



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

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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

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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

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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 Giasuddin, 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

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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'

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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.