

Israeli strike kills 18 members of a family in Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH (Gaza Strip), Aug. 17 (AP)

AS MEDIATORS expressed optimism for an imminent cease-fire deal between Israel and Hamas, violence raged on Saturday in the Gaza Strip, where an Israeli airstrike killed at least 18 people, all from the same family. The attack came days after the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza announced the death toll surpassed 40,000 in the 10-month-old war, and hours after officials from US, Egypt and Qatar ended two days of cease-fire talks with a message of hope that a deal could be reached.

A joint statement from the mediators said a proposal to bridge the gaps between Israel and Hamas was presented and they expected to work out the details of how to implement the possible deal next week in Cairo. The mediation efforts are aimed not just at securing the release of scores of Israeli hostages and stopping the fight-

ing that has devastated Gaza, where aid and health workers fear a possible polio outbreak. They are also aimed at calming regional tensions that have threatened to explode into a broader war if Iran and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon attack Israel in retaliation for the recent killings of top militant leaders.

Saturday's airstrike in Gaza hit a house and adjacent warehouse sheltering displaced people at the entrance to Zawaida town, according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah, where casualties were taken. AP reporter there counted the dead. Among those killed was Sami Jawad al-Ejlah, a wholesaler who coordinated with the Israeli military to bring meat and fish to Gaza. The dead also included his two wives, 11 of their children ages 2 to 22, the children's grandmother and three other relatives, according to a list provided by the hospital.

Interim Govt in B'desh committed to hold free and fair elections: Yunus

DHAKA, Aug 17 (PTI)

THE caretaker Government in Bangladesh is committed to ensuring a transition to inclusive and pluralistic democracy and creating an environment in which "free, fair and participatory elections" can be held, its head Mohammad Yunus assured the international community on Saturday.

Yunus, the Chief Advisor of the interim government, said while addressing the third Voice of Global South Summit which was hosted by India in a virtual format.

"You all are aware that Bangladesh witnessed a 'Second Revolution' on 5th August 2024, through a mass

uprising spearheaded by our valiant students and joined by the masses," the 84-year-old Nobel laureate said, referring to the political turmoil in his country and the resignation of prime minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5.

Noting that the current interim Government led by him was sworn in on August 8, Yunus said, "Our Government is committed to ensuring a transition to inclusive and pluralistic democracy and creating an environment in which free, fair and participatory elections can be held."

Yunus assumed charge of the interim government amid ongoing violence and vandalism, including against the minorities.

Solutions did not come from multilateral bodies when global order faced critical challenges: EAM

NEW DELHI, Aug 17 (PTI)

INDIA on Saturday once again strongly pitched for reforms of key multilateral institutions, saying it is an “undeniable” fact that when the global order faced “critical challenges”, solutions did not emerge from them.

In his address at the third India-hosted virtual Voice of the Global South Summit, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar also called for facilitating low-cost financing and critical technologies to developing countries.

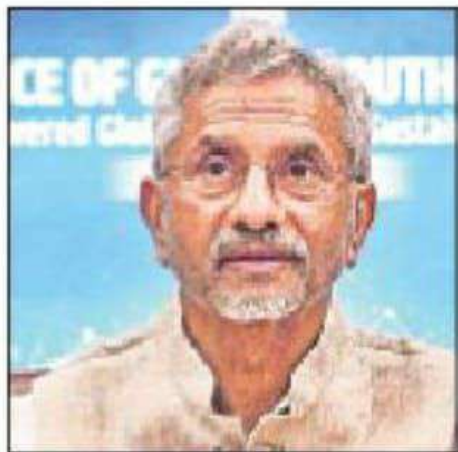
“It is an undeniable fact that even as the global order faced critical challenges, solutions did not emerge from the multilateral domain,” he

said, calling for revitalising multilateralism.

“The reason is both the obsolescence and the polarisation of multilateral organisations,” he said, speaking at the foreign Ministers’ session of the summit.

“Here too, India has argued for reformed multilateralism and sought reforms of Multilateral Development Banks through the G20. As a group, we need to press home our case,” Jaishankar said.

India has been consistently pressing for reforms of multilateral institutions, including the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, arguing that they must reflect the realities of the current world.



IAF, Army carry out first-ever Aarogya Maitri Cube para-drop

NEW DELHI, Aug 17 (IANS)

THE INDIAN Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Army jointly executed a first-ever para-drop operation, delivering the Aarogya Maitri Health Cube at a high-altitude location near 15,000 feet, said the Ministry of Defence on Saturday.

“These trauma care cubes were indigenously developed under Project BHISHM (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita and Maitri). The operation was conducted in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of providing critical supplies to Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) affected areas,”

as per the Ministry.

The IAF employed its advanced tactical transport aircraft C-130J Super Hercules to airlift and precisely para-drop the cube while the Indian Army’s Para Brigade, renowned for its operational expertise, ensured the successful deployment using advanced precision drop equipment.

This operation highlighted the capability of specialised military assets to support HADR missions in remote and mountainous regions, demonstrating the effectiveness and synergy between the Armed Forces in providing rapid and efficient humanitarian assistance.

Persecution of minorities in B'desh Hindus across Australia hold rallies, call for global action

Nearly 650 killed in B'desh violence: UN

DHAKA/GENEVA, Aug 17 (PTI)

NEARLY 650 people have been killed in the recent unrest in Bangladesh between July 16 and August 11, the UN Human Rights Office has said in a preliminary report, suggesting a thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into reports of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions.

According to the 10-page report titled "Preliminary Analysis of Recent Protests and Unrest in Bangladesh", nearly 400 deaths were reported between July 16 and August 4 while around 250 people were reportedly killed following the new wave of protests between August 5 and 6, leading to the

ouster of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The available public reports by media and the protest movement itself claimed that between July 16 and August 11, more than 600 people were killed due to the wave of violence following the Anti-Discriminatory Student demonstrations. The number of reported killings in revenge attacks since that time remains to be determined, the report, released on Friday in Geneva, said. Several deaths were reported between August 7 and 11, including those who died while undergoing medical treatment for injuries sustained in the violence, the UNHCR report suggested.

voices against the persecution of Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh, according to a statement by 'Hindus of Australia' on X.

Despite the unfavourable weather, the spirit of the Hindu community in Melbourne remained unshaken, everyone showed solidarity with Bangladeshi Hindus—a powerful display of unity and resilience, informed 'Hindus of Australia' on X. Similarly, a rally in Sydney emphasised these sentiments, while an earlier rally in Brisbane highlighted the dangers faced by the Hindu

community in Bangladesh.

'Hindus of Australia' on X, appreciated the bravery of those attending the rally despite the potential risks their families might face back home due to their absence.

The Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Oikya Parishad had sent an 'open letter' to Chief Adviser of the Interim Government of Bangladesh Muhammad Yunus, expressing "profound sorrow and concern" over a particular group's "unprecedented violence" against the minorities.

MELBOURNE, Aug 17 (IANS)

THE Hindu community held rallies across Australia on Saturday, calling for global awareness and action against ongoing attacks on Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh.

The rallies took place in several cities, including Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane, and saw participation from people of all ages, from children to the elderly.

In Melbourne, a large group of Hindus gathered at Treasury Gardens, near the Victorian Parliament House, to raise their