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Students hold placards and pictures of a victim as they protest July 22, 2025, demanding the actual number of the death toll after an air force training aircraft crashed into a building belonging to Milestone School and College in Dhaka, Bangladesh July 21. (OSV News/Reuters/Mohammad Ponir Hossain)



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Dhaka, Bangladesh — July 23, 2025
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In Bangladesh, grief and shock gripped the capital, Dhaka, after a military jet crashed into Milestone School and College on July 21, killing at least 31 and injuring more than 170.

Most of the victims were students who were just leaving class when the F-7 fighter slammed into the building, sparking a deadly fire.

Pope Leo XIV said he was "deeply saddened" to learn of "the loss of life" caused by the air force jet crash in Bangladesh.

The pope said in a July 22 telegram that he "entrusts the deceased to the merciful love of the Almighty" and was also "praying that their families and friends may be consoled in their grief, and for the healing and comfort of the injured."

The telegram, signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican's secretary of state, said, "The Holy Father invokes upon the entire school community and all affected by this tragedy the divine blessings of peace and strength."

After the crash, a portion of the school caught fire, killing dozens. Of the more than 170 injured, at least 76 people were undergoing treatment in various hospitals in Dhaka, local health authorities said.

A sense of grief and desperation engulfed Dhaka's Uttara district as anguished families searched desperately for their loved ones, the local Daily Star newspaper reported.

Parents rushed between the crash site, hospitals and morgues in a frantic attempt to locate their children, the paper said.

In a July 22 letter to the Bangladesh government, Archbishop Kevin Randall, apostolic nuncio to Dhaka, expressed "profound sorrow" upon learning of the tragic plane crash, which resulted "in the loss of precious lives, the majority of whom were children, and injury to others."

The nuncio offered his condolences to "the bereaved families and to the entire Nation," offering "prayers and spiritual closeness."

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"May the Almighty grant eternal rest to the departed, especially the young lives so suddenly taken, healing to the injured, and strength and consolation to all who are affected by this painful tragedy," Randall said.

One of the parents who was on his way to pick up his child from school July 21 when the plane crashed told OSV News that luckily, he found his child unharmed.

Sharif Ahmed told OSV News that it was "a terrifying moment" that he "cannot express in words."

"Children were coming out of the school with their bodies on fire, crying all around, parents were running around like crazy. I was also looking for my son. But when I found my son unharmed, he was silent for at least 10 minutes, unable to say anything out of fear," Ahmed told OSV News.

The Bangladesh bishops' conference also expressed condolences in a statement, urging the government to provide full support for the treatment of the injured and those who lost loved ones. Bishop Ponen Kubi, the conference's secretary general, called for prayers and urged authorities to take measures to prevent such incidents in the future, according to the Daily Star.

While over two dozen victims remain hospitalized in serious condition, students took to the streets to protest. Hundreds of students protested July 22 near the site of the crash demanding accountability, compensation for victims' families and the halt of training flights.