

Demos roll into day 4

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Four cases were filed against a huge number of unidentified people on charges of vandalism and arson. The charges stemmed from the attack on the DU vice chancellor's residence. Other charges were related to obstruction of justice during the quota-reform demonstration in Dhaka.

All the cases were filed with Shahbagh Police Station on Tuesday night, Abul Hasan, officer-in-charge (OC) of the station, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Dhaka University (DU) Chief security officer Kamrul Ahsan filed one of the cases against some unknown persons for vandalism and arson attack on the residence of the university's Vice Chancellor Prof Mohammad Akhteruzzaman.

Humayun Kabir, inspector of the Special Branch (SB) of Police in Dhaka filed another case accusing 30 to 40 unidentified people for torching his motorcycle and snatching his walkie-talkie from Doyel Chattar at the DU campus during the demonstrations.

Besides, sub-inspectors Bhajan Kumar Bishwas and Robiul Islam filed two cases against a huge number of unknown people for obstructing policemen from performing their duties during the demonstration.

The movement for quota reform turned violent on Sunday after police fired tear gas shells and rubber bullets, used water cannons and charged truncheons to disperse the demonstrators who blocked the Shahbagh intersection for over five hours. The clashes went on throughout the night.

Around 100 people were injured during the clashes.

The demonstrations began on February 17, students under the banner of Bangladesh Shadharan Chhatra Odhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad launched the movement over their five-point demand, including reducing the quota privilege to 10 percent from 56.

On the following day, after a meeting between government officials and a delegation of the platform, a one-month pause in the movement was announced. But a group of protesters defied the announcement and vowed to press on with their agitation.

In a dramatic turn of events on Tuesday, two factions of demonstrators reunited and called for indefinite

nationwide road blockade and strikes at universities and colleges.

The movement gained further momentum after the news that two students of Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall of Dhaka University were tortured by hall unit Chhatra League president Iffat Jahan Isha yesterday. The protesters began gathering in front of DU's Central Library from 9:30pm.

The DU authority immediately suspended Iffat from the university, DU Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani said. BCL also expelled her from their organisation. The protesters in front of the hall left around 4:20am yesterday.

At a press briefing around 10:45am the next day, leaders of the platform vowed to continue their movement until the prime minister gave a specific timeframe to reduce the quotas.

Then, they brought out a procession, attended by several thousand agitators who marched through the streets of DU campus and its surrounding areas before rallying at the foot of Raju Sculpture near TSC.

The situation started to change around 1:00pm after BCL general secretary SM Jakir Hossain, on a Facebook post, said they (he and BCL president) met the prime minister and she said there would be no quota privileges in public service jobs.

Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof Akhteruzzaman and Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) expressed solidarity with the movement. Led by DUTA President Maksud Kamal, they spoke before the students around 1:40pm.

However, everyone was eagerly waiting to hear something from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Meanwhile, students from the public and private universities had started their agitations in the morning.

Several thousand students of different private universities took over the thoroughfares in Mirpur, Farmgate, Sukrabad, and Dhanmondi areas in the capital, leading to a breakdown of Dhaka's traffic system.

Several thousand Chittagong University students staged demonstrations in front of Soloshohor Railway Station and blocked the railway track of the university's shuttle train.

Classes and examinations were not held at CU as most of the students

boycotted them, expressing solidarity with the movement.

CU Teachers Association extended its support to the movement and urged the government to take quick measures.

The Dhaka-Rajshahi highway remained blocked since morning as several hundred students of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (RUET) demonstrated in front of the university's main gate.

Around 200 students of Varendra University brought out a procession on the same highway and joined RUET students.

Several thousand students of Rajshahi University staged demonstration before RU main gate and staged a sit-in blocking vehicular movement there.

Earlier at 10:00am, they brought out a procession from the Central Library premises of the university.

Some students of Rajshahi College joined the RU demo, as they failed to organise a demo at their campus due to intimidation by BCL men.

Students of North Bengal International University also joined them. Most of the classes and examinations were boycotted by the students.

Students of Jahangirnagar University took position on Dhaka-Aricha Highway in front of their main gate from 10:30am, halting traffic on the highway.

Barisal University students blocked Barisal-Patuakhali Highway for more than seven hours. Students of Government BM College and Barisal Textile Institute also held agitation programmes.

Students of Dhaka Engineering and Technology University in Gazipur blocked Dhaka-Joydebpur road at Shibbari More area for around an hour seeking quota system reform.

Student of Gono University in Savar blocked Dhaka-Aricha Highway for around two hours from 10:00am.

Meanwhile, students of Devendra College in Manikganj could not hold their demonstration after they were intercepted by the police.

Students of Bangladesh Agricultural University blocked Dhaka-Mymensingh rail route, which goes through their campus, for hours leaving several local and intercity trains stranded at different stations.

Bangabandhu-1

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Shahjahan Mahmood, chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC). "It will take about eight days to reach its slot."

After the launch, it will take about two months to tune the satellite in and monitor it in the orbit from its landing stations in Gazipur and Rangamati and then it will be available for the commercial use, said the BTRC chief.

"After the successful tuning, we can use the connectivity and capacity of the Bangabandhu-1 for commercial purposes," he added.

On March 31, French company Thales Alenia Space, designer and maker of Bangabandhu-1, took the satellite to Florida's Cape Canaveral for launching.

SpaceX has carried out several test runs and found its performance quite okay, Shahjahan added.

Thales manufactured the 3.7 tonnes satellite a few months ago and kept it in a warehouse in Cannes.

Project officials said a brand new rocket would carry the satellite and that was why it took some time to launch.

In November 2015, the BTRC signed a \$248-million deal with Thales Alenia Space to manufacture and launch the satellite.

The satellite would be launched into a slot bought from Russian satellite company "Intersputnik" for \$28 million in January 2015.

Bangladesh will be the 57th country in space. To celebrate the historical achievement, the government has made a massive preparation and will have fireworks on May 5 evening across the country.

Initially, the launch of the satellite was slated for the Victory Day 2017. But it was postponed until March after Hurricane Irma and subsequent floods hit Florida, said officials concerned of the project.

A 22-member team, led by state minister for information Tarana Halim, will also be in Florida during the launch of the satellite. Tarana was previously the state minister for telecom.

Talking about the advantages of the satellite, project officials said it would immensely contribute to the country's digital advancement.

Currently, Bangladesh meets its demand for satellite connectivity by renting bandwidth from foreign operators which costs the country about \$14 million a year. Once launched, Bangabandhu-1 will save the foreign currency expenditure.

It will also improve the Direct to Home (D2H) services, making people's access to worldwide TV entertainment faster and easier.

Bangabandhu-1 will have 40 transponders and three of them would be used for broadcasting TV channels.

The country's remote parts -- haors, coastal areas and deep-sea zones -- will also have impressive internet connectivity. It will also be helpful for distance learning, treatment, and improvement of weather forecast facilities.

"The satellite will be a game changer in rescue operations after natural disasters," said the BTRC chairman.

World's first

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"And it also ensures road safety. That way motorists would have no problem taking their foot off the gas."

"You have to like the Frisian anthem a lot to endure listening to it all day and night," said annoyed residents to Dutch television reporters.

"That's mental torture," claimed one woman.

"No one expected these side effects," added spokesman Hofstra. The "singing road" will therefore be silenced later this week.

Repatriation a priority

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Myat Aye said as he left a meeting with Rohingya representatives at Kutupalong camp, reports Reuters.

Asked if the Rohingyas could be granted citizenship, which they had been long denied, the minister replied: "We are trying to have that."

This is the first time a Myanmar minister visited the makeshift camps where more than 700,000 forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals are sheltered amid "ethnic cleansing" by Myanmar army.

Diplomatic sources say the Myanmar minister made the visit following the UN Security Council's decision to visit Bangladesh and Myanmar to see firsthand the situation of hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas and observe the impact of the crisis in Rakhine.

The UN Security Council is expected to pay a two-day visit to Bangladesh on April 29.

The Myanmar minister along with his delegates is scheduled to fly to Dhaka this morning and hold bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali at the State Guesthouse Padma at 6:00pm.

Though Dhaka hopes that the visit will help speed up repatriation process, officials and experts are sceptical about sincerity of the Myanmar government's readiness to start it soon.

A repatriation official in Cox's Bazar cited the media interview of Win Myat Aye, who said the process would be delayed and they needed more time to verify the list provided by the Bangladesh government.

Rights groups have raised concerns about the safety of returnees being sent to Myanmar, where the authorities have razed many Rohingya villages in Rakhine.

Earlier, the Myanmar minister arrived at Cox's Bazar Airport yesterday morning and went directly to Kutupalong Rohingya shelter centre in Ukhipa by road, reports our Cox's Bazar correspondent.

He first talked with government officials, representatives of local and international development agencies and Rohingya community leaders about relief, rehabilitation and repatriation of the refugees at the camp in-charge office.

After the views exchange, the Myanmar minister along with his delegation talked with the refugees, who placed some demands before him. The Myanmar team stayed at the camp for about two and a half hours.

At a press briefing later, the Myanmar minister said his government had been working for taking back the Rohingyas. He had come to Bangladesh to see the current situation himself, he added.

He said both the Bangladesh and Myanmar governments had been working unilaterally for the repatriation, adding the Rohingyas would be given citizenship and brought back with proper honour and dignity.

Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) Mohammad Abdul Kalam said the Myanmar minister had been briefed on overall steps taken by the government for the displaced Myanmar nationals.

Meantime, a 21-member high-level Saudi team led by Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Rabeah, general supervisor of Riyadh-based King Salman Centre for Relief and Humanitarian Aid Centre, yesterday visited a shelter centre at Balukhali in Ukhipa. They visited KS Relief, IOM activities and a hospital run by the Malaysian government.

The UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSRelief) are set to sign a \$3 million agreement in Cox's Bazar today to provide emergency responses and relief items to the refugees

in urgent need.

The agreement would be signed by Abdullah Al Rabeah and Khaled Khalifa, regional representative of UNHCR to the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf.

The agreement aims to support and provide emergency relief for the refugees and comes in line with a wider cooperation between UNHCR and King Salman's Centre and in the framework of strategic partnership, bearing in mind the long-term commitment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to supporting the refugees.

As per the Joint Response Plan, the UN and humanitarian partners are asking for \$951 million to provide emergency assistance and protection services to 1,300,000 vulnerable refugees, including 336,000 people from the affected Bangladeshi host communities.

Refugee Rehabilitation and Repatriation Commissioner Abul Kalan said they raised Rohingya people's concerns about the condition in Rakhine.

He told The Daily Star by phone that the Rohingyas would voluntarily go back only when they feel Rakhine was safe and secure.

The Myanmar minister said they were working to make return of the refugees safe and that they would sign agreements with the UNDP and the UNHCR towards that end.

Judicial

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University student Talha on October 8 last year, leaving him dead.

Rita, in her case filed with the Court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge in Dhaka under the Torture and Custodial Death (Protection) Act-2013, also mentioned two to three unnamed policemen as accused, said court sources.

The case statement said without any arrest warrant, SI Jyotish picked up Rakib as he went to the capital's Kaptan Bazar area to buy betel leaves for his mother around 10:30pm on April 4.

Hearing about the incident, Rita went to Wari Police Station immediately, met the SI and asked him why her son was picked up. In reply, the SI said Rakib was in jail custody and that they were verifying some information, according to the case statement.

During that time, Rita said, she heard Rakib's screams coming from the OC's room. As Rita enquired about it, the SI allegedly ran towards the room and informed the OC about her presence.

Later, OC Rafiqul, Inspector Selim and SI Jyotish forced Rita out of the police station, saying that her son was not there, says the case statement.

Later around 1:30am, Rita went to the police station again but this time in a veil. There, she saw two to three policemen kicking her son. She also tried to send some food to Rakib through Constable Md Ali in vain, it says.

Around 11:00am on April 6, OC Rafiqul called Rakib's grandfather Abdul Latif over phone and informed him that Rakib was killed in a gunfight. The body was kept at Dhaka Medical College Morgue for autopsy.

Rita, in her case, also alleged that she found the right hand of her son broken. Also, there were injury marks on the head and legs.

She also alleged that police had been threatening her not to file any complaint over the incident.

Contacted, the OC termed all the allegations baseless.

"Rakib was wanted in three cases, including two for murders. He was killed in a gunfight when police went to arrest muggers," he added.

'Get ready Russia'

FROM PAGE 16

the suspected use of chemical weapons.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a Facebook post that "smart missiles should fly towards terrorists, not towards the lawful government".

Russia yesterday accused the White Helmets civil defence organisation of staging a chemical weapons attack in Syria's Douma that has escalated the tension.

"Acting purely as a terrorist organisation, the odious 'White Helmets' once again staged for the cameras a 'chemical attack' on the civilians of Douma," Lieutenant-General Viktor Poznikhir said at a briefing in Moscow.

After Trump's tweet, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights - a British-based war monitor with a network of sources on the ground - reported that pro-government forces were emptying main airports and military air bases.

The Syrian foreign ministry accused the United States, which has supported some rebel groups in Syria's conflict, of using "fabrications and lies" as an excuse to hit its territory.

After the Douma attack, the insurgent group dug in there, Jaish al-Islam, finally agreed to withdraw. That clinched a huge victory for Assad, crushing a long rebellion in the eastern Ghouta region near the capital Damascus.

White House officials did not immediately reply to a Reuters request for more detail about Trump's remarks.

SYRIA TENSIONS

Trump says US-Russia ties 'worse now' than during Cold War

Russia says alleged chemical attack in Douma 'staged' by White Helmets

Syria says US threats 'reckless escalation'

WHO seeks access to poison gas-hit Douma town

The US Defense Department said it "does not comment on potential future military actions".

Trump's decision to disclose his decision to strike as well as the kind of weaponry to be used in a future military operation is likely to frustrate military planners, who hold such information closely.

Trump had repeatedly said he would not telegraph military moves against foes such as North Korea and Islamic State. On Monday he said he would decide within 48 hours on a forceful answer to the attack in Syria, later telling reporters: "When, I will not say, because I don't like talking about timing."

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization said that 43 people had died in Saturday's attack on Douma from "symptoms consistent with expo-

sure to highly toxic chemicals", and more than 500 in all had been treated.

The WHO cautioned that it has no formal role in forensic inquiries into the use of chemical weapons. International inspectors are seeking clearance from Damascus to visit Douma under safe conditions to determine whether globally banned munitions were used, though they will not assign blame.

Moscow's own threat to down US missiles came from its ambassador to Lebanon, Alexander Zasyupkin, who said it was based on previous statements by President Vladimir Putin and the Russian armed forces chief of staff.

Zasyupkin also said that any hostilities with Washington should be avoided and Moscow was ready for negotiations.

Oil prices jumped to their highest level in more than three years yesterday after Trump's missile warning, and US stock index futures fell amid alarm over possible Russian-US conflicts.

Moscow and Washington stymied attempts by each other at the UN Security Council on Tuesday to set up international investigations into chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

Pan-European air traffic control agency Eurocontrol warned airlines to exercise caution in the eastern Mediterranean due to possible air strikes into Syria over the next 72 hours.

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All 257 people

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those on board were army members and their families, it said.

There was no immediate word on the cause of the crash. Deputy Defence Minister General Ahmed Gaid Salah visited the site and ordered an investigation, the defence ministry said.

The Ilyushin IL-76 transport plane was bound for Tindouf in southwest Algeria near the borders with Morocco and Western Sahara.

The Tindouf region is home to refugees from Western Sahara and houses the administrative offices of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic declared in 1976 by the Algiers-backed Polisario Front which seeks independence for the region.

Rabat considers Western Sahara an integral part of Morocco and proposes autonomy for the resource-rich territory.

According to the plane manufacturer's website, the IL-76, a four-engine plane built in the Soviet Union and then Russia, can transport between 126 and 225 passengers depending on the model and configuration.

The North African country has suffered a string of military and civilian aviation disasters but yesterday's was Algeria's deadliest ever plane crash and the world's fourth costliest in human lives in 20 years.

Two Algerian military planes collided mid-flight in December 2012 during a training exercise in Tlemcen, in the far west of the country, killing the pilots of both planes.

In February 2014, 77 people died when a military plane carrying army personnel and family members crashed between Tamanrasset in southern Algeria and the eastern city of Constantine.

Plane-tower

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The aircraft was found mostly burnt and damaged as it had caught fire.

The report also said rescue and fire fighting teams rushed to the spot and worked with "utmost efficiency".

The probe body was formed on March 12, the day the US-Bangla airliner crash-landed at the TIA, killing at least 51 people including 27 Bangladeshis.

The preliminary report however didn't mention any reasons behind the crash.

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03.	Time for completion of the work	120 (one hundred twenty) Calendar days from the date of issuance of work order.
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11.	Special Instructions	i) Intending Firm having requisite qualification should apply to the General Manager (Engg.) on their Letter Head Pad to collect Tender Document from the Engineering Department. ii) Uttara Bank Limited reserves the right to accept partly or fully any quotation or reject any or all quotations without assigning any reason whatsoever and is not bound to accept the lowest quotation. iii) UL/NFPA/BRE Global Certified Fire Door. iv) Any fabricated/false documents, over writing & erasing/fluid correction etc. in the Tender will be treated as cancelled.

Engr. Sk. Abul Hashem
General Manager