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## MILESTONE TRAGEDY

### Death toll 34 as another student dies

#### Commission formed to probe jet crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another student who sustained severe burns in the July 21 jet crash at Milestone School and College in the capital's Uttara died early yesterday.

Meanwhile, the government has formed a high-power commission to probe the crash and make recommendations to prevent such incidents in the future.

Shaheen Faravi Ayan, 14, a seventh grader, passed away around 1:45am at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, said Shawon Bin Rahman, a resident surgeon at the institute.

"He had 40 percent of his body burnt," he said.

The number of crash deaths at the institute has risen to 18.

The health ministry on Sunday revised the official death toll twice within six and a half hours, eventually confirming 33 deaths.

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In the wake of last week's harrowing jet crash at Milestone School & College in Uttara's Diabari, a counselling centre has been set up on campus to offer psychological support to children suffering from trauma. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Thailand and Cambodia agree on ceasefire

AFP, Putrajaya

Thailand and Cambodia's leaders agreed to an "unconditional" ceasefire yesterday, after five days of combat along their jungle-clad frontier that has killed at least 36 people.

Nearly 300,000 people have fled as the two sides fired artillery, rockets and guns in a battle over the long-disputed area, which is home to a smattering of ancient temples.

The flare-up was the deadliest since violence raged sporadically from 2008-2011 over the territory, claimed by both sides because of a vague demarcation made by Cambodia's French colonial administrators in 1907.

Reading a joint statement from the leaders of both countries after peace talks, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said they had agreed "an immediate and unconditional ceasefire" with effect from midnight Monday (1700 GMT).

"This is a vital first step towards de-escalation and the restoration of peace and security," he said at a press conference in Malaysia's administrative capital Putrajaya, flanked by Thai acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai and Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Manet.

Anwar said a meeting of military commanders from both sides would take place on Tuesday morning, before the countries' cross-border committee would meet in Cambodia on August 4.

As the deal was being announced, an AFP journalist in the Cambodian city of Samraong -- 17 kilometres (10 miles) from the fraught frontier -- reported hearing continuing artillery blasts.

But locals expressed relief that a truce had been struck.

"I am very happy with the ceasefire. This will let people go back home and children go back to school," 48-year-old Cambodian vendor Soeung Chhivling told AFP. "Please stop the clashes."

## No extortionist will be spared

### Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will show no leniency towards any extortionist regardless of their identity or influence, said Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury.

"No one will be spared, no matter how powerful or influential they are, or what identity they claim -- no extortionist will be given immunity," he told reporters yesterday at the secretariat following a meeting of the Law and Order Core Committee.

On July 26, police arrested five individuals, including leaders of the Students Against Discrimination platform, on extortion charges in Dhaka.

The group, identifying themselves as SAD members, went to the residence of former Awami League lawmaker Shammim Ahmed and demanded Tk 50 lakh.

"We didn't let the extortionist in Gulshan walk free," he said, adding that the crackdown was part of a broader combing operation against extortion and criminal networks.

The government has also intensified its efforts to curb the spread of narcotics.

"Drugs have spread into every corner of our society -- we are now focusing on how to stop this."



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News of SAD  
coordinators'  
arrest painful  
Says Fakhrul  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

B N P  
Secretary  
General  
Mirza  
Fakhrul  
Islam  
Alamgir  
yesterday said he was  
saddened to see the arrest  
of members from Students  
Against Discrimination on  
extortion charges in the  
capital.

"I turned blue with  
sorrow when I opened the  
newspaper. I saw that five  
coordinators had been  
arrested by police for  
allegedly extorting Tk 50  
lakh from the residence of  
a former lawmaker. Is this  
the outcome we had hoped  
for? Is this what the people  
of Bangladesh wanted?" he  
said.

"If such an incident  
can happen so soon, even  
before a year has passed,  
what does that say about  
our future? I say this  
because the entire nation is  
looking to them..." Fakhrul  
added.

The BNP leader  
made the remarks while  
inaugurating a graffiti  
campaign by the party's

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## Israeli rights groups call Gaza campaign 'genocide'

At least 55 Palestinians killed, including 17 waiting for aid

AGENCIES

Rights groups B'Tselem and Physicians for Human Rights Israel said on Monday that they had concluded the war in Gaza amounts to "genocide" against Palestinians, a first for Israeli NGOs.

Both organisations are frequent critics of Israeli government policies, but the language in their reports issued on Monday was their most stark yet.

"Nothing prepares you for the realisation that you are part of a society committing genocide. This is a deeply painful moment for us," B'Tselem executive director Yuli Novak told a news conference unveiling the two reports.

"As Israelis and Palestinians who live here and witness the reality every day, we have a duty to speak the truth as clearly as possible," she said.

"Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinians."

Since October 7, 2023, Israeli assault has left much of the Gaza Strip, home to more than two million Palestinians, in ruins, and according to the Gaza's health ministry has killed at least 59,821 people, most of them civilians.

All Gazans have been driven from their homes at least once since the start of the war, and UN

agencies warn that residents face a growing threat of famine and malnutrition.

The International Court of Justice, in an interim ruling in early 2024 in a case lodged by South Africa, found it "plausible" that the Israeli offensive had violated the UN Genocide Convention.

The Israeli government, backed by the United States, fiercely denies the charge and says it is fighting to defeat Hamas and to bring back Israeli hostages still held in Gaza.

The reports from B'Tselem -- one of Israel's best-known rights groups -- and Physicians for Human Rights Israel argue that the war's objectives go further.

B'Tselem's report cites statements from senior politicians to illustrate that Israel "is taking coordinated action to intentionally destroy Palestinian society in the Gaza Strip".

Physicians for Human Rights Israel's report documents what the group says is "the deliberate and systematic destruction of Gaza's healthcare system".

On the ground, truckloads of food reached hungry Gazans yesterday after Israel promised to open secure aid routes, but humanitarian agencies warned vast amounts more were

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'Without the  
uprising, you  
wouldn't have  
dreamt of polls'

**Nahid tells political  
parties, demands justice,  
reforms before election**

STAR REPORT

Political parties would not have dreamt of an election had there been no mass uprising on August 5, said Nahid Islam, convener of National Citizen Party (NCP).

"Under fascist Hasina, you would have had to wait another four years for an election," he said at a street rally yesterday organised as part of its monthlong programme styled 'Road March to Build the Nation' at Faujdar intersection in Jamalpur town.

Nahid's comments came in reference to the accusations made by a few political parties that the NCP is attempting to delay the national election.

"We want justice for all the crimes committed by the previous regime, including for massacre -- we want reform of state structures, and we want elections too."

The students and people have toppled the fascist government and ushered in the birth of a new

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Just outside the outpatient gate of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, auto-rickshaws hog almost the entire width of the Secretariat Road. They are blocking traffic, causing congestion, and obstructing emergency access to the hospital. This photo was taken near the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## ATTACK OVER FB POST Hindu families living in fear in Rangpur's Gangachara

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The Hindu community in Aldadpur village of Rangpur's Gangachara upazila is living in fear after several homes were vandalised by people protesting over an alleged Facebook post hurting religious sentiment.

Police said 12 houses were attacked while the locals put the number at 20 and the Upazila Nirbahi Officer at 15.

Army personnel and additional police have been deployed in the area to prevent further violence, said Al Emran, officer in charge of Gangachara Model Police Station.

According to locals and police, Ranjan Roy, 21, a resident of the village and a student of Rangpur Polytechnic Institute, allegedly uploaded a Facebook post deemed hurtful to religious sentiment.

Tensions had been rising since Saturday noon as the news spread, the OC said quoting locals.

A group of people vandalised some houses in the neighbourhood around

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