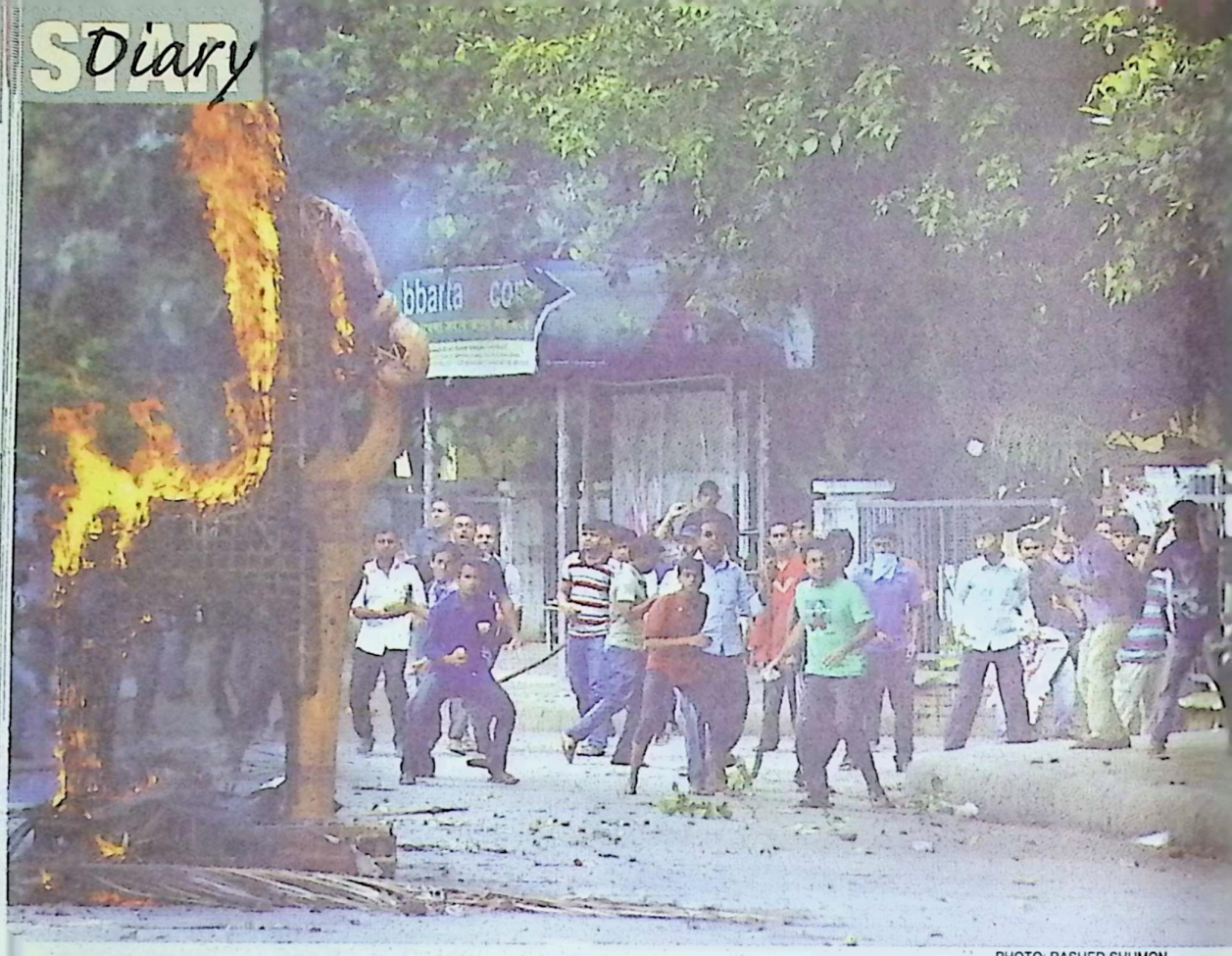


PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

QUOTA STRATEGY

Over 160 million people of Bangladesh live with no social security. A large segment of fresh graduates are relegated to a never-ending list of the unemployed every year. The government, instead of offering a long-run solution to tackle the nagging issue of unemployment, introduced a 55 percent quota for minorities in the public job sector. As a result, qualified youngsters are deprived of jobs that should rightfully be theirs. As we recently witnessed at the 34th preliminary exams of the Bangladesh Civil Services (BCS), a quota holding applicant needs only 55 percent to pass the written exams while a regular student needs at least 78 percent to pass. If this is justice, what would be injustice? I do no oppose the quota system but there should be a limit to everything. A 55 percent quota is unacceptable. It is high time for students to raise their voices against this practice.

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For the Sake of the Daily Bread

On my way home one day, I was stuck in traffic in a bus at Shahbagh. It was raining heavily and we were waiting for the traffic to move. Street hawkers took advantage of the dire situation and started marketing their products. One passenger called out from our bus to a popcorn vendor. The vendor gave him the packet of popcorn through the buss window and was waiting for his payment when the bus began to move abruptly. The vendor ran for his payment and as was expected, slipped and fell on the wet road. I was so shocked by all this that I shouted at the drive to stop and allow the poor man to get his payment. He did so in an annoyed, angry manner. When the vendor was paid by the buyer, I asked them both to be careful when trading on busy streets. Safety can never be compromised for anything.

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