

## Silence

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"I was walking back to the classroom after eating tiffin. I had only taken a few steps when I saw the plane crash right into it. Eleven students were inside. Usually, there are 40. It was a coaching class, so fewer were present. Two of my friends survived," he said.

His mother, Nargis Parvin, said her son was saved only by chance.

"Every day, coaching classes are held after regular lessons. He had just come out to eat. After washing his hands, we both saw the plane -- on fire. I told him, 'Look, the plane is burning.' Within a minute, it crashed into their classroom."

"He lived because he had stepped out. Many didn't. It's heartbreaking," she added.

By late morning, more than a thousand people had gathered on campus, including students, guardians, teachers, and local residents. Milestone students chanted slogans, demanding accountability, as additional police forces were deployed to control the swelling crowd and ensure order around the crash site.

At 10:30am, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul and Education Adviser Prof CR Abrar arrived at the school to inspect the site.

As they approached, groups of students surrounded them, chanting, "Fraud! Fraud!", "Why did my brother die?" and "We want answers from the administration!"

The protest chants rang out three times before the advisers were escorted to the conference room on the ground floor of College Building 5, where they met 5-7 student representatives for a closed door discussion.

Outside, hundreds continued their demonstration.

On the school field, HSC examinee Md Ratul Chowdhury, who lives in the hostel, described what he witnessed.

"We heard a loud noise and ran to see what happened. There was a huge fire. Students were being pulled out by breaking window grills," he said.

"Then the army came and cleared the area. Even in my nightmares, I never imagined a plane would crash into our college," said Ratul, who was scheduled to sit for his chemistry second paper exam yesterday, which was postponed.

Meanwhile, Milestone College Director Russell Talukder told The Daily Star that a help desk had been set up below building 1 to provide and collect information regarding the deceased and the injured.

"Teachers are stationed there to update and assist guardians. We are grieving and devastated. Many of our teachers and students have died. Many others are still in hospital receiving treatment," he added.

## SC verdict

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his district during the Liberation War.

The tribunal also sentenced Mobarak to life imprisonment for another war crime and acquitted him of three other charges.

On December 18, 2014, Mobarak filed an appeal through his lawyers with the apex court, challenging the ICT-1 verdict.

In an 82-page appeal, Mobarak sought acquittal of the two charges, in which he was found guilty and convicted. He also annexed documents of 780 pages along with the appeal.

The former AI leader also mentioned 77 grounds, for which, according to him, the court should consider acquitting him.



Boys play a game of football on a muddy field in Pakundia upazila of Kishoreganj. Despite the field's poor condition following days of rain, the joy on their faces remains undiminished. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TAFSILUL AZIZ

## Rest well little angels

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Lipi Begum, devastated, remembered her son's achievements: "He came first in all classes, got GPA 5 in every subject. Teachers loved him."

Tanvir was buried after the namaz-e-janaza at Andipara Government Primary School. The bright boy with ambitions far beyond his village now rests in the soil where his dreams once took root.

**'SHE WAS WAITING FOR ME IN HER CLASSROOM'**

Sumi Akter, the mother of Mehnaz Akter Humaira, 9, said, "She was just waiting in her classroom for me to pick her up."

Her daughter, a third-grade student, died on the spot as the aircraft crashed into her classroom at Milestone School.

Humaira's father, Delwar Hossain Rana, a lecturer in the Bengali department at the same institution, was seen kissing his daughter's coffin during the funeral in Sakhipur's Hataya Keranipara in Tangail.

"Everything happened before my wife's eyes," Delwar said. "She's now

unable to speak. How can I console her?"

Humaira, their only child, was buried at the family graveyard following a tearful janaza at Gabal Bazar.

Her grandfather, Abdul Bashed, wept inconsolably. "Grandpa used to be with me all the time. She'll never call me Grandpa again!"

**'MOM, WILL YOU STAY WITH ME TONIGHT?'**

Abdullah Shamim, a sixth-grade student at Milestone, was buried beside his father, Abdul Kalam Azad, in Shariatpur's Bhedarganj upazila.

His father had recently died in Saudi Arabia, where he had worked for years. The family returned to Bangladesh three years ago and had hoped to rebuild their lives.

At the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College, Abdullah Shamim asked his mother, Zulekha Begum, question: "Mom, will you stay with me at night?" Hours later, he passed away.

"My son used to press my feet and say, 'Paradise is under your feet, Mother,'"

Zulekha wept. "Now my son has gone to paradise himself."

Shamim's maternal uncle Saiful Islam condemned the authorities for allowing flight training over residential areas. "No government representative even came to visit us," he said. "We buried a child, and the silence was deafening."

**'HE DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL THAT DAY'**

In Barishal's Mehendiganj, a heartbreaking janaza was held for 12-year-old Samiul Karim, a seventh-grade student whose life was cut short in Monday's tragedy.

The funeral took place at the Bir Muktijoddha Mustafa Kamal School ground -- the same school where his mother, Reshma Begum, is a teacher.

Samiul's family had moved to Uttara after losing their ancestral home in Rukundi village to river erosion.

Just a day before the incident, Samiul had returned to Dhaka from a visit to his family home in Mehendiganj and Barishal.

"He didn't even want to go to school that day," said his uncle, Humayun Kabir.

"But the school authorities had asked him to submit his marksheets, so he went."

His father, Rezaul Karim Shamim, went to the school to pick him up. As they were walking just a short distance away, a burning fragment of the jet fell on Samiul.

"In front of his father's eyes, he caught fire and was fatally burned," said Humayun.

Relatives described Samiul as a bright and respectful child. "We should not lose anyone else like we lost Samiul," said family member Abu Jaher.

Overcome with grief, Samiul's father broke down during the funeral prayers, struggling to pray for his son's departed soul.

Samiul was buried in Deshkhagata village, beside his maternal grandfather's home, surrounded by heartbroken classmates and neighbours.

**'I CALLED HIM EINSTEIN'**

In Lakshmipur, grief has gripped Bashikpur village as 14-year-old Shayan

Yusuf, a seventh-grade student of Milestone School and College, died early yesterday from burns.

Shayan, son of AFM Yusuf, an assistant professor in Milestone's Chemistry Department, passed away at 3:30am while undergoing treatment at the burn

institute.

His body arrived in the village that afternoon. His grandmother Kamrun Nahar, upon hearing the ambulance, collapsed in grief, repeatedly crying, "Where is my precious one?"

At the funeral, Shayan's father broke down, telling mourners, "We won't live in this country anymore. Politicians have destroyed it. My son was brilliant. I called him Einstein. Why did this happen to us?"

Shayan's uncle recalled seeing a video of the boy, burnt but walking with his schoolbag before collapsing. His janaza was held after the Asif prayers; he was buried beside his grandfather Dr Maqsoodur Rahman.

Another victim, Afan Fayaz, also a seventh grader from Sonapur village in

Lakshmipur, was buried in Dhaka.

## QUIET RANGAMATI HILLS ALSO SHAKEN

In the hills of Rangamati's Rajasthani upazila, another family mourned quietly. Uky Ching Marma, 13, a seventh-grade student, had been critically burned in the crash. He died at 2:25am on Monday at the Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute in Dhaka.

His father, Usai Mong Marma, a teacher, and mother Daisy Marma, an assistant teacher in Bandarban, rushed to Dhaka upon hearing the news.

"We are bringing his body back. The cremation will be held on Wednesday," Usai told The Daily Star.

Uky's village, Collegepara in Bangalhali union, fell silent in mourning. UP Chairman Adomong Marma noted, "This has shaken the entire area. Everyone is grieving."

[Our correspondents from Tangail, Gazipur, Rangamati, Barishal and Noakhali contributed to this report]

## Dengue cases reach 18,000

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"Intermittent rain is highly favourable for the spread of dengue, which is already present across the country," said entomologist GM Saifur Rahman.

He said Aedes mosquitoes are more active during overcast or gloomy weather, which has been widespread recently. "During the monsoon, dengue cases can be up to nine times higher than in the dry season," he added.

Saifur urged people to take precautions such as wearing full-sleeve clothing, using mosquito nets, and regularly cleaning areas like rooftops to eliminate breeding sites.

He criticised the authorities for inadequate anti-mosquito drives. "They often fail to operate properly in infected areas, even in homes where cases are reported," he said.

Jahangirnagar University entomologist Prof Kabir Bashar predicted that dengue cases in August could be at least three times higher than in July, with a possible further rise in September.

He stressed the importance of controlling larvae and breeding sites. "When both mosquito populations and infected individuals increase at the same time, the disease spreads rapidly," he said.

Bashar called for targeted hotspot management around the homes of dengue patients to kill adult mosquitoes and prevent further breeding.

He also warned that hospitals can become transmission hotspots if Aedes mosquitoes bite infected patients and then others, and stressed the need for mosquito control in facilities where patients are being treated.

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## Hearing of Charge framing

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-- former BRUR proctor Shariful Islam, Amir, Sujan, Imran, Akash, Rafiul Hasan Rasel, and Anowar Pervez alias Appel -- were produced before the court.

They face charges of murder, attempted murder,

abettment, and complicity in crimes against humanity.

The tribunal also appointed six state defence counsels for the 24 accused who are on the run, as they did not appear in court despite notices being published in two national

newspapers.

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## Once a lifeline, now

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Many illegal structures have been built along the riverbank, especially near the municipality. Though there are laws to protect rivers, they are not being enforced.

Jamalpur Deputy Commissioner Hasina Begum said, "I am not aware of any embankment at the originating point of the river. I will look into the matter and take necessary action."

entity."

Sarishabari UNO Mohsen Uddin said steps would be taken to protect the river from pollution and illegal occupation.

## Why was

again in the future. We must remain cautious. All of you present here -- don't you want these questions answered too? Did I come up with them on my own? No, these are the people's concerns, the people's questions," he added.

In a brief speech at the event, Gayeshwar prayed for the students who lost their lives.

DHAKA WEDNESDAY JULY 23, 2025  
SRABAN 8, 1432 BS

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## Local residents halt substandard road work in Kurigram

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A road construction project in Kurigram's Ulipur municipality has come under scrutiny after allegations of irregularities, including reinforced cement concrete (RCC) casting without iron rods.

The 675-metre road is being constructed by contracting firm Messrs Mostafa Sons. The project is worth Tk 2.1 crore.

On Saturday night, residents in the Masterbari area of Ward-6 noticed suspicious activity at the site. Upon closer inspection, they found workers pouring RCC without using rods -- a violation of standard construction norms.

The locals halted the work on the spot.

Local Monjurul Haque said, "The workers were deliberately pouring concrete without using rods. When we realised what was happening, we intervened. They fled the scene. Later, we removed the ready mix that had already been poured."

Debashish Sarker, another resident, said, "In many sections, the RCC thickness was only 2.5 to 3 inches, instead of the required 4 inches. The cement to sand ratio was supposed to be 1:4, but it looked closer to 1:8. In a 20-foot stretch, there was clear evidence of concrete poured without any rods."

Assistant engineer Russell Mia, who was in charge of monitoring the project, said, "Casting without rods was a mistake. It happened unintentionally."

Executive engineer Mahbubul Alam said, "I was not present at the site... Some extra ready-mix was poured there. But it was later removed."

Contractor representative Golam Rabbani said the excess concrete had been dumped in that spot during the night, but it was removed after objections.