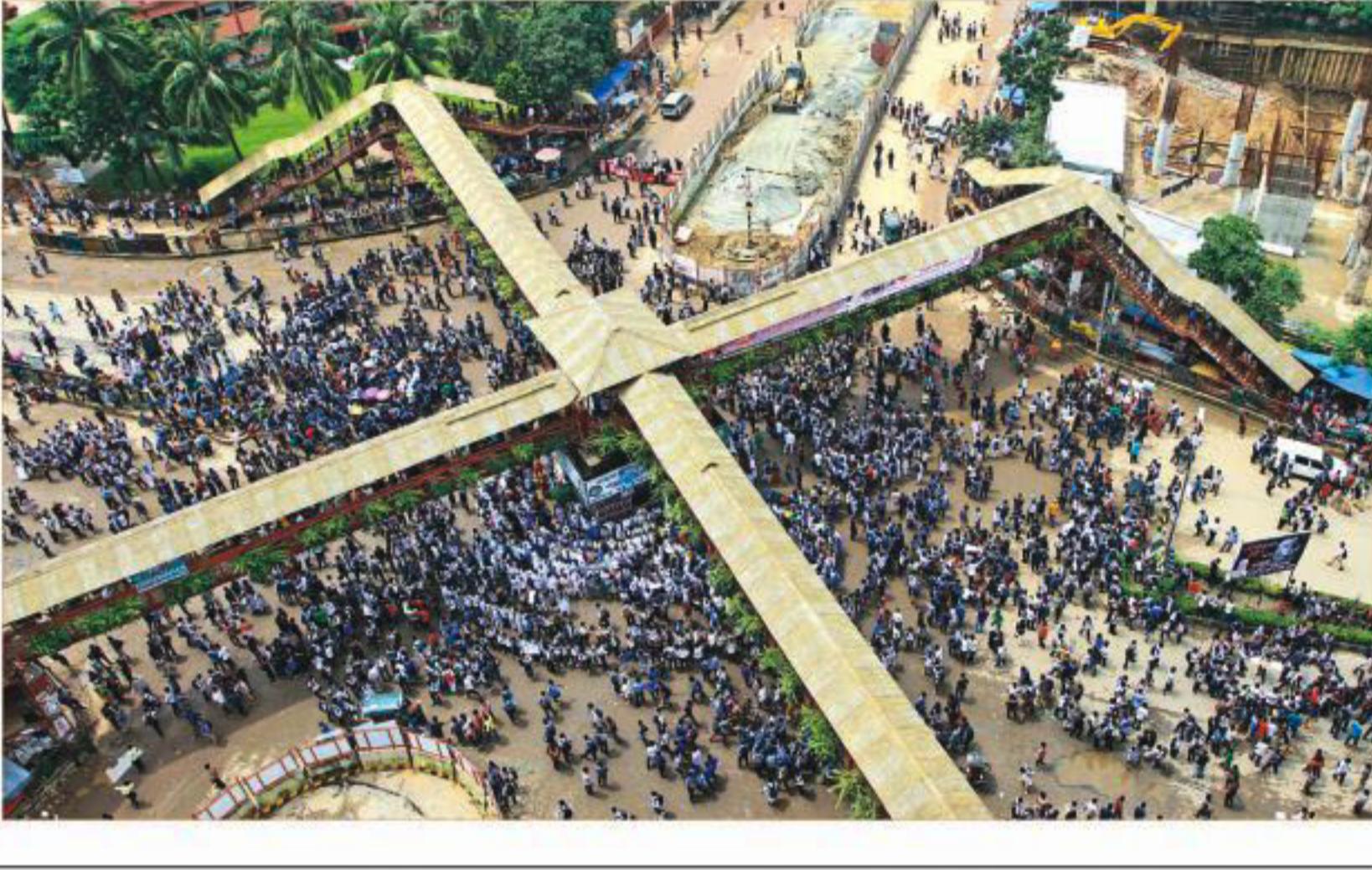




## CALL FOR JUSTICE RINGS LOUDER

Clockwise from top left, a student pleads a BGB man to save the teenage protesters being attacked by Bangladesh Chhatra League in Jigatola, near the main gate of BGB (Border Guard Bangladesh) Headquarters, yesterday. Slogans demanding justice and safe roads reverberate around Mirpur-10. Students form rows to separate lanes and compel the drivers to leave the fast lane for emergency vehicles near Farmgate. An aerial view of Mirpur-10 roundabout surrounded by protesters. Bangladesh Jatri Odhikar Andolan organises a human chain in front of the National Museum demanding safe roads, and as part of it, a dedicated lane for bicycles.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS, PALASH KHAN



# Group of student protesters visit AL president's office

**Find no hostage or body as per claims**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid rumours of death, detention and abuse of students at Awami League President Sheikh Hasina's Dhanmondi political office, a group of protesters visited the office yesterday and found no evidence of the claims.

"No one was held hostage at Awami League office and there were no victims inside it," Kazi Hasibur Rahman Turja, a student protester, said after visiting the office last evening.

They were misled by the rumours, he added. He was briefing reporters at the AL president's office.

Rumours were spread that four student protesters were killed and some female students were held hostage inside the AL office, allegedly by BCL men after they carried out attacks on the protesters, said Turja, a student of Dhaka Ideal College.

Before the rumours spread, BCL allegedly carried out attacks on the protesters at Dhanmondi 3 near Jigatola. But the rumour of death escalated the situation and the protesters had face-off with BCL men, turning the area into a battlefield.

Turja said he was shouting slogans with his other protesters at Science Lab intersection around 11:00am.

After Zohr prayers, a group of people told them that BCL men launched an attack on protesters in Jigatola area, he said.

"On receiving the information, everyone was shocked, but we did not leave our position. Some might have carried out an attack on the AL office that led to a chase and counter-chase in the area," he added.

"We were initially misled... but found no validity of the claims as we visited the office," Turja said and urged the protesting students

outside the office not to believe unfounded information.

At the briefing, BCL general secretary Golam Rabban said the government has met all the demands of the students as those are logical.

He alleged BNP-Jamaat men instigated the students by circulating rumours of death and confinement of some female students. No one was kept confined or beaten up inside the party office, he claimed.

When a student asked him for taking steps against BCL men who attacked the protesters, Rabban said they will initiate an impartial investigation into the incident.

Before Turja's briefing, AL Office Secretary

Abdus Sobhan Golap called upon the protesters and their guardians to leave the streets.

"Your demands are justified and the government has already accepted them. You're the future leaders of the nation. Why are you on the streets?" Golap said.

Golap also said the entire country has plunged into an acute crisis as drivers are not willing to operate vehicles on the streets due to fear of safety.

Turja later addressed another briefing near BGB Gate-4 and said, "Our movement is non-political and we are not against Chhatra League or the government. We are waging our movement for the nine-point demand."



Student protesters at the AL president's office in Dhanmondi yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Election Commission performing as a 'mere witness'

**Dr Kamal Hossain says**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Blaming the Election Commission for performing the role of a "mere witness", Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said a greater national unity has to be formed for a free and fair national election.

He was addressing a press conference -- at the party office in the capital's Arambagh area -- on the latest political situation in the country, after an extended meeting of the party's central and grassroots leaders.

Dr Kamal Hossain said his party will work for national unity and a participatory election.

Criticising the ruling party, the veteran politician said Awami League played a pioneering role once to ensure that a free and fair election was held through movements but it now "feels to hold such elections".

Responding to a query, he said, "It will be a disaster if the election is held under the current EC." Election will not be free and fair if the EC does not play an impartial role, he added.

Reading out a written statement, Gono Forum General Secretary Mustafa Mohsin Montu said Bangladesh has virtually turned into an "autocratic state" as everything, including the judiciary, circles around one person.

At the meeting, the party decided to take "effective measures" to form a national alliance, "Shoirachar Birodi Brihottor Jatiya Oikko", which will comprise of democratic political parties, civil society members and representatives of different professional backgrounds.

Montu said the alliance's aim will be to reinstate people's power and effective democracy as well as to establish rule of law based on the spirit of the Liberation War and Gono Forum's seven-point demand.

At the meeting, party members expressed solidarity with the ongoing student movement for road safety.



**Golam Sarwar hospitalised in Singapore**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Treatment of Daily Samakal Editor Golam Sarwar started at a hospital in Singapore yesterday.

Golam Sarwar, also the president of Editors' Council, is suffering from cardiac diseases and lung complications, said a press release.

Earlier on July 29, he was admitted to Labaid hospital in Dhaka following a heart attack. Later on Friday, he was taken to Singapore General Hospital for better treatment.

His wife Saleha Sarwar, two sons, a son-in-law and a special correspondent of his newspaper are accompanying him in Singapore.

All are requested to pray for his quick recovery.

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Developing rail, waterways an effective solution

Poba's suggestion for tackling road accidents

UNB, Dhaka

Giving priority to rail and waterways development can be an effective solution to stop road accidents, said Poribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba), an environmental advocacy group, yesterday at a programme.

Poba organised the discussion titled "Deaths and Anarchy on Road: Reasons and Solutions" at its main office in Dhaka.

Presiding over the programme, Poba Chairman Abu Naser Khan said ensuring road safety is impossible without ensuring proper traffic and transport management.

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UNB, Dhaka

## Nirmul Committee to support AL in nat'l polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee and its associate organisations yesterday decided to support Awami League in the upcoming national election, slated for later this year.

Nirmul Committee leaders claimed that AL is the only party which upholds the spirit of Liberation War and is on the side of the pro-liberation forces.

Speaking at a conference, they called upon other like-minded organisations to support the ruling party and directed their district-level leaders to forge separate "resistance committee" to counter the anti-liberation forces.

Nirmul Committee organised a two-day conference at Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) auditorium in Dhaka to prepare an action plan for the upcoming polls.

Yesterday was the last day of the programme.

Writer and war crimes researcher Shahriar Kabir, also president of the Nirmul Committee, claimed that AL could clinch "landslide victory in previous national polls" because of the efforts of such organisations.

Nirmul Committee should lead bringing other like-minded organisations together to support the pro-liberation party, he said.

"We can earn victory if we work this way. There is no alternative," added Shahriar.

An adviser to the Nirmul Committee, Maj Gen (retd) Abdur Rashid, also chairman of Institute of Conflict, Law and Development Studies, said if the party cannot win in the election, the spirit of Liberation War will not thrive.

Maj Gen (retd) KM Shafiqullah Bir Uttam, president of Sector Commanders' Forum; Kazi Mukul, general secretary of the Nirmul Committee, among others, spoke at the conference.