



Students carrying a wounded woman to safety after BCL activists attacked quota protesters on the Dhaka University campus yesterday, *left*. A protester tries to take cover under a bus while attackers try to get to him in front of the DU VC's residence, *top right*. Protesters beating up a man they suspected to be a BCL activist inside the DMCH emergency department. Several clashes took place there last evening.



PHOTOS: AFP; AMRAN HOSSAIN; MUNTAKIM SAAD

## BCL unleashes fury on quota protesters

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protesting what they said was a “disparaging comment” by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina regarding quota protesters.

They chanted slogans like “Tumi ke? Ami ke? Razakar, Razakar! [Who are you? Who am I? Razakar, Razakar!],” “Cheyechhilam odikhar, hoye gelam Razakar [We wanted rights, but we have been labelled as Razakars]”.

The prime minister on Sunday said, “Why do they [the protesters] have so much anger against the freedom fighters?... If the grandchildren of freedom fighters don’t get quota benefits, should the grandchildren of Razakars get the benefit?”

Yesterday, the violence started about two hours after Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said the Chhatra League would give a fitting reply to those student leaders of the quota reform movement who labelled themselves as Razakars, and were arrogant.

The demonstrators had announced a rally in front of the Raju Bhaskarjo at noon yesterday to protest the PM’s remarks and attacks on him at different universities on Sunday night.

Chhatra League also announced a rally there at 3:00pm to protest “the students’ derogatory comments on the country’s independence”.

Around noon, the quota reforms demonstrators started gathering at Raju Bhaskarjo. A group of them went to different dormitories to mobilise more students around 2:30pm.

When the group reached Bijoy Ekattor Hall around 3:00pm, some Chhatra League hall unit members threw brick chunks and flower pots at them from inside, said witnesses.

As the news of the attack spread, demonstrators from Raju Bhaskarjo rushed there and retaliated by throwing brick chunks at the Chhatra League men.

Around 3:30pm, Chhatra League men took position inside the hall while the demonstrators in front of it.

Both groups kept throwing brick chunks at each other and at one stage, BCL activists from five nearby dorms rushed out and along with their fellows inside Bijoy Ekattor Hall chased the demonstrators, sparking a running battle.

The demonstrators eventually retreated to the area in front of DU vice-chancellor’s residence.

Within a few minutes, numerous Chhatra League activists, many non-DU students, attacked the demonstrators, including female students.

The Chhatra League men, many wearing helmets, were seen chasing down the students, kicking them and beating them with cricket stumps, and bamboo and hockey sticks for around 15 minutes, said witnesses.

Some female students were seen lying on the ground and in tears during that time.

“How could they dare attack the female students? It cannot be an act of an educated person,” said an injured female student.

She said Chhatra League men brought in outsiders to attack them. “Where were the VC and proctors when we were being attacked? Are they not our guardians?”

Another female student said the “Chhatra League goons” attacked the front part of their procession where most of the female students were.

“They are afraid of the fact that we can also speak about our rights. They want to gag our voice at any cost,” she said.

Around 5:00pm, as the demonstrators took the injured to the DMCH for treatment, a group of Chhatra League activists stormed the hospital, and another bout of chase and counter chase ensued.

A pedestrian caught in the middle was injured and was seen being led away with his shirt all bloodied.

Chhatra League activists were patrolling outside the gate of the DMCH emergency department, and they chased away students from the hospital area.

Chased by BCL men, a large group of the demonstrators went inside Shahidullah Hall while some managed to stay inside the DMCH.

As some Chhatra League men went to the DMCH with injured activists, the demonstrators beat up three of them around 6:50pm.

Half an hour later, around 70 Chhatra League activists again stormed the DMCH emergency department. Armed with sticks and clad in helmets, they beat up demonstrators inside the hospital.

Meanwhile, at Shahidullah Hall, the demonstrators and Chhatra League men hurled brick chunks at each other. The demonstrators were inside the hall and the Chhatra League activists outside.

**OCTOBER 4, 2018**  
Government scraps quota system for class-I and class-II jobs in civil service.

**JUNE 5, 2024**  
HC rules circular scrapping freedom fighter quotas illegal.

**JUNE 9, 2024**  
The government challenges HC rule with Supreme Court.

**JULY 1, 2024**  
Students and jobseekers start demo, seeking reform to the quota system.

**JULY 4, 2024**  
Supreme Court upholds High Court verdict for the time being.

**JULY 7, 2024**  
Protesters launch ‘Bangla Blockade’.

**JULY 9, 2024**  
Two DU students file petition seeking stay order on HC verdict.

**JULY 10, 2024**  
SC orders status quo on the quota issue for four weeks.

**JULY 11, 2024**  
HC says govt can change, reduce, or increase the ratio or percentage of quotas.

**JULY 14, 2024**  
Late-night student protests rock DU, other campuses over PM Hasina’s “disparaging remark”.

**JULY 14, 2024**  
In its full verdict, HC declares abolishment of freedom fighter quotas in govt jobs illegal.

**JULY 15, 2024**  
Public university students come under attack while staging demos at various campuses protesting PM’s remark.

The demonstrators vandalised several rooms belonging to Chhatra League activists.

Crude bomb explosions and gunshots were heard outside the dorm.

The police in the area were mere bystanders during the whole time.

Late last night, the demonstrators vandalised 10 motorbikes allegedly owned by BCL men in front Amar Ekushay Hall. Witnesses said the bikes had more than 20 men on them who ran away.

**‘THEY TARGETED FEMALES’**  
Around 3:00pm, almost 500 BCL activists carrying sticks targeted and charged towards the female student protesters near the Kalabhaban, said Sanjana Afifa, a DU resident student of Shamsunnahar Hall.

“Once they spotted us, they lunged towards us and threw brick chunks. We all ran and tried to hide but they hunted

us down ... At one point, I hid inside a bus and I heard the attackers coming inside screaming ‘you are Razakar, you are Razakar’. Many of those hiding in the bus with me were dragged out and beaten. I pleaded them to let me go, only to find so many others lying on the ground, bleeding.”

Another female student of the same hall said, “I ran towards Fullar Road at one point and saw Chhatra League men carrying out a full-throttle attack there. At one point, a brick hit my head and I fell. Instantly, 3-4 people came and began beating me with sticks. I just lay there, getting beaten. A senior male student rescued me and took me to hospital. After treatment, I was able to return around 7:00pm.”

She added that along with her, around 30 other female students of her hall were attacked and injured.

Sufiya Kamal Hall’s resident student Umama Fatema said the attackers identified her from television.

“They screamed, ‘we saw you on TV, we will kill you’, and around 25 people charged towards me ... They targeted me, I had to cry and beg them to let me go. I ran and they still chased after me. When I reached Fullar Road, two women passing by hid me behind them and asked me to stop crying so that the attackers cannot hear me.”

Another student of Begum Rokeya Hall Arpita Das said, “I somehow got out alive. Most of those who beat us up did not look like students. I tried to protect myself and run wherever the others ran. I saw a girl behind me fall to the ground and then people beating her up mercilessly. They beat whoever they saw in their path. At one point, I ran into the SM Hall ... There were so many people with blood all over them. We tried not to scream or cry ... At one point, the provost told us to hide in the TV room.”

**“WE WON’T LEAVE”**  
Through a video message on his Facebook page, demo organiser Nahid said that yesterday was a very sad day for Dhaka University.

“The situation at Dhaka Medical College Hospital is horrible. The injured are lying on the floor. There are no treatment facilities there. The Chhatra League goons even attacked female students at the emergency gate,” he said.

“We will resist unitedly. We are promising we will be on the ground. We will not leave the ground,” he said.

Nahid told reporters at Doyel Chatter around 9:30pm that they have announced fresh demonstrations and protest rallies at 3:00pm today at campuses across the country.

He urged the students to join the programmes and threatened harsher demonstrations like blockade if their demand was not met.

**BCL TAKES NO BLAME**  
Chhatra League President Saddam Hussain said the demonstrators forced students to join their protests to create an unstable environment at DU.

“They [demonstrators] brought students from different halls by threatening them. They carried out attacks on students with locally made weapons. But they fled away when the students untidily resisted them [demonstrators],” he told reporters at DU in the afternoon.

Chhatra League General Secretary Sheikh Wali Asif Enan alleged that Chhatra Dal and Chhatra Shibir goons attacked different halls in DU.

**KEEP DORMS FREE OF OUTSIDERS**  
Dhaka University authorities, after an emergency meeting of the provost standing committee last night, directed its respective hall authorities to keep the dormitories free of outsiders and to strengthen security on campus.

DU VC Prof ASM Maksud Kamal chaired the meeting, which was attended by the provosts of all dormitories.

Meanwhile, students of several private universities, including United International University, North South University, Independent University, Bangladesh, American International University Bangladesh, and Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology took to the streets yesterday and blocked several city streets.

## Why must brute

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instructions by their bosses to remain calm and not take any action against the students. But as soon as the high-ups in the government made dismissive comments criticising the movement, things started to take an ugly turn. The AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader at a press conference on Sunday remarked that the Chhatra League was ready to give an apt answer to the “audacious behaviour” shown on the campuses (by leaders of the anti quota movement). Such a direct call for action gave them the green signal. True to their reputation, the members of the student body swooped on the students and “taught them a lesson” for daring to be vocal and defiant.

It is tragic that a student body that was once at the forefront of the most significant movements of our history has been turned into the bully boys (and girls) of the ruling party. These young men wielding rods and sticks are also university students. Why should students beat up other students for a cause that would ordinarily unite them? Why do the large numbers of the police force become silent bystanders when helmet-clad goons pounce upon unarmed university students?

These are naïve queries in a reality where even peaceful protests are seen as threats to power and are clamped down upon with full force. For some reason it was thought that this time the government would show tolerance and listen to the young, passionate young men and women who believed that their voices would be heard, their needs would be addressed. All they have been asking for is a fair chance in life, an equitable system of opportunities to compete for government jobs and the realisation of a dream that can be attained through merit and hard work. Are these aspirations unwarranted for young people of an independent nation?

## HC verdict

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All the protesting students are asked to go back to their respective educational institutions and concentrate on their studies.

“This court hopes that the vice-chancellors and proctors of all universities and heads of other educational institutions will take their students back to their respective educational institutions and create a supportive environment for learning.”

“Protesting students can, if they wish, present their arguments before the court through lawyers. The court will take into account their statement while disposing of the original petition. In the meantime, the petitioners are directed to file regular civil petitions for leave to appeal,” the Appellate Division also said.

On July 10, the SC delivered the status quo order following two separate petitions filed by the government and two Dhaka University students seeking a stay on the HC judgement.

It fixed August 7 for hearing the leave to appeal petitions.

“The apex court order means that the government cannot take any initiative about the quota system in civil service until the leave to appeal petitions are disposed of,” Deputy Attorney General Sk Shaifuzzaman told The Daily Star yesterday.

He also said the government may file a fresh petition with the Appellate Division seeking an extension of the July 10 status quo order within a few days.

Following a writ petition, the HC on June 5 this year declared illegal the circular, issued by the public administration ministry on October 4, 2018, which cancelled the quota system in government jobs.

The circular said that in the case of direct recruitment to the posts of 9th grade (formerly class-1) and 10th to 13th grades (formerly class-2), the appointments should be made based on merit.

## It’s a shame

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Agreements for the FY 2024-25 at the Prime Minister’s Office.

“Our only target is to establish the spirit of the Liberation War. Lakhs of martyrs shed blood and lakhs of our mothers and sisters were tortured. We won’t forget their contribution. We must keep that in mind.”

The PM said her government took legal action against the war criminals involved in mass killing, looting, and torturing of women.

“Many of them were executed following trials and thus the repressed got justice,” she said.

Hasina said, “I felt sorry when I heard yesterday [Sunday] the students of Ruqayyah Hall calling themselves Razakars. Do they know what happened there on March 25, 1971? Some 300 girls were killed, and 40 others were taken to the Pakistan camps and raped.”

Referring to some gruesome incidents carried out by the Pakistan forces in 1971, the premier said the female students did not see the oppression on streets in 1971. “So, they are not ashamed of calling themselves Razakars.”

“What country are we in? What spirit do they believe in? What lesson

did they learn? What did they learn? It is my question,” she added.

Hasina said the Liberation War is a matter of our pride.

People left their homes and fought for independence risking their lives following the call of the father of the nation and achieved victory, she said.

Those who were in Razakar, Al-Badr, and Al Shams Bahini unleashed inhuman torture on the people, she said, adding, “Don’t forget it.”

“We have to march forward with the spirit of the Liberation War after taking lessons from it,” the PM said.

Those who were in power for 21 years after the assassination of the father of the nation on August 15, 1975, failed to give the country anything, she said.

Hasina said the pro-liberation force Awami League has changed the country with massive development work over the last 15 years after assuming power.

“Bangladesh is now a changed country ... Bangladesh has earned a dignified position on the global stage,” she added.

“Let’s take the country ahead. This Bangladesh will move ahead. We will move around the world keeping our heads high ...”

## Panic at DMCH emergency

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Other demonstrators accompanied the injured.

Meanwhile, alleged BCL members were stationed on the adjacent road when student protesters gathered near the hospital.

Witnesses further alleged that before the BCL attacks, quota protesters assaulted at least three people at the hospital, suspecting them of being Chhatra League activists.

A female DU student in the hospital, requesting anonymity, said, “We thought the hospital was safe, but unfortunately, BCL activists entered.”

Hasan Abdullah, a patient, said, “Around 5:30pm, I saw people running away from the hospital, which scared me.”

Another patient, Rina Begum, said, “A young man was being beaten in front of the hospital’s emergency department. An Ansar member intervened to calm the situation. Attacks inside the hospital are never acceptable.”

Speaking to this newspaper, patient

## Trump picks JD Vance

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challenge Democratic President Joe Biden in the Nov 5 election.

Trump, 78, and Biden, 81, are locked in what opinion polls show to be a tight election rematch. Trump continues to falsely claim that his 2020 loss to Biden was the result of widespread fraud and has not committed to accepting the results of the election were he to lose.

In the wake of the assassination attempt, Trump said he is revising his acceptance speech to emphasise national unity, rather than highlight his differences with Biden.

“This is a chance to bring the whole country, even the whole world, together. The speech will be a lot different, a lot different than it would’ve been two days ago,” Trump told the Washington Examiner. The would-be assassin’s bullet clipped Trump’s right ear but did no major harm.

Trump said that following the judge’s decision dismissing the documents case, his other outstanding prosecutions should also be thrown out. He is still awaiting trial on two cases - a federal prosecution in Washington and a Georgia state prosecution - for his attempts to overturn his 2020 election defeat.

Biden has tried to bring the temperature down after months of heated political rhetoric.

## Foreign national detained with 3.9kg of cocaine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A foreign national was detained at Chattogram’s Shah Amanat International Airport yesterday morning after nearly four kg of cocaine was found in her luggage. Cocaine is an intense, euphoria-producing stimulant drug with strong addictive potential.

The detainee was identified as Statia Shantae Rolle, a citizen of the Bahamas, an island nation in the Atlantic Ocean.

A package of cocaine, weighing 3.9kg, was recovered from her luggage during a search, said Saifur Rahman, joint director of the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Department in Chattogram.

Inspector Dewan Mohammad Zillur Rahman from the Directorate of Narcotics Control said Statia arrived in Chattogram from Brazil via the United Arab Emirates on July 13. However, she did not take her luggage and went to a hotel.

Yesterday morning, she arrived at the airport to claim her luggage from the “Lost and Found” department.

Chittagong Customs officials said the market value of the seized cocaine may be approximately Tk 60 crore.