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Israel 'at war' after Hamas offensive

At least 100 killed in Israel; retaliatory air strikes pound Gaza killing at least 232

AGENCIES

Palestinian Islamist group Hamas took Israel by surprise yesterday with the biggest attack for decades, a sudden assault by gunmen who crossed into Israeli villages, killed dozens of people and brought hostages back into the Gaza Strip.

Israel responded with massive air strikes deep inside the coastal enclave, killing scores and wounding hundreds of people and vowing unprecedented retaliation.

Israel's N12 News reported that at least 100 Israelis were killed, while Gaza authorities released a death toll of 232 in the bloodiest escalation in the wider conflict since May 2021, with hundreds more wounded on both sides.

"We are at war," said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as the military launched a series of air strikes against targets of Iran-backed Hamas in the blockaded coastal enclave where black smoke billowed into the sky.

"The enemy will pay an unprecedented price," the right-wing veteran Israeli premier vowed after Hamas launched its first such combined air, sea and ground offensive, half a century after the outbreak of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

The Islamist group started the surprise attack around 6:30am (0330 GMT) with thousands of rockets

PHOTO ON PAGE 12

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



HAMAS-ISRAEL ESCALATION

- ▶ Hamas launches '5,000 rockets'
- ▶ Gunbattles rage in southern Israel, militants take hostages
- ▶ UNSC to meet today
- ▶ West condemns attack, Iran congratulates Hamas
- ▶ Palestinians fear 'long-term' assault

MORE STORIES ON PAGE 7

- ▶ How the attack unfolded
- ▶ Why did Hamas attack Israel now?
- ▶ World reaction



Skipper Shakib Al Hasan embraces all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz as wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim joins them in celebration during Bangladesh's six-wicket victory over Afghanistan in their opening World Cup fixture at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamshala yesterday.

PHOTO: ICC



Next int'l aviation hub will be here

PM says at soft launch of HSIA's Terminal-3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka or Cox's Bazar airport will become the next international aviation hub due to favourable geographical location, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said at the soft launch of the iconic Terminal-3 of the capital's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

She partially opened the terminal, designed by celebrated architect Rohani Bahrin, by unveiling a plaque at the HSIA with the slogan "Connecting dreams to reality".

Architect Rohani, who was present at the soft launch, told the media, "The third terminal designed based on the six seasons of Bangladesh. The terminal was built with a mix of heritage and modernity."

Taken up at a cost of Tk 21,398 crore, the third terminal is one of the major mega projects of the Awami League government. It was finished around seven months ahead of schedule, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB).

Covering an area of 542,000 square metres, the third terminal

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



THIRD TERMINAL TO OPEN NEW HORIZON FOR OVERSEAS TRADE BI LOCAL COMPANIES DISPLAY STRENGTH OF GLOBAL STANDARDS BI

Big rise in 10 banks' bad loans

MD MEHEDI HASAN

The defaulted loans in 10 banks, including four state-run lenders, increased at an alarming rate in fiscal 2022-23, indicating their worsening financial health.

At the end of June, the ten lenders' bad loans stood at Tk 69,671 crore, which is 45 percent of the record Tk 156,039 crore of defaulted loans logged in by the banking sector. A year earlier, the ten banks' defaulted loans accounted for 38.2 percent of the sector's total.

ICB Islamic Bank, which was born out of the scam-riddled defunct Oriental Bank, has as much as 86.65 percent of its total disbursed credit defaulting as of June 30, up from 82.61 percent a year earlier, according to the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Tigers shrug off Afghan challenge

MAZHAR UDDIN from Dharamshala

A small but passionate group of Bangladesh fans turned Dharamshala into Mirpur yesterday with their hooting and cheering outside the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium, celebrating Bangladesh's comprehensive six-wicket win over Afghanistan.

It was the ideal start to the World Cup for skipper Shakib Al Hasan and his troops. It also extended Bangladesh's streak of winning their first match in the ODI World Cups to three.

Mehedi Hasan Miraz was the standout performer on the day as the all-rounder picked up three wickets, conceding just 25 runs from his nine overs. He then struck his third half-century in ODIs to set up Bangladesh's victory with 92 balls to spare, their biggest win in the mega event in terms of balls in hand.

It was a clinical show from the Tigers, which began with skipper Shakib winning the toss and asking Afghanistan to bat first.

Bangladesh took the risky call of going with five specialist bowlers and Mahmudullah as the sixth option, if needed. They were close to regretting this decision when Afghanistan got off to a solid start, courtesy of their openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran.

Shakib then stepped up to the plate and put the brakes on Afghanistan with a couple of strikes.

Afghanistan still looked on their way to a decent total till Gurbaz was in the middle. But once he got caught off Mustafizur Rahman for 47, the Afghan innings fell apart as they lost their last eight batters in the span of 44 runs.

Shakib did not hide his disappointment with the way they started the match, but was proud of the way his bowlers fought back.

"We didn't get the start we wanted. Everyone believed that once we got a wicket, we could get more. It wasn't easy, but I am very happy the way

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Shakib leads from the front

AL-AMIN

Before Bangladesh's opening World Cup match against Afghanistan, there was apprehension about how well Shakib Al Hasan would handle the pressure as a captain.

The champion all-rounder has passed the opening test with flying colours by leading his side from the front to a

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

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