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# Journo killed while covering quota protests

2 from Star among 11 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A journalist was killed and at least 11 others were injured yesterday while covering the students’ “complete shutdown” programme demanding reforms to quotas in government jobs.

Mehedi Hasan, staff reporter of Dhaka Times, an online news portal, was injured during a clash between police and protesters in the capital’s Jatrabari. The 28-year-old was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Among the injured are Abir Shafiq Shameen of The Daily Star’s multimedia department and Dwoha Chowdhury, Sylhet correspondent of the newspaper.

Abir, a senior assistant producer, was hit by shotgun pellets in the capital’s Mirpur-10 while Dwoha was hit by brick chunks at the main entrance to Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, said Mohiuddin, general secretary of Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU).

Nadira Sharmeen, senior reporter of Ekattar TV, and its cameraperson Syed Rashidul Hasan were hit by shotgun pellets in the capital’s Jatrabari.



Mehedi Hasan

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Illegal structures have been set up encroaching on the Buriganga at Jhauchar Ghat of Keraniganj. The authorities had installed boundary pillars along the river to save it from encroachment, but that has proved futile. The photo was taken recently.

# 30 establishments torched in 2 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Protesters have set fire to at least 30 establishments, including the main building of Bangladesh Television, along with police and BGB vehicles over the last two days.

Arson attacks were also carried out on government and political party offices, police stations and outposts, and toll plazas.

Witnesses said a large number of students broke open the main gate of the BTV station in the capital’s Rampura around 2:45pm yesterday and set ablaze a part of the building.

The fire later spread to the main building, leading to suspension of BTV transmission, Mahafuza Aktar, general manager of BTV, told The Daily Star.

“We had to leave the building around 7:30pm.”

Khaleda Yeasmin, duty officer of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, said two fire engines went to the BTV station but were barred by the protesters from entering.

Demonstrators set fire to the office of the Department of Disaster Management in the capital’s Mohakhali around 3:30pm. The blaze damaged the cables of some data centres housed in an adjacent building.

Emdadul Haque, president of the Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh, said the centres lost at least 30 percent of their total bandwidth because of the damaged cables.

In the evening, the Setu Bhaban was set on fire, damaging at least 10 vehicles parked in front of the building, said an official of the Bridges Division. Demonstrators also vandalised the ground floor of the building.

In Madaripur, protestors set ablaze a police outpost and vandalised the offices of the superintendent of police and deputy commissioner.

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## LATEST FROM RANGPUR

The DB office and Tajahat Police Station in Rangpur city were set on fire around 1:45am. Firefighters, with the BGB providing security, doused the blaze, said police and fire service sources.

## Internet service blocked across the country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country is under complete internet blackout after the transfer of bandwidth was suspended to internet service providers (ISPs) and carriers were ordered to shut down mobile data service.

The government had this done yesterday through the international terrestrial cable (ITC) companies, which import bandwidth from India across the border, The Daily Star has learnt with people involved with the proceedings.

ITCs provide over half (3,500gbps) of the total bandwidth import around 5,800gbps. From 9:00pm, internet supply from the two submarine cables was mostly down, leaving the country with virtually no internet.

“We aren’t getting any bandwidth from the ITCs and only a little from the submarine cables,” said Emdadul Haque, president of the Internet Service Providers’ Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB).

It’s not enough to ensure internet for the users, he added.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh

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# Exports dropped in last three years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh’s exports have been declining over the past three years, according to the central bank data.

The disclosure was made in the monetary policy statement for the first half of fiscal 2024-25, which was unveiled yesterday.

For instance, in fiscal 2023-24, exports are likely to be around \$42 billion, which is \$10 billion less than the figure reported by the Export Promotion Bureau, as the receipts, according to the BB, were down 4.28 percent year-on-year in the first 11 months of the year.

As per EPB statistics, exports stood at \$51.54 billion during that period, up 2.01 percent from a year earlier.

Similarly, the EPB has shown an export growth of 6.67 percent for fiscal 2022-23 and 34.38 percent for fiscal 2021-22.

The BB receipts indicate otherwise. The central bank data shows receipts from garment shipments dropped 5.2 percent between July last year and May this year.

Following the export data mismatch, the EPB has decided not to publish the monthly export data until further instructions from the commerce ministry, said a senior official of the commerce ministry wing.


If the EPB can set up its own data centre, it will release the data monthly, he said.

The EPB will assess the export dynamics based on the data from the customs department of the National Board of Revenue and the BB, the official added.

“The export data which the BB has been publishing is correct as the EPB data was inflated,” said Mohammad Hatem, executive president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA).

Over the last few years, Hatem has been saying that the export data was inflated as the real data of issuance of Utilisation Declaration (UD) certification does not match with the EPB export data.

The BKMEA and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association issue the UD certification to its members.



The central bank data shows receipts from garment shipments dropped 5.2 percent between July last year and May this year.

## QUOTA IN GOVT JOBS

# SC to hear pleas against HC verdict on Sunday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court will Sunday hear two leave to appeal petitions that challenged the High Court decision to reinstate quotas in government jobs.

Justice M Enayetur Rahim, chamber judge of the Appellate Division, yesterday evening fixed the date for the full bench, led by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, to hear the matter first that day.

The chamber judge passed the order after Attorney General AM Amin Uddin appealed for an early hearing of the petitions considering those as an important and urgent matter.

Justice Enayetur conducted the judicial functions and passed the order at his official residence

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# HSC, equivalent exams for July 21, 23, 25 postponed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The HSC and equivalent examinations of all education boards scheduled for July 21, 23, and 25 have been postponed.

The schedule for the postponed examinations will be notified later.

The development was communicated through a notification signed by Prof Tapan Kumar Sarkar, chairman of the Bangladesh Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee and chairman of the Dhaka Education Board.

Other examinations will be held as per the previously announced schedule from July 28, the notification said.

The HSC and equivalent examinations scheduled for yesterday were also postponed earlier.

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# China for peace and stability in Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

China wants restoration of peace and stability in Bangladesh, said Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen yesterday.

“We wish that peace and stability will be restored very soon. This is aspiration of all in Bangladesh. It is important for China too. We want to have more cooperation. We wish to see Bangladesh move forward,” he said.

The diplomat made the comments in response to media questions on the ongoing countryside demonstrations by the students seeking reforms to the quota system in government jobs.

Wen yesterday met Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud at the

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# Australia, India, US missions issue travel alerts

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign missions of Australia, India, and the US have asked their nationals in Bangladesh to remain on alert while travelling amid the ongoing student demonstrations.

They issued travel alerts as the demonstrations have spread across Dhaka and elsewhere in the country over the last few days.

“Traffic delays and public transport disruptions are likely. Avoid large gatherings, including protests, demonstrations, and rallies. These can turn violent without warning. Be aware of your surroundings, monitor local media, and follow the advice of local authorities,” said the Australian High Commission in a

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# Eerie silence reigns over campuses

## Hotbeds of quota demo shift elsewhere after students vacate halls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most of the public universities across the country were calm yesterday after the authorities vacated the halls following clashes between law enforcers, Chhatra League men, and students over the quota reform protests.

Dhaka University was almost empty yesterday. Police and BGB personnel took control of the campus on Tuesday evening after sporadic clashes between law enforcers, Chhatra League men, and demonstrators for over two hours from 4:00pm.

At least 15 students were injured during the clashes as police fired rubber bullets, tear gas and sound grenades at the protesters.

Since early yesterday, law enforcers were seen patrolling campus streets and guarding the entries to the campus. Some teachers and officials

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The mother of a 20-year-old Palestinian of Gazan origin is being comforted by others as she mourns her son after he was killed during an Israeli army raid in al-Bireh north of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP