

## Civilian plane crash kills 11 in France

AFP, Tomblaine

A civilian aircraft carrying skydivers crashed near the eastern French town of Tomblaine yesterday, killing all 11 people on board, local authorities said, in one of France's deadliest light aircraft accidents.

The crash killed five instructors, five students, and the pilot, said Yves Seguy, the prefect of the eastern department of Meurthe-et-Moselle.

"There were no bystanders among the victims," he added, speaking at a press conference.

The aircraft, registered in Germany, crashed in a grassy area near the runway of the Nancy-Essey aerodrome, close to a residential area and two roads, an AFP journalist reported.

The cause of the incident was not immediately clear.

Medical and psychological support teams were caring for relatives of the victims who were present at the airfield, as well as other witnesses.

A technical investigation had been opened, said Amaury Lacote, deputy public prosecutor in the eastern city of Nancy.



**Japan's Self-Defense Forces' Type 16 Maneuver Combat Vehicle fires in a joint live-fire drill with US Marines during the annual Resolute Dragon exercises in Yufu, Oita Prefecture, Japan, yesterday.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Iraq arrests 47 officials in anti-graft campaign

AFP, Baghdad

Iraqi authorities arrested 47 officials, including members of parliament, yesterday as part of an anti-graft campaign in the corruption-plagued country, state media reported.

Iraq's new prime minister, Ali al-Zaidi, who recently took office with the blessing of the United States, has made two main vows: to fight corruption and to ensure a state monopoly on weapons.

His anti-graft raids come before an expected visit next month to Washington, where he hopes to attract US investment and is expected to renew his promise to ensure pro-Iran armed groups hand over their weapons.

Iraq's news agency INA quoted senior officials as saying that 47 suspects were "arrested on corruption charges," including members of parliament and other officials, with at least one from the oil ministry.

The round-up began early yesterday when Iraqi security forces, primarily from anti-terrorism units, raided Baghdad's fortified Green Zone and another neighbourhood in the capital.

The Green Zone houses the US embassy and other diplomatic missions, as well as international institutions and government offices. High-ranking officials and politicians also live there.

Video footage shared on local Telegram channels showed security forces in heavy armoured vehicles in the Green Zone, including a clip of them inside a compound and, in one instance, inside a house.

## Full raise in basic pay likely from next month

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Under the two-year option, the employee's basic salary would rise in one phase from Tk 10,000 to Tk 20,000 in the first year, with the enhanced allowances taking effect in the second year.

However, the Finance Division found that implementing the basic salary increase in two phases and the allowances in the third phase could create technical complications in the Integrated Budget and Accounting System (iBAS+).

It therefore recommended implementing the entire increase in basic salary at once, while introducing the revised allowances in the second phase.

"The final decision depends on the prime minister's approval," a finance ministry official said, adding that the gazette is expected to be issued by mid-July or the following week.

The committee is also expected to recommend a 100 percent or slightly lower increase in basic salaries for employees in grades 1 to 10, and an average increase of around 130 percent

for those in grades 11 to 20.

Government employees currently receive 10 percent dearness allowance and 5 percent annual increment on their basic salaries. These would be adjusted into the hiked salaries under the new pay scale, finance ministry officials said.

The proposed budget for fiscal 2026-27 has earmarked Tk 44,000 crore for partial implementation of the new pay structure.

In his budget speech, Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury announced that the new pay scale would take effect from July 1, although he did not spell out how it would be implemented.

"We are announcing the phased implementation of a new pay structure for government employees from July 1, 2026," he said, noting that public servants had remained under the same pay structure for the past 11 years despite a sharp rise in living costs due to inflation.

Unlike previous pay revisions, the budget does not show a separate increase under the salary and allowances

head.

Finance ministry officials said the allocation has instead been incorporated under the Net Public Service head, where spending has increased by Tk 54,572 crore from the revised allocation for the current fiscal year to Tk 1,41,444 crore for 2026-27 fiscal year.

According to the officials, the Tk 44,000 crore allocation will finance salary adjustments for government employees, pensioners, and MPO-listed teachers and staff, depending on the pace of implementation.

The Ninth Pay Commission recommended increases in basic salaries ranging from 100 percent to 142 percent, along with substantial increases in other benefits.

The Eighth National Pay Scale, introduced in 2015, was also implemented in two phases, with revised basic salaries taking effect first and revised allowances following a year later.

The government currently spends around Tk 1,31,000 crore annually on salaries and pensions for about 14 lakh employees and 9 lakh pensioners.

20 minutes as Japan secured their first-ever victory over Brazil after 14 previous meetings.

"Perhaps... they will be even more motivated," Japan manager Hajime Moriyasu said.

That famous comeback was no fluke. Moriyasu's side have again showcased their resilience in this tournament, recovering from behind twice to earn a 2-2 draw with the Netherlands before thrashing Tunisia 4-0 and then holding Sweden to a 1-1 draw.

Japan have already scored seven goals at this World Cup – their highest tally in a single edition – underlining that they are unlikely to abandon their proactive style against one of the tournament favourites.

"We will be playing against a Brazil side that is very keen to win. I'm looking forward to it," Moriyasu said, making no attempt to hide his ambition of upsetting Brazil once again.

For Brazil, the contest is about far more than revenge. It is an opportunity to show that the steady progress made throughout the group stage can be carried into the knockout rounds. Against the toughest opposition they have faced so far, the Selecao now have the chance to prove they are finally beginning to resemble genuine World Cup contenders once again.

## Brazil to face toughest test yet

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Brazil's pursuit of a record-extending sixth World Cup title began in underwhelming fashion with a 1-1 draw against Morocco. However, convincing 3-0 victories over Haiti and Scotland have restored belief and suggested that Ancelotti's side are steadily rediscovering their identity.

There has been a clear pattern to Brazil's campaign. With every match, they have looked sharper, more cohesive and increasingly confident. Their third goal against Scotland perhaps offered the clearest glimpse yet of the trademark Samba football that defined the country's most successful generations.

Bruno Guimarães controlled the ball with one swift movement to wrong-foot his marker before threading a perfectly weighted pass to Matheus Cunha, whom he had spotted only in his peripheral vision. The Manchester United forward did the rest, calmly finishing the move to cap one of Brazil's best passages of play in the tournament.

That is exactly the level Ancelotti and Brazil's supporters will hope the Selecao can resume from against Japan, with an even stronger touch of Joga Bonito at Houston Stadium.

The transformation from the side that stumbled against Morocco has been evident across the pitch.

## Off the bench, Messi still steals the show

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eventually make the game his own. It was exactly what the Argentine faithful – and football fans everywhere – had hoped to see.

As Messi warmed up on the touchline, he watched Argentina, who had taken a comfortable two-goal lead before the break, concede their first goal of the tournament. It seemed he had already decided to restore order.

He did exactly that in the 80th minute, restoring Argentina's two-goal cushion in trademark fashion. After winning a freekick himself with a quick turn that defenders simply could not handle – a reminder that, even at 39, he still possesses the agility that defined his younger years – Messi stepped up from around 25 yards on the left side of the pitch.

It was not one of his trademark top-corner curlers. Instead, it was a goal born of intelligence as much as technique.

Jordan's wall barely covered the goal, with two Argentine players positioned alongside it. Messi cleverly used them to obstruct the goalkeeper's view before drilling a low strike around the wall and beyond the keeper.

The goal carried him to yet another milestone. Messi became the first player to score in seven consecutive World Cup matches, surpassing the

record he had shared with France's Just Fontaine and Brazil's Jairzinho.

"It's a little bit of an uncomfortable situation when people ask me that and I don't know what to say," Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni admitted, searching for words to describe a player who continues to defy description.

Messi also leads the scoring charts at this tournament with six goals and stands alone atop the all-time World Cup scoring list with 19.

Yet Scaloni insisted the records mean little to his captain.

"He doesn't think so much about the numbers that people are talking about. The only word that comes to mind is that I'm surprised," Scaloni said.

For Messi and Argentina, the Jordan game gave the perfect opportunity to test their bench strength.

Scaloni made nine changes to the side that defeated Austria 2-0, with only goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez and striker Lautaro Martinez retaining their places.

"Today, he could've played 90 minutes and, without undermining our opponent, he wanted his teammates to have time on the pitch and to save himself for what's coming up," Scaloni explained.

For Messi, extending his lead in the Golden Boot race clearly remains secondary to Argentina's bigger

objective, even with Kylian Mbappe, Ousmane Dembele, Vinicius Junior and Erling Haaland all sitting just two goals behind him.

Much to the relief of Argentina's supporters, however, they had already shown before Messi's introduction that they are no longer solely reliant on their captain for goals. Giovanni Lo Celso opened the scoring in the 19th minute with a superb left-footed freekick from just outside the penalty area before Lautaro Martinez doubled the lead from the penalty spot in the 30th minute.

Those strikes were Argentina's first goals of the tournament scored by players other than Messi.

Now, with their squad depth tested and concerns over their dependence on their captain eased, the defending champions head into the knockout stage full of confidence. Argentina, who have arguably landed the most favourable path, will face Cape Verde in the Round of 32.

The tournament debutants may have held Spain and Uruguay to draws before eliminating the latter to progress from their group, but with Messi leading the way and Argentina having seemingly dispelled their biggest concerns, the defending champions look increasingly well placed to go all the way once again.

## Ex-DMP chief, 2 others to die

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sub-inspector of Rampura Police Outpost Chanchal Chandra Sarkar received 20 years in prison.

Only Chanchal, who is in custody, was present in the dock. Habibur and the three others remain absconding.

Habibur, Rashedul and Mashiur were convicted on all three charges, while Tarikul and Chanchal were found guilty only on the second charge, relating to the shooting of 18-year-old Amir Hossain.

Footage of Amir hanging from the cornice of an under-construction building while two policemen appeared to fire at him from close range went viral on social media after he was critically injured.

In another incident, Md Nadim Hossain was shot dead around noon during police action.

The third involved seven-year-old Basit Khan Musa, who was shot later that afternoon. The bullet passed through the child's head before striking and killing his grandmother, Maya Islam. Musa survived after treatment, but Maya succumbed to her injuries.

The tribunal found the accused guilty of murder, attempted murder, conspiracy, complicity, facilitation, abetment, incitement, failure to prevent or punish crimes, and command responsibility under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973.

"We considered all the facts, circumstances and evidence to determine whether the victims were killed or grievously injured by police

gunfire during the July movement, particularly on July 19, 2024. We have also determined the liabilities of the accused," Tribunal Chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder said while delivering the verdict.

He said former DMP commissioner Habibur had ordered subordinate police personnel over wireless to "use maximum force".

Habibur had earlier been sentenced to death in another crimes against humanity case over the killing of six people in Chankharpul on August 5, 2024.

The tribunal found that former additional deputy commissioner Rashedul was present at the scene, monitoring, directing and supervising the killings, while officer-in-charge Mashiur led and actively participated in the atrocities. It also found that Tarikul and Chanchal opened fire on Amir while he clung to the building's ledge.

"After considering all the facts, circumstances and the evidence before the tribunal, we have found all of them guilty," the tribunal chairman said.

This is the fifth verdict delivered by the ICT and the third by ICT-1 over atrocities committed during the July 2024 uprising, which, according to the UN Human Rights Office, left up to 1,400 people dead and thousands injured, and culminated in the ouster of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5 that year.

Talking to The Daily Star, Musa's father, Md Mostafizur Rahman, said, "I am satisfied with the verdict.

## Police take steps to improve law and order

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range of areas – from crime prevention to intelligence gathering to inter-agency coordination," said the official.

Recovery of illegal firearms and enhancement of border security are also on the priority list.

The move comes at a time when law enforcement agencies are grappling with a wave of violent incidents across the country.

Recent killings linked to local criminal networks, rising muggings on city streets, attacks on law enforcers during drives, and incidents of mob violence have fostered a climate of insecurity.

Between September 2024 and May this year, at least 597 murder cases were filed with police stations in the Dhaka metropolitan area. Of those, 11 were linked to turf wars among criminal gangs. Four of the dead were top-listed criminals, showPHQ data.

After assuming power in February, the BNP government said that improving law and order was its top priority. However, the situation has yet to improve to the expected level after three months.

PHQ data show that 915 murder cases were recorded countrywide in the last three months. During the same period in 2025, the number of such cases was 993, which included 226 cases filed over past incidents.

On June 12, top criminal Yeasin Khan, alias Kailla Palash, was shot in broad daylight in the capital's Rampura area. He later died from his wounds. Two individuals have been arrested but the shooter remains at large.

Earlier, another top criminal, Khandokar Nayeem Ahmed Titon, was killed by armed assailants near Dhaka University's Shahnewaz Hostel on April 28. Investigators are still clueless about the motive even one

and a half months after the killing. No arrests have been made yet.

When contacted, Additional Inspector General (AIG) Khandaker Rafiqul Islam said that they held a meeting to review key challenges and discuss capacity enhancement.

"We are working to prepare a set of recommendations for enhancing professionalism," he said, adding that upon finalisation, the proposals would be submitted to higher authorities.

However, he declined to comment on the activities of the subcommittees.

### SUBCOMMITTEES

A seven-member subcommittee, led by DIG Abu Sufian of the Crime Management Division at the PHQ, is reviewing the overall law and order situation across the country. It will assess crime trends, organised crime networks, and gang activities, according to sources. It held its first meeting on June 22.

Another subcommittee has been tasked with developing proposals to increase manpower and strengthen operational capacity for improved crime control and public safety.

To address the growing threat of cybercrimes, fraud, and online harassment, a subcommittee, headed by the DIG of the CID Cyber Police Centre, has been formed.

It will make recommendations regarding specialised forensic tests and the enhancement of technological capacity to investigate cyber-related offences and financial crimes.

Seeking anonymity, one of its members told this correspondent that they are now working in full swing.

A five-member committee has been tasked with developing an instant response mechanism and early warning system to deal with political violence, extremism, and

We got the justice we expected for the killing of my mother and the grievous injuries suffered by my son."

Chanchal's lawyer, Sarwar Jahan Nippon, said they would appeal to the Appellate Division.

His brother, Utpal Chandra Sarkar, claimed Chanchal was not at the scene.

"He was on duty at the BTV building in Rampura. No firearms or ammunition were issued to my brother that day. Those who were issued firearms were not made accused in the case. We have been victimised because we are members of a minority community," he said.

Chief Prosecutor Md Aminul Islam said the prosecution was "apparently satisfied" with the verdict and that the victims' families had received justice. He added that Interpol's assistance would be sought to arrest the four absconding convicts.

The tribunal's investigation agency submitted its report to the prosecution on July 31 last year. Formal charges were filed on August 7 and framed on September 18.

The trial began on October 23, with 14 prosecution witnesses testifying. Chanchal was the sole defence witness. Closing arguments concluded on February 3.

Although the tribunal had initially fixed March 4 for delivering the verdict, it deferred the announcement after the prosecution submitted a petition along with a video recording in which Chanchal allegedly admitted his involvement.

sudden deterioration in law and order.

Besides, a six-member committee has been formed to determine ways of improving service delivery through digital transformation. It will make recommendations on smart tracking systems, body-worn cameras, online general diaries, and other technology-driven policing tools.

Another committee will devise a strategy to recover illegal firearms, combat drug and human trafficking, and strengthen border security.

The PHQ also set up two additional committees – one focused on designing a modern training framework with an emphasis on human rights, accountability, and ethics, and the other aimed at expanding community policing to improve cooperation between law enforcement agencies, local representatives, and citizens.

Meanwhile, the Special Branch of police has been assigned to design mechanisms to improve coordination among different units and agencies.

It will also propose ways to strengthen the intelligence network and information-sharing structure.

Talking to this newspaper, former IGP Asrafur Huda said that law enforcement agencies need to regularly review policing strategies and assess how their operations can be made more effective.

"It is a continuous process. There is always a need to see how our activities can be further strengthened and made more effective.

"Since there have been some concerns regarding law and order recently, there is certainly a need to review these issues again," he said, adding that the latest move is a timely initiative given the current circumstances.