

## UN MISSION IN MALI 2 Bangladeshi peacekeepers killed in storm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Bangladeshi police constables on the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali were killed and five others injured in a storm on Sunday.

The dead are Motahar Hossain, 28, and Samidul Islam, 30, said a press release of police headquarters in Dhaka yesterday.

The storm swept over Bangladesh contingent in the West African country around 5:30pm local time.

The two died and five others wounded as a structure collapsed on them during the storm, said sources at the police headquarters.

The other members of the contingent are safe.

Motahar and Samidul joined the peacekeeping mission on May 2 this year, according to the press release.

Hailing from Charpathalia village of Munshiganj, Motahar joined Bangladesh Police in 2007. He left behind his parents, wife, two brothers and three sisters.

Samidul, of Butmari village in Sherpur, joined Bangladesh Police in 2005. He left behind his parents, wife, eight-year-old son and two-year-old daughter.

After completing all formalities, the bodies will be brought to Bangladesh, says the release.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) AKM Shahidul Hoque mourned the deaths.

In a condolence message, the IGP said Bangladesh Police is deeply shocked over their untimely deaths. Their contributions to the UN peacekeeping activities will be remembered forever.

The IGP conveyed condolence to the victims' families and sought salvation of the departed souls.

## 2 remanded

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family, investigation officer Md. Anisur Rahman said.

The accused are Abdur Rahim, 25, Md Zia, 26 and Sa Mong Chak, 35. Police said Rahim and Zia belong to the Rohingya community.

After the arrest on suspicion they were produced before the court on Monday noon seeking ten days remand for each, said the IO.

They were arrested in different raids in the early hours of Sunday but police did not disclose any further information about the investigation.

In the early morning of May 14, 73-year old Buddhist monk U Damma Oaing Cha Bhikkhu was found dead with his throat slit in his temple Baishari Upor Chakpara Natun Chandra Nirvana Bouddha Bihar. The Bihar is some 250 yards away from the nearest village Upor Chak Para where his family members live.

A day later, police said they had arrested the trio on suspicion of involvement in the killing.

Meanwhile, Buddhist devotees and monks under the banner of several Buddhist organisations including Parbatyia Bhikku Parishad, Bangladesh Sangharaj Bhikkhu Mahasabha, and Bangladesh Buddhist Federation from home and abroad protested the gruesome killing of the monk demanding immediate arrest of the killers and a proper investigation of the incident.

The leaders of the organisation also threatened a movement demanding the resignation of the home minister if he does not withdraw comments he made by next Baishakhi Purnima (May 21).

## Farid Hossain

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holding the position over the last five years.

A journalist since 1976, Farid spent most of his career working for international media, including Time magazine. Born in 1953, he obtained honours, masters in English literature from Dhaka University.

A freedom fighter, he served as senior vice-president of Jatiya Press Club, president of Overseas Correspondent Association of Bangladesh (OCAB), president of Commonwealth Journalist association, Bangladesh.

As an AP correspondent, he covered many regional and international events.

## Arrest killers

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Association, also spoke.

Meanwhile, denouncing the killing of the monk, BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia said the government is blaming the opposition for the recent killings in a bid to use those barbaric assassinations politically.

"It seems their [government] main target is not to destroy dens of the real perpetrators...rather their target is to use those killing incidents politically. They are blaming oppositions including BNP immediately..." Khaleda said in a statement.

## Schoolteacher 'raped'

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The victim lodged a case with Kushtia Model Police Station on Sunday night. In the case statement, she said Shariful Islam, the alleged headmaster, and she had taken two rooms at Al Amin Hotel at Barabazar area of Kushtia town on Thursday night.

Shariful knocked on the door early in the morning and offered to give her some tips on the exam, she alleged.

As she opened the door, Shariful entered the room, closed the door and raped her, she claimed.

At one point, the woman lost her consciousness. The alleged rapist called one of his associates Zahidul Islam, a medical representative, over the phone and asked him to go there.

Zahidul took the victim to the hospital and fled.

After primary treatment, the hospital staff persuaded her to go home, she claimed.

As she went home and narrated the incident to her family, they took her to the hospital again since her bleeding did not stop.

Kushtia Deputy Commissioner Syed Belal Hossain visited the woman

at the hospital on Sunday evening after he came to know about the incident from journalists. He urged her to file a case.

According to Tarun Kanti Ghosh, medical officer of the hospital, a test to collect evidence of rape would be done on her today.

Talking to this correspondent on Sunday night at the hospital, the victim said, "My life has been ruined. Now I want to see the culprit behind bars."

Contacted, Shabuddin Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Kushtia Model Police Station, said they were trying to arrest the absconding rapist with the help of Meherpur police.

Meanwhile, the headmaster was temporarily suspended at a meeting of the school managing committee yesterday.

Nazrul Islam, president of the managing committee, confirmed this correspondent about the decision.

While the meeting was going on, locals gathered outside the school and chanted slogans against the teacher, demanding his exemplary punishment and dismissal.

## BNP leaders meet visiting

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Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs William E Todd in the capital.

There was no formal briefing from either side on the outcome of the two-hour-long meeting held at the Gulshan residence of US Ambassador Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat.

Both the sides at the meeting agreed not to disclose to the media what had been discussed.

The Daily Star could learn about the meeting as a few of the BNP leaders, who had been there, spoke on condition of anonymity.

The US embassy invited the BNP leaders to meet Todd, who is now on a visit to Dhaka. They discussed a wide range of issues, including the latest political development in the country.

The recent local body polls witnessed violence, massive irregularities and vote rigging by the ruling Awami League, the BNP delegation told the US official.

Against this backdrop, they said they wanted help from the US to ensure free and fair general elections next time.

The BNP leaders also pointed out that the present chief election commissioner and his deputies did not have the guts to perform to ensure free and fair polls in the country and that the present EC was biased towards the government.

To substantiate their claims, they showed video footage and newspaper clippings on vote rigging and violence in the Union Parishad polls.

Emerging from the meeting, BNP standing committee member Moyeen Khan, who led the six-member delegation, however, told reporters that the meeting was nothing but a courtesy call.

Another party standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan said different issues, including the country's political events, had come up in their discussion.

He refused to elaborate further. During the meeting, the US side wanted to know about the recent targeted killings of writers, bloggers, and religious minorities in Bangladesh and what to do, according to their views, to tackle the situation, party sources said.

## Plan to revive battered

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vessels; industrial waste being dumped; individuals and even real estate companies encroaching upon it are everything the city dwellers have been living with for years. There is no point going fishing in the river. There are hardly any fishes there.

Environmentalists have long been urging the government to do something about the river.

Responding to a question about the lack of coordination between different utility service providers, Khokon said there are 56 service providing organisations and a lack of coordination among those was hampering services.

He said both the mayors of the city have already requested the prime minister to form a coordination committee in which she would be the head. "We hope we will shortly get the committee," he said, adding, "We are now sitting with the heads of departments

as part of the coordination efforts."

About new unions, which have already been included in the DSCC, he said there would be planned development in the expanded areas but they want to go slow with it. He said they would also provide all necessary services to the new unions.

Responding to a question about fund crisis, the mayor said even though 65 percent of the income of undivided DCC had gone to Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), the DSCC has to spend 65 percent whereas the DNCC spends 35 percent.

He said as the prime minister has given assurance of providing money and had already provided Tk 1,700 crore for development and beautification of DSCC areas, money was not a problem.

Khokon said they would send a proposal to the government asking for a portion from the national revenue to increase the income of the DSCC.

## Evidence of rape found

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"The remaining one matches with Tonu's teeth."

Nazmul Karim also said, "We have shortened our list of suspects and now we will see if the samples match with DNA of any suspect."

Tonu's father Yaar Hossain learnt the news from television.

"We have full respect for judiciary and hope the latest development would pave the way for getting justice," he told The Daily Star in his immediate reaction.

Tonu, a Victoria College student and theatre activist, was found murdered in the Comilla Cantonment area on March 20. The killing sparked huge public outcry.

The first autopsy conducted on March 21 found no signs of rape and could not determine the cause of death.

A forensic expert, when told about the results of the DNA tests, said on condition of anonymity that the first autopsy should have found the rape evidence in this case.

Asked why the first autopsy didn't find any rape evidence, Dr Sharmin Sultana, who conducted it at Comilla Medical College, said she made the negative report as she did not find any assault marks in the genital area or sign of violence on the body.

The lecturer of forensic medicine replied in the negative when asked whether she made the report under any pressure.

The report says, "No sign of forceful

intercourse before death was found. Victim was not pregnant. No definite opinion as to the death could be given."

The police inquest too found no sign of injury or assault on any part of Tonu's body.

But talking to The Daily Star earlier, Yaar Hossain, an employee of Comilla Cantonment Board, said he had noticed the back of Tonu's head was smashed and there were injuries in her nose.

Following a court order, Tonu's body was exhumed and a three-member board conducted a second autopsy on March 30. The report is yet to be prepared.

On May 10, Tonu's mother Anwara Begum told the media that her daughter was killed as she refused to perform at a programme in Comilla Cantonment. She also named two army men as suspects.

Yaar Hossain last night told this newspaper that they gave the CID the names of two army personnel as suspects.

On Sunday, Director of Inter Service Public Relations Lt Col Mohammad Rashedul Hasan said Tonu was a member of army family and the army is extending all-out support to investigators to find out the culprits.

He said the investigators on several occasions interrogated two army personnel named by Tonu's mother.

## 2killed

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away from Chittagong Railway Station. The Lohagara-bound bus was on its way to Karnaphuli bridge area from the BRTC bus depot in the city's Oxygen area.

Vegetable vendor Firoz Alam, a witness to the incident, said that as the bus got stuck after crossing the level crossing barrier, the train hit it, causing the vehicle flip on its side.

The gatekeeper didn't lower the barrier on time to keep the crossing free. By the time the barrier was brought down, the bus was already on the track, added Firoz.

However, gatekeeper Habibur Rahman claimed that the bus driver drove on to the level crossing while he was lowering the barrier.

"When I asked the driver to reverse, he said: 'Let the train come. I would see to it.'"

By the time the train reached near the railway crossing, there was not enough space for the driver to reverse. Sensing danger, he jumped off the bus and fled the scene, Habibur said.

Shamshul Alam, senior locomaster, said the train was running at a speed of around 12 kilometre per hour. Had it been running at a higher speed, the accident would have been more fatal.

This supervisor could not reach bus driver Md Oli for his comments.

Meanwhile, the railway authorities yesterday formed a four-member committee, headed by Firoz Iftekar, divisional transportation officer of Bangladesh Railway (east zone), to probe the accident.

Mentionable, four garment workers were killed and 10 others were injured in a similar accident in the port city on March 11, 2014, when a train hit a minibus in Chandgaon area.

## JMB man held

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Police did not say when they arrested Hasan or from where.

Unknown assailants hacked to death Prof Siddiquee on the morning of April 23 when he was waiting for the university bus in Shalbagan area of Rajshahi city.

His son Riyasat Imtiaz Shourav filed a case with Boalia police station accusing unnamed people for the murder.

Later, police arrested three people, two of them with Shibir affiliations.

Police investigations found three youths, who went to the killing spot by a motorcycle, orchestrated the murder. They left the scene shouting "Allahu Akbar".

Militant group Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack, according to US-based SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors global terror activities.

"#ISIS' Amaq Agency reported the group's responsibility for killing Rajshahi Univ. prof Rezaul Karim for 'calling to atheism' in #Bangladesh," SITE tweeted hours after the killing.

The government maintains there is no IS presence in the country.

## BGB, BSF

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Three others were also injured in the incident.

"This kind of incident is not acceptable. If one such incident takes place, how do we see it? Whether we address it in the right perspective or try to bypass it," he said.

The BGB chief said journalists would be invited to view activities of each other's border forces.

The talks focused on moving forward to foster cooperation, said his Indian counterpart, KK Sharma, adding that 447 illegal cattle traders were apprehended by the BSF since last year's DG-level talks.

Replying to a query, the BGB chief said he came to know during informal talks that the Felani killing case has been moved to the Indian Supreme Court. He declined to comment further, saying it was a sub judge matter.

## Comoros ready to take Kuwait stateless

AFP, Kuwait City

The African island nation of the Comoros has said it is ready to consider taking thousands of stateless people denied citizenship in the Gulf state of Kuwait, newspapers reported yesterday.

"If the issue is raised officially, we are ready to discuss it," visiting Comorian External Affairs Minister Abdulkarim Mohamed said, when asked if his country was ready to receive Kuwait's stateless, known as bidoons.

"Yes, it is something we are ready to do if officially requested by the Kuwaiti government," he said, cited by Al-Anbaw newspaper.

More than 110,000 bidoons have been living in Kuwait for decades claiming the right to citizenship in the oil-rich emirate and the generous welfare benefits that accompany it.

## Journalist Sadeq Khan

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BNP vice-chairman, told The Daily Star. NP vice-chairman, told The Daily Star.

He has his wife Anjumam Chowdhury Khan, son Kishon Khan, relatives, friends and many other well wishers to mourn his death. His wife and son are now staying abroad.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and journalist leaders offered their condolences to the bereaved family.

In her condolence message, Khaleda said Sadeq was truly a patriot who had worked for the nation throughout his life.

"Freedom of opinions is vital for upholding democratic spirit. The role of Sadeq Khan was praiseworthy in ensuring freedom of expression," she observed.

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu and Nobel Peace Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus also expressed their condolences for the death.

Sadeq's body will be taken to the National Press Club today to hold his first namaj-e-janaza. He will be buried in his father's grave at Banani graveyard following funeral prayers at Gulshan

Azad Mosque after zohr prayers.

Born in 1936, Sadeq had an illustrious career. He worked for several newspapers beginning with the daily Sangbad as a lead writer in 1955. He served as contributing editor in the weekly Holiday.

Sadeq also played a key role in developing the country's film industry. He directed and produced acclaimed film Nadi O Nari.

He was the chairman of Gonoshasthya Kendra Trust. Gono Bishwabidyalay held a condolence meeting at its Savar campus over the death of the veteran journalist who worked with the Bangladesh government in exile during the war of independence in 1971.

He was informally assigned at the time to oversee logistics and external publicity, keeping in touch with sector commanders and cultural leaders.

His four brothers are New Age founding editor Enayetullah Khan, poet Abu Zafar Obaidullah, Civil Aviation Minister Rashed Khan Menon and New Age publisher ASM Shahidullah Khan.

## Healthcare makes

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makes it and other Scandinavian countries welfare states.

Madsen said on returning to work, mothers can take a leave with low pay in the child's first year. "If children below eight years are sick, the mother can take two days of leave with pay a year for per kid," she said.

Lillian Bondo, president of the Danish Association of Midwives, said the country has adequate number of daycare centres with professional caregivers, allowing mothers to participate in the job market.

She said some 70 percent of women in Denmark work outside homes, almost double that of Bangladesh where 36 percent of women are involved in the formal job market.

With the advent of industrialisation, the Danish authorities encouraged women to work outside, Bondo said.

Women unions, since then, were formed to demand facilities for maternity leave and childcare, eventually leading to several laws protecting the rights of

mothers, she said.

Paternal leaves later were also allowed to avoid discrimination in recruitment of female workers, but it still remains to some extent, said Bondo.

Despite that, motherhood and childhood in Denmark is pleasing, she told this correspondent on the sidelines of a midwifery symposium.

Danish Foreign Minister Kristian Jensen said gender equality has been one of the top priorities that made the country much different from most countries.

"When women and men have equal opportunities, it truly benefits the society - in economic, political or social aspects," he told a press conference yesterday.

As the Sustainable Development Goals aim to leave none behind, Jensen said it is high time that the world looks at the large number of women and girls who are still being overlooked.

"Everybody wins when you invest in women and girls," said Katja Iversen, CEO of New York-based global advocacy organisation Women Deliver which is organising the conference.

## All-out help

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meeting with the home minister.

"The entire world is now exposed to terrorist attacks. Some isolated incidents are taking place in Bangladesh, carried out by home-grown terrorists," Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told newsmen following a lengthy meeting with the 15-member US delegation led by US State Department's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs William E Todd.

"We don't want to be the victim of any terrorist attacks, we want to prevent terrorists before they launch such an attack and thus we sought US's assistance to successfully combat those attacks in the country. They [the US] agreed to provide us with the assistance and we will work unitedly to counter terrorism," he said.

Prior to their meeting with the home minister, the US delegation had a meeting with a BNP delegation and Prime Minister's Adviser HT Imam, and later held a lengthy meeting with Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam and senior officials of the foreign ministry.

Diplomatic and official sources said the government leaders have welcomed the US offer for assistance and called for advance intelligence information before any terrorist or extremist attack takes place. Dhaka also sought US assistance in training security forces in Bangladesh and further strengthening and expanding the newly floated Counter-Terrorism Unit.

The ministers and officials informed the US delegation about Bangladesh's success in combating terrorist attacks and foiling extremists' attacks.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, the home minister alleged that conspira-

cies, both at home and abroad, were being hatched against Bangladesh and that the government, with the help of the people and the police, was dealing with such conspiracies.

Responding to a query about diplomats' concern over security in diplomatic zones, he said security has been beefed up in diplomatic zones and the visiting US representatives have expressed their satisfaction over the security measures.

Speaking on behalf of the visiting team, US envoy Bernicat said the US experts on countering-terrorism and violent extremism had a very good discussion with the Bangladesh officials about how the US could expand its cooperation. "We find a very strong partner in Bangladesh and in this fight and global fight together."

"The point is you need everyone in the society and in the country fighting terrorism. The government and police cannot do all in any country and so we are sharing lessons we have learnt from working within the United States and working with other countries and how to bring everybody productively into that fight together so we had consultation with regards how to keep Bangladesh safe."

Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque, DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Miah, Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit chief Monirul Islam, among others, were present at the meeting.

Meanwhile, a five-member US delegation, led by Deputy Coordinator of Counter-terrorism Bureau Marie Richards, met the inspector general of police and assured him of US assistance for Bangladesh police in enhancing skills and efficiency in countering expansion of extremism through social media and information technology.

## Cannes hotel deploys hawks

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In the middle of the world's premier film festival in the French Riviera town, a five-year-old Harris's Hawk named Tsunga is ready to swoop in and save the day.

"If a gull that weighs a kilo lands on a table, knocking over glasses -- keeping in mind that celebrities walking the red carpet are wearing unique dresses -- if a drink spills on a dress, it's all over," said professional hawk Christopher Puzin.

"We basically send our birds of prey to attack seagulls. During the day, when we serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner, we're watching to make sure no seagulls land on the tables."

Tsunga is one of five hawks on the hotel's feathered security team.

To the hotel the hawks provide an environmentally friendly solution to the gulls who are so used to humans that they don't hesitate to come and help themselves.

"We have seen a gull try to take a guest's steak before. And others come to get peanuts or other things," said Alessandro Cresta, general manager of the hotel.

"Of course, it is also partly the guests' fault. They have started taming them by feeding them regularly. After a while, birds get used to the presence of humans and lose their fear."

The birds are trained to fly above the hotel at an altitude of about 150 metres.

"The gulls can see their natural predator and understand that there is a new presence here... so that makes them stay away."

Puzin said the hawks pose no threat to the hotel's guests. The Cannes film festival runs for 12 days and has brought some of Hollywood's biggest stars to town -- like Julia Roberts, George Clooney and Kristen Stewart -- as well as thousands of visitors who come to soak up the glamour.