

‘Get me a stretcher, he needs help’

Scenes from hospitals in Dhaka

MASHFIQ MIZAN

The air inside the capital's hospitals was filled with cries for help and painful screams. Injured protesters were seen groaning while their friends and relatives screamed for trolleys, stretchers and wheelchairs to carry them inside.

One after another, injured students flooded into Uttara Adhunik Hospital, their bodies pierced by shotgun pellets.

Visiting the hospital, this newspaper found emergency camps set up in front of the gate, with stretchers, trolleys, and wheelchairs.

Friends carried their injured fellows into the hospital, with vans, auto-rickshaws and CNGs.

Those with comparatively less severe injuries were treated in front of the camps, while those with serious injuries were taken inside. The hospital authorities took an "all hands on deck" approach as day-offs of all the doctors and staffers were cancelled.

The interns and medical students nearby chipped in. It resembled hospitals inside a war zone.

At least eight students were killed as police fired shotgun pellets and lobbed tear shells at protesting students in Uttara's Azampur area, confirmed Mizanur Rahman, superintendent of Kuwait Moitree Friendship Hospital.

Meanwhile, over 1,000 students, mostly between 16-28 years old, sought treatment at Uttara Adhunik Hospital, said inside sources.

Many are in critical conditions, they added.

Inside, this correspondent found the usually sterile floors of the facility to be bloodied. There were not enough beds to treat all the patients.

Many were receiving treatment in the floor. Some parents were seen crying beside their injured sons, who were screaming in pain from the injuries.

Even the doctors struggled to fight back tears.

"I haven't seen such a horrific situation in 12 years of my professional life," said a nurse, requesting anonymity.



"Hundreds of protesting students with shotgun pellet wounds have streamed in since this afternoon. There aren't enough beds to accommodate them all. Even the doctors and nurses are in tears," she added.

The situation was worse in Kuwait Moitree Hospital, as seen by our reporter there.

Eight died inside the facility, all of whom had shotgun pellet wounds. The parents and friends of the deceased were in no condition to talk with this correspondent.

This newspaper could not contact our correspondents stationed in other hospitals of Uttara due to internet shutdown and disruptions in mobile network.

Similar situations existed in hospitals near Mohammadpur and Dhanmondi as police fired shotgun pellets on protesters, mostly college students.

A 17-year-old named Farhan Faiyaz died in City Hospital, Mohammadpur.

At least 200-250 injured were brought to the facility,

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Country rocked by violence

STAR REPORT

For the third day in a row, the country witnessed widespread student protests, which erupted like wildfire in retaliation to the earlier attacks on them by law enforcers and Chhatra League men during their protests against quota system.

The protestors yesterday enforced a "complete shutdown" of transport networks, businesses, and offices as part of their movement.

Like the capital, the protests took place in many other cities and district towns, where law enforcers, alongside activists of Awami League and its associate bodies, attacked on the protestors.

As a result, clashes took place among them, in which, six people, including three students, were killed outside the capital.

Also, over 500 were injured in at least 19 districts, reported our district correspondents.

Shaikh Ashabul Yamin, a student of Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST), was killed in Savar when protestors clashed with police and AL activists in the Savar Bazar bus stand area.

The victim's father Mohammad Mohiuddin confirmed the death.

Yusuf Ali, duty manager of Enam Medical College Hospital in Savar, told The Daily Star that Yamin, who had several rubber bullet injuries on his body,

was brought to the hospital dead.

Five other injured were admitted to the hospital, he added.

Earlier, protestors blocked Pakiza bus stand on Dhaka-Aricha highway around 12:30pm and proceeded towards the Pakiza area, where leaders and activists of AL, its associate bodies, police, and BGB members took position.

In the port city, two people were killed and 50 others injured in clashes between protesters and police in Bahaddarhat area.

Identities of the deceased could not be known immediately.

Tuhin Shubhro Das, emergency medical officer at CMCH, said two people with bullet wounds were brought to the hospital in the evening. One, aged around 21, succumbed to his injuries around 6:30pm while another, aged around 23, died at 7:00pm.

Witnesses said several thousand protestors chased the police and took control of Bahaddarhat Intersection

around 2:00pm. Police charged batons and fired tear shells to disperse them.

Protesters also clashed with BCL activists in phases.

Later, the protestors attacked police around 6:00pm. They also set the police box at Bahaddarhat Intersection on fire.

In Narsingdi, two students were killed during clash between protestors and police at Bhelanagar area.

Deceased were Imon Ahmed, 21, who returned from Malaysia and Tahmid Tamim, 15, a class nine student. The clash left at least 100 more injured.

Mizanur Rahman, residential medical officer of Narsingdi District Hospital and Mahmudul Kabir, RMO of Narsingdi Sadar Hospital, confirmed the deaths, saying there were marks of rubber bullets on their bodies.

In Madaripur, Dipta Dey, a student of Madaripur Government College, drowned in Shakuni Lake in the district town after being chased by police and BCL activists

during a clash.

The clash left around 50 more injured. The district's Additional Superintendent of Police Md. Moniruzzaman confirmed the death.

"The protestors gathered at the Shakuni Lake area. They hurled brickbats at the police and attacked with sticks, and in response, police charged batons, fired rubber bullet, and lobbed teargas to disperse them," he claimed.

Later, police recovered a body from the lake, he said, adding, "However, we don't know how he died. We will know details of the death after investigation."

In the evening, protestors set fire to a police outpost and attacked the offices of the superintendent of police and deputy commissioner.

In Bogura, at least 53, including 10 police men, were injured in Bogura yesterday during the clash between law enforcers and protestors at town's Satmatha and court area.

A total of 43 injured students, including 12 with rubber bullet injuries, were taking treatment at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College, according to the hospital's deputy director, Abdul Wadud.

In a separate clash with police at the Bogura District Court area around 1:45pm, at least 10 police personnel were injured. They are receiving treatment at Mohammad Ali Hospital in Bogura, said

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