

Six Bangladeshi peacekeepers to get UN medals posthumously

BSS, Dhaka

Six Bangladeshi peacekeepers who lost their lives while serving under the UN flag in Abyei will be posthumously honoured with the prestigious Dag Hammarskjöld Medal at the United Nations Headquarters on June 5.

The medals will be presented by UN Secretary-General António Guterres during a ceremony marking the International Day of UN Peacekeepers at the UN Headquarters in New York.

The six Bangladeshi peacekeepers are Md Jahangir Alam, Md Sobuj Mia, Md Masud Rana, Md Mominul Islam, Shamim Reza and Santo Mondol. They were killed in a drone strike on December 13, 2025.

Bangladesh is currently the 4th-largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations, with over 4,000 personnel, including 277 women, deployed in missions in Abyei, the Central African Republic, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, Libya, South Sudan and Western Sahara.



Following heavy rain and storms on Sunday and Monday, farmers rushed to the fields to dry and salvage mature paddy soaked by the downpour. Many said fields expected to yield 24-25 maunds of paddy per bigha may now produce less than half, causing significant losses. The photo was taken in Kajurpara village of Rajshahi's Puthia upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

6 killed, 52 hurt in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least six people were killed and 52 others were injured in separate road accidents in Netrokona, Kushtia, and Sylhet yesterday.

In Netrokona, a woman and her two daughters were killed when a passenger bus of Mohua Paribahan hit a battery-run auto-rickshaw at the Chollisha Bus Stand intersection on the Netrokona-Mynensingh highway around 11:30am, said Hafizul Islam, additional superintendent of police.

The deceased are Nur Jahan, 45, a resident of Amlī Keshabpur village in Sadar upazila, and her daughters Smriti Akter, 15, and Iti Akter, 12.

Following the accident, locals temporarily blocked the highway and staged a protest.

In Kushtia, at least one person was killed and 32 were injured when a bus carrying army recruits from Bogura Cantonment collided head-on with a passenger coach in Talbaria area of Mirpur upazila around noon.

The deceased could not be identified immediately, said OC Abu Obayed of Chourhas Highway Police Station.

In Sylhet, two persons were killed and 15 injured when a coach of Saint Martin Paribahan hit a stationary bus of Jatayat Paribahan on Sylhet-Dhaka Highway in Osmaninagar upazila around 6:30am, UNB reported.

The deceased are driver Sohel, 30, and his helper Emon, 20, of the stationary bus. They were repairing the bus when the accident happened, said OC Abu Taher Dewan of Sherpur Highway Police Station.

They were gone

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“I, along with an aaya, took our babies towards the NICU around 4:30am, but they could only be admitted around 6:00am. Both of them died after 9:00am,” she told this correspondent over the phone yesterday.

Seeking accountability, Hasan said, “I want a proper investigation and justice. Nothing can bring back my sons, but those responsible should be identified and punished.”

Members of the government’s probe committee visited Hasan’s home yesterday and recorded Hasan and his wife’s statement as part of their investigation, he said.

Contacted, Tariqul Islam Mukul, director of HR and Company Affairs at Ad-din Foundation, which runs the hospital, refuted the allegations.

“It is true that there was no doctor stationed in that particular post-operative room, but a doctor was available in nearby units. No hospital assigns a dedicated doctor to a post-operative room,” he said, adding that a nurse was present there.

Asked about the alleged delay in responding to the babies’ deteriorating conditions, he said hospital staffers transferred the newborns to the NICU as soon as complaints were made.

He claimed that the hospital has a protocol for running the post-operative room. “However, something might have gone wrong. We have many things to learn and correct from this incident,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Ukraine strikes Russian pipeline, oil depot

AFP, Kyiv

Ukrainian drones yesterday struck an oil depot in southern Russia and a pumping station hundreds of kilometres from the front, Kyiv said, with Russian officials confirming strikes in the areas.

Kyiv has stepped up strikes on Moscow’s infrastructure in the fifth year of war, hitting targets as far as the Urals in recent weeks.

Its army said drones hit a “dispatch station of a major oil pipeline” in Russia’s Kirov region and an oil depot in the Rostov region, near occupied Ukraine.

It said the pipeline transported oil from Siberia to western Russia and Belarus.

The governor of the Kirov region, Alexander Sokolov, only said that Ukrainian drones had hit a “facility” and caused a fire, claiming no casualties and calling for calm.

In the town of Matveyev-Kurgan in the southern Rostov region, regularly hit by Kyiv, local officials introduced a state of emergency over a huge blaze at an oil depot hit by a drone.

The town’s head Dina Alborova said the fire spread over 3,600 square meters (39,000 square feet), publishing images of plumes of black smoke. She said residential houses and several shops were affected.

In Ukraine, authorities were clearing the aftermath of a Russian strike on a warehouse in Dnipro, belonging to popular postal company Nova Poshta.

Nova Poshta, a private courier company widely used in and outside Ukraine, said its Dnipro branch was hit by a drone and that “the building burned down completely”.

It added that no employees were injured.

“All these attacks must be stopped,” President Volodymyr Zelensky said online, posting images of the blaze.

Islamist parties looking to usher in women voters

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Islami Andolan Secretary General Yunus Ahmad said the initiative aims to expand dawah-based and organisational activities among women.

“Half of the country’s population is women. This initiative stems from the idea that female students should become highly educated and help carry out dawah activities,” he said.

He said work on the constitution, policy framework and organisational structure is underway to accommodate the change in policy.

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis Ameer Mamunul Haque, in a Facebook post on May 23, announced the launch of the party’s women’s and student divisions.

He said the party is advancing with a four-stage vision of establishing Islam, from personal practice to

state-level implementation of Islamic principles.

Mamunul said divisions were formed to enhance women’s rights, responsibilities and religious consciousness.

Party Secretary General Jalaluddin Ahmad said a policy decision was taken at the central committee meeting in April, and membership recruitment is underway.

“Initially, women and female students will be organised under one platform, with the possibility of separate wings later depending on capacity,” he told The Daily Star.

He said online and offline programmes are raising awareness among women about dawah, social responsibility and political participation, and the structure will be formalised as membership grows.

Meanwhile, Khelafat Majlis Secretary General Ahmad Abdul Qader said the initiative stems from the need to engage a large section of the population in dawah and organisational work.

“There are millions of women in the country. It is necessary to expand Islamic work among them,” he told this newspaper.

Past structural limitations had previously restricted such engagement, but the environment is now conducive, he said.

Speaking on the matter, political analyst Altaf Parvez said Islamist parties are focusing more on female voters and students to build support bases and expand ideological influence.

“While political awareness among women has grown through education, technology and internet

access, their participation in party structures remains limited.”

He added that the move could aid organisational expansion and ideological outreach and reflects a broader effort by right-leaning forces to reorganise.

North South University professor AKM Waresul Karim said some believe Jamaat received a higher share of women’s votes in the last election. “It can be assumed that other parties are also taking similar initiatives to counter or respond to that.”

He added that many students are enrolled in madrasas outside mainstream educational institutions. “A large portion of them are female students. Therefore, these parties may feel the need for representation there and to build capacity to compete with Jamaat.”

Feud within family, gambling clash leave trail of deaths

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Kamal later went to stop the fight but was attacked by members of the opposing group and subsequently lost consciousness. He was taken to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead, said his family members.

However, police said they are investigating the death and did not initially find visible injury marks on the body.

In Patuakhali, a teenage boy was stabbed to death allegedly by miscreants on Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as Tajul Islam, 16, of Machuakhali village

under Kalapara upazila.

Quoting family members, police said Tajul joined a wedding ceremony on Saturday night in the village. At around 11:30pm, some people called and took him to a nearby secluded area and stabbed him.

Hearing his screams, locals rushed there, rescued him, and took him to the nearby health complex, where on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Following the incident, local residents detained the three youths on suspicion and handed them over to police, said Nazrul Islam, the OC of Kalapara Police Station.

In Pirojpur, police recovered the bodies of two men from separate places in Mathbaria upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Abdur Rashid, 50, a farmer, and Mohammad Sagar, 28, a motorcycle driver. Both were residents of Dakkhin Amragachia village.

The bodies were found less than a kilometre apart.

According to family members, Rashid left his home at around 10:00pm on Saturday night after receiving a phone call and did not return. His body was found yesterday

morning on the veranda of a local maktab near his house.

In a separate incident, Sagar’s body was discovered beside his home. Family members alleged that he had been killed and his body left there by unidentified assailants at around 1:30am.

Investigators are yet to determine how the men died, said Partha Chakraborty, additional superintendent of police in Pirojpur.

[Our correspondents from Manikganj, Noakhali, Pirojpur, Khulna and Patuakhali contributed to the report.]

Fragile phase for Rohingya aid: UNHCR

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support from the international community, notably Finland, means the appeal has reached 60 percent of its funding target.

As the Rohingya response enters a fragile phase – marked by declining funding, worsening camp conditions, rising protection risks and continued instability in Myanmar – Finland’s stepped-up commitment shows great generosity, said Ivo Freijesen, the UNHCR representative in Bangladesh.

“It reaffirms our collective responsibility to protect Rohingya families and help them thrive, until conditions in Myanmar allow for

voluntary, dignified and safe return to their homeland,” he added.

Finland stands in solidarity with Bangladesh and with the Rohingya people, and almost a decade into displacement, the Rohingya people still await a chance to rebuild their lives, said Mari Ahmed, Chargée d’Affaires of the Finnish embassy in New Delhi.

“In addition to basic assistance, we must invest in a better future for the Rohingya – including support for skills and resilience-building, inclusion of those most vulnerable and ensuring that their plight does not fade from global attention,” Ahmed added.

The UNHCR announced a EUR 2 million contribution from the Finnish government to sustain life-saving assistance and protection for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

With this increased contribution, Finland has enabled the UNHCR to fill critical gaps, including in underfunded areas such as skills development and resilience programming.

Nearly a decade after fleeing targeted violence and persecution in Myanmar, 13 lakh stateless Rohingya continue to reside in Bangladesh.

With limited livelihood opportunities, the Rohingya in Bangladesh remain

largely dependent on aid.

In 2025, only 23 percent of refugee households earned income through cash-for-work, the only formal livelihood activity permitted, while 42 percent had access to temporary and unstable income sources.

As many as 35 percent had no income source at all and relied fully on assistance.

As funding falls, the most vulnerable bear the brunt: women and girls, persons with disabilities, older people, and some 150,000 new arrivals since early 2024, who are still without shelters due to lack of space in the already very congested camps.



Smoke rises in the city during a Russian missile strike in Dnipro, Ukraine yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

No safe haven

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another, information about the operation appears to have been leaked,” he said.

The minister said criminal groups had previously maintained control over parts of the area through a network of CCTV cameras and lookout posts, which had now been dismantled.

He also referred to an earlier attack on a joint forces camp, questioning how “criminals gained the courage” to challenge government authority, so much so that they had the audacity to damage a Rab facility under construction.

Authorities have identified individuals linked to land grabbing and other illegal activities in the area, he added.

He said nearby locations, including Alinagar, Betua and Cha Bagan, would also be brought under control.

The government is considering infrastructure development for the area, including road links connecting Salimpur with Sitakunda, Bhatiari, the Hathazari Bypass and the Chattogram-Cox’s Bazar highway.

He further said plans were underway to establish facilities for police, BGB, Rab, prisons, and other law-enforcement agencies in the area.

The minister assured residents that a rehabilitation plan would be prepared for long-term settlers and said “no one will be evicted from the area for the time being.”

PARLIAMENTARY POLLS Malta’s Labour party wins historic fourth term

AFP, Naxxar

Malta’s Labour party yesterday won an unprecedented fourth term in a victory for outgoing Prime Minister Robert Abela, who had called a snap election in light of geopolitical uncertainties.

Fireworks were set off across the tiny Mediterranean island and ecstatic Labour supporters dressed in the party’s red chanted “four times!” after officials in the Counting House in Naxxar said preliminary results gave the election to the governing party.

“I’ve voted Labour since I was a little girl, I’m thrilled they’ve made history,” 73-year-old Margaret Camilleri told AFP, as Labour supporters drove past on a truck with speakers blaring the song “We are the Champions”.

Abela, 48, had sent the country to vote a year early, saying the government needed a fresh mandate in order to shield the tiny, import-heavy island from the Middle East crisis.

While Malta’s economy grew 4.0 percent last year, there are concerns the conflict could have an impact on tourism due to spiralling aviation fuel costs and drive up inflation.

Abela campaigned on Labour’s economic record since 2013, pledging stability in a period of uncertainty.

His main rival was Nationalist Party (PN) candidate Alex Borg, a 30-year-old lawyer and former “Mr World Malta” beauty pageant winner, who has urged the Maltese to vote for change.

Abela has led Malta since 2020, when his predecessor quit following a political crisis over the assassination in 2017 of reporter Daphne Caruana Galizia, who exposed corruption at the highest level in the country.