

Truce crumbles

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probable capture of Israeli Second Lieutenant Hadar Goldin, 23.

The military also announced that two soldiers had been killed in the same incident near the southern city of Rafah.

"Our initial indications suggest a soldier has been abducted by terrorists in an incident where terrorists breached the ceasefire," according to army spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Peter Lerner.

In 2006, militants from Gaza captured Israeli conscript Gilad Shalit and held him for five years before freeing him in exchange for more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners.

The short truce gave brief respite to people in the battered Strip from fighting that has now killed 1,600 on the Palestinian side, mostly civilians, and 63 Israeli soldiers and three civilians on the other.

Within hours, air raid sirens were heard on the Israeli side, and heavy shelling resumed in Rafah.

Across Gaza, 160 people were killed or died of their wounds yesterday, including 65 in Rafah and 50 in Khan Yunis, emergency services spokesman Ashraf al-Qudra said.

An Israeli army spokeswoman said 51 rockets and mortar rounds hit Israel yesterday, with another nine rockets shot down by the Iron Dome missile defence system.

Israeli soldiers shot dead two Palestinians during separate clashes in the northern and central West Bank, while in and around Hebron more than 100 people were wounded in clashes with Israeli forces, seven of them seriously.

Obama said the United States "unequivocally condemned Hamas and the Palestinian factions that were responsible for killing two Israeli soldiers, and abducting a third almost minutes after a ceasefire had been announced".

"If they are serious about trying to resolve this situation, that soldier needs to be unconditionally released, as soon as possible."

Obama added: "We have also been clear that innocent civilians in Gaza

caught in the crossfire have to weigh on our conscience and we have to do more to protect them."

Earlier yesterday, the Israeli military warned people in Gaza to remain at home, saying in voice messages to mobile phones that it was "pursuing terrorist elements in Rafah".

US Secretary of State John Kerry had said that once the ceasefire was under way, Israeli and Palestinian representatives, including from Hamas, would begin talks in Cairo on a more durable truce.

The Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad later said Egypt was postponing the talks after news of the Israeli soldier's capture, but Cairo said the invitation to talk was "still in place".

And Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas said a joint delegation, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, will travel to Cairo Saturday for talks despite the renewed fighting.

In a speech published after the ceasefire broke down, Saudi King Abdullah denounced "inexcusable" world silence over Israel's "war crimes" in Gaza.

"We see the blood of our brothers in Palestine being shed in collective massacres, that have spared nobody, and in war crimes against humanity... all taking place under the eyes and ears of the international community... that has stood indifferently watching events in the whole region," he said.

"This silence is inexcusable" and will "result in a generation that rejects peace and believes only in violence," he said.

The truce came after the UN Security Council expressed "grave disappointment" that repeated ceasefire calls had gone unheeded, and demanded a series of humanitarian breaks to ease conditions for Gaza's civilians.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office accused Hamas and other Gaza militants of "flagrantly violating" the ceasefire.

Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhum riposted that "it is the (Israeli) occupation which violated the ceasefire. The Palestinian resistance acted based on... the right to self defence."



A relative in tears at Barobazar level crossing in Jhenidah after a train rammed a bus killing 11 people early yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Wedding turns tragic

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"At first I could not guess what it was due to the darkness but I could hear screams. I ran towards the train as did many others and noticed that it was a bus which got hit and was being pushed forward. I saw several bodies drop by the lines and the bus was on its side."

Banya Rani, 35, her son Koushik Das, 8, her niece Trishna Rani, 30, Sanjay Kumar, 34, Sudhir Kumar Biswas, 40, Sujay Kumar, 34, Biplob Biswas, 25, Shobhon Dey, 25, Oyishee, 7, Subal Kumar Biswas, 45, and Ujjal Kumar Das, 15, were killed.

They are all from Phulahari village of Sajalkupa upazila, reports our Jhenidah correspondent.

Rail communication between Khulna, Jessore and other districts were suspended for seven hours and resumed around 11:00am when a salvage train cleared the line, said Motabbar Ali, station master of Mobarakganj Railway Station.

The railway authorities suspended

gatemen Humayun Kabir and Barobazar Railway Station Master Turki Ahmed for their alleged negligence in duty.

Both of them are missing and presumed on the run.

Fire fighters and police from local highway police camp and police station had rescued the injured and took them to hospitals with the help of locals.

The bus was rented for the wedding, said the officer-in-charge of Kaliganj Police Station.

A three-member probe body was formed, led by Additional District Commissioner Nasrin Jahan, to probe the accident. The probe body has been asked to submit its report within the next three days, said Jhenidah Deputy Commissioner Safiqul Islam.

The DC, Additional Superintendent of police Mohammad Hasanuzzaman, and ruling Awami League lawmaker of Jhenidah-4 constituency Anwarul Azim Anar visited the spot.

3 hurt in train-car collision

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A woman and a child, apparently unscathed, got out of the wrecked car right after the accident around 5:15pm, locals told police. They also said three other occupants of the car, including the driver, had injuries.

However, the people in the car went

missing after the recovery of a gun with 12 bullets and eight other bullets from inside the car.

Police also found several number plates of cars inside.

"We are trying to find out whether the Austrian-made pistol was licensed. If not, we are going to be after the men who

owned the firearm," said SI Arefin.

Officer-in-Charge Abdul Mazid of Dhaka Railway Police Station told The Daily Star late last night that they have found AR Rahman, 40, an alleged occupant of the vehicle, having treatment at the intensive care unit of Holy Family Medical College Hospital.

They found out that another passenger of the vehicle, who claimed to be Nur-e-Alam Khan, had treatment in Square Hospitals on Panthapath. He left the hospital before police could get there.

The OC said they were raiding a few places at the capital's Matuail where Nur reportedly lives.



PHOTO: STAR

Locals try to get a car off the rail lines after the car had whizzed past a closing level crossing gate in Malibagh and was hit by the train yesterday afternoon.

Terrorist state

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Obama administration condemn the shelling of the United Nations school, where hapless Gazans had earlier taken shelter, and the deaths caused by the raid. But they do not condemn the criminality of the Israeli government. Indeed, the US administration remains "committed" to the "security" of Israel. The security of ordinary Palestinians does not appear to be its concern.

Between 2008 and 2019, as estimates suggest, the United States will have provided military aid to the tune of \$30 billion to Israel. There are reports, as Israel shoots down Gazans, that fresh arms will be on the way for the Netanyahu outfit. The deaths of children and their parents, the hasty burials, the endless fear of the transience of life as Israeli missiles rain down on Gaza do not matter. Not even the outrage expressed by the UN secretary general matters. The Israeli military machine has no time to pause. And Benjamin Netanyahu does not see the irony in a Jewish state, all these decades after the atrocities committed against Europe's Jews by Hitler's Nazi goons, cheerfully taking the lives of people whose homeland it commanded in May 1948.

It is a government based on callousness and insensitivity Netanyahu presides over. The terrorism that Israel shows on Gaza, on the Middle East, pales before the putatively roguish behaviour of such states as Saddam's Iraq or Gaddafi's Libya or Taliban-run Afghanistan. There is little scope for politeness here. Under Benjamin Netanyahu and his ilk, Israel has swiftly mutated into the world's paramount terrorist state. It has targeted the power station in Gaza, leaving fearful Gazans with no more than two hours of electricity every forty-eight hours. It has, through its pounding of

innocent people in a conflict that is more the murder of a nation than a war against an enemy, left Palestinians worrying about supplies of food. The absence of electricity has led to a crisis in water supply, for the water Gazans need must be brought up from underground sources by power pumps. The destruction of homes and schools and other structures has, besides killing hundreds, left many more hundreds, perhaps thousands, badly wounded. The medicines they need are in a state of fast depletion.

The world watches. Those states that are quick to slap sanctions on nations they think are guilty of human rights violations or are ignoring the need for democracy, feel little need to impose sanctions on Israel. They look away from its brazen behaviour in Gaza. Large sections of the media in these states focus on Hamas terrorism. Israel, for these embedded journalists, is under assault. That is the lie being peddled before the world. The truth is something else: the deaths of 63 Israeli soldiers at the hands of Hamas are a hint of how Israel might be tying itself in knots. If Hamas has not been defeated in 26 days, what guarantee is there that it will bite the dust in the next 26 days?

And there lies the dilemma for Netanyahu. He cannot defeat Hamas, which is why he does the next best thing: he bombs sleeping Gazan children to death. As Israel's monstrosity expands in Gaza, one recalls the war criminals in 1940s Europe and Japan, in 1990s Africa, in 1990s Europe. Hitler, Tojo, Taylor, Milosevic and Mladic paid or are paying for their sins.

It is now time to identify the world's newest war criminal, none other than Benjamin Netanyahu. He happens to be leading a militarily sophisticated terrorist state called Israel, one that is today a clear threat to stability around the world.

Cancel 'Delwar's bail'

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payments."

Today's demonstration will start at 11:00am in front of Hossain Market in North Badda, Dhaka.

Joined by eleven more organisations under the banner of Tuba Group Sramik (workers) Sangram Committee, the agitation will continue until 12:30pm, said Mishu, who is also on hunger strike since Monday.

At a press conference on Thursday, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) said they would make the payments within seven days as they are negotiating with a bank for a loan.

The Tuba Group could not pay the workers for three months and bonus before the Eid as the bank loan could not be secured in the absence of the owner of the group, according to the management and BGMEA.

The group needs Tk 4.14 crore for the payments.

In Moshrefa Mishu's view, the BGMEA pledge is nothing but a drama. "Their statement is irresponsible and inhuman as well."

"We will withdraw our hunger strike once the Tuba management pays three months' arrears, one month allowance for overtime and Eid bonus," Mishu later told The Daily Star over the phone.

"If our demands are not met, we will continue our agitation programme and it will spread all over the country."

Shahidullah Azim, vice-president of BGMEA, yesterday said, "We will sit with the labour minister on Sunday to find a solution to the workers' problems."

He added, "If Delwar Hossain is released, the problem will be resolved as soon as possible."

Workers say they learnt about

"Delwar's bail" from media reports. They don't think the owner being released on bail will meet their demand right away.

Delwar, managing director of Tuba

Group, has been in jail since February in a case filed over the fire at Tazreen Fashions, a concern of the group, in 2012. At least 112 workers were killed in the incident.

State Minister for Labour and Employment Ministry Mujibul Haque Chunnu Thursday told The Daily Star that Delwar had been granted bail before Eid. The order of the bail may reach the jail by Sunday or Monday.

Meanwhile, at least 60 workers on hunger strike fell sick. Of them, 10 have been hospitalised, said Faridul Islam, one of the workers.

"We are also concerned about the fate of our job after the hunger strike," said Farid, who has been working with the group since 2007.

The group needs Tk 4.14 crore for the payments.

AL prepares to tackle BNP

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All the 74 organisational district units of the ruling party would hold meetings and elaborate programmes to mark the day.

At those meetings, they would also plan their next course of actions to deal with the BNP's threat of anti-government movements, according to the AL grassroots leaders.

Since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other senior AL leaders have been speaking against the BNP threat for the better part of the last couple of weeks, the AL grassroots have already got a hint of the party's high command's message about what they should do.

The AL's Dhaka city unit is likely to take highest precaution as the BNP had declared its movements would be capital-centric. Top city unit leaders have already talked to lawmakers of the capital and different thana and ward unit leaders in this regard, AL insiders said.

"We are also concerned about the fate of our job after the hunger strike," said Farid, who has been working with the group since 2007.

AL General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam and Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif have already issued verbal directives to the party grassroots to stay united and prepared to foil any bid of the BNP to spark violence in the country, according to grassroots leaders.

In the last two days, The Daily Star talked to the presidents and the general secretaries of over 10 districts and 12 upazilas to learn what they are doing or thinking about it.

"We have called an extended meeting of the district committee for August 4 when we will draw up programmes for August 15 and plans to deal with BNP's movements," said Asgar Ali, general secretary of Kushtia district AL.

If the BNP tries to create chaos, they along with the people would resist it, he said.

Most of those AL leaders believe people would not participate in the BNP movements. With the party in

power this time, the AL men would spontaneously tackle the BNP's bid to create chaos, they said.

The general secretary of a district unit AL under Rangpur division said though they are making preparations to counter "chaos" the BNP might create, they might fail to do so because of intra-party feuds in its unit.

Mahbubul Alam Hanif told The Daily Star that the AL would not obstruct BNP's movement if it is peaceful.

"If BNP resorts to vandalism, killings and arson, like it did before the January 5 national elections, the government will contain them with an iron hand and the Awami League will assist the government by all means," he said. He said the AL would remain on the street with different programmes till December.