



DHAKA SUNDAY JULY 21, 2024

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXIV No. 178

SRABAN 6, 1431 BS

www.thedailystar.net

MUHARRAM 14, 1446 HJRI

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Dhaka wears a deserted look amid curfew
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A convoy of military vehicles in the capital's Jatrabari area around noon yesterday. Armed forces were deployed across the country after a curfew was imposed Friday midnight. *Top right*, Agitators gather in Jatrabari with billboards and corrugated iron sheets to use them as shields. *Bottom right*, The capital's Science Lab area, which was one of the flashpoints of Friday's violence, wore a deserted look amid the curfew yesterday.



Curfew to stay in force until further notice

Says home boss; 2hr break from 3pm today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to extend the ongoing curfew, which was scheduled to end at 10:00am today, until further notice.

The curfew, however, will be relaxed for two hours starting from 3:00pm today.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan made the announcement at a press briefing following a meeting with law enforcement agencies at his Dhanmondi residence yesterday.

On Thursday, the government imposed a nationwide curfew and deployed armed forces to assist the civil administration in ensuring national securities and protecting lives and properties.

This is the first instance of a curfew being imposed in the last one and half decades.

Responding to a query, the minister

PHOTO: STAR

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At least 21 dead on first day of curfew

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first day of curfew was marked by sporadic incidents of violence that left at least 21 people dead and scores injured in Dhaka and other parts of the country yesterday. Most of the victims were hit by bullets.

On Friday night, the government imposed nationwide curfew and deployed army personnel to assist the civil administration in ensuring national security and protecting lives and public properties in the wake of fierce violence centring on quota protests.

Members of the army were seen patrolling different city points and other districts since yesterday morning. They also set up makeshift bunkers with sandbags at different points.

Amid the curfew, thousands of protesters, both students and non-students, took to the streets with processions, blocked roads and highways and torched tyres and planks of wood on the streets in Dhaka and elsewhere.

Of the victims, nine were killed in the capital and four each in Savar, Narayanganj and Mymensingh, hospital authorities said.

In addition, two policemen were brought dead to Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday, said Inspector Bacchu Mia, in-charge of the DMCH police outpost. Police

and morgue sources said both were beaten to death during clashes on Friday.

Also, two people who suffered head injuries during violence in the city's Mohammadpur on Friday died at National Institute of Neuroscience and Hospital, said Ahad Ali, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

Of the nine victims in the capital, eight were either brought dead or declared dead at the DMCH, Bacchu Mia told The Daily Star. Most of them suffered bullet and pellet injuries during clashes in Jatrabari, Rayerbagh, Azimpur and Mirpur.

Another victim was brought dead at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said its director Prof Dr Shafiur Rahman.

Including yesterday's victims, at least 127 lives have been lost since Tuesday, when six people were killed in violence. On Thursday, at least 29 more people were killed in fierce clashes between protesters and law enforcers, aided by ruling party activists.

Another victim injured in Wednesday's violence also died on Thursday. On Friday, at least 66 people were killed across the country.

The overall death toll and that from yesterday's violence may rise, as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals where dozens of critically injured patients were taken for treatment. Also, many

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Violence flares in Mymensingh, Savar, N'ganj

STAR REPORT

Fierce clashes between agitators and law enforcers in Mymensingh, Savar, and Narayanganj left at least 12 people dead yesterday.

At least four were killed in each of these places. Over 100 people took treatment at hospitals for injuries sustained in the violence in Savar and Narayanganj.

In Mymensingh's Gouripur upazila, three people were killed during clashes on the first day of the nationwide curfew. At least 30 people, including 12 police officials, were injured.

Witnesses said the agitators blocked the Mymensingh-Kishoreganj Highway at Kaltapara around 11:00am and police rushed there to try and disperse them.

Of the injured, 16 were taken to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, where Rakib, 18; Biplob, 19; and Jubayer, 18, died around noon, said Md Zakul Islam, deputy director of the hospital.

Contacted, Gouripur Police Station Inspector (Investigation) Imran Al Hossain confirmed the deaths.

In the district's Phulpur upazila, a pedestrian was reportedly killed, while 10 others, including three policemen, were hurt in clashes between agitators and law enforcers in the Amuakanda Bridge area.

The deceased was identified as Saiful Islam, 32, of the upazila, said police.

In Savar, poultry trader Kurban Ali, 55, was killed as police opened fire during a chase and counter-chase with demonstrators at the Bazar Bus Stand.

He was shot in the throat while he was in his shop, his family said.

Witnesses said the agitators gathered there around 2:00pm. The clash erupted when police fired shots to disperse them. The demonstrators retaliated by throwing brick chunks at them.

Kurban was taken to Enam Medical College Hospital, where he was declared dead, said Rezaur Rahman, a doctor there.

Rickshaw-puller Roni, 27, of Savar's Shahibagh, was shot during a clash around 5:30pm on the Savar

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Key organiser of quota demo 'picked up'

Allege family and witnesses, point fingers at cops

ASIFUR RAHAMAN and AHMED DEEPTO

Nahid Islam, a key organisers of the anti-discrimination student movement, was picked up by plainclothes persons from a house in Sabujbagh early yesterday, according to witnesses.

They alleged the people broke the locks of the building gates to enter and detain Nahid, a masters student of DU's sociology department who has been leading the quota reform protests from the front line since the first week of July.

His family members and fellow protesters alleged that law enforcers picked him up as he declined the government's proposal for a dialogue ahead of the Supreme Court's hearing on the quota issue today.

However, three of the 27 protest organisers met the law minister on Friday night in this regard.

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Notice

Internet outage has forced us to cut the number of pages to 8 from 16. Our website is also inaccessible. We regret the inconvenience.

Two varying sets of demands from quota protesters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the quota reform protests have come up with two varying sets of demands.

Three key coordinators of the Baishamyabirodhi Chhatra Andolan placed eight point demand at a meeting with three ministers at State Guesthouse Padma on Friday night.

Hasnat Abdullah, Sarjis Alam and Hasib Al Islam participated in the meeting with Law Minister Anisul Huq, Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury and State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Muhammad Ali Arafat.

They demanded that those in the government, who instigated Chhatra League and instructed the law enforcement agencies to attack the protesters, be brought to book after an investigation.

They also called for financial assistance and monthly allowance to the families of those killed and injured during the protests.

The demands also include resignation of the vice-chancellors and proctors for whose "silent role" the students came under attack.

They said the seats at the university halls should be allocated through the university authorities concerned, and the students' unions must be made effective.

The three coordinators demanded immediate withdrawal of the law enforcers from all universities and reopening of halls.

The government must ensure that those who are involved in the movement will face no political or legal harassment or any punitive measures from the university administration, they added.

All the cases filed over the quota reform protests have to be withdrawn immediately, the protest organisers said.

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Three key organisers of quota protests place 8-point demand before three ministers.



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Security personnel patrol the road near the Jatrabari toll plaza of the Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover in the capital yesterday after violence broke out there. *Top right*, a bus burns after an arson attack in Jatrabari. *Bottom right*, army personnel checking the shopping bag of a rickshaw passenger in Khamarbari area during curfew hours.

WOMEN’S ASIA CUP Losing start for Tigresses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh began their Women’s Asia Cup campaign on the back foot, losing against hosts Sri Lanka by seven wickets at the Dambulla Ranagiri International Stadium last night.

The women in red and green opted to bat first in a decent batting wicket, but found themselves in trouble losing early wickets. The Nigar Sultana Joty-led side lost three wickets for six runs and then reached 46 for four in 10 overs.

Joty’s 48 eventually helped the Tigresses post 111 for eight.

The bowlers, however, failed to put up a fight as the Lankans raced to the target in 17.1 overs. Left-arm spinner Nahida Akter took all three wickets for Bangladesh. Vishmi Gunaratne scored a half-century for Sri Lanka.

In the other match of the day, Thailand beat Malaysia by 22 runs.

Curfew to stay in force until further notice

FROM PAGE 1
said the government will do everything required to bring back normalcy to the country.

“We will take stern actions against those involved in subversive activities and killings using the quota reform protest,” he said, adding that law enforcers did not see any students’ involvement in destructive activities.

Asaduzzaman said the quota protesters placed an eight-point demand and government will accept the logical ones at the earliest.

He said the miscreants are using firearms and bombs against law enforcers. Even common people came under their attacks, he added.

“All these [destructive activities] are being conducted to dislodge the government and form a government with anti-liberation forces. They are tirelessly trying to achieve their goal,” Asaduzzaman said.

“The curfew has been announced as miscreants are inflicting huge damage [to our country]. We had no other options. Our main target is to bring back normalcy,” he said.

The minister said the government will identify the miscreants involved in vandalism killings and take stern actions against them.

Acknowledging that people will suffer during the curfew, he urged all to cooperate with the law enforcers to identify “the country’s enemies”.

Asked about the death toll in the ongoing unrest, the minister said he will not be able to ascertain the exact number at this moment.

At least 21 dead on first day of curfew

FROM PAGE 1
families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families. The Daily Star’s count of the victims is based solely on hospital sources.

Some of yesterday’s fiercest clashes took place in Rayerbagh of Jatrabari, Mirpur-10, and Mohammadpur.

Besides, law enforcers opened fire on agitators when they took out processions at Badda and Malibagh rail crossing areas. They lobbed teargas canisters and sound grenades in Rayerbagh from low-flying helicopters. Gunshots were heard in Banasree areas as well, witnesses said.

Like in the past few days, Dhaka remained cut off from the rest of the country as road and rail communications remained suspended.

At least 11 international flights were either cancelled or delayed for hours “due to a lack of passengers and a glitch in the flight data system”, causing sufferings to several hundred passengers.

In an executive order, the government yesterday announced holidays for today and tomorrow for all government, autonomous, semi-autonomous and non-government offices except those providing emergency services, Public Administration Senior Secretary Mesbah Uddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan also announced holidays for the lower courts. But one or multiple magistrates will perform duties at the courts of chief judicial and chief metropolitan magistrates round the clock, said a press release issued by the SC registrar general.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and the High Court Division will function from 10:00am to 1:00pm.

Today, the apex court is set to hold hearing of two leave-to-appeal petitions that challenged the June 5 HC judgment, reinstating quotas in government jobs.

A tense situation prevails across the country.

Many citizens called The Daily Star reporters and voiced their concerns over the ongoing violence.

Streets of Dhaka wore a deserted look as only a handful number of rickshaws were seen plying. During the recess of curfew for two hours from 12 noon, many rushed to kitchen markets and other destinations for emergency work.

Almost all shops in the capital were closed. Many onlookers went to the main roads to assess the situation.

As the day progressed, hundreds of agitators, including members of the public, took to the streets to stage demonstration.

Two varying sets

FROM PAGE 1
However, another group of protest coordinators in text messages to different media outlets last evening said the Friday’s meeting with ministers was a personal decision of a few individuals.

They said their movement will continue until the next announcement is made and the “nine-point demand” is met.

Abdul Kader, a coordinator of the quota protests, placed the nine-point demand in a statement at 9:30pm on Friday.

The demands include an apology from the prime minister for her remarks and resignation of Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader and Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan resign from cabinet.

These demands were left out of the eight-point demand.

Yesterday’s text message from

JATRABARI

Violent clashes took place in phases in Rayerbagh of Jatrabari as protesters blocked the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway from Chittagong Road area to Kajla by placing several trucks and covered vans haphazardly.

Law enforcers fired gunshots, lobbed teargas shells and sound grenades to disperse them. The protesters hurled brick chunks at the law enforcers, and also set afire tyres and planks of wood at different spots.

A local resident told The Daily Star around 5:30pm that he saw helicopters flying low.

“I saw choppers hovering and charging teargas canisters and sound grenades at the protesters,” he said.

Witnesses said that streets in Kajla, Rayerbagh, and Chittagong road of Jatrabari saw running battles between demonstrators and law enforcers since morning.

A tense situation has been prevailing in the area since Thursday.

MOHAMMADPUR

In Mohammadpur, the police fired bullets, teargas canisters and numerous sound grenades to prevent a crowd from reaching Mohammadpur Police Station in the afternoon.

The protesters threw brick chips and stones at police and then took position at Mohammadpur Bus Stand. They also blocked the road at different points from Mohammadpur Bus Stand to Beribadh area.

A reporter of The Daily Star was present there.

Members of the Armed Police Battalion, the BGB and the army reached the area around 5:15pm and a severe clash broke out between protesters and law enforcers.

Till 6:30pm, members of law enforcement agencies fired numerous shots while the demonstrators threw brickbats and stones.

Earlier, hundreds of protesters blocked Mohammadpur-Beribadh road and put up makeshift barricades in adjacent areas around 11:00am.

At one point, the agitators marched towards Mohammadpur Police Station, chanting anti-government slogans.

The protesters included students, children and general people, including women.

Hundreds of protesters also blocked Sat Masjid Road around 4:00pm.

Aged between 15 and 25, the agitators set up barricades at all major intersections from Dhanmondi 15 to Shankar neighborhood.

Around 6:00pm, police used teargas and sound grenades to disperse them. But the protesters, most of whom wore facemask, quickly took shelter in nearby lanes.

When police stopped firing, they regrouped and returned to the street,

and hurled brick chunks and stones at police.

MIRPUR

Mirpur-10 and adjoining areas also saw severe clashes as law enforcers opened fire and charged teargas shells and sound grenades on the protesters who gathered on Rokeya Sarani from Kazipara to Benarashi Palli.

A number of residents and witnesses said they saw many injured being taken in ambulances and rickshaws from the spot. They saw also helicopters hovering in the sky.

Around 1:30pm, several hundred people, mostly youths, blocked the road near Kazipara Metro station. A media vehicle was torched there.

Things became tense around 1:45pm, when police opened fire on demonstrators, according to witnesses.

At 3:00pm, a huge number of people gathered on the road from Kazipara to Benarashi Palli and burnt tyres and woods at different places on the road. Additional police, Rab and BGB personnel were called in.

Locals saw armored vehicles and water cannons there.

Several hundred people then brought out a procession from the Kazipara end around 6:00pm when police, Rab and BGB members opened fire, leading to clashes, witnesses said.

At least four journalists were assaulted by protesters who expressed their anger, saying the media is not reporting the actual death toll.

Sporadic clashes also took place at different places on Mouchak Rampura road for several hours. Law enforcers dispersed protesters by firing rubber bullets and teargas shells, witnesses said.

Parts of the road remain blocked since Thursday.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, assistant inspector general of police (media) said the two police members who were killed during clashes are Gasuddin, a Nayek of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, and Muktadir, an assistant sub-inspector of tourist police.

At least 650 police members were wounded across the country till Friday, he added.

However, he said he had no information about the total death toll or the volume of ammunition used on the protesters so far.

Rab director Legal and Media Wing Lt Col Munim Ferdous said none of their members was wounded yesterday. Till Friday, over 100 Rab members were injured, one of them critically. Besides, two Rab vehicles were torched, while two ambulances and nine pick-ups were vandalised.

He said both Rab and BGB were flying helicopters over the Dhaka sky to quell the protest.

confirmed the authenticity of the text message.

About the eight-point demand of the three key protest organisers, the message said, “Their decision is devoid of the spirit of the protests.”

Meanwhile, the law minister and the education minister yesterday told this newspaper that a logical solution to the students’ demands is possible.

“The students have placed their [eight] demands before us. We have discussed those. We think it is possible to find a reasonable solution to what they said on the percentages of job quotas,” Anisul told The Daily Star yesterday.

Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury said, “Since a hearing on the matter will be held at the Supreme Court tomorrow [today], a solution will come. We and the students are on the same page regarding these demands.”



PHOTO: STAR

Violence flares in Mymensingh

FROM PAGE 1
Bazar Road. He too was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

Mehedi, 24, a mason, was shot in the head around 6:45pm during a clash on the same road. He was also taken to the same hospital and declared dead.

“My son was returning home from work. He was not a protester,” said Mehedi’s mother Jahanara Begum.

Sixth grader Saad Mohammad Khan, 13, was killed when he went to watch a clash in Savar’s Dogormura area around 6:00pm. He was shot in the abdomen.

He was taken to Enam Medical College Hospital, where he died around 8:30pm, said doctors.

Around 50 people with bullet and shotgun-pellet injuries received treatment at the hospital and at Savar Upazila Health Complex.

Eight of them were in the ICU of Enam Medical.

In Narayanganj, sporadic clashes went on all day long from the Signboard area to Kanchpur on the Dhaka Chattogram Highway.

Six vehicles and a market were torched.

Law enforcers hurled sound grenades from helicopters to disperse the agitators.

Three men – Sajal, 22, Shahin, 23, and Hridoy, 22 – were declared dead in the district’s Sugondha Hospital, said hospital manager Abdul Jalil.

Sajal, who was shot in the abdomen, appeared for SSC exams this year, while

Shahin, who had pellet wounds on his body, was a cashier at a hotel. Hridoy had bullet injuries in the head and waist.

Meanwhile, garment worker Minarul, 25, was brought dead to the Narayanganj 300-bed Hospital around 8:00pm last night, said Apu Kumar Saha, a medical officer there.

He was shot in the abdomen during the clash, the doctor said quoting Minarul’s parents.

Around 50 people with bullet and pellet injuries were admitted to a private hospital in Narayanganj’s Signboard area between 6:00pm and 8:00pm, doctors said.

In Kishoreganj’s Pakundia upazila, 20 people, including an assistant commissioner (land) and five policemen, were injured as agitators clashed with police and ruling party activists in the Pakundia Bazar area.

In Narsingdi, the Panchadhana Muktiyoddha Complex was vandalised and torched by demonstrators around 12:30pm, said police.

In Shibpur upazila, they vandalised a highway police outpost around 3:00pm.

In Sylhet, several groups of people were seen trying to block the Sylhet-Sunamganj Highway but police and army personnel obstructed them.

In Gazipur, a police box was vandalised at Board Bazar and another one was torched at Chandana intersection.

(Our correspondents from the districts contributed to this report.)

Key organiser of quota demo ‘picked up’

FROM PAGE 1
The three – Hasnat Abdullah, Sarjis Alam and Hasib Al Islam – placed an eight-point demand to the minister, while Nahid and others earlier announced a nine-point demand.

Multiple witnesses told The Daily Star that around 25-30 plainclothes persons, including a woman, came to the building in two black vans and two SUV’s around 1:10am.

After about 10-15 minutes, around five of them jumped over the boundary wall and broke the main gate’s lock with an iron rod from the inside. They then brought a cutter from the car and cut two locks of a collapsible gate inside the building, a witness, who is a guard of an adjacent building, described.

He said the people brought out a man from the second floor and left the area around 2:30am.

“The woman among them told us not to call or tell anyone about the incident.”

Another witness said locals in the area did not know who Nahid was nor the reason behind his detention.

This newspaper was able to contact Nahid’s friend, who was with him that night.

Requesting anonymity, he said, “When they [plainclothes persons] reached the first floor, we knew they came for us. Nahid told me to run and I went and hid on the rooftop. They then took him away.

“I later heard they were from the Detective Branch of police and that a Rab team was also with them.”

These correspondents waited in front of the building from 7:30am to 9:00am yesterday to talk to the

tenants and house owners, but no one responded.

Nahid’s father Badrul Islam said he learned his son was picked up from the house owners.

“My son has been fighting against discriminations. The government tried to convince him to sit with them before the Supreme Court’s hearing but my son denied it. That’s why the law enforcers picked him up.”

However, no law enforcement agency has admitted to picking Nahid up till the filing of this report around 9:00pm.

His father spent the day rushing from the DB office to the CID office and then Sabujbagh Police Station.

In the evening, he said they were yet to get any news from any law enforcers regarding Nahid’s whereabouts.

“Wewantoursonbackimmediately.”

Around 11:00pm, Nahid’s father filed a general diary with Khilgaon Police Station.

Contacted, both the DB and Rab denied the allegation of picking up Nahid from Sabujbagh. Deputy Commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Faruk Hossain said they did not detain any of the protesters.

Lt Col Munim Ferdous, director legal and media wing of Rab, said, he doesn’t know about any such incident.

Nahid is the member secretary of Democratic Students Force, a newly formed political party. Its convener Akhter Hossain, former welfare secretary of Dhaka University Central Students’ Union, was also arrested on Wednesday from the campus.

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Deployment of armed forces was necessary

Says Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the government was compelled to deploy armed forces to protect lives and properties.

He, however, said the curfew will be relaxed when the situation becomes normal.

Quader was addressing a press briefing at the party president's Dhanmondi office.

In an ill attempt, the BNP Jamaat is trying to keep the country's people hostage using the quota movement, Quader alleged.

The AL spokesperson said criminals have gathered in the capital under the directive of BNP leader Tarique Rahman, aiming to take advantage of the quota movement.

He urged all to assist the armed forces to face the criminals and foil their evil plan. Quader hoped that the court's verdict will be acceptable by students.

Foreign minister to brief envoys today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud will brief foreign diplomats today on the current crisis that has arisen out of the quota reform movement in Bangladesh.

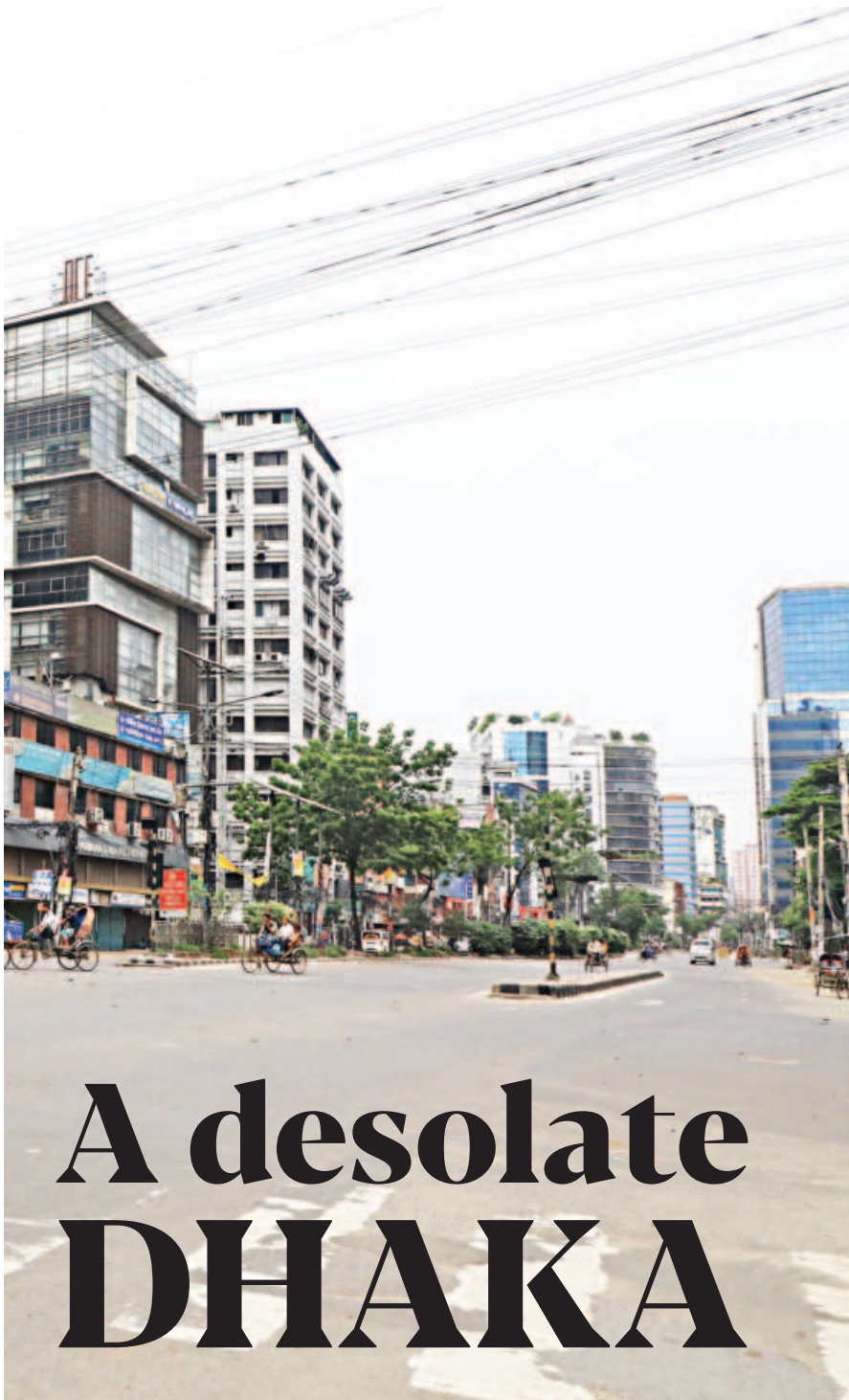
The briefing will be held at the state guesthouse Jamuna at 11:00am, he told reporters at the foreign ministry yesterday.

He also thanked the foreign embassies in Dhaka for not making any public statements on the internal affairs of Bangladesh.

Last Thursday, the foreign ministry sent a verbal note to the foreign missions in Dhaka, describing the current situation.

It said that the government has read the demands of the students who were demonstrating for reform to the quota

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



A desolate DHAKA

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

All major roads and streets in Dhaka wore a deserted look amid curfew yesterday.

Apart from a few sporadic clashes between agitators and law enforcers in different areas, much of the city remained largely empty as most people chose to stay at home throughout the day.

From morning till noon, the kitchen markets, shopping malls, offices and all sorts of businesses remained completely closed. Pedestrians and vehicles were rarely noticed even on the busiest streets including Mirpur Road, Manik Mia Avenue, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, and Sat Masjid Road.

Only a few rickshaws, ambulances and some police vehicles were seen plying the capital's roads, while no public and private transports could be seen anywhere in the city.

When the curfew was lifted on 12:00pm for two hours, people rushed to shops and kitchen markets to buy essentials.

However, the panic-stricken people moved cautiously in and around their neighbourhoods even during this time, only opting for the nearest shops and bazaars, thereby causing long queues and supply shortages in the stores, leaving many compelled to return home empty handed.

The shop owners were seen keeping their shutters half open so they could close shops at any moment if needed.

Rubaya Ahmed went to buy eggs, vegetables, chicken and fish for her family. After waiting for half an hour, she could only purchase four eggs and some vegetables.

Chicken, eggs and fresh fish were out of stock in many shops.

"I walked from one shop to another but could not find chicken and fish. I managed to buy four eggs and some vegetables. The vegetables were not fresh, but I had no choice," she said.

Many customers also alleged that the shop owners were demanding higher prices for essential commodities.



Clockwise from left, an empty street in Kakrail. Teens playing cricket in Hatirpool. Piles of Garbage remain unattended in Shewrapara. People getting water from a pipe in front of Bangabhaban as Wasa water ATM booths became non-functional due to internet shutdown.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN, PRABIR DAS, RASHED SHUMON

Long queues also formed in front of mobile top-up outlets and mobile financial services (MFS) agent outlets. Amid the countrywide internet shutdown, people are heavily relying on mobile phones for communication.

However, many people could not recharge their phone balance due to poor mobile phone network, and send or receive funds through MFS agents.

Rakib Hasan, a resident of Dhanmondi, said he could not recharge his phone and hence will be unable to make any emergency call for the rest of the day.

"My family lives in another district and they are very worried about the situation in Dhaka. I need to maintain regular communication with them, but due to poor network, even communication through mobile phone has become extremely difficult," he said.

"I also regularly use MFS for financial transactions. Due to poor network and long queues at the agent outlets, I could not send or receive money for four days," Rakib added.

'How many bullets does it take to kill a person, sir?'

Grief-stricken SI asks after losing 17-year-old son in Jatrabari clash

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Moynal Hossain, a sub-inspector at Razorbagh Police Lines, and his wife were frantically running from one room to another at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, looking for their son Imam Hossain Tayeem, 17, yesterday.

"Do you know, where we can find this boy?" the couple asked everyone, showing a photograph of Tayeem.

However, even after looking for him for two hours since 5:00pm, they could not find his name on the list of the injured or deceased.

Seeing the photograph, a journalist suggested that Moynal search the emergency mortuary. The tensed father immediately took off in that direction, and found Tayeem's lifeless body there around 7:00pm.

Shell shocked, Moynal froze for a moment. His wife collapsed on the floor, wailing, "Oh almighty, who took my son? Why did you go outside without telling us, my son?"

Tayeem, a college student in Narayanganj, had left his home around 11:00am yesterday to join an agitation as part of the quota reform protests at Rayerbagh of Jatrabari, which has been a flashpoint of violent clashes for the past three days.

About an hour later, his parents got a phone call that said Tayeem was shot and being taken to DMCH.

"My youngest son had been protesting for quota reforms since the beginning. Yesterday too, he went out to the streets, defying my instruction to stay home amid the curfew," said Moynal.

Tayeem, a college student in Narayanganj, had left his house around 11:00am yesterday to join an agitation as part of the ongoing quota reform protest at Rayerbagh of Jatrabari, which has been a hotspot of violent clashes for the past three days.

After finding Tayeem's body, Moynal was heard talking to someone over phone, "Sir, my son is dead. His chest was torn apart by bullets [pellets]. Sir, my son is no more."

The aggrieved father asked, "How many bullets does it take to kill a person, sir?"

The Daily Star could not verify who was on the other side of the phone.

INTERNET SHUTDOWN

ATM services, digital banking disrupted

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Online banking, ATM and digital payment services including money transfers and utility bill payments continued to be disrupted yesterday amid the ongoing internet blackout across the country since Thursday.

Robiul Islam, who has an account with EXIM Bank, wanted to withdraw money

as he urgently needed cash but failed to do so from numerous ATM booths in different areas of Dhaka.

He finally managed to withdraw money from an ATM booth of Mutual Trust Bank at Panthapath.

"Most ATM booths of different banks were shut down, while those that were open had no money," he told this correspondent.

Contacted, Mohammad Feroz Hossen, managing director of EXIM Bank, said they loaded all of their ATM booths with money before the ongoing unrest began.

While all of their ATM booths remained open since then, there is a possibility that some of the booths ran out of cash because the bank was facing difficulties to load money to the booths amid the unrest,

he added.

Faria Anjum, a student, wanted to use her bank card for buying some urgent medicines for her mother at Popular Diagnostic Centre in Shantinagar due to shortage of cash in hand.

But she was unable to do so as the POS (point of sale) machine at the diagnostic centre could not run without internet.

"There should be no problem in withdrawing cash if ATM booths have adequate funds. However, ATM booths in some areas are vulnerable to risk of attacks, so those have been kept shut as a precautionary measure," said Syed

Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank.

Saiful Islam, executive director and spokesperson of Bangladesh Bank, said the central bank's systems were operating well and there were no problems at their end.

However, online banking transactions have not been taking place amid disruption to data services, he added.

The transfer of bandwidth was suspended to internet service providers,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Most ATM booths of different banks were shut down, while those that were open had no money.

ROBIUL ISLAM

A bank account holder

Family's struggle to bury a loved one

Vendor dies amid violence in Banasree

ASIFUR RAHMAN and AHMED DEEPTO

"Please help! We need money to send this body to his village for funeral. Donate whatever you can."

There lied the body of Jashim Uddin, 32, on a khatia (wooden platform), covered in a white cloth.

The appeal for help came from his uncle Kala Miah, a street vendor.

These correspondents spotted him in front of a mosque in Sipahibag Bazar area of Khilgaon on Friday evening.

Jashim died when BGB and police, opened fire at protesters in Banasree area around 5:00pm on that day, claimed locals.

They brought the body to a nearby hospital where Kala Miah identified him. The body



was handed over to Kala Miah without an autopsy at 7:00pm.

From there, he brought the body to Sipahibag and started collecting funds.

"Look, I am a street vendor, so was my nephew. He used to sell chanchur (a traditional spicy snack). We were already in a tight spot due to rising costs

of essentials. On top of that, we didn't earn any money due to violence for the last three days," said Kala Miah.

"His [Jashim's] family lives in Sarail of Brahmanbaria. We need to send the body back home. But I don't have any money. So, I am collecting funds," he told these correspondents.

People, from all backgrounds and ages, were seen chipping in, donating five taka coins or ten-taka notes, up to over Tk 1,000.

Within an hour, Kala Miah managed to collect Tk 60,000 with the help of locals.

He didn't waste any time. He hired a microbus and left Dhaka with the lifeless body of his nephew.

Before leaving, he said, "Jashim has five children -- four daughters and a physically challenged son. All of them are aged between one and 12. What will happen to them?"

Jashim was sick for the last two days and couldn't earn a single penny as the whole area remained a warzone during the movement.

He was suffering from fever for a week. So, he couldn't venture out to sell chanchur.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Army personnel laying razor wires across the road at Bijoy Sarani intersection in Dhaka on the first day of countrywide curfew yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Passengers stuck as flights grounded

11 international flights cancelled; global IT outage hits Dhaka airport

RASHIDUL HASAN and
PORIMOL PALMA

Hundreds of passengers were stranded at the Dhaka airport yesterday after flights were grounded due to a glitch in a cyber security software widely used by airlines.

Some flights were also cancelled due to a low turnout of passengers.

Many of them could not reach the airport amid the ongoing countrywide violence.

Sources at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport said 11 international flights were either delayed or cancelled in the last 24 hours till 6:00pm yesterday.

Many foreign airlines including, Saudia, Air Arabia, and Emirates cancelled the flights, said sources.

Saudi-bound passenger Rimon Mia went through a great ordeal to reach Dhaka from Barishal amid road blockades, lack of transportation, and violence on the streets.

However, upon reaching the airport, he was told that his flight was cancelled.

"My flight was scheduled for takeoff at 6:00am today [yesterday]. I was not informed about the cancellation. No one at the airport is telling me when is the next flight," he said.

"I don't know what to do now as my visa expires in two days," he said.

He added that he did not even have a place to stay in Dhaka as he had no relatives here in the capital.

Similarly, Salamat Sheikh, a Dubai-bound passenger, reached Dhaka from Cumilla by renting a car for Tk 10,000.

After entering the airport, he was informed that his flight was cancelled.

Many other passengers shared similar ordeals.

"In the current situation, how will I go outside [out of the airport]? Who will give us security?" asked one Saudi-bound passenger, Mohammad Abir, who came from Narayanganj.

Meanwhile, many passengers failed to reach the airport on time due to the road and rail blockades.

Twelve Bangladeshi migrants who were supposed to fly to Brunei at 2:00am on Friday found out that there flight was cancelled due to a shortage of passengers.

"We arranged accommodation for the 12 Bangladeshi migrants," an official at the airport said.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister

Muhammad Faruk Khan, however, said operations at the Dhaka airport were going on smoothly without any obstructions.

Air tickets would be counted as curfew pass for the passengers going to airports, the minister added.

Faruk said stern actions will be taken if any airlines increase fares taking advantage of the current situation.

On Friday, an enormous IT outage hit hard banks, grocery stores, TV networks, airlines and even emergency services across the world causing suffering to millions.

The problem occurred when cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike was conducting a software update of its popular product Falcon Cybersecurity Software, said its CEO.

No let up in price hike

People suffer as unrest causes supply disruption for third day

SUKANTA HALDER

As consumers hit the markets yesterday amid the nationwide curfew, they had to pay higher prices due to supply of essentials -- rice, vegetables, eggs, etc. -- facing disruptions for the third consecutive day.

Transportation of perishable commodities to the capital remained scarce, hiking the prices.

Jashim Uddin, a resident of Farmgate's Tejpuribazar, said he had to pay a lot higher for vegetables and fishes at the local market.

"The traders say they had to hike the prices as they are not getting enough supply. How can we afford to pay the extra in these trying times?" he asked.

Khaled Mia, a resident of the Pallabi area, echoed him.

The supply shortage has increased prices of fish such as hilsa, rui, katla, and some others by Tk 180 to Tk 250 per kg, said Avlad Hossain, a fish trader at Hatirpool kitchen market.

Rahidul Islam, a wholesaler at Mahasthan Bazar, said one of the biggest wholesale markets in Bogura, said they cannot send fresh farm produce to Dhaka and other major cities due to the unavailability of trucks.

"Even, when one is available, we have to pay thrice the fare we used to pay," he said, adding that he had to pay Tk 60,000 for a truck which used to be only Tk 20,000 before the unrest.

"Drivers are unwilling to move in fear of attacks," he said.

Due to the crisis, most farmers are not bringing their produce to the market, he said.

"Vegetables are rotting in the fields, and we can't do anything about it," he added.

Sabbir Nasir, executive director of ACI logistics, which owns supermarket retail chain Shawapno, said the unrest is hurting their business.



"Sales have dropped by 30 to 35 percent since Thursday," he said, adding that 48 out of their 483 outlets were closed across the country yesterday.

Nasir said Shawapno's internal supply chain for product delivery across the country started operating in a limited scale yesterday.

Unimart, another supermarket chain, yesterday opened its eight outlets for only one and a half hours from noon, said its chief executive Murtoza Zaman.

He said the decision was taken due to supply chain disruption, alongside several of their staffers being hurt in the unrest.

The unrest has also affected the supply chain of country's biggest commodity importers and processors.

Bishawjit Saha, head of corporate affairs of City Group, said, "We couldn't supply any product yesterday due to unavailability of drivers."

Taslim Shahriar, deputy general manager at Meghna Group, said they could resume limited scale delivery of goods yesterday following a hiatus of two days.

Safiul Atahar Taslim, finance director at TK Group, said they are trying hard to keep the supply of goods as usual.

Since Wednesday, their supply dropped 30 percent, he added.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Two shopkeepers sit idle in front of their closed shop in Kataban yesterday morning. Due to the ongoing curfew, most of the shops remained shut in the capital.

Family's struggle

FROM PAGE 3

As a result, he did not earn much.

Just when his physical condition was improving, he saw Banasree, Rampura, and his other usual places of business turn into a battlefield as armed law enforcers fired tear shells, sound grenades and shotgun pellets to disperse protesters, said his neighbour Ruma Begum.

The situation persisted for three days and took a turn for the worse after Juma prayers on Friday when BGB fired live bullets to stop protesters from marching towards the BTV area.

The violence spread to Banasree as Rab helicopters patrolled over the area and fired tear shells and sound grenades on the ground.

"Due to his financial situation, Jashim was getting increasingly restless. He left his home around evening," said Ruma.

Before leaving, he shared peanuts with me and other neighbours, and left with a smile.

"I will be back soon," Ruma quoted Jashim as saying.

"Never have we thought that he will return in white cloth, lying in a poll of blood," Ruma cried.

Yesterday morning, this newspaper contacted Kala Miah again. He said they managed to reach Brahmanbaria amid the curfew.

Some of the money was spent at the funeral, while the remaining were given to his family members.

ATM services

FROM PAGE 3

while carriers were ordered to shut down mobile data services since Thursday amid the ongoing violence centring the quota reform protests.

Broadband and mobile network operators said this decision was taken by the government in view of the current situation, adding that they were dependent on the directives of the authorities concerned to resume the services.

PRAYER TIMING					
JULY 21					
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4-15	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-15	
JAMAAT 4-50	1-15	5-15	6-58	8-45	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					

Foreign minister

FROM PAGE 3

system in government jobs, and that the authorities were working to come to a solution.

Besides, the government was also taking necessary measures to ensure peace and stability amid the demonstrations, the note added.

At the briefing yesterday, Hasan Mahmud also said the foreign embassies can inform the foreign ministry if they have any concern.

"The government has declared curfew and deployed army in aid of the civil administration in the wake of violence."

The minister said the BNP Jamaat, using the cover of quota protesters,

have destroyed public properties. "These attacks are on the state and people," he said.

He went on to say that some of the foreign media have wrongly reported the number of casualties and requested them to verify the numbers before publication.

Meanwhile, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lin Jian at a briefing in Beijing said China noted what happened recently in Bangladesh and that it was Bangladesh's internal affairs.

"We believe that the government of Bangladesh will properly handle it and uphold national solidarity and stability."



বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিগত ০১/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তারিখে "দৈনিক বাংলাদেশ প্রতিদিন" ও "দ্যা ডেইলী স্টার" পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি অনুযায়ী বারডেম জেনারেল হাসপাতালের অর্ন্তগত ঢাকার বাসাবোতে বারডেম নার্সিং কলেজ, নার্সিং হোস্টেল এবং ১০০ বেডের হাসপাতাল নির্মাণের জন্য স্থাপত্য নকশা প্রণয়ন, স্ট্রাকচারাল ডিজাইন, প্রাক্কলন এবং অন্যান্য আনুষঙ্গিক ডকুমেন্ট প্রস্তুতের জন্য কারিগরি ও আর্থিক প্রস্তাব জমাদানের তারিখ ২১ জুলাই এর পরিবর্তে বর্ধিত করণ করে ২৮ জুলাই ২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তারিখ দিন ধার্য করা হলো। ইতিপূর্বে প্রকাশিত অন্যান্য শর্ত অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে।

মহাপরিচালক
বারডেম জেনারেল হাসপাতাল

World Food Programme
বিশ্ব খাদ্য কর্মসূচী

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Call for Expressions of Interest For contracting NGOs for WFP's 2025-2026 Partnership cycle (from January 2025 to end 2025/26) To implement the Humanitarian Assistance Programme in Bangladesh to Enhance Food Security, Nutrition and Resilience

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) invites experienced local/national/international NGOs to submit an Expression of Interest for the implementation of "Humanitarian assistance programmes to enhance food security, nutrition and resilience."

About the Programme:
Under the Country Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026), WFP will support Bangladesh on its path to ending hunger and reducing malnutrition by 2030 through four strategic outcomes (SO):

- **SO1:** Populations affected by crisis in Bangladesh are able to meet basic food, nutrition and other essential needs during and after crises.
- **SO2:** The nutrition needs of women, children, and vulnerable groups in Bangladesh are met through national institutions that have enhanced capacities to design and implement gender- and nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes by 2026.
- **SO3:** Vulnerable communities in Bangladesh are more resilient to shocks and natural disasters owing to enhanced national disaster management capacity and flexible nutrition- and gender-sensitive social safety net programmes by 2026.
- **SO4:** Vulnerable crisis-affected populations in Bangladesh benefit from enhanced coordination and improved common services during and after crises.

WFP, through its partners, currently provides humanitarian assistance to approximately 1.2 million people in Bangladesh. In collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), other UN agencies, and NGOs, WFP is also working in various sectors namely Food Security, Nutrition, Emergency response and Common Services. In the most vulnerable Bangladeshi communities and the camps, WFP will continue to: i) provide humanitarian food assistance to the Rohingya population every month through E-vouchers; ii) build the resilience of refugees and local communities through skills development, livelihoods, market linkages, food assistance for assets and volunteer services; iii) support schools and learning centres with school feeding and capacity building for relevant national institutions; iv) implementation of an integrated package of malnutrition prevention and treatment interventions and nutrition services targeting children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women; v) implement safety-net programmes; vi) implement disaster risk preparedness and response to protect the food security of vulnerable population; vii) implement Food and Nutrition Security Programme in Urban areas; viii) provide lifesaving food assistance during Emergency Response to any disaster in any geographical location in Bangladesh (through the provision of a standby emergency roster).

Conditions for entry:
The organization must have:

- A fully filled-in profile in the UN partner Portal (UNPP)
- Legal status (valid registration certificate with NGO Affairs Bureau)
- Experience in the geographic area for which it applies
- Experience in implementing food, nutrition, education (specifically school feeding), cash-based transfers and/or market-based interventions
- Experience in community mobilization and resilience building activities
- Experience in emergency preparedness and response
- Organization's strategic objectives that are aligned with WFP's strategic priorities; SO1 to SO4 mentioned above
- Adequate resource capacity (financial human resources and procurement)
- Relevant sector experience (Food, Nutrition, Logistics and Common Services)
- Strong project management experience
- Adequate financial capacity to conduct the required activities supported by an audited financial statement
- Strong relationships with local administration and relevant local and regional institutions

Application Process:
Interested parties are advised to monitor the UN Partner Portal (<https://www.unpartnerportal.org/dashboard>) for opportunities published for Bangladesh (Calls for Expressions of Interest – CFEI / Request for Proposal – RFP – under Partnership opportunities) during the period between July and September 2024. Please note, unlike previous years, that these partnership opportunities require a full proposal from the outset.

All interested local/national/international NGOs with a valid registration certificate from the NGO Affairs Bureau must ensure that their Organizational Profile on the Portal is fully updated with all the latest information and documents, and they must actively apply to the WFP partnership opportunity with a full proposal. Applications must be submitted through the UN partner portal within the timeframes given. A detailed guideline for creating an organizational profile in UN Partner Portal is available at <https://supportcsco.unpartnerportal.org/hc/en-us/sections/360000940774>. Please note that there are no fees for applications and that applying is free of charge.

In case interested NGO's encounter any technical difficulties with UNPP, please contact bangladesh.fiataskforce@wfp.org.

A sudden curfew

Govt must explain the unprecedented scale of deaths

A nation-wide government curfew was declared from midnight on Friday till 10 am on Sunday. A government declares curfew and brings the army to the aid of civilian administration as a last resort when a situation gets out of control. We are made to understand that this last resort had to be taken to stop the unbelievable violence we have been witnessing for the last four days, especially on Friday. We hope and expect the army to handle the situation judiciously and not in the way the police and BGB have, which has been shockingly brutal. We must remember that a curfew does assist the restoration of law and order, but it also throttles the economy, kills small businesses, greatly harms the lives of daily wage earners and generates harmful rumours. Thus, it should be enforced for the shortest period of time.

This brings us to the most horrific part of this crisis—at least 66 (confirmed) lives lost in one day (July 19) and hundreds injured. It puts the death toll as confirmed by this paper at 101, though the actual figure is probably much higher. More deaths have been reported on Saturday. People, mostly students, have been shot dead throughout the country. What happened that so many people had to be killed? According to media reports, the majority of deaths was caused by firing from the police and the BGB (with the highest death toll on July 19). Is it acceptable that law enforcement agents and other state actors can shoot so many civilians “to control a situation?” Can something as irresponsible as law enforcers indiscriminately firing bullets and throwing sound grenades from helicopters, be legitimate? In fact, their action instead of reducing violence, inflamed it further. The nation demands a credible explanation for such unprecedented deaths along with a believable investigation into these killings. Those responsible must be given befitting punishment and those who ordered such violent measures to be taken must be held accountable.

There is some truth in the government’s statement that political elements have entered the students’ anti-quota movement. It is obvious that non-student elements including those that are political have become players in the crisis which makes it all the more important that the government differentiates the students from these non-student elements. The onus is on the government to find a solution acceptable to the quota protestors. The government must also ensure that no student is intimidated, harassed or attacked for being part of the movement by the police, university authorities or by members of the Chhatra League.

We condemn the large-scale destruction and arson attacks on government establishments which we believe were carried out by non-student actors and fair investigations must be made of these incidents. We urge the government to refrain from any further hardline approach to this crisis and restore the country to normalcy as soon as possible.

Why this prolonged internet shutdown?

Curfew, internet outage combine to severely restrict space for citizens

The nationwide complete internet shutdown has not only brought life as we know it to a screeching halt but also cut off Bangladesh from the rest of the world. The blanket shutdown, which started on Thursday evening and continued as of writing this editorial on Saturday evening, is unprecedented in the history of Bangladesh. Never before has there been such a lengthy internet outage encompassing the whole country. Together with the curfew, also in effect since midnight on Friday, the total restriction of both digital and physical spaces has caused unimaginable sufferings.

As per a report by this daily, people all over the country have been struggling to access essential services that rely on internet to function, including digital transactions, utility bill payments, online communications, mobile credit recharge, etc. Customers couldn’t use ATM booths or the apps enabling mobile financial services (MFS), nor could they pay through their bank cards or use other online banking services. The only ray of hope for MFS users was the *247# service, but its scope too was limited. In fact, any service or activity requiring internet has been halted, and its cumulative effect is immeasurable at this stage. In the IT sector alone, BASIS estimates a loss of Tk 80 crore in the first 24 hours of outage. As well as the staggering daily financial losses for the IT and digital commerce sectors, another significant concern is the reputational damage for those operating in these sectors.

The question is, how can the government justify such severe and prolonged restrictions? Internet shutdown is one of the major aspects of control that the government has exercised to curb protests over the last decade. This time, it took it a notch up, timing it with a curfew. The justification given for such measures is that they are essential to restore normalcy amid the complete breakdown of law and order that saw over a hundred people killed in just three days in the ongoing quota reform movement. But the risks of internet outage, in particular, far outweigh any benefits. Besides the losses and sufferings that it brings for citizens, an outage invariably means information blackouts which can only lead to the spread of rumours and misinformation. In a country where freedom of expression and mass mobilisations around common political issues are severely restricted, it is vital that such blackouts are resisted as they sow the seeds of long-term instability. Only free flow of information can neutralise such threats.

We, therefore, urge the government to restore internet connections immediately. It must give citizens a breather from the suffocating environment that has been prevailing because of its failure to ensure peace in the ongoing student movement.

Shahab Enam Khan
is professor of international relations at Jahangirnagar University.

SHAHAB ENAM KHAN

Let’s begin by revisiting the timeless concept of “protest” in political science. Throughout history, small, loosely connected groups united by a common cause have sparked remarkable and transformative change, political or otherwise. This is a powerful reminder that no display of excessive power goes unnoticed in the annals of history, and no death goes unpunished.

Take the example of 1952. It sowed the seeds of independence and the great Liberation War of 1971. Civil rights movement in the US, the European colour revolutions, the Arab Spring, or perhaps the Indian independence movement—all thrived on the bonding of powerless groups of people against the powerful.

While protests are formed by the powerless banding together, it is common for a wide range of entities—each presenting diverse motivations and grievances—to join them. This diversity underscores the complexity and depth of social issues and individual as well as collective aspirations that fuel protests. That is exactly what is happening in Bangladesh under the quota reform movement 2.0.

The vibrant and energetic young protesters are in their teens and twenties, most of them first-time voters. While electoral politics is not at all a feature of this movement, some have blatantly tried to give it a political spin. As an organic reaction, I am sure many fringe elements have tried to blend in with the movement. Still, their participation does not invalidate the core cause of the general students under any circumstances. Hence, motivations could be different, but the grievances of different sections perhaps coincide.

The students exposed the overall social mistrust and grievances towards political enterprises. One needs to dig deeper beyond our comfortable political narratives.

A protester told me, “The recent protests by auto-rickshaw drivers in May 2024 got the government’s prompt and compassionate response. And look at us; aren’t we supposed to run the country in the coming years? You think they value merit?”

Another promptly added, “Did we ask for political change? We asked for policy changes and reforms. Can you ask the government who appoints these university administrators or Public Service Commission officials?

Our parents and their hard work pay for these universities to run, and all the development work the government brags about.”

Nonetheless, the students’ awakening was unsurprising for those with some political sensibility left.

The grievances were all clearly written on the walls, as my Dhaka-based journalist friend Shahiqul Alam said, “Those anti-quota protests are bigger than the Nur-led successful protests in 2018.” He added that this



This time protestors have achieved a far greater goal—a major moral reckoning among millions of apolitical young people. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

time protestors have achieved a far greater goal: a major moral reckoning among millions of apolitical young people. With jobs staggering, graft and connections deciding one’s place in society, the cost of migration to the West getting pricier, and the economy in the doldrums, this new generation will decide the fate of our democracy in the next few years.

This leaves us with three painful but critical paths forward.

First, the distribution of quotas must be reformed, which I guess will

AL’s comfortably slow reaction to teachers’ pension-related movements because many of the teachers are in good term with the ruling party. And the teachers, in general, lack the ability to take to the street to protest. If a meaningful outcome of the teachers’ protest is expected and reforms are to be meaningful, the so-called leaders among the teachers should control their appetite for undue benefits and change their political subservience.

If the government is willing to see stability, all these efforts should

transformation, in which the number of protests each year has tripled between 2006 and 2024. The transformation shows that the political attitude of “we know everything,” inequality, inflation, nationalism, conflictive social relations, and sycophancy can lead to more turmoil in the future.

If the abovementioned issues remain unaddressed, things can go very wrong in the coming months. Mark this as an early admonition from a public university faculty member.

Let there be sanity.

Stop money laundering to curb inflation



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MOHAMMAD JAHIDUR RAHMAN

The finance minister, in his final speech in parliament on the proposed budget for FY24-25, said: “While it is necessary to adopt contractionary policies to control inflation, it is undeniable that in the long run, this approach can slow down growth.”

Inflation, which erodes the purchasing power for consumers as well as businesses, happens in two ways. One is through an increase in the production cost of goods or services, generally referred to as cost-push inflation; the other happens through an increase in the demand for goods and services due to increased supply of money in the market, which is referred to as demand-pull inflation.

When more jobs and higher wages increase people’s income level, it leads to a rise in consumer spending. The overall effect is an increase in aggregate demand, which gives firms the opportunity to increase the prices of their goods and services. As soon as this happens on a large enough scale, it leads to an increase in demand-pull inflation.

The current inflation in Bangladesh has not been driven by an increase in the money supply in the market. Rather, a large portion of the active labour force is unemployed or underpaid due to the impact of post-Covid global factors and the war in Ukraine.

A low unemployment rate is unquestionably good in general,

but it can cause inflation because zero or near-zero unemployment means people have higher disposable income. The unemployment rate in Bangladesh was 4.38 percent in 2019, which climbed to 5.21 percent in 2020 due to the pandemic’s affects. The unemployment rate dropped to a low of 4.7 percent in 2022. The Ukraine war that started in February 2022 halted the post-pandemic recovery process—and employment generation could not gain much momentum. So, it is evident that low unemployment (or an economy with full employment), which is a cause for demand-pull inflation, is not applicable in the Bangladesh context.

The inflation rate as of May 2024 was 9.89 percent, whereas it was 5.57 percent in January 2020. So, what we have in Bangladesh is cost-push inflation. The devaluation of our currency has led to an increase in the import cost of raw materials, leading to an increase in the overall price level. The official exchange rate of the US dollar against the taka was 84.86 in 2021. It was Tk 103.02 and 109.75 in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Finally, it stood at Tk 117.00 after the introduction of a crawling peg exchange rate.

The value of a country’s currency and its exchange rate significantly influences the level of inflation. If a country’s currency depreciates, the cost of imported goods affects

domestic pricing. Thus, a weaker currency triggers inflation.

To control inflation, the standard response of a central bank would be to raise official interest rates. When the central bank increases interest rates, borrowing for commercial banks becomes more expensive. Both consumers and businesses might think twice about taking loans for major purchases or investments. This slows down spending, typically lowering overall demand, which leads to reduced inflation.

This monetary instrument to curb inflation is best suited for inflation triggered by an excessive supply of money. But in the case of inflation in Bangladesh, it is triggered by a rise in the cost of production, especially due to an excessive rise in the dollar price. In August 2021, Bangladesh Bank had \$48.1 billion in foreign currency reserves, which came down to \$24.2 billion in May 2024.

Here, it is evident that the higher inflation rate prevailing in Bangladesh is not due to demand-pull inflation; it is due to a shortage of Forex reserves and an increase in the dollar price. So, contractionary monetary policy will not function here as expected.

Increased policy rate and the introduction of a specific margin plus Six-Month Moving Average Rate of Treasury Bill (SMART) as a lending rate will make the economy grow. It will limit the earning capacity of consumers and affect producers, leading them to lower production. Thus, a vicious cycle will take over the economy, pulling the growth rate down or even push it towards negative growth.

Since the current inflation in Bangladesh cannot be most effectively addressed with a contractionary monetary policy, an alternative financial regulatory intervention

through the repatriation of overdue export proceeds and curbing money laundering is needed.

In 2022-23, the mismatch between the actual realisation reported by Bangladesh Bank and the shipment figure provided by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) was \$12.08 billion. EPB data showed that goods and services exports stood at \$63.05 billion in FY23, whereas the central bank reported that Bangladesh received \$50.97 billion in the same year. There may be some differences between the export data of the Bangladesh Bank and the EPB due to disagreements and the time lag effect. But such a huge gap must be investigated meticulously to find any unrepatriated export amount.

According to Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Tk 26,400 crore or \$3.1 billion is illegally siphoned out of Bangladesh every year. Reportedly, hundi, over-invoicing, under-invoicing, and trade mis-invoicing are the primary ways of money laundering.

Corruption has a negative impact on the economic growth of any country, as it reduces investment and consequently lowers the growth rate of industrial output. Undoubtedly, corruption is a big hindrance to sustainable development. But it’s not the biggest hindrance for an economy. When money acquired through corruption circulates within the economy, it still generates employment and thus contributes to increasing GDP. The biggest hindrance to sustainable development is the money getting laundered abroad. Money, whether earned legally or illegally, once laundered out of the country, is most likely lost forever and will not make any contribution to its economic activities. The damage that this does is massive, which is why it is so vital to stop money laundering in Bangladesh.

BCB in observation mood as nat’l camp gets held up

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board’s (BCB) cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus on Saturday said the board is currently observing the ongoing countrywide unrest and is optimistic about holding the national team’s scheduled camp in Chattogram once the situation improves.

“The plan remains the same. We are observing the whole situation. We don’t know how long the curfew will continue. Let’s see what happens,” Jalal told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Bangladesh team was scheduled to begin their preparation camp today in Chattogram ahead of their two-match Test series against Pakistan next month.

Several members of the national team were expected to travel to Chattogram on Saturday for the preparation camp, however, due to the current situation, they had to postpone their flight.

“We have delayed our travel plan to Chattogram. We were supposed to fly today [Saturday]. But it was postponed. We are closely following the direction of the government. We will act accordingly,” said cricket operations manager Shahriar Nafees.

During the scheduled camp, the Tigers are expected to play two practice matches on July 23 and 29 respectively before flying to Pakistan mid-August for the Test series, which are part of the ICC Test Championship.

Jalal said that the BCB is still optimistic about holding those matches but they are giving top priority to players’ safety.

Jalal informed that some of the national team’s foreign coaching staff are already in Dhaka following their vacation post the ICC T20 World Cup and the board is expecting the others to join them soon.

“David Hemp [batting coach] and Andre Adams [fast bowling coach] have already arrived in Dhaka. The rest of the foreign coaching staff are expected to arrive within a few days. There were some flight disturbances for a Microsoft complication. Hopefully, we will learn about their arrival dates very soon.”

The first Test in Rawalpindi will take place on August 21-25 while Karachi will host the second Test on August 30-September 3.

Meanwhile, the BCB had to cancel two scheduled white-ball matches between the High Performance Unit and Bangladesh Tigers at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram on July 19 and 20 respectively due to the ongoing unrest.



‘We are competing in Olympics as token participation’

SPORTS REPORTER

Swimmer Sonia Khatun, who will represent Bangladesh in the forthcoming Paris Olympics through a wildcard, said she was unhappy with her preparation for the mega event and criticised the prevailing culture in the country’s athletics of taking part in the Olympics just to make up the numbers.

“Considering the magnitude of the Paris Olympics, my preparation is not good enough,” Sonia told The Daily Star on the eve of her departure to Paris.

“I have been training at the BKSP for the last two months whereas other swimmers across the world began their preparation for the Paris Olympic Games right after the Tokyo Olympics,” she added.

The 25-year-old swimmer feels that there is no point in Bangladesh continuing to send athletes for the Olympics if the federations and other relevant sports bodies do not invest in athletes and aim to win medals.

“We are taking part in the Olympics as token participation. We feel really sad when we produce poor timings and don’t win any medals. I think we should not participate in the Olympics just for the sake of it.

“If we want to develop our sports, we need to undertake proper planning and also require strong financial backing. We should set a goal and then design the training and other related things to

achieve it.”

In the last nine editions, since the 1988 Sydney Olympics, Bangladesh have always participated in the swimming discipline in the Games through wildcards, but haven’t achieved anything of note.

Sonia, the national record holder in 100m butterfly event, is set to become the fourth female swimmer after Doli Akter, Sonia Akter and Junayna Ahmed to represent Bangladesh in the Olympics.

The Bangladesh Navy swimmer will compete in the 50m freestyle event, where her current best timing is 30.11 seconds, which she set during the Hangzhou Asian Games in China last year.

The Bangladesh Navy swimmer spoke how competing in the Olympics will be a dream come true for her but her underwhelming preparation for the biggest sports extravaganza in the world has somewhat dampened her enthusiasm.

“Of course, like all other athletes, I always dreamed of competing at the Olympics. Despite this lack of preparation, I am optimistic about giving my best and surpassing my previous best timing.”

Sonia, whose journey in swimming began in 2013 after getting admitted at the BKSP, prefers butterfly and freestyle events but will have to compete in the 50m freestyle event in Paris, in which Bangladesh’s three-time Olympian Doli Akter (30.72 and 30.23 seconds), Sonia Akter (29.99 seconds) and Junayna Ahmed (29.78) had competed in the past.

Cricketers uncertain about away tours

SPORTS REPORTER

Several cricketers are dealing with uncertainty regarding their upcoming tours abroad due to the country’s ongoing political unrest.

While the red-ball team of High Performance (HP) Unit are already in Australia – currently facing Pakistan Shaheens in the first of two four-day matches – the white-ball squad is expected to fly to Australia on July 27 for two one-dayers and a T20 tournament, involving Pakistan Shaheens and Big Bash teams.

HP’s white-ball preparation had taken a blow as their last two practice matches against Bangladesh Tigers had to be cancelled, and it appears that most of them could likely be forced to stay in Chattogram if the nation-wide curfew, enforced yesterday, is extended.

“We were scheduled to travel to Dhaka on July 23. I don’t know when we will be able to fly to

“We were scheduled to travel to Dhaka on July 23. I don’t know when we will be able to fly to Australia.”

AFIF HOSSAIN, who is set to lead HP team in Australia

Australia,” Afif Hossain, who is set to lead HP team in Australia during the one-day series and is also part of the T20 squad, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin, who was picked by Montreal Tigers in upcoming Global T20 Canada, scheduled to start on July 25, informed he is yet to get visa for Canada.

“I came to my home in Feni two days ago. As far as I know, everyone’s visa issues are ongoing. It’s not sure [about him playing in Global T20 Canada],” said Saifuddin, who was in Chattogram with Bangla Tigers.

Saifuddin aside, Shoriful Islam and Shakib Al Hasan will represent Bangla Tigers Mississauga and Rishad Hossain will feature for Toronto Nationals in the franchise tournament. Shakib, who is currently representing Los Angeles Knight Riders in the ongoing Major League Cricket in the USA, is expected to fly to Canada after the tournament ends.

NEWS

Heatwave poses big challenge for Greece’s workers

REUTERS, Athens

Yannis Asimakopoulos has worked as a food delivery driver in Athens for 17 years and cannot recall a hotter summer as a new heatwave gripped Greece this week.

Authorities shut all archaeological sites in Athens for a second consecutive day on Thursday and restricted outdoor work as the country sizzled under its second heatwave of the summer.

Thermal cameras have recorded temperatures of about 70 Celsius (158 Fahrenheit) on the road surface, but delivery drivers on their scooters are still needed.

“Driving is really hard. You have to wear a helmet, the lens of the helmet fogs up from the sweat. You have to stop all the time, the tyres melt faster, the street is slippery, the conditions in general are really difficult,” Asimakopoulos said after the end of his shift at noon.

“Every year I see a huge difference in the temperature. I see a rise and it lasts longer. Before it was two or three days,” he added.

As with many countries in Europe, Greece has repeatedly seen high temperatures disrupt daily activities since June, and hundreds of wildfires

have broken out following the warmest winter on record that scientists link to global climate change.

This year Greece recorded its warmest-ever winter. June was also the hottest on record and the current heatwave is forecast to be the country’s longest ever, said Kostas Lagouvardos, research director of the national observatory.

The government has ordered some businesses not to let their employees perform heavy outdoor duty from midday until 5 pm (0900 GMT to 1400 GMT) this week as the mercury is expected to reach 42 Celsius (105.8 Fahrenheit) in parts of the country.

For many delivery workers, that is not an option, Asimakopoulos said.

“Many people... who need more money for their families will continue to work, and the employers will exploit this.” More than 20,000 drivers deliver food, beverages and other goods in Athens. Their unions are demanding the restriction in working hours to apply when temperature reaches 38 Celsius (100.4 Fahrenheit), not 40 or higher.

In some areas, even the lowest temperature recorded was already 30 degrees Celsius, increasing the impact of heat stress on humans, Lagouvardos said, adding: “There is no hour in the day to feel better.”

Israel’s occupation

FROM PAGE 8

Hamas even as demands grow for him to reach a deal that would free hostages.

According to the Gaza health ministry, more than 38,919 Palestinians have been killed and nearly 90,000 people have been injured in the Israeli military offensive in Gaza since October 7.

All health facilities in southern Gaza have been pushed to “breaking point” due to an influx of people wounded by Israeli bombardments, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

Washington has been pushing for a truce deal between Israel and Hamas

since President Joe Biden released details of what he said was an Israeli ceasefire roadmap on May 31.

But despite the efforts of Egyptian and Qatari mediators, indirect negotiations between the foes have not yet led to a final deal. Biden last week said there were “still gaps to close” but progress was being made.

Meanwhile, a drone attack on Israeli land injured several people on Friday night. The Israeli military said they detected the Iran-made drone beforehand but could not shoot it down due to human error.

Houthi movement in Yemen claimed responsibility for the attack.

Restore internet now

FROM PAGE 8

Editors’ Council is urging the government to quickly resume the internet service all over the country, the statement added.

The statement was issued on Friday. However, due to a technical glitch, this portion, which was in our yesterday’s report titled “Lives upended by internet shutdown”, got dropped. We regret the error.

Mindless destruction leaves them in ruins

FROM PAGE 8

However, when they could not break the shutter on the first floor, they smashed the window glasses to get into the station.

They vandalised ticket counters, vending machines, fire extinguishers, TV screens, CCTV cameras and each and every room on the floor, the official said, wishing anonymity.

They even tried to break open the ticket vending machines to loot money, he said.

“It seems the attackers had a personal grudge against the metro rail...,” he said.

Replying to a question, he said it would take some time to replace all these equipment and fix the rooms. For example, he said, they have to set up vending machines, which have to be customised as per our usability.

“Besides, all these sophisticated equipment need to be replaced. We also have to carry out trials before starting operations in the stations,” he said.

Mass Rapid Transit Line-6, the country’s first metro rail line, was made partially operational from Uttara to Agargaon in December 2022. The Agargaon Motijheel section opened for service in October last year.

The government is implementing a Tk 33,472 crore project to build the 21.26km line from Uttara to Kamalapur, with most of the fund coming from Japan as loan.

SC hears today pleas against HC verdict

FROM PAGE 8

keep the provision of quotas in public service, and the court cannot interfere in this decision.

On July 18, Justice M Enayetur Rahim, chamber judge of the Appellate Division, fixed today as the date for the hearing at its full bench led by the chief justice.

He 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.

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.

The HC in the full text of its judgement, released on July 14, also directed the government to restore and maintain the quotas for freedom fighters’ children, districts, women, physically challenged people, tribes, minor races, and ethnic groups and others, if any, and to publish a notification in this regard as soon as possible, preferably within three months, from the date of receipt of the order.

The court, however, said the government can change, reduce or increase the ratio or percentage of the quotas in public jobs, if necessary, and can fill the vacant posts from the merit list if any quota in government recruitment is not fulfilled.

Protesting the HC judgment on June 5, students staged demonstrations

at different educational institutions, including Dhaka University. They took to the streets on July 1, demanding the reinstatement of the 2018 circular.

Students intensified their protests across the country since July 4 as the Appellate Division did not stay the HC verdict following a government petition.

Amid the situation, the government and two DU students moved two petitions before the Appellate Division seeking stay on the HC verdict.

Following their petitions, the Appellate Division on July 10 directed the authorities concerned to maintain the status quo regarding the subject matter of the case till filing of civil petitions for leave to appeal.

“The impugned judgement of the High Court shall remain inoperative till that period,” the Appellate Division said in the full text of its order.

N Korea launching more trash balloons

Says Seoul military

AFP, Seoul

North Korea is launching more balloons believed to be carrying trash towards the South, Seoul’s military said Thursday, in the latest round of a tit-for-tat balloon war between the two Koreas.

Seoul’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said the North was “launching (suspected) trash balloons aimed at the South once again”, adding they were currently floating across the border.

“Citizens are advised to be cautious of falling debris. If you find any fallen balloons do not touch them and report them to the nearest military unit or police station,” it added.

Seoul city authorities issued an alert to residents Thursday, saying “a suspected balloon from North Korea is confirmed to have entered the airspace of Northern Gyeonggi province. Citizens should be cautious of outside activities.” This is the eighth round of trash-carrying balloons launched by Pyongyang since late May.

The nuclear-armed North has already sent more than a thousand of the balloons south, calling it retaliation for ones carrying anti-regime propaganda floated northwards by activists south of the border.

Internet blackout wallops life and living

MAHMUDUL HASAN

A countrywide internet blackout dealt a massive blow to the lives of the Bangladeshis, upending their digital lifestyle and leaving businesses staring at huge financial losses.

The complete non-availability of the internet has left people without social media, internet-based voice and video calls, online transactions and many more essential services for three days.

Mobile financial services (MFSs), which have become the lifeblood for crores of people, have come to a halt, leaving many with no money in hand.

Export and import activities at sea and land ports are also paused as the entire process depends on the internet.

This scenario delivered the wrong message to the world, portraying Bangladesh as an unreliable business partner.

The digital commerce sector is facing losses of \$5 million every day, said Fahim Ahmed, CEO of ride-hailing company Pathao.

From logistical support to money collection, everything is being affected due to the absence of internet, he said.

Russell T Ahmed, president of the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services, said: “Many of my association members called and cried as they fear this prolonged internet outage may destroy their businesses in the blink of an eye.”

As the internet was suspended without prior notice, IT firms and freelancers could not notify clients about the outage, which may also lead to a downgrade of Bangladesh's rating in the global IT services industry, he added.

He urged the government to restore internet services at least for the export-oriented IT businesses and other firms.

Md Arslat, a resident of Dhaka, said he tried multiple

This scenario delivered the wrong message to the world, portraying Bangladesh as an unreliable business partner

times yesterday to top-up his phone through MFS accounts, but failed. Local flexiload shops offered no solution.

Officials of telecom operators said they are losing around Tk 35 crore to Tk 40 crore in revenue each day.

The internet blackout started in Bangladesh on July 16, when the telecom regulator ordered operators to shut down 4G internet services in over 50 university areas amid quota reform protests.

The next day, the government, utilising its own technology, shut down mobile internet to help law enforcers tackle the existing situation, said Zunaid Ahmed Palak, the state minister for ICT.

On July 18, a fire broke out in the building of the Department of Disaster Management in the capital's Mohakhali area, damaging the internet transmission lines of some data centres hosted in adjacent buildings.

The same day, at around 8pm, officials of the Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB) said the fire may eat away 30-40 percent of bandwidth supply, leaving some users disconnected and many with slow internet.

But at around 9pm, users across Bangladesh faced a complete broadband blackout, leaving them totally disconnected from the outside world.

The government had ordered international terrestrial cable and international internet gateway companies to stop supplying bandwidth to the internet service providers, said multiple industry players seeking anonymity.

However, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) said miscreants had set ablaze a data centre in Mohakhali, which had led to the internet disruption.

Yesterday, the BTRC and the ISPAB said they needed more time to repair the damaged data centre and transmission lines.



Standing in stark contrast to the usual bustle, an eerie calm prevails at Naya Paltan, with the silence broken only by the passing of the occasional rickshaws during a nationwide curfew imposed by the government. The photo was taken around 11:00am yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Fresh blow to fragile economy

AHSAN HABIB

The countrywide shutdown and subsequent violence centring the quota reform movement crippled business and economic activities for the last three days, dealing a further blow to an economy that is already ailing due to high inflation, falling exports and depleting forex reserves.

Fearing further violence and arson, factories, including those in the biggest export-earning sector of garments, remained shut.

Additionally, passenger and freight vehicles stayed away from plying roads and highways, disrupting the transport of exportable goods and imported items to and from the ports.

At the same time, a countrywide internet blackout affected the assessment of imported and exported goods by the customs, causing indefinite delays in clearance.

The ongoing internet blackout also forced the closure of digital commerce activities for a second consecutive day.

Markets in Dhaka and Chattogram, the two biggest economic hubs of the country, shuttered their stores fearing attacks, with only small neighbourhood shops offering essentials to the few who ventured out.

Over the past few days, several public and private assets were also vandalised and set on fire, which will contribute to losses.

Importantly, such a situation will also impact the image of the country. So, export orders and investment may take a hit.

“On the one hand, this has direct ramifications for export earnings. On the other, the current situation tarnishes the image of our country to international customers,” said Syed Tanvir, managing director of Pacific Group, one of the largest garment exporters in Bangladesh.

“Global buyers started to believe that Bangladesh had been able to come out of political volatility. This increased their confidence. Now, they feel bad.”

Tanvir added that the imposition of a curfew by the government indicates that the situation is extremely volatile. “We have not seen this in almost two decades.”

He added that export shipments would be delayed because of problems in transport, which may have a ripple effect.

As such, he called for a quick resolution to the stalemate.

Kamran T Rahman, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), said the situation could

have been resolved much earlier.

It is so sad that so many students have been killed, he said.

“Trade and businesses will be impacted. Already, the price level has climbed,” he said, adding that investment would be affected too.

To reduce economic losses, a fast solution is necessary. The course of the economy depends largely on a proper resolution to the existing impasse, he added.

To reduce economic losses, a fast solution is necessary. The course of the economy depends largely on a proper resolution to the existing impasse, said Kamran T Rahman, president of MCCI

Prof Selim Raihan, executive director at the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem), said the economy is bleeding.

The political situation will lead to further deterioration of the economy, he added.

The government should have resolved the demands of the students through a dialogue. “This kind of situation could

have been avoided in view of the current economic challenges.

“Any disruption to the economic activities is very costly,” he added.

The extent of destruction witnessed in the country has raised the alarm for the economy. This type of situation will create uncertainty and it is not good for the economy, Raihan said.

“The supply chain has been disrupted. Activities in the export-oriented sector are almost suspended. Internet-based business activities are down. This will have a major negative impact on the economy.”

Faruque Hassan, managing director of Giant Group and a former BGMEA president, said indirect losses would be more costly than direct losses, especially in terms of losing work orders.

A top official of a leading listed drug company, said the pharmaceutical sector usually remains out of the purview of any restrictions. But that is not the case this time around.

“This time, the government did not announce that the curfew would not be applicable for the pharmaceutical sector. So, we had to keep our plants closed.”

Due to problems in transporting medicine, many pharmacies remained closed. As a result, drug sales may halve, he added.

Garment sector’s losses piling up as factories remain shut

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Garment factories kept production suspended yesterday and decided to keep the units closed today as well considering the safety of the workers and the factories amid ongoing countrywide violence and curfew imposed by the government.

For now, the leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) decided to keep the factories shut until today.

The boards of directors of the two associations will sit again today to decide whether the factory shutdown will be extended or not, BGMEA President SM Mannan Kochi and BKMEA Executive President Mohammad Hatem told The Daily Star over phone.

The suspension of the internet is also hampering the garment sector as factories cannot send inspection reports to international retailers and brands online, which is a must every day to keep the buyers updated, said Faruque Hassan, managing director of Giant Group, a garment exporter.

AT A GLANCE

BGMEA, BKMEA shut factories from July 20 to July 21

They will meet today to discuss extension of factory shutdown

Garment sector accounts for 84% of Bangladesh's total exports

Violence and curfew create obstacles to transporting goods

Internet blackout hampering communication with int'l buyers

LOSSES

Garment sector losing over \$500m every day due to factory closure, owners say

Indirect losses are greater than direct losses

In the last two days, many goods-laden trucks failed to reach Chattogram port from the factories, but factory owners could not convey that to the buyers as there was no internet, he added.

“If the curfew continues, it will be difficult to keep the factories open,” BKMEA's Hatem said.

He said the BKMEA member factories were shut yesterday after the association announced the factory closure a day earlier.

But a few factories at Konabari and Gazipur opened yesterday as factory owners and workers did not know about the imposition of the curfew, the BGMEA chief said.

Garment is the main export earner of the country, contributing over 84 percent to national exports a year.

The sector is losing over \$500 million every day due to the closure of factories, industry insiders said.

The indirect losses are greater than direct losses in the case of factory closures, said Faruque Hassan, also a former BGMEA president.

“If a factory is closed, buyers either cancel the work orders or seek discounts or air shipment. They may also shift work orders to other countries due to delays in production.”

Ports, transport at a standstill

JAGARAN CHAKMA, DWAIPAYAN BARUA and MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Export and import activities suffered severe disruptions for the third day yesterday amid transport problems because of violence centring the quota reform movement and internet shutdown by the government.

The deadlock affected industrial production and shipment of exportable goods from the ports, especially Chattogram port, which handles roughly 90 percent of Bangladesh's international trade.

Truck and lorry drivers are reluctant to ply their vehicles, for which deliveries of the construction sector's raw materials could not be taken from the port, creating a backlog in production and delivery of the final products.

“Production is being severely hampered as workers, technicians and engineers cannot come to work for the curfew,” said Tapan Sengupta, deputy managing director of BSRM.

No raw materials could be received from the port as logistics service providers do not want to risk their vehicles being

vandalised, he said.

“We could not even reach products to dealers and clients over the past week,” he added.

Almost all steel mills have suspended production, said Jahangir Alam, president of Bangladesh Steel Manufacturers Association.

The mills are unable to receive raw materials from the port and are having to pay storage rent daily, he said. Similarly, no revenue has been earned over the past week but bank loan interest will still have to be paid, he added.

The sufferings of industries such as steel and cement will affect development activities, including the real estate sector, he said.

According to Alam, the effect will be apparent after a couple of months when the rise in production costs will be passed onto consumers.

If production of steel and cement is hampered, its effect directly falls on the construction sector, particularly housing, as these are the major raw materials, said FR Khan, managing director of bti, a leading developer.



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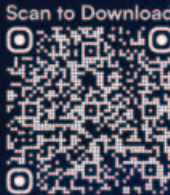
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MIRPUR-10, KAZIPARA METRO STATIONS

Mindless destruction
leaves them in ruins

At least a year needed to fix them, say officials;
metro service suspended indefinitely

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

From vending machines to ticket counters, from offices to police control rooms, from computers to television screens and close circuit cameras – everything inside the Mirpur-10 metro station was smashed to bits.

On Friday evening, miscreants carried out mindless destruction inside the Mirpur-10 and Kazipara stations amid the ongoing unrest.

The scale of destruction was such that it would take at least a year to repair and replace the equipment and structures, authorities said.

The extent of destruction has also put a question mark on the resumption of metro service.

The metro rail authority suspended its operation for indefinite period from yesterday, amid the ongoing unrest. Before the suspension, more than 3 lakh people used the metro services every day.

“There is nothing left... They damaged and looted everything needed for the

operations...,” said MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd, while visiting the Mirpur-10 station yesterday afternoon, along with other DMTCL officials.

While they were visiting the Mirpur-10 station, miscreants attacked the Kazipara station once again, another official said.

Asked when services at the stations can be resumed, MAN Siddique couldn’t provide any timeframe.

“The people with technical knowledge, who visited the station [Mirpur-10] with me, said it would take at least a year to make the two stations operational,” he said.

Asked whether the destruction will affect the resumption of overall metro rail operations, he said, “It’s not possible to comment on the matter now. We will check all the aspects once the situation returns to normal.”

Another official, who visited the Mirpur-10 station, said miscreants broke down the (north-west end) entrance gate.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



Vandals damaged a ticket vending machine and furniture in a room of the Mirpur-10 metro rail station on Friday afternoon. The attack caused extensive damage to the station and it will take at least one year to make the station operational again, said DMTCL.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF DMTCL

Restore
internet
now

Editors’ Council
urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors’ Council has demanded that the authorities concerned immediately resume the internet service across the country.

In a statement, the council’s President Mahfuz Anam and its General Secretary Dewan Hanif Mahmud said the internet service has been suspended across the country since Thursday night, due to which quick exchange of news and scrutiny of information are being hampered.

The council thinks the suspension of internet service in such a manner creates apprehension of information blackout, which can lead to the spread of rumors, and false and baseless information.

In this situation, the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

GOVERNMENT JOBS

SC hears today
pleas against
HC verdict that
reinstated quota

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All eyes are on the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court that is set today to hear two leave to appeal petitions that challenged the High Court judgment of reinstating quotas in government jobs.

The government and two Dhaka University students filed the petitions with the SC on July 16 and 18 seeking the scrapping of the HC verdict.

The full bench of the Appellate Division, led by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, will sit after 10:00am for hearing the petitions as the curfew will be in force till that time, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin told The Daily Star yesterday.

Usually, the Appellate Division sits at 9:00am on every working day.

The government and two Dhaka University students filed the petitions with the SC on July 16 and 18 seeking the scrapping of the HC verdict.

In the petitions, they said it is a policy decision of the government whether to

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

DMCH morgue never
been thicker with grief

SHAHEEN MOLLAH, DIPAN NANDY and MD ABBAS

The air at Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue was never this thick with grief before yesterday.

Kamrul Islam could not look more shattered – his younger son Nayeem Hawlader had just died from bullet wounds. Next to him was one Suraiya Akhter, who was weeping inconsolably over the death of her father from bullet wounds too.

Near them were distraught friends and relatives of Tahir Zaman Priyo, who arrived at the morgue of Dhaka Medical College Hospital on hearing news of his death.

When the correspondents visited the DMCH morgue at 4:30pm, the place was overcrowded with shell-shocked relatives of the deceased. For the next hour, the correspondents saw at least 12 dead bodies entering the morgue.

One of the dead bodies was of Kamrul’s son Nayeem, a second year HSC student of Raoshan Ara Degree College in Jatrabari. On Friday, he joined the student protests with his friends and sustained bullet wounds that took his life.

Although his father Kamrul is beside himself with grief, his elder brother Noman is proud as his brother died a hero.

“I am feeling extremely proud as my brother did not lose his life in any political party’s programme. He was active in the movement going on against the discriminatory quota system – he sacrificed his life for a just movement,” Noman said.

Suraiya Akhter’s father happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, just like

Arif from Bhola’s Lalmohon area.

“We live just opposite the BNP party office. When the clash took place with police and BNP men, my father went there to witness the situation. Suddenly, bullets hit my father in the back,” she said.

Her father, a rickshaw puller, died on his way to hospital.

Like Suraiya’s father, Arif was an innocent bystander.

Just a month ago, Arif started working at a hotel in Jatrabari, a site of fierce clashes between the police and the protesters.

“My brother was not involved in any politics or clashes. He suffered a bullet wound in his head on Friday in Kajla-Boubazar area. His body bore no other injury mark,” Rashed said.

Relatives and friends of freelance photojournalist Tahir Zaman Priyo, were seen sitting in front of the morgue as autopsy was performed on his body.

Priyo was killed during a clash between police and protesters on Friday in Science Lab area while on duty.

He was hit by a bullet in the head and was pronounced dead at 10:00pm on Friday when he was brought to DMCH, according to his grandfather Shafiul Alam.

Like Priyo, Tourist Police’s Assistant Sub-Inspector Mukhtadir was killed while on duty.

“My brother was walking towards his Banasree office from Rayerbagh house. At that time, some miscreants swooped on him, beat him up indiscriminately and smashed his face,” his brother Kuddus Ali said.

Mukhtadir was taken to the DMCH where the doctor declared him dead.

‘Stop using
excessive force
on protesters’
44 jurists urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty-four noted law practitioners, including jurists, legal researchers, and professionals, yesterday condemned the use of “excessive and disproportionate” force on students demonstrating for quota reforms.

“We demand that the excessive use of force must be stopped immediately, and justice along with adequate reparations must be provided to the victims and their grieving families,” they said in a statement sent to media via text messages.

They demanded that the perpetrators of the atrocities be held accountable for their actions.

They said they are also concerned by the composition and mandate of the inquiry commission. They questioned if the standards applicable to domestic investigations under the international human rights law were being maintained, particularly regarding

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BNP leader Amir
Khasru arrested

Rizvi, Nazrul placed on remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of police arrested BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury from his Banani residence yesterday.

Confirming the incident to The Daily Star, Shamsuddin Didar, a senior member of the BNP chairperson’s press wing, said Amir was picked up from his home around 10:00pm.

Earlier in the day, a Dhaka court placed BNP standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan and the party’s Senior-Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi on one-day remands each in a violence case filed with Paltan Police Station.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mosharrar Hossain passed the order after they were produced before the court. Kabir Hossain Howlader, a DB inspector and the case investigating officer, sought two-day remands for each, said a court source.

DB arrested Nazrul from his Banani residence early yesterday, while police arrested Rizvi from in front of the Jatiya Press Club on Friday afternoon.

On the other hand, Nurul Haque Nur, convener of the Gono Odhikar Parishad, was allegedly picked up by law enforcers from his Uttara home early yesterday.

Speaking to journalists, Nur’s wife Maria Nur, alleged that law enforcers broke the front door and entered their house.

“I looked for my husband at the DB office. But they denied arresting him. I clearly saw that those who picked up my husband were wearing Rab, DB, and police uniforms,” she said, demanding to know the whereabouts of her husband and his unconditional release.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir demanded the immediate release of the arrestees.



Khaleda’s
condition
stable

Says her physician

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid widespread rumours that BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia’s health has deteriorated, her personal physician yesterday said the former prime minister’s condition was stable.

“She’s being treated at the Evercare Hospital at the advise of the medical board,” Dr AZM Zahid Hossain said.

She gave samples for several blood tests yesterday, Shamsuddin Didar, a senior member of BNP chairperson’s Press Wing, told The Daily Star last night.

On June 21, Khaleda was admitted to the coronary care unit at Evercare Hospital following breathing complications.

On June 23, a pacemaker was implanted in her chest. She was discharged from the hospital on July 2.

She was admitted to the hospital again on July 8 as her health condition deteriorated.



Palestinians inspect the damage as the collapsed minaret of Abdullah Azzam mosque leans against a house after the mosque was hit by an Israeli strike in Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip.

PHOTO: AFP

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

Israel’s occupation
violates int’l law

Rules UN top court; death toll
in Gaza rises to 38,919

AGENCIES

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has said Israel’s continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territories is “illegal and should come to end as rapidly as possible.”

In a non-binding opinion on Friday evening, the UN top court in The Hague said Israel must pay reparations to Palestinians as they lost lands and property due to its occupation.

The lands in its ownership have been under dispute since 1967 after the six-day war when Israel almost tripled the size of the territory under its control.

Before the hearings, Israel said it did not recognise the legitimacy of the proceedings at the world court. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the ICJ opinion a “decision of lies.”

The ICJ judgement does carry a moral and political weight to have the world court determine that Israel’s occupation violates international law and must end as soon as possible, reports CNN.

The Palestinian authority welcomed the ruling, and said the international communities should respect the ruling and force Israel to end the occupation.

Palestinian group Hamas called for immediate implementation of the judgement.

On the ground, Palestinians mourned relatives killed in overnight Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip, where Israel’s prime minister has vowed to intensify the pressure on

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