



With the demand for withdrawal of a police case, anti-quota demonstrators stage a rally on Dhaka University campus yesterday. On Wednesday night, police filed the case against 700 to 800 unnamed people who were demonstrating that day for reform in the existing quota system in all public service recruitments. They were accused of attempting to kill police officers and vandalising vehicles during their demonstration.

Foyzur confesses to attack on Prof Zafar Iqbal
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Sylhet court yesterday recorded the confessional statement of the lone attacker in a case filed for attacking Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust).

Haridas Thakur, a metropolitan magistrate in Sylhet, recorded the statement of Foyzur Hasan under section 164, said Abdul Wahab, additional deputy commissioner (media) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

He was first produced before Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court after his 10-day remand ended and later on the court sent him to Haridas Thakur's court, the ADC said.

Quoting the statement, he said Foyzur admitted that he carried out the attack to kill the professor. Officer-in-Charge of Jalalabad Police Station Shafiqur Rahman, also investigation officer of the case, said Foyzur's brother Enamul Hasan will be produced before the court today after an eight-day remand.

On March 3, Foyzur, a suspected Islamist, attacked Prof Iqbal with a knife at the Mukto Mancha on Sust campus. Caught by students immediately, Foyzur was beaten up and handed over to the Rapid Action Battalion. On March 8, after a five-day stay at hospital, he was placed on remand for 10 days.

His father Atiqur Rahman, mother Minara Begum and uncle Fozlur Rahman are in jail after completing different periods of remand.

Anti-quota demos held across the country

DU CORRESPONDENT

Students and job aspirants demanding reformation of the existing quota system yesterday staged demonstrations at different colleges and universities across the country and demanded the withdrawal of the case filed against at least 700 demonstrators on March 14.

At Dhaka University, more than 500 students, mostly from DU, from various educational institutions and job seekers brought out a procession from the DU Central Library around 10:30am.

During the demonstration they announced a five-point demand that includes lowering the quota to 10 percent from 56 percent, recruitment of jobseekers to vacant posts on the basis of merit if eligible candidates are not found under quota, stopping of special recruitment tests for quota candidates and ensuring of a unified age limit for all jobseekers.

The procession marched through roads in Nilkhel and Shahbagh areas and ended at Raja Memorial Sculpture on the campus where they later held a rally.

Coordinator of the movement, Hasan Al Mamun, told The Daily Star that police foiled their programme on March 14 without any provocation.

He said the movement is a logical one and it is not against any person, any group or any organisation.

The quota system was introduced by an executive order in 1972 and was amended several times. Currently, 44 percent recruitment is done on merit and the remaining 56 percent on privilege allocated under various quotas.

Of the 56 percent under quotas, 30 percent are kept for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren, 10 percent for women, 10 percent for people of districts lagging behind, 5 percent for people from indigenous communities, and one percent is reserved for the physically challenged.

Haider Ali Soikat, a job seeker, held the existing quota system responsible for the unemployment problem in the country.

"Over half of the posts were reserved under different quotas, resulting in a larger

number of people having to compete for the rest of the posts..." he said adding that due to such situation, their future is gripped by uncertainty.

Meanwhile at Rajshahi University, around 1,000 students brought out a procession on the campus around 10:00am, demanding withdrawal of the case filed against anti-quota demonstrators in Dhaka.

The procession started from the university's Central Library and ended at the RU Buddhi Jibi Chattar.

At Jahangirnagar University, over 100 students brought out a procession on the campus to press home the same demand.

According to the Facebook group of the platform of demonstrating students and government job seekers, demonstrations were staged at Jagannath University, Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur, Bangladesh Agricultural University in Mymensingh, Islamic University in Kushtia, Carmichael College in Rangpur and Govt Ananda Mohan College in Mymensingh.

On March 25, the demonstrators will bring out a procession, starting from Shahbagh and ending at the Central Shaheed Minar, with their educational certificates hung around their necks.

On March 29, they will hold a citizens' gathering at the Central Shaheed Minar.

On March 14, police foiled a sit-in programme of the anti-quota protesters by charging batons and firing teargas shells, leaving at least 15 of the demonstrators wounded.

Police detained 53 demonstrators and released them later. On the same night, police filed a case against 700 to 800 demonstrators, accusing them of attempting to kill members of the police and vandalising vehicles.

HUMAN CHAIN IN CTG, COMILLA
At least 500 students from different colleges and universities in Chittagong city formed a human chain in the city's Gate 2 area while Comilla University students formed another at Kathaltala of the university campus yesterday, report our Chittagong University and Comilla correspondents.

Prisons getting scanners to check drug entry Says IG prisons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In order to stop prisoners or prison staff from sneaking in drugs into the prisons, body and baggage scanners are being installed at prisons, Brig Gen Syed Iftekhar Uddin, inspector general (IG) of prisons, said yesterday.

"We've imported body scanners for the first time in Bangladesh and work is underway to install the scanners at a number of major jails like the ones at Keraniganj, Kashimpur and Narayanganj," he said.

The IG prisons said this while addressing reporters at the prison directorate to brief them about "Prison Week 2018" that would begin tomorrow (March 20).

President Abdul Hamid is scheduled to inaugurate the week's events at Kashimpur jail complex.

Plagued by limited personnel and resources, the prison authorities are having difficulties containing drug abuse by inmates as a large number of them, over 35 percent, are jailed for drug-related offences.

Out of a total 77,124 prisoners in 68 prisons in the country, 35.97 percent or more than 27,741 were imprisoned for narcotics abuse.

The inmates have been resorting to innovative methods to smuggle in various drugs, especially Yaba, into the prisons, said the prison chief, adding that many of them were caught with Yaba put in polythene pouches that they had swallowed while they were taken outside the prisons for court appearance.

An inmate was recently caught after smuggling in 350 pieces of Yaba this way, the IG prisons said.

"So far, we've suspended 20 members of the jail staff over the past one year after finding their involvement with narcotics." They were handed over to police and criminal cases have been filed against them, he added.

In response to a query regarding the de-radicalisation programme for 577 militants imprisoned at different jails, he said till date 20 jail officials have received training from a government organisation under a project to de-radicalise the militants.

Barisal cop closed over 'bribery'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of Barisal police was closed to the district police lines yesterday for allegedly taking bribe from relatives of an arrestee.

Saiful Islam, superintendent of police (SP) in Barisal, said Aminul Islam, an ASI at Ujjirpur Police Station, arrested one Shamim Khan with Yaba on Thursday noon.

Later, the ASI collected Tk 5,000 through bKash, a mobile financial service provider, with the promise that the arrestee would not be tortured in custody, said the SP.

Aminul was closed to the police lines as he could not provide any satisfactory answer in this regard, said the SP, adding that an investigation into the allegation was underway.

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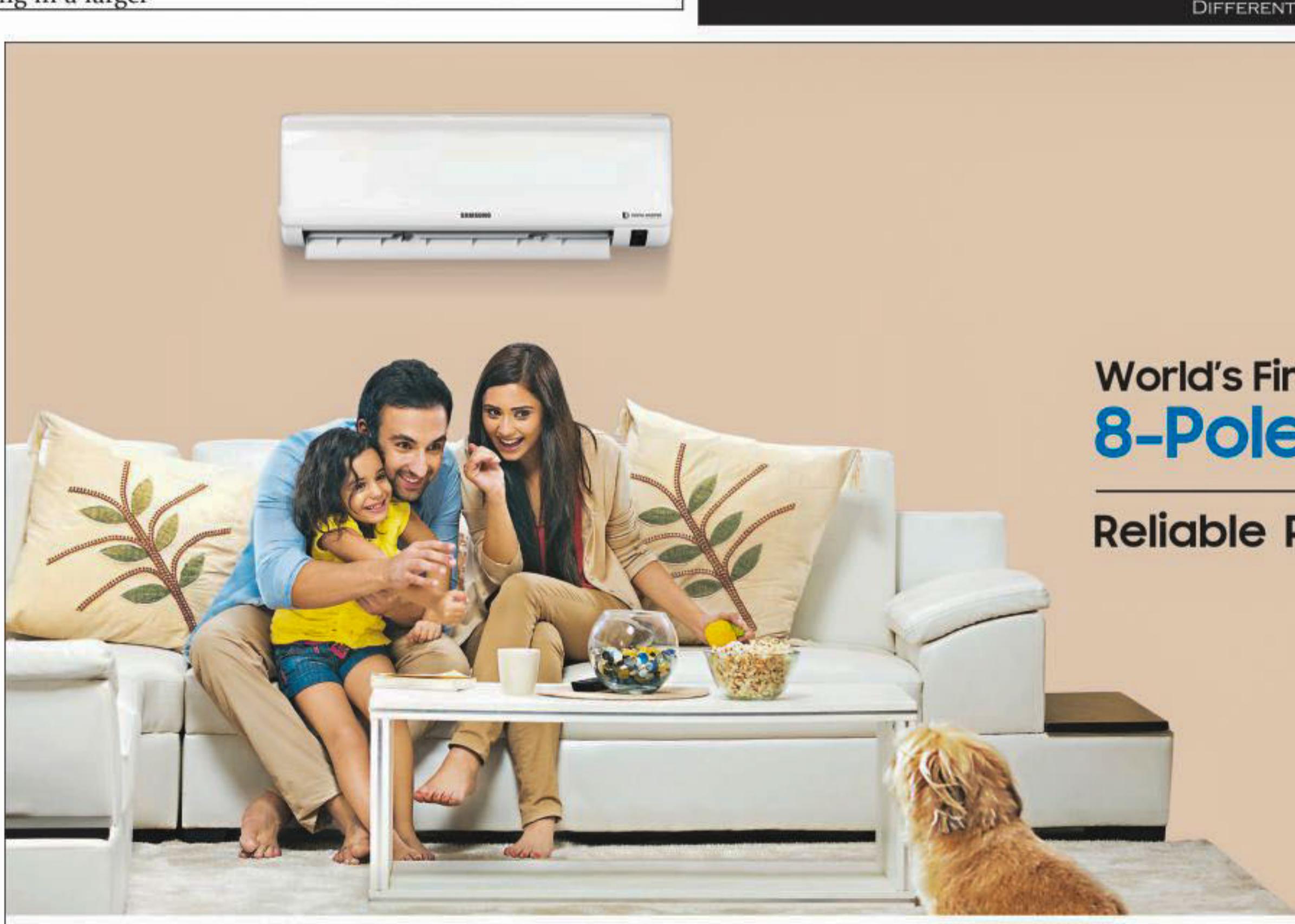
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