



DHAKA TUESDAY JULY 23, 2024

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXIV No. 180

SRABAN 8, 1431 BS

www.thedailystar.net

MUHARRAM 16, 1446 HJRI

12 PAGES PLUS LIFE STYLE : Tk 15.00



Preparations hampered as practice match postponed
P11



Freelancers in trouble amid internet blackout
P10



A historic decision, but can Harris beat Trump?
P9



Move away from blame game and confrontational power politics
P8

Won't spare BNP-Jamaat this time: PM

Businesses urge quick restoration of normalcy

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday warned that the government will not spare the "BNP-Jamaat clique" this time so easily like in the past, reports UNB.

"They are trying to carry out terrorist activities during the curfew. Who are these people? They are not unknown faces. You saw BNP extended its support, and convicted criminal Tarique Rahman who tried to kill me through grenade attack gave the order [to carry out violence]," she said.

Branding Islami Chhatra Shibir as a militant organisation, she accused it of being involved in destruction in a planned way.

The PM made the remarks during a meeting with leading businesspeople at her office.



SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



The burnt wreckage of 30 garbage trucks and other vehicles parked at the DNCC zone-4 office in the capital's Mirpur-10. The vehicles and the office were torched on July 18 and since then, garbage has been piling up on many city streets.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

4hr break in curfew from 1pm in Dhaka, 4 other dists
General holiday today as well

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to continue the nationwide curfew until further notice and to give a four-hour break from 1:00pm today in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Narsingdi and Sylhet.

In Barishal, the curfew will be relaxed from 11:00am to 5:00pm, and in Chattogram, the break will be from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.

In other districts and metropolitan areas, magistrates and police commissioners will decide on the curfew breaks.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal made the announcements at a press conference at his Dhanmondi residence last night.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

'Normalcy to return soon'
The army chief urges cooperation from all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman yesterday said normalcy will return to the country soon with everyone's help.

"We think the situation has started to improve within 48 hours of the deployment [of the armed forces]," he told journalists in front of Sheikh Russel Roller Skating Complex after inspecting various places across the city.

"If we can work together, we will be able to improve the situation further," he said thanking the media for their objective coverage.

"We want your cooperation," he added. Noting that the destruction of public property is beyond description, General Waker said it could take a few more days to return to the normal way of life.

"I don't know how much longer it will take to recover from the losses. I cannot



Waker-Uz-Zaman

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Quota reforms on PM's table for final nod

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The public administration ministry yesterday afternoon sent a proposal to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for making 93 percent recruitments in the civil service on merit and the rest from quotas.

The ministry also recommended that the reformed quota system be applicable to recruitments for 9-20 grades in government, semi government, and autonomous bodies, said Public Administration Minister Farhad Hossain.

He told The Daily Star that the reformed quota system would be applicable to appointments that require recruitment tests.

Public administration ministry officials, however, said the PM would decide whether the new quota system would be applicable to recruitments for grade 9-20 or grade 1-20.

The appointments in grade 9 to 20 are made through recruitment tests.

There are 20 grades in government jobs. The quota system was applicable to grade 13-20, following a 2018 government circular that

Public Administration Minister Farhad Hossain last night aborted a press briefing twice, held a meeting with ministry officials, and then deferred announcement on circular until today.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

6 more hurt in previous days' clashes die

At least 146 dead so far

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six more people, who were injured during the previous days' clashes between agitators and law enforcers, died yesterday, said police and hospital authorities.

Four died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital having suffered either bullet or shotgun pellet injuries, according to the hospital's death register and police.

Three of the four deceased were identified as Rasel, 20, Azizul Mia, and Razu, 36. The other person who died at DMCH was an unidentified person, aged around 35.

Besides, police received two bodies from the National Institute of Neuroscience and Hospital and sent those to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College morgue for autopsies, said Ahad Ali, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

They were injured in clashes that broke out in Uttara and Gulshan areas in the previous few days, he said.

With yesterday's deaths, at least 146 lives have been lost since last Tuesday, when six people were killed in violence.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Parts of Dhaka left charred

MD ABBAS and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The six burnt cars that lie at the entrance to the Department of Disaster Management at Mohakhali can hardly give a sense of the scale of destruction inside the 11-storey building.

In the parking space alone, there were 50 other private cars and minibuses -- all burnt to the skeleton. The acrid smell of the charred vehicles and other objects wafted through the air in the small space. A sub-station, an emergency response coordination centre and a resting room for Ansar members on the ground floor too were burnt down.

Lifts; transmitters used for making contact during natural calamities; television screens; computers; air conditioners -- nothing was spared.

The entire building, now enveloped in darkness, came under attack on July 18.

"Nothing was left untouched by the fire," said Mahub Rahman, a DMD staffer who saw it all first-hand, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said around 200 miscreants, carrying sticks, suddenly appeared around 4:00pm that day and started throwing brick chunks at the building. Those at the front of the line, he said, appeared to be aged under 18.

"Within a minute, they started vandalising the cars, and poured petrol on them and set them on fire. Three on-duty Ansar members stationed there were helpless. The mindless destruction went on for

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

The organisers of the [quota reform] movement have vehemently denied any protesting student's involvement in the destruction.

BUSINESS

Pharma production disrupted

Production and distribution of medicines have been disrupted for the last four days due to violence centring the quota reform movement and the curfew imposed by the government, drug makers said yesterday.

Industry operators said they were unable to receive imported raw materials from Chattogram port and Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport as customs assessment and clearance was suspended for the ongoing internet blackout.

This may subsequently affect drug exports too, they added.

STORY ON PAGE 7



DON'T TAKE BABA AWAY! ... Little Tayeba runs after the prison van that is carrying her father to jail, while her mother, Mona, tries to stop her. Mizan, a CNG driver, was arrested from their home in the capital's Jatrabari in a violence case on Sunday night. He was produced before the CMM court, which sent him to jail yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

ONGOING VIOLENCE

More than 1,400 arrested in three days

Scores of BNP, Jamaat men among them; raids going on in Dhaka, elsewhere

STAR REPORT

Law enforcers have arrested 1,427 people across the country over the last three days in connection with the recent violence.

Of them, 692 were held in the capital alone and the rest in 16 districts.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police has been conducting block raids since Sunday to arrest suspects, said DMP Commissioner Habibur Rahman.

"We are looking for conspirators and criminals hiding in nearby places," the DMP chief told journalists while visiting the capital's Jatrabari yesterday.

Around 50 cases were filed with different police stations in the capital in the last few days accusing 20,000 unidentified people of resorting to violence, Habibur said.

Police said 735 people were arrested in 16 districts over the last three days. They were accused in 43 cases filed over violence.

Of them, 98 were held in Chattogram, 50 in Dhaka district, 35 in Sylhet, 10 in Patuakhali, 120 in Narayanganj, 42 in Kushtia, 33 in Barishal, 104 in Tangail, 59 in Khulna, 10 in Jamalpur, 33 in Mymensingh, nine in Pirojpur, 47

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Labourers board a Rangpur-bound truck in the capital's Karwan Bazar area around 1:00am yesterday. They are leaving Dhaka as they cannot earn due to the curfew. *Top left*, the wreckage of a burnt double-decker on the flyover for the BRT corridor in the capital's Abdullahpur. *Bottom left*, a gridlock on the Airport Road in the capital's Khilkhet during the curfew pause around 2:30pm yesterday. *Top right*, army personnel checking the documents of one of the passengers of a three-wheeler near the BTV Bhaban in Rampura. *Bottom right*, soldiers on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Narayanganj's Mouchak.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN, AMRAN HOSSAIN, SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM

6 more hurt in previous days' clashes die

FROM PAGE 1

On Thursday, at least 29 people died in clashes between agitators and law enforcers and 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. On Saturday, at least 25 people died including four who were injured in earlier clashes.

On Sunday, at least seven were killed in the clashes, and six others who were injured in previous days' clashes died.

The overall death toll from the violence centring quota demonstrations may rise as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals where dozens of critically injured patients were taken for treatment. Also, many 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.

The forensic departments at DMCH, Suhrawardy Medical College and Mitford Hospital so far conducted autopsies on 84 bodies and they have nine pending.

Meanwhile, none was reported killed yesterday as no major clash was reported across the county on the third day of nationwide curfew.

The curfew was declared and armed forces were deployed on Friday night to assist the civil administration in ensuring national security and protecting lives and property. On Saturday night, the government extended the curfew till further

notice.

This correspondent visited different areas in Dhaka, including Mohammadpur, Rampura, Badda, and Mirpur, that had turned battlefields at the height of the violence. There was an uneasy calm yesterday.

Members of the armed forces, police, and Rab were seen patrolling different points.

In another development, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said three police personnel were killed and 1,117 others were injured in clashes centring the quota protests across the country.

Over 200 are stated to be in critical condition and three of them are in the intensive care unit, he told reporters after visiting injured police personnel at Central Police Hospital in Dhaka.

Quota reforms on PM's table

FROM PAGE 1

abolished quotas for ninth to 13th grade recruitments.

A BCS cadre joins the civil service in the ninth grade.

Earlier yesterday, the public administration ministry official told journalists that a briefing would be held at the minister's residence at 5:30pm.

Around 6:30pm, the minister told reporters that they sent the summary of the proposal to the prime minister and they would issue the circular once the PM approves it.

The minister reappeared before the journalists around 9:45pm and said they had the PM's approval. He sat down for the press briefing but immediately left to receive a phone call. Some TV channels then reported that the circular had been issued.

Meanwhile, some top officials of the ministry had a meeting with the minister.

Farhad again sat for the press briefing around 10:45pm and once again left to pick up a phone call.

Half an hour later, he said they would hold a press conference on the circular during a curfew break today.

The government move to issue a circular came a day after a Supreme

Court verdict set 93 percent jobs in the civil service on merit. There will be five percent quota for children of freedom fighters, martyred freedom fighters and Biranganas, one percent for ethnic minorities and one percent for people with disabilities and of third gender.

This major reform to the quota system was made in the wake of a massive student protest.

At least 146 people were killed and several thousand injured since Tuesday last week after law enforcers and ruling party men clashed with protesters in Dhaka and elsewhere.

The sheer scale of violence prompted the government to impose a curfew and deploy the armed forces across the country.

In October 2018, the government, through a hastily issued circular, scrapped the quota system for recruitments in grade 9-13 following students' demonstrations for quota reforms.

But the students did not want the quota system to be abolished, they rather wanted it reformed.

At that time, there was 30 percent quota for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren, 10 percent for districts that are lagging behind, 10

percent for women, five percent for ethnic minorities and one percent for physically challenged people.

The government decision to abolish the quota system was challenged in the High Court by seven children of freedom fighters. In response, the HC on June 5 declared the government circular illegal, essentially reinstating the 56 percent quota in government jobs.

The HC verdict sparked students' protests on public university campuses. Students from private universities, colleges, and in some cases from schools joined in.

The protests intensified after the Supreme Court on July 4 declined to stay the HC verdict.

After three days of nationwide demonstrations, the SC issued a status quo on the HC verdict and set August 7 for a hearing. The decision did little to pacify the protesters.

As protests escalated and the death toll climbed, the government requested the top court to hold an early hearing.

The seven-member full bench of the Appellate Division of the SC, led by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, on Sunday issued the order regarding reforms of the quota system.

More than 1,400 arrested in three days

FROM PAGE 1

in Pabna, 46 in Madaripur, and 44 in Kishoreganj and Netrakona.

A total of 15 cases were filed with six police stations of Chattogram city and district in the last one week accusing 30,000 named and unnamed people of resorting to violence, said police.

According to court documents, 799 people, including several BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court of Dhaka over the last six days following their arrests.

They were arrested in 68 cases lodged with 34 police stations in the capital on charges of attacking law enforcers and damaging and torching state properties. Some of the cases were filed under the Special Powers Act and the Explosive Substances Act.

The court sent many of the arrestees to jail.

On Sunday, 297 people, including BNP chairperson's adviser Zahir Uddin Swapan, former convener of Dhaka city (north) BNP Amanullah Aman, International Affairs Secretary Nasiruddin Ahmed Wasim, and Jamaat Central Working Council member Samiul Haque Faruqui, were produced before the CMM court in a case filed over torching and damaging properties at Setu Bhaban.

The court placed Zahir Uddin, Nasiruddin, and Samiul on five-day remand after the Detective Branch of DMP produced them before it seeking 10-day remand for each.

Earlier, top BNP leader Amir Khashru Mahmud Chowdhury and Dhaka District BNP General Secretary Nipun Roy Chowdhury, Publicity Affairs Secretary Sultan

Salahuddin Tuku, Dhaka city (north) BNP member secretary Aminul Haque, Organising Secretary Kazi Sayedul Alam Babul and Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar were arrested in a case filed over planning and financing attacks, and vandalising the BTV Bhaban in the capital's Rampura.

They were produced before a Dhaka court on Sunday.

DMP CHIEF'S COMMENTS

DMP Commissioner Habibur yesterday questioned if it was possible for students to attack metro rail stations, BTRC data centre, BTV Bhaban, and Setu Bhaban.

He said criminals had rented homes in the capital to stay long ago with the intent to carry out destructive activities.

Habibur urged the city dwellers to provide police with information about the new tenants.

Won't spare BNP-Jamaat this time: PM

FROM PAGE 1

Referring to past destructive activities like arson attacks by "BNP-Jamaat clique," including those in 2013-14, she said her government had taken steps as per the law, according to the UNB report.

"We ensured punishment for many of them, but after getting out of jail, they are showing their old face again. This time we will not spare them so easily like in the past," she said.

Hasina, also the ruling Awami League president, said the country will return to normal very soon with gradual relaxation of the ongoing curfew, imposed on Friday night in the wake of a massive nationwide unrest centring quota reform protests.

"I want to improve the situation quickly, and we have already been able to calm down the situation. The curfew will be relaxed more in the coming days."

The PM said the government was forced to impose curfew to save the lives and properties of the people.

According to The Daily Star count, at least 146 people have been killed across the country since Tuesday, although the death toll may rise. Also, dozens of public and private establishments, including BTV centre and two Metro stations, and scores of vehicles were vandalised or burned or both.

"Many people wanted to tell we have deployed army against the students. I am doing politics and I have come here after doing student politics. We have tried till the last moment to resolve the matter politically. After that we have been forced to deploy the army."

Students are the most sensitive subjects, and the government has to look after the students and their

security, she said adding that the government had tried to provide them security by the police and other law enforcement agencies.

When destructive activities began, the students said they were not involved with those activities. They also condemned those activities, she said.

"Only then did we deploy the army. We did not deploy the army before that," the PM said, adding that she is worried about the trade and commerce of the country in the wake of the situation.

"I have invited you here and we need your support and cooperation to run trade and commerce," she told the businesspeople.

Talking about a rumour that she had left the country, she said, "Sheikh Hasina never flees."

She said that when she sits with businesspeople, she does see who is in favour of BNP or who is in favour of Jamaat. "I know everyone. I never identify businesspeople based on their party affiliations, because I love my country."

Regarding business communities' demand for opening mills and factories, she said the government will allow those to open once it is convinced that there is no risk in a particular area.

"You can also reopen your factories and mills if you want at your own peril. If anything happens, you will be responsible for that," she said.

FBCCI President Mahbubul Alam, BGMEA President Abdul Mannan Kochi, Banks Association of Bangladesh (BAB) President Nazrul Islam Majumder, Shop Owners Association President Helal Uddin, BKMEA leader Mohammad Hatem,

Basundhara Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan, Syed Nasim Manzur of Apex, and Pran Group Chairman Ahsan Khan Chowdhury also spoke.

A documentary on the recent carnage was screened at the programme.

After a halt to businesses activities due to violence and curfew, the businesses yesterday demanded a quick restoration of the normal business environment and internet services as losses pile up.

Goods transport, production, sales, financial transactions in banks and even in the financial mobile services remain halted.

FBCCI President Mahbubul Alam led the business delegation to place their demand.

After the meeting, FBCCI Senior Vice-President Md Amin Helaly said they mainly placed three demands to the PM -- restoration of normalcy in business, restoration of the internet service and normalcy in transport of essential goods.

Garment factory and textile mill owners demanded that the government allow them to open their units.

Nearly 450 heads or representatives of trade bodies, business chambers, individual businessman from the capital, divisions and districts joined the 2-hour meeting from 3:00pm.

BGMEA President SM Mannan Kochi said they are counting losses every day as their factories remain closed.

Nasim Manzur of Apex wanted to know at the meeting if the intelligence agencies gave any alert about the unrest.

"If not, it should be investigated why they have failed," he said.

Parts of Dhaka left charred

FROM PAGE 1

around half an hour," Mahub said.

Mohibur Rahman, state minister for disaster management and relief, said over Tk 500 crore worth of damage was done in the arson attack at the DMD office.

"A five-member probe committee, headed by a DMD Director Abdullah Al Noman, was formed to ascertain the exact amount of damage. It was asked to submit a report within seven days," he told reporters yesterday.

Meanwhile, he said, a case was filed with Banani Police Station on July 20 over the attack.

Other establishments that came under such attacks were the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) office; Setu Bhaban; BTV centre; the Mohakhali and Banani toll plazas; BRTA Bhaban; the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Police (Traffic) in Badda; Badda Ansar camp; Mirpur Indoor Stadium; Mirpur-10 police box and footbridge; and the Matsya Bhaban.

The destruction between July 18 and 19 were carried out during the unrest centring the quota reform movement.

So far, at least 146 people were killed in the clashes across the country.

The organisers of the quota movement have vehemently denied any protesting student's involvement in the destruction.

Meanwhile, the ruling Awami League has been pointing fingers at BNP-Jamaat men.

Visiting the DGHS yesterday, these correspondents found 22 vehicles vandalised and 19 others completely burnt in front of the directorate's old building.

Pieces of the shattered glass walls, doors, and windows at the MIS (Management Information System) and Old DGHS buildings were strewn all over the place.

Rezaul Karim, an Ansar member and a witness, said, "Some 200-300 people, armed with sharp weapons, entered the building chanting 'capture DGHS [Dhor Shastho Odhidaptar]' around 4:15pm [on July 19]. They threatened the on-duty five Ansar members, and vandalised the parked vehicles and structures."

The attackers were carrying red and black bags from where they pulled out petrol, which they poured on the vehicles to set them ablaze, he added.

"We informed our bosses and they called the national emergency helpline-999, seeking help but they too expressed their helplessness."

The toll plazas of elevated expressway at Mohakhali and Banani-2, were also set on fire at 5:00pm and burned till 8:20pm on July 18. The correspondents saw the charred iron structures with ashes all around.

Md Sakib, a security guard of the Mohakhali toll plaza, said, "Several hundred people carrying machetes and sticks first vandalised the toll plaza. Before leaving, two of them set those on fire using petrol."

The toll plaza authorities too called police, whose response, yet again, came in the negative.

Sakib, who witnessed it, added that the attackers did not look like students.

Fazlul Haque, security supervisor of Banani-2 toll plaza, gave a similar description.

In front of Setu Bhaban in Banani, these correspondents saw two burnt

cars still lying on the road. The glass front of the building was shattered.

Inside, five motorcycles and 48 cars were burnt while the ground and first floors of the 12-storey building were vandalised and burnt at places.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader's room was vandalised, while computers, laptops, televisions and other valuables were looted from the building.

Nearby, BRTA headquarters and the Roads and Highway's executive engineer's Dhaka office were also vandalised and two cars torched.

Bangladesh Television centre in Rampura was also vandalised and set on fire.

BTV Director General Jahangir Hossain said the design section was fully gutted, while the administrative and studio rooms, along with the auditorium, were torched. Cameras and laptops were stolen.

"The attackers also looted the vintage cameras from the BTV museum," he said, adding that 18 vehicles, including a telecast car, were burnt and nine others were vandalised.

In Badda, attackers torched the zonal office of Assistant Commissioner of Police (traffic) and the Ansar Camp office, where at least seven burnt cars were found.

At the Mirpur-10 roundabout, the traffic police box and footbridge were set ablaze, rendering them unusable.

Visiting Badda, Rampura, Mirpur and Banani areas, these correspondents found that at least five burnt cars lying on roads. Street lamps from the road dividers, lampposts, and signboards were also found broken.

‘Normalcy to return soon’

FROM PAGE 1

even estimate how much more public money will have to be spent [for the recovery]."

Asked what is his message for those involved in the subversive activities, he said, "I have one message for them: anyone may have grievances, but what's the point in destroying public property?"

Terming the destruction "incomprehensible", the army chief said those properties did not belong to any individual, but to the public. "We the people are the sufferers. I don't know what would be gained from

this."

He said the armed forces have been deployed to protect public property and they are committed to do so.

Replying to a query, General Waker said supply of essentials through Jatrabari, which was blocked for four to five days, has resumed already.

"Aviation fuel delivery to Dhaka airport from Narayanganj [through Jatrabari] has started," he said, adding that it might take a little time to normalise the flow.

"We will have to restore confidence among people. We will have to reassure the drivers. I think it will happen in a

couple of days."

Asked when the situation will become normal, he said, "Give us a little time. We have been here for only 48 hours. I believe, if all of us work together, we will achieve that goal soon."

He said the air force, navy and police are playing an important role alongside the army. Together with Rab, BGB, and Ansar forces, we are working to improve the situation, he added.

"I am sure we are heading towards the right direction," said the army chief.

Enjoy Your Golden Years with
SENIOR CITIZEN PUBALI DEPOSIT SCHEME (SCPDS)✓ Any Bangladeshi individual aged 59 years and above
can open account under this scheme.✓ Attractive Interest Rate / Profit
[6 Months FDR rate plus 1% p.a.]**পূবালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি**
PUBALI BANK PLC.**Open your
Account
from anywhere**PI a PUBALI BANK
apps**Islamic Banking services are provided through online from all our branches and sub-branches**

Restore internet, withdraw curfew Demands platform of university teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

University Teachers Network (UTN) yesterday called upon the authorities concerned to immediately withdraw the countrywide curfew and resume internet services to end public sufferings.

Due to the disruption, people are struggling to get essential services, the platform of public university teachers said in a statement.

The government imposed the nationwide curfew from early Saturday and internet services were also shutdown as scores were killed and many government establishments were torched and vandalised amid the clashes between law enforcers and protesters.

"Mindless killing of people has to be stopped now and those who have gone missing should be traced immediately," reads the statement.

The platform called for proper and non-partisan inquiry into the killings by a neutral probe body to be formed in line with different global human rights instruments.

It called upon everyone to not "dehumanise" the protesters and refrain from using any offensive words against

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

BNP-Jamaat behind attacks, sabotage: Arafat

UNB, Dhaka

State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad A Arafat yesterday said BNP-Jamaat activists carried out attacks across the country as part of their well-thought and pre-designed blueprint to disconnect the country from the world and stop development efforts.

"Look at their dress-up, approach and attitude," he said, adding that even some of the attackers were drugged.

He was highlighting the extent of the destruction caused to the government properties at a views-exchange meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the country's business leaders.

Arafat said BNP-Jamaat cadres are responsible for staging sabotage in the country while the attackers targeted general people and key establishments.

He said a solution is being found through discussion with students while curfew was imposed to check the attackers.

The government said the ill motive of the perpetrators was exposed when the coordinators of the quota protests made public statements denying any involvement in the indiscriminate violence, vandalism and arsons and called on all quarters not to take evil political advantage from their apolitical movement.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SAUDI ARABIA-BOUND MIGRANTS

Stranded, they continue to suffer

RASHIDUL HASAN and JAMIL MAHMUD

Md Mahbul, a Saudi-bound migrant worker, was scheduled to fly for the KSA at 2:35am on July 19. However, his flight was cancelled due to technical issues caused by countrywide internet shutdown.

He was forced to stay overnight at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport as there was no arrangement from the authorities concerned for accommodation and food for the stranded passengers.

Like Mahbul, several hundred migrant workers had to face massive troubles at the Dhaka Airport due to cancellation or delay of flights of different airlines including Saudia, Air Arabia and Emirates in the last three days since Friday.

Many of the passengers got stranded at the airport or had to stay outside the airport as international flights were either delayed or cancelled due to a technical glitch related to global Microsoft flight data and lack of passengers amid road blocks by demonstrators and the curfew.

Mahbul, who came to Dhaka from

Pabna while suffering huge hassle on the road, said, "As there was unrest in different parts of the country, I didn't dare to go back to Pabna.



Instead, I decided to stay in Dhaka as I was not sure when my flight will be rescheduled."

Saiful, another Saudi-bound migrant, whose flight also got

cancelled on July 20, said, "We contribute to the country's economy with our hard-earned money. But the respective ministry or any other government authorities bothered little to look after us during this hard situation."

Sakibul Hasan of Bhola, another Saudi-bound migrant, said, "I have been at the airport for the last 16 hours to learn when my flight has been rescheduled. But neither the airlines authorities, nor airport authorities could give us any information."

"At the airport, I had to cross half a kilometre to get water and food while carrying my heavy luggage on my head, as there was no such arrangement at the waiting area outside the terminal," said a frustrated Sakibul.

Amid the sufferings of migrant workers, Aviation Minister Mohammad Faruk Khan on Saturday said for migrant workers, there were arrangements for food and accommodation at the Hajj Camp and the rest house of expatriates' welfare ministry at city's Ashkona.

But several migrant workers

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

COUNTRYWIDE VIOLENCE

Power sector incurs loss of Tk 1,000cr, DNCC Tk 205cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The power sector incurred a loss of at least Tk 1,000 crore during the violence centring the quota reform protest, said State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid yesterday.

He said the saboteurs were BNP-Jamaat men. The miscreants vandalised, looted or torched at least five power sub-stations in Dhaka and beyond.

Besides, Palli Bidyut offices in Narsingdi and Narayanganj were torched and vandalised.

When sufferings of people failing to recharge pre-paid meters without the internet were brought to his attention, he said the situation is improving.

"Zonal offices of the power distribution companies have been recharging the prepaid customers... They are working 24 hours... we have increased limit of the emergency balance," he



added.

Meanwhile, Dhaka North City Corporation incurred a loss of around Tk 205 crore in the unrest centring the student protest on quota reform on Friday and Saturday.

The city corporation said one-fourth of DNCC vehicles tasked with garbage management had been set on fire.

DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam presented a primary estimation of their loss at a press conference held at Nagar Bhawan in Gulshan yesterday.

The mayor said most of the damages were reported from Mirpur-10, amounting to Tk 120 crore.

He said a footbridge at Mirpur-10 intersection, four garbage carrying compactors and 29 vehicles including 10 garbage carrying container carriers had completely been burnt on Friday and Saturday.

DNCC faced a loss of around Tk 3.10 crore in zone-1 and zone-5, Tk 1.25 crore in zone-3 and around Tk 7 lakh in zone-6.

Besides, LED lights, road medians and similar structures were vandalised in areas under DNCC, amounting to Tk 65 crore in damages.

Also, a storm sewage pump was damaged in Rampura, disabling DNCC to pump out additional water from Hatirjheel now, the mayor said.

3RD DAY OF CURFEW IN DHAKA

Free from violence but far from normal

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

After nearly a week of chaos, no incidence of violence or clash was reported inside Dhaka on the third day of curfew. People were seen heading to kitchen markets, grocery stores and paying utility bills.

Nasrin Akhter, a resident in Dhanmondi area, moved out to dump the household garbage into a garbage can located a few hundred metres away from her home.

"Cleaners and garbage collectors from the city corporation could not come to our building for the last five days due to clashes. Many of these wastes started to rot and stink. So, I came out myself to dump it into the local garbage container."

Although there was no violence on the streets, the situation was still far from normal. Most of the shops, shopping malls, restaurants, public places and offices were closed throughout the city. Public transport was absent like the previous days. App-based ride sharing services were closed as the internet shutdown is still in effect.

Very few private vehicles were plying the roads and people were using mostly rickshaws and battery-powered auto-rickshaws to move about. They said rickshaw-pullers were asking for exorbitant fares taking advantage of the situation.

Naimur Rahman was trying to go to Farmgate from Mohammadpur but failed to find any rickshaw. He said, "The usual fare should be Tk 80. But, rickshaw-pullers are asking Tk 140-150."

Although there was no violence on the street yesterday, people are now in fear of getting arrested as news of mass arrests made rounds on mainstream media.

Cleaners and garbage collectors could not come to our building for the last five days due to clashes. All these wastes started to rot and stink.

NASRIN AKHTER
A resident of Dhanmondi

Sadequr Rahman, a delivery man of an app-based company, said, "There are thousands of youth like me who are now sitting idle at home without any work due to curfew and internet shutdown. We have no income for a week and now we are passing days with extreme fear and anxiety as we are getting news of mass arrests."

Suraiya Akhter, a sales worker of a shopping mall in Farmgate, said, "The government should bring the country back into normalcy as soon as possible."



A relatively empty road in the capital's Banani yesterday. On the third day of the ongoing curfew, Dhaka saw more traffic as people head out to restock essentials.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BOALKHALI, PATIYA
People suffer
for power
outage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Residents of Boalkhali and Patiya upazilas in Chattogram suffered a lot due to prolonged power outages following technical glitch in the supply line of Palli Bidyut yesterday.

Farzana Akter from Boalkhali said power went out at around 6:00am and came around 11:30am; later, it went out again around noon and didn't come till 6:00pm.

"We are suffering in the sweltering heat," she said, adding, "We cannot recharge our mobile phone sets and cannot communicate with others over phone for emergency purposes."

Mizanur Rahman, deputy general manager of Chattogram Palli Bidyut Samity-1, said as the technical glitch occurred in the breaker of supply grid, power outage started in those areas.

"A total of 72,000 clients are there in the zone under Palli Bidyut," he added.

Three children
drown in
ponds

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Three children drowned in ponds in Jamalpur yesterday afternoon.

The incident took place at Kalkihara and Malirchor villages in Bokshiganj upazila, police quoted locals as saying.

At Kalkihara, Shoeb Hassan, 6, son of Gofur Badsha; and Robiul Miah, 8, son of Ayob Mia, drowned while they were bathing in a pond near their houses around 5:00pm, said Abdul Ahad Khan, officer-in-charge of Bokshiganj Police Station.

Meanwhile, Safa Aktar, 4, daughter of Raju Miah from Malirchor village, drowned in a pond, said the OC. The bodies were handed over to the families.



This roll of cable was burnt during the violence on July 18. DPDC was installing underground wires in Basila area of Mohammadpur, when miscreants set it on fire. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

NATIONWIDE CURFEW

7,500 tourists stuck
in Cox's Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 7,500 tourists have been trapped in Cox's Bazar amid the ongoing nationwide curfew.

Being anxious to return home, they are collecting curfew passes from deputy commissioner's office, so that they can have a safe passage.

They are also facing massive financial troubles due to the online banking system not working because of the nationwide internet shutdown.

Mohammad Yousuf, a tourist from Dhaka's Elephant Road, said he and his friend came to Cox's Bazar on July 17 for two days.

However, due to the curfew, they got trapped here, and they were already out of cash as they could not withdraw any money through mobile banking services, he said.

"We had to get our meals and stay at the hotel on credit. Later, we managed to pay our bills after we could withdraw some money



Tourists gathering at Cox's Bazar DC office for curfew passes and bus tickets yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

from a distant ATM booth. Since we have been staying at the hotel due to an unfortunate circumstance, it would be nice if the hotel gave us a discount, but they didn't give any," said Yousuf.

Another tourist Morium said she came on a two-night trip with 50 of her colleagues four days ago, but still they have not been

able to leave Cox's Bazar due to curfew.

The extended stay is hurting them financially, she added.

Masud Rana, an executive magistrate, said the district administration is arranging buses with regular fare for the trapped tourists to leave Cox's Bazar.

"Around 50 buses will leave

Cox's Bazar tomorrow [today] morning with the trapped tourists," he added.

Around 4,000 curfew passes were issued to the tourists on Sunday and many others were being issued passes yesterday, Masud Rana told The Daily Star in the evening.

According to the District Tourist Police, around 7,500 tourists are trapped in the Cox's Bazar, he added.

Meanwhile, tourists complained that they are having to pay higher fares for both buses and airlines.

Sirajul Islam, a tourist from Narayanganj's Araihaazar, said the same sleeper coach that carried them to Cox's Bazar for Tk 1,100 per seat, is now asking Tk 2,500 for the return ticket.

Iftexhar Mahmud, a businessman from Dhanmondi, said airline companies are asking Tk 8,000 to Tk 11,000 for return tickets, while the fare was Tk 5,500 when he was getting tickets to come to Cox's Bazar.

'Reducing quota
for indigenous
people not logical'
Says Adivasi Quota
Sangrakkhan Parishad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reducing the quota for people from indigenous communities in government jobs from five percent to one percent is not logical, said Alik Mree, convenor of the Adivasi Quota Sangrakkhan Parishad.

"Now it would be impossible for indigenous community members to attain higher growth through sustainable and inclusive development as pledged in the SDGs," he said in a text message.

Besides, the pledge to change the quality of living standard by reducing poverty and inequality among the marginalised communities will be also not viable, he also said.

The quota reduction will keep the indigenous communities lagging behind, which will in turn impede the building of "Smart Bangladesh" and attaining the SDGs, he remarked.

Mree urged the Supreme Court and the government to restore the five percent quota for indigenous communities in government jobs.

Pahari Chhatra Parishad in a statement yesterday demanded that the government restore the five percent quota for indigenous communities.

Surrender or
face stern action
IGP warns convicts who
fled Narsingdi jail; 64 out
of 826 arrested so far

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun yesterday said police will take stern action against the convicts who fled from Narsingdi District Jail on July 19 unless they surrender immediately.

"We urge all the convicts, who have fled, to surrender. Otherwise, we will take stern action against them," he said.

Police have so far arrested 64 out of the total 826 convicts who fled from the jail, and recovered 21 of the 85 arms that were looted on the same day, the IGP said while briefing reporters in front of the Narsingdi jail premises yesterday.

The IGP also announced a reward of Tk 50,000 to anyone who will provide information or help to recover the looted arms.

Narsingdi Deputy Commissioner Badiul Alam and Superintendent of Police Mohammad Mustafizur Rahman were present among other senior officials at the briefing.

Contacted, Tanvir Hasan, officer in-charge of Narsingdi Sadar Police Station, yesterday said few convicts have already surrendered to them. He, however, did not mention the number of convicts who surrendered.

On July 19, a total of 826 convicts fled from the jail, while 85 arms and 9,000 bullets were looted.

Meanwhile, two separate committees have been formed to investigate the incident.

Restore internet, withdraw

FROM PAGE 3

them, urging the authorities to publish identities of the murdered and injured ones.

The platform said the government has to withdraw "false and fabricated" cases against student protesters and other innocent people.

Besides, safety of all student coordinators has to be ensured, it added.

It said those who were injured should be provided with adequate treatment.

The platform condemned atrocities allegedly committed by police and other law enforcement agency members and demanded that the power of those who gave the orders should be curtailed and that they should be brought under an accountability framework.

It said before resuming classes across the country, an education-friendly environment has to be ensured.

It said a "delayed" but recent verdict from the country's apex court came as a positive development in regards to fulfilling demands of the students, however, their eight-point demand was still awaiting implementation.

Meanwhile, Gonoforum, in a statement, demanded prosecution of those who killed protesting students, a cease to the ongoing mass arrests and harassment, release of all political prisoners and re-opening of all educational institutions.

Social Resistance Committee, a platform of 66 women, human rights and development organisations, expressed deep concern over the latest verdict of the Appellate Division that eliminated the female quota.

"The SDG-5 clearly mentions equality of men and women and female quota is necessary to achieve that goal," said Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Fauzia Moslem, on behalf of

the platform, in a statement.

Meanwhile, 25 female rights activists and teachers termed the Supreme Court's verdict on quota system "confusing, illogical and a farce", and demanded its withdrawal.

In a joint statement, they said the SC verdict was "a trap to confuse the ongoing just protests against the fascist government".

"The government has tried to blackout the information of killing at least 174 general people with internet shutdown and by imposing curfew," reads the statement sent through a text message.

Signatories of the statement include: Bangladesh Nari Mukti Kendra president Sima Dutta; rights activist Rehnuma Ahmed; Dhaka University teacher Samina Lutfa Nitra; Bangladesh Hill Women Federation president Niti Chakma; artist Sayan; and teacher Monira Sharmin.

Internet

FROM PAGE 7

The CPA is also trying to adopt manual documentations as a part of its efforts to keep the port running, he said.

Transport of import and export-laden containers between the port and the private ICDs, however, improved a bit yesterday morning.

Four vessels departed from the port yesterday and they took almost all of the containers for which bookings had been placed on them.

Far East Group, a Gazipur-based garment factory, imported three containers of cotton and chemicals from China and India which were unloaded from a ship on July 17.

The assessment and payment of duties against these consignments were completed by July 19 but they could not be delivered until yesterday, said Kamruzzaman Sagar, proprietor of ABS Corporation, the clearing and forwarding agent.

Because of the internet blackout, the three containers could neither be traced nor be run through a final verification by customs in the last three days, he said, adding that it was difficult to carry out these activities manually.

PRAYER
TIMING
JULY 23

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

Stranded, they continue

FROM PAGE 3

yesterday claimed the situation at Ashkona Hajj Camp and the rest house is not good at all.

Besides, the roads that lead to the two places are unable to be used as those are under repair, they said.

While visiting Dhaka airport yesterday afternoon, hundreds of exhausted migrant workers were found waiting for 8-12 hours for their flights.

Shariful Hasan, associate director of BRAC Migration Programme, said many migrant workers, both

outbound and returnees, were affected due to the curfew and internet shutdown.

"There was fear and uncertainty among the migrants to catch their flights on time amid the situation. As a result, many reached the capital from different districts a day before and later found it difficult to spend the night," Shariful said.

BRAC has provided support to many migrants in distress, he said.

Hamidur Rahman, director general of Wage

Earners' Welfare Board, said currently they provide accommodation facilities to both outbound and returnee migrants at the Bangabandhu Wage Earners' Centre at Khilkhet, where 50 people can reside at a time.

If required, migrants can use the facility as a short-time shelter, he said, adding that they also have ambulance service at the airport. Meanwhile, sources at HSIA said at least 12 international flights were cancelled and many others delayed in the last four days.

The People's Republic of Bangladesh

National Board of Revenue

Bangladesh Regional Connectivity project 1:

National Single Window Implementation and Strengthening Customs Modernization

IDEB Bhaban (10th floor), 160/A, Kakrail, Dhaka

Memo no. 1(192) Active items/ Hardware /NSW/2024/2142.

Date: 22.07.24

Subject: Addendum to bidding document for supply and Installation of Hardware and Infrastructure (network, communication, cabling etc.) and standard software for NSW solution; other network, communication equipment, structure, Hardware and cabling: Server & Storage and Network & Security components for NSW Server Room & DR. Bangladesh Regional Connectivity project 1: Request for Bids (RFB) No. NBR-GD2A.1.

Addendum No. 2

This is for the information of all Bidders concerned that the following amendments have been mad for the procurement mentioned in the subject above;

Ref	Existing Entry	Amended entry
SI No. of 6, SPN ITP-23.1& 26.1	The deadline for Bid Submission is: Date: July 23,2024, Time :14.00 hours.	The deadline for Bid Submission is: Date: August 13,2024, Time :14.00 hours.
	Date & Time for Bid Opening July 23,2024, Time: 14:30 hours	Date & Time for Bid Opening August 13, 2024, Time :14:30 hours

All the terms and conditions of bidding Documents (RFB) NBR-GD2A. 1 shall remain unchanged. This Addendum No. 2 shall be considered an integral part of the Bidding Documents and shall be binding on all Bidders who have obtained or will obtain the Bidding Documents from the Purchaser.

(Abul Bashar Md Shafiqur Rahman)
Project Director
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity project 1:
National Single Window Implementation and strengthening Customs Modernization
Email: pdnsw.nbr@gmail.com

GD-64



Hall owners face huge losses, look to recoup with ‘Toofan’



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

It seemed like silver-screen cinema was finally back, when ‘Toofan’ started breaking all records for a Bangladeshi film. However, the unforeseen situation has seemed to put a halt to that.

SAHID AKBAR

Irrespective of whether it was on single-screens or multiplexes, Shakib Khan starrer *Toofan* was doing incredible business in cinema halls after its release this Eid-ul Azha. The Raihan Rafi directorial was expected to run for the foreseeable future before the quota reform protests started. According to the producers, the film earned around Tk 25 crores, a rare feat for a Bangladeshi film. Even though some people did go see the film at the start



of the movement, cinema halls had to close down after nationwide violence started, claiming the lives of many involved. In the past few years, films like *Hawa*, *Poran* and *Priyotoma* showed that there is still promise for Bangladeshi films, and if done right, it can pull people to cinema halls despite the dominance of OTT. Hall owners now are facing considerable losses during the current curfew, as noted by Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, senior manager at Star Cineplex, the country's biggest multiplex chain. “We were running 46 shows of *Toofan*, it was doing really well for us,” he said. “However, we had to close down. It is unfortunate, as no film in recent memory made as many records as this film – and now, we are facing huge losses which will be hard to recoup if we have to keep the halls closed for a few more days.”

Iftekhar Uddin Nawshad, owner of Madhumita Cinema, is distraught at the situation. “After a huge gap, we started seeing good business with *Toofan* – the timing of closure could not have been more unfortunate. I do understand that this is a national emergency, but so many lives depend on our business as well. What I can tell you is after the situation is better, we will run the film again to attract people to our halls. Shyamoli Cinema’s Ahsanullah also echoed the same sentiment, “We had to keep our hall closed from July 19 onwards, was it even possible to run films in this situation? Thanks to Shakib Khan, we finally started seeing profitable days, but that has been upended by the nationwide violence. We hope to keep *Toofan* running after the situation gets better.”

‘Sitting at home, hoping for normalcy’



Chanchal Chowdhury was in the USA when the quota reform movement started in Bangladesh. However, the actor had no idea that it would lead to so much violence. He is now at home, hoping for the situation to return to normal. “I am shocked at the amount of violence that has ensued, must there have been bloodshed?”, he said. “I am now obeying the rules of the curfew, and I can only hope that we can once again see normalcy in our beloved country.”

Chirkutt’s Dhaka return delayed amidst protests

Known as Bangladesh’s ‘international’ act, Chirkutt was on its Canada tour for the past month, and was supposed to return to Dhaka on July 20. However, the band’s flight has been delayed, amidst continued violence. “We are horrified to learn about the situation in our beloved country,” said Pavel, the band’s drummer. “We are all praying that we can all get through this together.” The band hopes to return as soon as it is safer to land in Dhaka.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



MEET YOUR MENTORS

70+ years of combined experience



A B M JABED SULTAN





MUHAMMAD SANJID HOSSAIN





MUNAF MOJIB CHOWDHURY





MD. EHSANUL HOQUE





JOSHUA ADHIKARI



DIGITAL MARKETING ESSENTIALS



Visit www.keeron.com
and embark on your journey to become career-ready.

Trump, Vance heap scorn on Biden, Harris

AFP, Washington

Donald Trump and running mate J D Vance on Sunday slammed the record of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, as the incumbent bowed out of the White House race and sought to pass the torch to his number two.

Biden's momentous decision to ditch his reelection bid was met with quick scorn from Republican presidential candidate Trump, in a series of posts on his Truth Social platform.

"Crooked Joe Biden was not fit to run for President, and is certainly not fit to serve - And never was!" Trump wrote. "Whoever the Left puts up now will just be more of the same."

Then his campaign team piled on, lashing into the vice president after Biden endorsed her to take his place atop the Democratic Party's presidential ticket, saying she would be "even worse" than the outgoing leader.

"Harris will be even worse for the people of our nation than Joe Biden. Harris has been the Enabler in Chief for Crooked Joe this entire time. They own each other's records, and there



is no distance between the two," the campaign said in a statement.

Later, it was Vance's turn to heap scorn on Biden and Harris.

"Joe Biden has been the worst President in my lifetime and Kamala Harris has been right there with him every step of the way," the Republican senator wrote on X, saying Harris had "lied for nearly four years about Biden's mental capacity."

"President Trump and I are ready to save America, whoever's at the top of the Democrat ticket. Bring it on," Vance concluded.

The Republican convention last week has put the party unity on display, in contrast to the divisions roiling Democrats. Trump's former top rivals for the nomination, former UN envoy Nikki Haley and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, offered strong endorsements of his candidacy despite their past criticisms.

IT, BPO firms

FROM PAGE 12

introduced so that the export-oriented firms can use internet to serve their global clients.

Apart from the daily financial losses of Tk 70-80 crore due to the internet outage, the country will face a long-term image crisis in the international market, said Rashad Kabir, managing director of software firm Dream71.

"The international buyers won't consider Bangladesh as an outsourcing destination in the future because commitment and timely delivery are most important for them."

There is a high chance that these buyers will shift to India, Vietnam, the Philippines and other competitor countries, according to Rashad.

3 bodies

FROM PAGE 12

bodies and informed police.

Police sent the bodies to Narayanganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies.

The victims were Selim Mondol, 29, Abdul Salam, 27, of Kushtia's Kumarkhali upazila, and Md Sohel, 21, Sylhet's Beanibazar upazila.

Golam Mostofa Russel, superintendent of Narayanganj police, said the Shimrail highway police camp was on the 7th floor of the building. On July 20, some agitators threw stones at the camp and police opened fire.

At one point, the agitators set the building on fire. The trapped police personnel went to the roof and were rescued by a helicopter.

Judicial body

FROM PAGE 12

on July 16 and identify the persons responsible for the deaths and recent incidents of violence.

The commission was asked to submit its probe report to the government within 30 working days.

Meanwhile, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on Sunday said it expects the commission to unearth the reasons behind the death of each and every student and the government to take necessary legal steps against those responsible as per the recommendations of the commission.



Palestinians walk past destroyed buildings to refill containers with water from a nearby supply point in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

US PRESIDENTIAL RACE What happens after Biden exit?

AFP, Washington

US President Joe Biden's decision Sunday to withdraw from the presidential race at such a late date -- just over 100 days until the November 5 election -- is unprecedented in modern US electoral history.

In the coming days, Biden's fellow Democrats "will undertake a transparent and orderly process to move forward as a united Democratic Party with a candidate who can defeat Donald Trump in November," chairman Jaime Harrison said in a statement.

Here's a look at how replacing the 81-year-old could work.

CHAOTIC CONVENTION?

To designate a formal nominee, delegates chosen from all 50 states, the US capital and overseas territories attend their party's summer nominating convention to officially anoint a candidate.

Biden overwhelmingly won the primary votes, and the party's roughly 3,900 delegates heading to the convention -- scheduled to begin August 19 in Chicago -- are pledged to back him.

Party leaders had previously planned to formally nominate Biden via a virtual

roll call ahead of the convention, due to potential legal issues regarding Ohio.

With Biden exiting, it is unclear if or when that early meeting will occur, but naming his replacement will ultimately fall to the delegates.



"Our delegates are prepared to take seriously their responsibility in swiftly delivering a candidate to the American people," Harrison said, adding that the "process will be governed by established rules and procedures of the Party."

The last-minute change could bring US politics back to the old days, when party bosses jostled to pick a nominee through deal-making in smoke-filled back rooms

and endless rounds of voting.

On March 31, 1968, then-president Lyndon Johnson made the shock announcement in the middle of the Vietnam War that he would not seek reelection.

The move -- though announced far earlier in the campaign than Biden's -- turned that year's convention, also in Chicago, into a political crisis, with protesters in the streets and left-leaning delegates angry at the pro-war stance of party-picked candidate Hubert Humphrey. Following that debacle, states more widely embraced primary process and conventions have become well-oiled affairs whose outcomes are effectively known in advance.

WHO MIGHT STEP IN?

A natural -- but not automatic -- pick to take Biden's place would be Vice President Kamala Harris, whom Biden quickly endorsed Sunday -- and who vowed to pick up the baton.

Otherwise, any of a number of strong Democratic politicians -- Governors Gavin Newsom of California, Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan and Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania have been mentioned -- might be called on.

Ukrainian drone strikes spark fire at Russian oil refinery

AFP, Kyiv

A barrage of Ukrainian drones sparked a blaze overnight at an oil refinery and separately killed one person in southern Russia, officials in Russia and Ukraine said yesterday.

Kyiv and Moscow have intensified fatal cross-border missile and drone attacks over recent months with both sides primarily targeting energy infrastructure.



Authorities in the Russian Black Sea town of Tuapse in the Krasnodar region said debris from one downed drone sparked a fire at an oil refinery.

The governor of Russia's southern Belgorod region meanwhile said one person driving a tractor was killed by a Ukrainian drone and his wife had been injured. A source in the Ukrainian defence sector said drones linked to the Defence Intelligence of Ukraine were behind the oil refinery attack and that the facility was operated by Russian state energy giant Rosneft.

Taiwan remodels war games in the face of China's threats

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan launched annual war games yesterday aiming to more realistically simulate an attack from China, dropping drills deemed to be out-of-touch with the growing threat of conflict.

Self-ruled Taiwan's military has discarded exercises "that were more for demonstration purposes", such as live-fire drills laid on for the media on the main island, said new Defence Minister Wellington Koo.

Officials have said such drills will now be held on Taiwan's outlying islands, where Chinese vessels and warplanes have edged closer in recent months, and that troops would now take part in "impromptu" exercises.

The changes come as Beijing, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory, has increased its military presence in skies and waters around the island. "Nowadays the situation is more threatened than before, so this type of public relations exercise is useless," Ou Sifu of Taiwan's Institute of National Defense and Security Research said of previous drills.

Biden exit offers scope, pitfalls for Democrats 4hr break in curfew

FROM PAGE 12

in the strongest position to replace him and may be able to consolidate support in the coming days -- a coronation that would allow Democrats to turn their fire on Trump.

If that doesn't happen then a chaotic -- and potentially damaging -- fight for the votes of almost 4,000 delegates at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in just four weeks looks more likely.

The party's national chairman Jaime Harrison promised a "transparent and orderly process" to replace Biden, the first president since Democrat Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968 not to seek a second term.

His campaign began collapsing after his dismal debate performance against Trump last month prompted concerns over his advanced years and mental capacity.

Trump, who would be 82 at the end of a second term, appeared more robust -- but opposition from a younger candidate would turn

the spotlight on his speeches and interviews, where he often appears incoherent and confuses names.

Several rising Democratic stars -- all younger than 60 -- have been floated as Biden alternatives, including governors Josh Shapiro, Gretchen Whitmer and Gavin Newsom.

Whitmer immediately appeared to suggest she would not be running and Newsom has previously said he would not challenge Harris, but neither explicitly ruled themselves out.

A campaign led by Harris and backed up by a moderate mid-western running mate could present the best chance for Democrats -- helping turn out more women, who historically vote in greater numbers than men and are a weakness for Trump.

Harris would also give Democrats a chance to redefine the race at their convention as a clash of cultures between a former prosecutor and a convicted felon.

"While she has largely been in

the shadows for the last four years it is time for Kamala the prosecutor... to make her comeback," said Sara Sadhwani, an assistant professor of politics at Pomona College in Claremont, California.

A new survey from Democratic polling firm Public Policy Polling released Thursday found that Harris -- with the right running mate -- could defeat Trump and Vance in Pennsylvania and Michigan, two of the three "Blue Wall" states seen as critical to electing a Democratic president.

Ryan Waite, a political marketing expert from Brigham Young University-Idaho, told AFP a contested nomination might actually benefit Democrats by depriving Trump of headlines for several months.

"A new Democrat candidate will benefit from a short vetting window and significant earned media impact right before the election," he told AFP. "The story is now who will it be and that will take the air out of the room through their convention."

FROM PAGE 1

He also said the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway, considered the country's lifeline, is now under the control of law enforcers and could be operational during the curfew break.

"Everything is now under the control of the law enforcement agencies. After the Supreme Court's verdict, we believe they [the quota reform protesters] have

accepted it and those who wanted to take advantage of the movement for their own vested interests will no longer be able to do so."

Meanwhile, the public administration ministry in a gazette notification extended the general holiday for all government and non-government offices for today. Emergency services will be out of the purview.

Philippines 'to assert rights' after China sea deal

AFP, Manila

Manila insisted yesterday it will continue to "assert our rights" over a hotspot South China Sea reef, after reaching a deal with Beijing for resupplying Filipino troops stationed on a grounded warship.

The Philippine foreign ministry also rejected suggestions by China that the "provisional arrangement" announced Sunday required Manila

to give Beijing "prior notification" and verification of deliveries to the BRP Sierra Madre on Second Thomas Shoal.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, including Second Thomas Shoal, which lies about 200 kilometres (120 miles) from the western Philippine island of Palawan and more than 1,000 kilometres from China's nearest major landmass, Hainan island.

Trial starts for Vietnam tycoon in \$146m graft case

AFP, Hanoi

A former Vietnamese property and aviation tycoon charged with \$146 million in fraud and stock market manipulation went on trial in Hanoi yesterday, the latest corruption case targeting the communist country's business elite.

Trinh Van Quyet, who owned the FLC empire of luxury resorts, golf courses, and the budget Bamboo Airways, had nearly \$2 billion in stock market wealth before his arrest, according to state media estimates.

But yesterday, the 48-year-old -- handcuffed and dressed in a white shirt -- was led into court by police officers.

The trial comes just days after the death of former Communist Party of Vietnam leader Nguyen Phu Trong, who is credited with spearheading a crackdown on graft at the highest levels.

Trong, 80, died on Friday at a military hospital in Hanoi "due to old age and serious illness", the party said, a day after announcing he was

standing down to seek medical care.

Tycoon Quyet is accused of illegally pocketing more than \$146 million between 2017 and 2022.

Following his arrest in March 2022, 49 other alleged accomplices were picked up -- including his two sisters and the former chairman of the Ho Chi Minh Stock Exchange and its chief executive officer.

According to the prosecution indictment, Quyet set up several stock market brokerages and registered dozens of family members to, ostensibly, trade shares.

Tigresses

FROM PAGE 12

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka thrashed Malaysia by 144 runs in the first match of the day to secure six points from two matches in Group B.

Sri Lanka captain Chamari Athapaththu smashed an unbeaten 119 off 69 deliveries to become the first batter to hit a Women's Asia Cup century in T20 format.

Drug production, supply take a hit

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Production and distribution of medicine have been disrupted for the last four days due to violence centring the quota reform movement and associated curfew to contain the situation, drug makers said yesterday.

Industry operators said they were unable to receive imported raw materials from Chattogram port and Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport as customs assessment and clearance were disrupted for internet blackout.

This may subsequently affect drug exports too, they said.

"Production of lifesaving drugs remains suspended since last Friday," said Md Mahbubul Karim, executive director (supply chain) at Incepta Pharmaceuticals.

There are adequate stocks of all the pharmaceuticals now to meet market demand for around one week but if the deadlock persists any longer, healthcare services will be seriously affected, he said.

Another concern was the absence of temperature-controlled facilities at the port and airport, for which some ingredients could get spoiled, he said.

Duty payments in cash are not accepted for release of raw materials, explained Karim.

All exports have been suspended since Thursday, said

Wasim Haider, senior manager (international marketing) at Beximco Pharmaceuticals.

Their production facilities were running in full swing, but uncertainties remain over how long it could be continued, he said.

Domestic and global supply chains are almost wholly dependent on the internet and the blackout was seriously hampering trade, he added.

Bookings for shipment of four consignments had to be cancelled in the last three days while keeping contact with foreign clients over phone, especially centring shipment and payment confirmations, was troublesome, he said.

Jahangir Alam, chief financial officer of Square Pharmaceuticals, said their factories were running operations partially to produce some essential drugs such as insulin as employees had apprehensions over the commute to their workplaces.

Drug distribution was also affected as they were having to manually issue invoices for delivering products, he said.

On any given day they usually issue 30,000 invoices but nowadays it had come down to 8,000 to 10,000 as many pharmacies opt to stay closed, he added.

Exports had been growing but the current situation would definitely have an impact on the overall production and supply, said Monjurul Alam, chief executive officer of Medicare, a wing of Beacon Pharmaceuticals.

Most drug makers are facing troubles maintaining correspondence with foreign clients and distributing medicine in local markets due to the unrest, he said. Some new foreign clients have even postponed scheduled factory visits, Alam added.

Export orders tend to be placed in July-September and the ongoing unrest may affect the sector's business, which would be apparent at the end of the year, he said.

Moreover, foreign buyers might lose confidence in the local manufacturers if they fail to stick to shipment schedules, Alam said.



There were very few vehicles plying the Dhaka-Chattogram highway yesterday, the third day of a nationwide curfew imposed to tackle violence centring the quota reform protests. The photo was taken in Sitakunda around 10:00am.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Dhaka-Ctg highway is disrupted. What does it mean to economy?

AHSAN HABIB and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The disruption in the Dhaka-Chattogram highway for the last six days amid violence centring the quota reform movement has dealt a huge blow to the economy, damaging the pipeline for around 90 percent of the country's \$120 billion trade and causing fears of a lasting ripple effect.

A huge number of industrial establishments have been built along the highway, hoping to capitalise on the connectivity to the country's largest seaport in Chattogram.

However, that means their supply chain is also dependent on the proper functioning of the highway. Furthermore, most of the tourism sector is also reliant on the highway as it links Dhaka to Cox's Bazar, the country's single largest tourist destination.

Against this backdrop, economists and businessmen were desperately seeking to ensure the security of the highway and guarantee hassle-free movement.

Agitators prevented vehicular movement on the highway several times this month, severing road connectivity, while protesting Cumilla University students shut it down as recently as Wednesday.

A few vehicles started using the highway on Sunday.

According to data from the Roads and Highways Department (RHD), on average around 35,000 to 40,000 vehicles use the four-lane highway daily.

Among the vehicles, 35 to 40 percent are goods-laden, an RHD official said, citing data from toll plazas at Meghna bridge and Gumti bridge along the highway.

"But, the number of vehicles was very thin in the last few days," the official added.

On average around 35,000 to 40,000 vehicles use the four-lane highway daily. That number fell by nearly 80 percent to 8,550 on Sunday

Only 8,550 vehicles used the highway on Sunday, according to data from these two toll plazas. From midnight to 7pm yesterday, 10,018 vehicles plied the highway.

Another RHD official said the highway was cleared of debris last night but the road from Jatrabari flyover area to Shitalakhya bridge was severely damaged as agitators had started a number of fires.

Additionally, barriers, medians, signs and signals along the highway were either burned or looted, which is expected to pose further problems, the official said,

asking not to be named.

The closure of the highway is also a source of huge sufferings for tourists and general passengers.

Khandaker Enyet Ullah, secretary general of the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, said many tourists were stuck in Chattogram and Cox's Bazar due to the situation.

Prof Md Shamsul Hoque, a noted transport analyst, said the country is dreaming of becoming a developed nation by 2041. Although Bangladesh's \$450 billion economy is mostly dependent on the Dhaka-Chattogram route, the government is yet to turn it into an expressway.

The four-lane road is not of the quality required for the expected economic development, he opined, adding that expressways are the best way to ensure connectivity, reduce travel time and congestion, and ensure reliability.

He added that exporters also demand a quality road connection since their activities are time sensitive. "They are ready to pay a handsome amount to use quality roads. General people will also pay for it when they get proper service," Hoque said.

Bangladesh has eight highways. But the Dhaka-Chattogram highway undoubtedly deserves to be an expressway given its economic importance since it has enormous multiplier effect as it is also connected with

major tourism hubs, he added.

Fazlul Haque, a former president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the country's main seaport would be better served by a railway connection, which is the most popular method in the world to carry goods.

However, even railway services remained shut down during the past six days.

The Pangaon water port is not an attractive option either as it lacks adequate infrastructure and supporting facilities. It also takes longer to send goods, he added.

A top official of a leading garment manufacturing company, preferring anonymity, said when he was travelling via the Dhaka-Bhanga expressway, he felt this type of expressway was required to connect Dhaka and Chattogram.

As the corridor has a huge economic impact, an expressway could lead to greater contributions to the economy.

At a meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and top business leaders yesterday, Syed Nasim Manzur, president of the Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh, urged the government to ensure safe passage through the Dhaka-Chattogram highway.

"Otherwise, we will not be able to survive," he said.

Internet blackout intensifies port congestion

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

Container congestion turned acute at the Chattogram port yesterday as deliveries remained suspended for a second consecutive day for operational complexities caused by an ongoing internet blackout and a lack of transportation facilities.

At least 1,252 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) of containers were unloaded from ships and placed at the port yards yesterday.

As of 8:00am, there were 42,150 TEUs of containers at the yards.

This is around 78.76 percent of the total storage capacity of 53,518 TEUs, according to data of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

Port officials say it becomes tough to load and unload containers and manoeuvre them through the yards once 60 percent of the storage capacity was reached.

Moreover, importers are having to bear storage rent for each additional day that they are having to keep import-laden containers at the port yards.

Export and import activities

have been facing unprecedented disruptions following the countrywide internet blackout since Thursday evening as digital entry of data is a must for port operations, said the port users.

They underscored the need for immediate resumption of internet

8,000 to 9,000 TEUs handled on any regular working day.

In the same period, a total of 2,107 TEUs of containers were discharged from the vessels and 2,972 TEUs were loaded onto ships, according to the CPA data.

Some 415 TEUs of import-laden

AT A GLANCE

- Another 1,252 containers piled up at Ctg port in a day
- No import container could be delivered for the second day
- Importers are counting extra store rent
- Container transport between port and private ICDs improved a bit
- Port users called for immediate resumption of internet

services to prevent the situation from deteriorating further.

Meanwhile, container handling activities have dropped by around 50 percent as only 5,079 TEUs were handled in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, much lower than the

containers were transported from the port to inland container depots (ICDs) during this time, but not a single one could be delivered to the consignees, said CPA Secretary Md Omar Faruk.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

NBR for manual assessment of essentials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has recently instructed customs to release imported perishables, food, chemicals and industrial raw materials through manual assessments to keep supply chains and factories operational.

The same has been directed for shipment of exportable goods.

"We have given instructions to clear the goods from day one as the internet is not working," NBR Chairman Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muncem told The Daily Star yesterday.

The move comes as an internet shutdown since the night of July 18 has been hindering the assessment of tariffs of imports and exports.

Chattogram customs began to assess goods in line with the directive. Officials said they are carrying out the task manually for imported industrial raw materials and fuel oil too.

Until now, importers received 22 consignments of fly ash, cement clinker and stone weighing 3,500 tonnes, said an official yesterday.

However, importers could not receive any perishable item as they could not submit any documents.

Garment buyers worried over shipment

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

International clothing retailers and brands are faced with uncertainties over work orders placed with Bangladeshi manufacturers as communication has become troublesome due to an internet blackout.

Following the internet outage since the night of July 18, liaison offices of foreign retailers and brands in Bangladesh have been unable to share documents with the port and customs authorities for clearance of goods. They have also been unable to send inspection reports to their headquarters.

A number of retailers and brands also have doubts about placing work orders amidst violence centring the quota reform protests, subsequent curfew to contain the situation and disruption to communication stemming from the internet shutdown.

"Our garments worth \$200 million are now lying at the Chattogram port as we cannot clear customs procedures because of the ongoing violence and curfew," said a top official of a European retailer asking not to be named.

"Similarly, I have been unable to place fresh work orders at the local factories over the past week due to the ongoing crisis," he said.

He said the disruption to the internet was also creating problems in communicating with their headquarters in Europe.

"The current situation will have a bad impact on business as the country's reputation will be under question," he said, urging the authorities for fast restoration of at least broadband internet services.

Another Dutch clothing retailer also said he was unable to communicate with his headquarters because of the internet blackout.



Curfew and violence slowly bleeding the economy

Resulting damage could have severe long-term impacts

The ongoing nationwide curfew, which may be necessary for security reasons, and internet shutdown are slowly bleeding the economy and causing untold sufferings for businesses and ordinary citizens. The country's biggest exporting sector, the garment sector, has already endured direct losses amounting to around \$48 million due to the production suspension, according to a report in this daily. When the country's exports have been on a decline over the last three years, such a big hit to its largest export sector could prove seriously damaging moving forward.

The violence that happened across the country in recent days, along with the repressive tendencies demonstrated by government agencies, has definitely damaged the image that Bangladesh has painstakingly built in the global arena over the years. This could mean that less business prospects will be available for local businesses with international partners, and other indirect losses that industries will have to incur. Losses due to delays, with buyers either cancelling work orders or shifting them to other countries, is already a concern that garment industry insiders are fearing.

On top of that, the shipment of goods because of unrest and curfew has come to a grinding halt. Reportedly, 6,000 export goods containers are currently stuck at Chattogram Port depots as customs cannot clear export consignments, and shipping agents have lost contact with main line operators without access to the internet. Operational activities at the port have been moving at a snail's pace, and port yards have been choked with containers. Meanwhile, export activities at Inland Container Depots dropped by 80-85 percent due to the unavailability of export cargo from factories.

With vehicles used to carry goods sitting idle for the last few days, the overall losses of the truckers would amount to at least Tk 175 crore per day. And due to the increased transportation risks, the very few vehicles transporting perishable goods such as fresh vegetables and fruits are demanding higher fares as risk premium—in most cases nearly double the normal rent per vehicle. As a result, prices of essential commodities including vegetables and eggs skyrocketed in kitchen markets across the capital and elsewhere. Low-income people and informal workers have been hit the worst by this. According to the Labour Force Survey 2022, more than five crore people (84.9 percent) of the employed population are engaged in the country's informal sector, over one crore of them working in Dhaka. What will happen to these people if the curfew continues? Without any available work, how will these people meet their daily needs, particularly with prices of essentials rising by the hour?

Under the circumstances, the government urgently needs to restore the country's internet connection and lift the curfew, so that all economic activities can resume as per normal.

Ensure accountability

Investigate allegation of abuse

We are disturbed by reports that Nahid Islam, a key organiser of quota reform movement, was allegedly abducted and tortured mentally and physically until he lost consciousness. In comments made to *The Daily Star*, Nahid stated that he was picked up in the early hours of Saturday from a house in Sabujbagh by at least 25 men in plainclothes. Blindfolded and handcuffed, he was then taken to a room where he was interrogated repeatedly about his involvement in the student movement and tortured. His body bore deep bruises sustained in his arm and legs.

Once he regained consciousness, he found himself dumped under a bridge in Purbachal. The inevitable question is: who abducted and tortured him so? Once his family came to know that their son had been picked up, they went to the office of the Detective Branch of police, but they said they have no information about him. Then they went to Khilgaon Police Station to file a GD, but there the police did not take the matter into cognizance. When contacted by this daily, the police have reiterated that they have no information about Nahid having been picked up.

How are we to interpret this incident, at a time when the government wants to accommodate the demands of the protesters? Nahid's family and fellow protesters had earlier alleged that Nahid was picked up as he was against the idea of holding a dialogue with the government prior to the Appellate Division verdict. If we accept, as we would like to, the version given by law enforcers, then isn't the obvious step to find out who the culprits are? The fact that Khilgaon Police Station refused to record the GD of Nahid's parents opens up many uncomfortable questions.

We urge the government to ensure, at the very least, security for the student activists and due process of law during any questioning of student protesters in the future. We have seen in the past how activists and dissenters have been arbitrarily and illegally detained and harassed by various state machineries in the aftermath of previous student movements. If the government is to restore people's confidence in the rule of law, the government must prioritise and protect human rights.

The Supreme Court on Sunday stated that it expects the judicial probe commission, led by a High Court judge, to unearth the reasons behind the deaths of the students. We hope that any excess of state machineries and ruling party will also be investigated.

Move away from blame game and confrontational power politics



Dr Iftekharuzzaman
is executive director of Transparency International
Bangladesh (TIB).

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN

The Appellate Division verdict of July 21 has opened the scope for resolution of the main issue around the demands coming from the quota reform movement. However, its observations associated with the judgment represent at least partial insensitivity to the bigger picture around the constitutional provision of equality and justice for the underprivileged section of society, especially women and Indigenous communities. The women's issue has been totally ignored, while the provision for Indigenous communities have been curtailed. One would hope that the government would exercise its leverage to address these critical issues before long.

Be that as it may, the nation has once again been reminded that student power is invincible, especially when fighting peacefully for a legitimate cause. Like many a time in the past, they have also shown the limits and fault lines of regime power that neglects lessons of history.

The student movement for quota reform, which challenged the prevailing state of discrimination in public service recruitment, cannot be in any manner linked to its violent and devastating turnaround. Though the movement and the violence were isolated from one another in terms of respective objective and means, what facilitated an unholy and unsurprising sync between the two is the country's confrontational zero-sum game of politics. From the beginning, there were clear replays of the ruling authority's usual practice of smelling in the quota reform movement a rot of conspiracy of the political opposition. The latter—as yet another example of its political bankruptcy—in the name of solidarity, took the quota reform movement as an opportunity for political mileage, for their core agenda against their political arch-rival.

Thus, when the student front of the ruling party, inspired by its general secretary, cracked down on protesters with the support and participation of law enforcement agencies, condoned by the partisan administration of most educational institutions, unprecedented violence was unleashed. What initially erupted in the campuses very quickly then spread nearly all over the country.

This opened the floodgates of mayhem by the subversive forces that have clearly been gaining from strength to strength in the space created for them by the confrontational politics between two major contenders. Needless to say, these subversive forces capitalised not only on the confrontational power game, but also on public discontent over growing economic hardships, governance deficits, and the atmosphere of intimidation and insecurity against free speech and



It is indispensable to ensure exemplary accountability and justice for those who were victims of abuse by both politically patronised power and the institutionally mandated authority.

FILE PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

freedom of association.

The kind of violence and destruction of public properties can represent nothing but evil designs and acts of such subversive elements. The cost of management failure of a crisis around a very genuine grievance of the young generation for justice, equality and non-discrimination in the public sector job market has already crossed enormous proportions. On top of all are at least 170 lives and countless injuries inflicted upon students, youth, and even children as well as professionals like journalists and police. Not to underestimate the huge loss of public properties, including key state installations and infrastructures.

But the economic cost of the deficit of political acumen in crisis management that catalysed the violent turnaround is going to be unprecedented in terms of disruptions of production, services, and businesses. A ballpark estimate of direct GDP lost is no less than \$1.3 billion daily since July 18, when everything came to a standstill, including the internet being shut down, unprecedented not only in Bangladesh but perhaps anywhere else in the world. Beyond the monetary value, the cost of public suffering and harassment for being deprived of various essential services including utilities, not to speak of the mental stress and agony, is mind-boggling. Whether the continued

destination for foreign investment in the region is anyone's guess. The same can be said about the time needed for our development and foreign trade partners and even the employers of our stranded expatriate workers to regain the eroded confidence.

No less important is the national and international implications of the information and images of human rights violations unleashed by the attackers on the movement as well as the disproportionate use of force by law enforcement agencies, despite the foreign ministry's invitation to follow the ostrich syndrome. Equally disturbing will be the possible impressions of us as a violence-prone society created by the images of destructions by the subversive elements who took advantage of the crisis.

The key lesson of the crisis, therefore, is that intransigence, non-responsiveness, denial of reality or overconfidence of absolute power, and use of disproportionate force do not serve the purpose and can only be counterproductive and self-defeating.

The more the regime power is detached from the people and public interest, the more fragile and vulnerable to governance deficits and political failings it can be. Vulnerabilities are further accentuated by partisan control of state institutions, which may serve only short-term interests at the expense of a greater public good.

or administrative mandate, like the reported abduction and torture of one of the coordinators of the movement, Nahid Islam. To be sure, this is nothing new nor isolated, while such “operations” not only remain unaccountable but also assume their own dynamics outside mainstream governance structure.

It is indispensable to ensure exemplary accountability and justice for the victims of perpetrators of violence against the striking students and others who were victims of abuse by both politically patronised power and the institutionally mandated authority, like the point-blank shooting down of a student in Rangpur. Failure to do so will further erode public trust in the government and the state institutions.

No less important is to identify and bring to justice those responsible for orchestrated violence, targeted attacks and enormous damages caused to public properties, including some key institutions. But as experience has also shown, ensuring accountability of perpetrators alone is not enough, especially leaving the breeding ground open on a daily basis for such militant forces to grow. On top of preventive measures is the imperative of moving away from the politics of blame game and confrontation for power, with a view to putting back public interest and people's participation at the core of political culture.

QUOTA REFORM PROTESTS

Govt failed to handle the situation properly



Brig Gen (retd) Dr M Sakhawat Hussain,
former election commissioner of Bangladesh, is
senior fellow at the South Asian Institute of Policy
and Governance (SIPO), North South University
(NSU). He can be reached at hhhinlbd@yahoo.com.

M SAKHAWAT HUSSAIN

The demand that was placed by student protesters could have been fulfilled through discussion. They had only one demand: that the existing quota system in government jobs be reformed to make space for meritocracy. They did not ask for a change in government or chant slogans against the government. But the government handled the issue from an egoistic stance, and made several wrong decisions while tackling the situation. The way they tried to quell the protests by using Chhatra League, the ruling party's student wing, cannot be justified, either legally or morally. The situation came to what it is today because of that.

It is being said that some political parties have infiltrated the protest. This not something new; political parties usually get involved with this kind of movements. It happened

during the protests in Ershad's time and even during the Pakistan period. It is unfortunate that the issue got prolonged and so many lives were lost, which according to various media reports, is about 170. This is too much! This means excessive force has been applied in this situation. The way our law enforcement agencies tackled this situation, using helicopters, is unprecedented. A civil protest should not have been dealt with this way.

Those who died, about half of them, if not all, were students. These were children! Farhan Faiyaz, Abu Sayed—losses like these is even harder to process. Also, why were the key point installations, some of which were attacked and burnt down, not protected by the authorities from the beginning? Even the way the police acted shocked us. I saw law

enforcement agencies with assault rifle in hand! Overall, I think, the government could not handle this situation properly and is still failing to do so. Bringing the military in and imposing a curfew mean that the government had no other options left. A different message is being projected to the whole world because of military deployment and the curfew.

I think, the government could not handle this situation properly and is still failing to do so. Bringing the military in and imposing a curfew mean that the government had no other options left. A different message is being projected to the whole world because of military deployment and the curfew.

Regarding the government's narrative that the data centre was burnt down, the question arises: what happened to the back-up for that? Why

are those not working? Crores of taka is being lost every day because of internet shutdown. People are complaining that they cannot transact money or pay their electricity bills because of this. When most businesses are dependent on the internet, I do not think shutting the internet service down across the whole country is worth it. Shutdown is okay for a day or two, but for how long will it continue, especially when the violence did not stop completely despite the internet shutdown? Lives were lost even yesterday (Saturday); about 35 people were killed, according to newspapers. Did the past protests—in 1969, for example—not take place when there was no internet? The internet shutdown is causing a great loss to the economy.

Anyway, all we can hope for is that good sense will prevail all over. The government should now properly heed the rest of the protesters' demands. There is not a single demand that cannot be implemented. I have all the sympathy for the students and their movement, which they had started peacefully but unfortunately a lot of lives were lost and much blood shed on the streets. I pray for the souls of those students who died, and for their families.

BIDEN DROPS OUT OF 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

A historic decision, but can Kamala Harris beat Trump?



Ramisa Rob
is in charge of Geopolitical
Insights at The Daily Star.

RAMISA ROB

Few weeks ago, even after Joe Biden’s disastrous presidential debate, it didn’t seem that his need to drop out of the race would become inevitable. Then things changed overnight, as it happens with politics: an unprecedented assassination attempt on former President Trump, and a viral picture of his blood trickled face with a fist held up high fuelled widespread speculation: “Did Trump just win the election?” It was followed with a loud Republican National Convention, a recharged MAGA cult and the altogether deification of Donald Trump: “a man impeached, convicted, almost killed but chosen by God to lead the United States of America,” according to Trump supporters.

The pro-Democrat, liberal US media who want Donald Trump to lose—from CNN to ABC News—ran rigorous reporting, or rather a campaign, to get Joe Biden to step down. Just two days before Biden announced the historic decision, CNN reported that Biden was “seething” at all suggestions to step down, including from former President Obama and Nancy Pelosi, when they tried to explain that his chances at winning were becoming untenable. Each passing day, it seemed like the Democrats were playing a losing game with a defiant old Joe stubbornly holding onto power.

It was becoming increasingly clear that the party needed a jaw-dropping, shocking moment to turn the tide against the surging popularity of Donald Trump. The clock was ticking, and the party delivered on the desired drama on Sunday, July 21, when Joe Biden announced that he is dropping out of the race, two weeks ahead of the Democratic National Convention. Biden has now undoubtedly sealed his legacy, for the good and the bad. He has had one of the longest political careers in US history—the

youngest to become a senator, and the oldest to become a President.

Joe Biden will be remembered as the politician who let go—when veteran politicians in power rarely do—by choice. The step Biden took will domestically restore at least some of his tarnished image, especially in regard to his foreign policy blunders since last year. While there’s a lot to learn from Joe Biden’s wrongs, there’s also a lot to learn from his best

decision yet: a reminder for leaders around the world that even as heads of state, it is the country, the people, that matter first in every democracy.

The Republican Party’s vigour will be overshadowed by Biden’s decision and the overall respect for Biden, for at least the next two weeks till the DNC. The Republicans chose to stand behind a convicted felon, milking the

party that has democracy internally within its ranks. The message this will send to voters is that unlike Trump and the Republicans, it is the Democrats who are “the true patriots and public servants.”

Biden endorsed his Vice-President Kamala Harris right away. After being widely unpopular, she’s risen more to the spotlight in the last year,



demographic of 65 years and older.

His endorsement doesn’t mean that she automatically becomes the nominee—the party has to nominate her in the DNC. Endorsements are flooding in from prominent Democrats, but the party so far seems sincere to hold a competitive race, and a proper transparent process with other contestants. The logistics for Harris to run a successful presidential campaign is a lot easier; she has the funds that has been raised so far for the “Biden-Harris” campaign. It is highly unlikely that Kamala Harris will not be the nominee, even if there are surely better candidates out there—as that would reveal cracks within the Democratic Party, which they wouldn’t want to risk against a united Republican Party. But showing that she has “earned” it through an open convention will legitimise her candidacy.

There is a lot favouring Harris, by luck mostly; she does have a shot at defeating Trump if she plays her cards right. She offers a face of change and breaks the wheel of Vietnam War-era politicians which voters are frustrated of seeing, while Trump is now the oldest presidential nominee. And policy-wise, she has the accomplishments of the Biden-Harris administration in her resume to maintain Biden’s base voters. As vice-president, yet a new candidate, she could also cleverly deflect Biden’s shortcomings—though that will remain to be seen, especially with Arab voters.

As exciting as this new horizon appears, this doesn’t mean the Democrats are no longer in crisis. The battle against Trump is still uphill. Polls conducted by CNN show Harris is lagging behind Trump, but not as much as Biden was. If Harris is going to be the Democratic nominee, she will still need to win the key battleground states like Pennsylvania, Michigan,

and Minnesota. While talks have already begun of her running mate, her most strategic decision to have a chance at winning, would be to have a governor from a key battleground state, such as Governor Josh Shapiro from Pennsylvania who has already endorsed Harris.

The Trump campaign will come at Harris with their full wrath and their vintage sexism. The fact that she defended Biden’s mental acuity and chose loyalty over the country, will surely be a point to poke at. It’s also well-known that Harris had a disturbing track record as a harsh prosecutor, especially for the Black community, and that could hurt her. But it’s also worth noting that many Democrat research groups recently found—just before Biden dropped out—that she can mobilise young Black, Hispanic voters, which Biden could not. She has been vocal and precise on re-establishing reproductive rights, which are projected to galvanise the younger female voter base to vote.

At the end of the day, debates and campaigning leading up to November shape the election outcome. Trump’s 90-minute speech—the longest acceptance speech in RNC history—veered off the teleprompter and showed that the xenophobia in Trump has not changed an iota. Kamala Harris, a seasoned prosecutor, is fiery at debates and as many commentators have projected, she has the ability to attack Trump and call out his lies. A lot of people feel nervous with a woman, especially of colour, running against Trump—reflecting some sort of post-traumatic stress from 2016—when Hilary Clinton lost to Trump. Gender and race do play roles in US elections, and that is undeniable. Everything is still up in the air, but just because that other woman could not, does not mean this woman cannot.

Teesta is no longer a bilateral issue



Shamsheer M Chowdhury, Bir Bikram
is a former foreign secretary of Bangladesh.

SHAMSHER M CHOWDHURY

During former Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh’s visit to Bangladesh in 2011, a deal on the sharing of transboundary river Teesta’s water was supposed to be signed, sealed and delivered. But all such expectations were sadly dashed when West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee backed out at the very last minute. This was not just an embarrassment for both sides—it took the wind out of such an important visit and left a bad taste here in Bangladesh. The event even prompted the highly respected Indian prime minister, a perfect gentleman, taking the blame and even offering a public apology for the failure to deliver. Since then, the Teesta deal has been stuck in a limbo, with the central and the West Bengal state governments in India blaming each other for any lack of progress as public disappointment on the Bangladesh side continues to gain traction.

It has been customary, especially in Bangladesh, that during any bilateral visit at the highest level between the two neighbouring countries, the burning issue of sharing the waters of transboundary rivers, especially the Teesta, would feature prominently at the talks between the two sides, with the hope that an acceptable solution would materialise. While the issue has featured in the discourses over the years, nothing concrete has yet appeared on the horizon.

However, things took a dramatic turn during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s two-day official visit to New Delhi in June this year, with India agreeing to dispatch a technical team to work on developing a comprehensive project covering

conservation and management of the Teesta River inside Bangladesh, within a mutually agreed time frame. This was a major move forward. This, taken with an announcement of discussions at the technical level on the renewal of the Ganges Water Treaty, due in 2026, and a basket of other measures on key issues—such as exponential enhancement of multimodal transport and electricity connectivity; increased defence cooperation; extensive collaboration in frontier technologies including civil nuclear, oceanography and space technology; India partnering in the development of a small satellite for Bangladesh and its launch using Indian launch vehicle; and the decision to commence early negotiations for a

While there is no denying that the Teesta is of strategic importance, a significant issue of great geopolitical value was the joint reiteration of a shared commitment to a ‘free, open, inclusive, secure, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region.’

Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) aimed at promoting bilateral trade and investment—gave the visit major substance. All this was covered in a Shared Vision statement for the future course of relations between Bangladesh and India, bound as they are by shared history and geography.

To observers here, though, it was the signal of a positive development on the

India, including former diplomats, made no secret of the concern. This is when Teesta ceased to be just a river; it assumed a status of strategic importance.

Just days after her return from New Delhi, the Bangladesh PM, while responding to a question at parliament, clearly stated that she had asked the relevant ministries to look at the Chinese proposal on the Teesta. And yet, exactly 10 days later, the

diplomacy,” she said.

Realistically, in the end, it is the Indian offer that will see the light of the day. The mention of the words “within a mutually agreed time frame” in the Shared Vision statement is a signal to set the right pace for its implementation. It is a win-win outcome for both sides.

While there is no denying that the Teesta is of strategic importance, a significant



The Teesta issue has now become a diplomatic issue of strategic importance.

FILE PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Teesta issue that understandably drew major attention. However, it is not without a context. With little to no visible progress in finding a mutually acceptable solution to sharing Teesta water until then, there emerged talks of a Chinese study on developing a project on the Bangladesh side of the Teesta, which would include conservation and management of the river. Given the geographical location of the Teesta—so close to the Indian border and not far from the strategically important Siliguri Corridor, commonly known as “the Chicken’s Neck”—even the thought of China getting involved in a project of such magnitude presented the possibility of raising serious security concerns for policymakers in New Delhi, more so when there have been limited armed skirmishes between the militaries of the two Asian giants recently. Political commentators in

Indian decision of sending a technical team to prepare a comprehensive project, one that would include conservation and management of the Teesta River inside Bangladesh with Indian assistance, was announced in New Delhi and in the presence of the two heads of government. Reference was also made on finding an interim arrangement on water-sharing, although no details were given how this sharing would be executed.

That the Teesta issue has now become a diplomatic issue of strategic importance was made abundantly clear by a confident Sheikh Hasina at a press conference after her return from an official visit to Beijing. While the prime minister made it known that she would “give priority to India for the Teesta project,” at the same time, she made reference to the Chinese proposal, implying Bangladesh has options. “This is

issue of great geopolitical value was the joint reiteration of a shared commitment to a “free, open, inclusive, secure, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region.” Such a commitment from Dhaka would not only be welcomed by New Delhi, it would also please listeners in Washington, Tokyo and Canberra, where the terms “open,” “secure” and “rules-based Indo-Pacific” have become an integral part of the geo-strategic lexicon. At the same time, the insertion of the word “inclusive” should give some comfort to Beijing.

In sum, the overall outcome of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s back-to-back official visits to New Delhi and Beijing served to reinforce the point that relations between Bangladesh and other key Asian players are no more confined to the bilateral frame alone; they play out on a much broader regional and global canvases.

Internet blackout: FREELANCERS IN TROUBLE

MD. ZAHIDUR RABBI

With the nationwide complete shutdown of internet services for the last four days, life on the digital frontier across the country has come to a halt. Mobile internet blackout was ordered on July 16 amidst country-wide protests against quota reinstatement in government jobs. After violence on the streets escalated, a complete internet blackout without any prior notice was suddenly in effect from July 18. Now, the freelancers of the country are facing significant troubles as their source of income is dependent on access to the internet.

Timely communication is one of the most important factors when it comes to freelancing in online marketplaces like Fiverr, Upwork etc. As freelancers

communicate on the embedded messaging option of the platforms, no communication was possible due to internet shutdown.

Shaikh Abdullah, a Dhaka-based motion designer and video editor working for international clients said, “I was communicating with a client for an order worth \$500. During negotiation, the internet was suddenly cut off without any prior announcement. After four days of complete inactivity, if the client reports my profile, I would lose profile impression which will significantly reduce click rates and overall impression of my profile. I would lose potential future clients which will reduce my income rate.”

The freelancing marketplace across the globe moves at a fast pace, as clients and workers usually maintain strict timetables for work orders and deliveries.

Failure to deliver the orders on time, in most cases, generate negative impressions from the clients, which in turn, affects the earnings of a freelancer if enough negative impressions rack up.

Sudipta Apu, a Khulna-based freelancer and graphic designer said, “I had 8 ongoing orders which were valued over \$1,000. Due to the internet blackout, those orders are now on hold. It is highly likely that the clients will move on to other service

providers as most of them require their orders urgently on a day-to-day basis.”

Mentioning about regular clients out of the freelance marketplaces, Sudipta added, “Due to the internet shutdown, I tried communicating with out of the marketplace clients through ISD calls based out of India and the USA. However, they could not properly hear me due to network issues and it is highly likely that I would lose most of my regular clients as well.”

Due to internet shutdown, many freelancers failed to deliver their orders which were already completed. Sohag Islam, a Dhaka-based UI-UX designer, and the founder of Designera, an IT firm, said, “I had two deliveries scheduled, one worth \$1200

and another worth \$660. Some one hour before the final delivery to the client, I lost internet connectivity. Communication with all my regular clients is completely cut off. I suffered a minimum loss of \$3,000 due to internet shutdown.”

Sohag Islam also mentioned that he works remotely for a USA-based firm but he could not properly communicate with them due to internet shutdown.

In the face of ongoing blackout, agencies and firms that handle online payments for digital advertisements also faced issues in handling their regular operations. Munaf Mojib Chowdhury, Partner Director, Aleph Holding (formerly, HTTPPOOL) said, “We will understand the global reaction to this situation once we can properly communicate with our clients and partners after the restoration of internet.”



PHOTO:
ORCHID CHAKMA

What is emotional intelligence and why do we need it?

In modern day and age, Emotional Intelligence is more valued than any other form of intelligence. For the development of interpersonal relationships between peers, colleagues and even friends and family, this can be a game changer in establishing a clear and meaningful communication. Emotional Intelligence is also very much celebrated for its significant contribution in self-development and professional growth.

NOMIROTA SARKER

Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to recognise, understand and regulate our own emotions as well as do the same with others'. In practical terms, this means being aware of the fact that emotions have a significant impact in human behaviour and decisions both positively and negatively. Coined by Peter Salavoy and John Mayer, this term gained popularity in 1996.

In modern day and age, Emotional Intelligence is more valued than any other form of intelligence. For the development of interpersonal relationships between peers, colleagues and even friends and families, this can be a game changer in establishing a clear and meaningful communication. Emotional Intelligence is also very much celebrated for its significant contribution in self-development and professional growth.

THE FOUR QUADRANTS

Emotional Intelligence is all about channeling one's energy and feelings into exciting and positive pathways through building an awareness of emotional logic. Emotional Intelligence revolves around four quadrants with which a person's emotional excellence is determined. The quadrants are self-awareness, social recognition, self-management, and social relationship management.

SELF-AWARENESS

Self-awareness typically reflects interpersonal communication. This quadrant is concerned with how well you understand yourself and your

personal psychology. Self-awareness is the first step towards a better perspective of the vision that you might have for yourself. This includes closely inspecting your own personality and learning styles, mental attitudes and states, strengths and weaknesses, stress levels, and spirituality.

In simpler terms, it is the attempt you need to take to address your feelings for exactly what they are, instead of

trying to relate it to a similar yet non-applicable scenario for yourself.

SOCIAL RECOGNITION

The social recognition quadrant reflects your consideration of the feelings and responses of others. This is where empathy plays a crucial role. It is important to maintain sensitivity to the moods and emotions of others because it allows for superior

intuition and connection. Oftentimes, communication with a colleague can seem to be hard if their emotions are opaque to you.

Social recognition is that step you take to be attentive and listen to them with an intention to build an effective communication with them. It is how you show your control over the external factors and scenarios. The key element for social recognition is

your 'reaction' to your surroundings and how you tackle consequences to external decisions.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self-management quadrant reflects indicates self-evaluation coupled with self-regulation. 'Indulgent' behaviour is what we are trying to avoid here. This quadrant is only concerned with your internal discipline and your ability to achieve personal objectives. In the case of developing inner resolutions, self-management is the key quadrant that can build an achievement-oriented outlook for you. It can give you a direction, as to how to start working on yourself and bring back discipline in your life.

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Social relationship management includes interpersonal skills and focuses intelligence on generating results. This quadrant of emotional intelligence fosters collaboration and connection to tap the power of synergy. This quadrant pulls together the other three quadrants and creates the final product; relationship management. Often if we have the other three dimensions figured out, this will flow more naturally.

Relationship management can be used to influence those around us to make a good decision. We can sense the reactions of others to the situation and fine-tune our response to move the interaction to a positive direction. This comes in handy in the case of collaboration, team management, and good leadership.



PREPARATIONS HAMPERED as practice match postponed

SPORTS REPORTER

The first of the two three-day practice matches of the national team, scheduled to begin today in Chattogram, has been postponed due to the ongoing unrest in the country as cricket in Bangladesh remains at a standstill during the ongoing unrest.

“A decision on the Bangladesh Tigers camp is due but the match is not taking place tomorrow [today],” one Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) official told The Daily Star yesterday.

The BCB is still hopeful about holding the matches, which were originally scheduled to begin on July 23 and 29 respectively, once the situation improves.

“The players are still at the hotel and we are hoping that when the situation improves, we will play the games. They have been waiting patiently at the hotel. We have been communicating with the law enforcement agencies over there on whether we can hold practice if the situation allows,” cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus told The Daily Star yesterday.

Fitness cost Pandya T20 captaincy: Agarkar

AFP, Mumbai

Hardik Pandya lost out on India's T20 captaincy to Suryakumar Yadav because of concerns over his availability after frequent injury absences, India's chief selector Ajit Agarkar said Monday.

Explosive middle-order batter Suryakumar, 33, was last week named Rohit Sharma's successor in the T20 format for India's white-ball tour of Sri Lanka, which begins Saturday.

All-rounder Pandya, 30, was Rohit's deputy during India's T20 World Cup triumph last month but he has suffered from fitness problems and missed the 50-over World Cup last year with an ankle injury.

“Fitness has been something that he's struggled with,” Agarkar told reporters in Mumbai alongside new coach Gautam Gambhir.

“As selectors, it becomes difficult then. The thought behind it was that we want someone who is likely to be available more.” India begin their Sri Lanka trip with the first of three Twenty20 internationals on Saturday and Pandya has reportedly opted out of the three subsequent one-day internationals.

He was “still a very important player,” Agarkar said. “And that's what we want him to be, those skill sets are hard to find.” Agarkar praised Suryakumar's captaincy credentials. “He is one of the best T20 batters in the world,” said Agarkar. “We feel that Surya has all the necessary qualities to be a good captain.”

“We wanted a captain, who is likely to play all the games.” Suryakumar would remain solely a T20 player, said Agarkar. Rohit has retained the 50-over captaincy.

Gambhir explained his coaching philosophy, speaking to reporters for the first time since succeeding Rahul Dravid. “I think it is important to give players the freedom, that's what I believe in,” he said.



Our journey date has been postponed. When everything is sorted, we will possibly fly to Chattogram. The practice matches might get rescheduled. Honestly speaking, the preparation for Pakistan series has been hampered quite a bit.

Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto on how current situation impacted the Tigers' preparation for upcoming Pakistan tour.

The hampering of practice schedules and practice matches due to the ongoing unrest has been a cause for frustration for the Bangladesh players, as it has disrupted the build up to their two-match Test series in Pakistan next month, which is part of the ICC World Test Championship cycle.

Two white-ball practice games on July 19

and 20, between Bangladesh Tigers and the High Performance unit were cancelled earlier due to the ongoing unrest.

Many of the Bangladesh national team stars including skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto, who was set to join the Bangladesh camp in Chattogram to play the three-day games, could not travel to

he port city to join the rest of the players in the programme.

“Our journey date [to Chattogram] has been postponed. If everything is sorted, we will possibly fly to Chattogram,” Shanto told The Daily Star yesterday.

“The practice matches might get rescheduled. Honestly speaking, the preparation for the Pakistan series has been hampered quite a bit,” he added.

Shanto had been training individually in Dhaka but for him and many of the Test players, the three-day practice games were crucial especially in light of national team's previous Test series against Sri Lanka, where questions were raised about their preparation after they got routed 2-0 at home.

While the BCB are still waiting for a green signal from law enforcement agencies to hold the remainder of the camp in Chattogram, another BCB official said they were hopeful of beginning practice from Wednesday.

“If they [law enforcement agencies] give us the green signal, and if we can move, the players will go to the practice, whether there is a curfew or not,” he said.

‘France ready to host Olympics’

AFP, Paris

President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday that France was ready to host the Paris Olympics as he visited the Athletes' Village four days before the Games begin.

“We are ready and we will be ready throughout the Games,” Macron said. “We have been working on these Games for years now and we are at the start of a decisive week which on Friday will see the opening ceremony and then the Olympiad which will be held in Paris, 100 years since the last one.”

He added: “This is the fruit of an immense amount of work which has profoundly changed the country, in particular area” of Seine-Saint-Denis, where the Athletes' Village is situated.

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach also visited the Village to the north of the French capital, where thousands of athletes and officials are arriving, with up to 14,500 expected there at the peak of the Games.

Comprising 40 different low-rise housing blocks, the complex has been built by employing innovative construction techniques using low-carbon concrete, water recycling and reclaimed building materials.

It was also intended to be free of air-conditioning with a natural cooling system, but some Olympic delegations are unconvinced and have ordered around 2,500 portable cooling units for their athletes.

Seine-Saint-Denis, where the main athletics stadium for the Olympics is also situated, is the poorest area in



France and is hoping to reap benefits from the sports extravaganza.

Macron promised the area would not be forgotten after the Olympics.

Meanwhile, France's foreign minister said Israeli athletes were welcome at the Paris Games after a hard-left member of the French parliament sparked outrage by urging them to stay away because of the conflict in Gaza.

“The Israeli delegation is welcome in France,” Stephane Sejourne said in Brussels ahead of talks with his Israeli counterpart, adding that the call by France Unbowed (LFI) lawmaker Thomas Portes for the country's exclusion had been “irresponsible and dangerous”.

“We will ensure the security of the delegation,” Sejourne added.

Portes drew an angry response from French Jewish groups and both

political opponents and allies.

Meanwhile, French security forces were continuing preparations for the unprecedented opening ceremony on Friday, the first time a Summer Olympics has opened outside the main stadium.

Between 6,000 and 7,000 athletes are to sail down the river on 85 barges and boats, with a backdrop of world-famous monuments including Notre-Dame cathedral, currently being renovated.

The athletes will disembark for the culmination of a ceremony at the Trocadero opposite the Eiffel Tower that organisers promise will be spectacular.

Up to 300,000 ticketed spectators will watch from stands and on the river banks and another 200,000 are expected to watch from the overlooking apartments.

HP fall to 149-run loss in Darwin

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) HP outfit were bowled out for 279 in the second innings in chase of the 429-run target set by Pakistan Shaheens to suffer a 149-run defeat on the fourth day at the DXC Arena Ground in Darwin yesterday.

Continuing from an overnight score of 20 without loss, HP were bowled out for 279 in 83.2 overs. Amit Majumder hit a team-high 71 while Parvez Hossain Emon struck 57. Shahadat Hossain Dipu, who scored 36 in the first innings, followed up with 42 in the second innings but it was not enough to see HP bat the entire day to draw the match.

Pakistan Shaheens' left-arm spinner Mehran Muntas was the pick of the bowlers, bagging four wickets for 84 runs.

Earlier, Mohammad Hunaira's double century in the first innings saw Pakistan Shaheens post 468 for three. Bangladesh HP were restricted to 266 in the first innings, with Shadman Islam scoring 88 before the Pakistani side put 226 for three in the second innings to set a 429-run chase for the fourth innings.

Boycott back in hospital

AFP, London

England batting great Geoffrey Boycott was on Sunday readmitted to hospital after suffering a setback in his recovery from throat surgery, his family revealing “things have taken a turn for the worse”.

The 83-year-old was discharged from hospital only on Friday after a successful operation to remove a cancerous tumour.

However, he has now developed pneumonia. “Thank you all for the well wishes, we've been blown away by the sheer number of them,” read a statement from the family on Boycott's X account.

“Unfortunately, things have taken a turn for the worse and my father has developed pneumonia and is unable to eat or drink so is back in hospital on oxygen and a feeding tube for the foreseeable.”

Boycott had previously been treated for throat cancer in 2002 with chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Boycott is one of a select group of cricketers to have scored 100 first-class hundreds. He scored more than 8,000 runs in 108 Tests for England.

After his 24-year first-class career ended with Yorkshire sacking him in 1986, Boycott established himself as both a newspaper columnist and a noted broadcaster, developing a global fanbase.

ICC puts USA Cricket on notice for ‘non-compliance’

AFP, Colombo

The International Cricket Council put USA Cricket on notice on Monday to comply with its membership rules on governance, along with Cricket Chile, just weeks after the United States co-hosted the T20 World Cup.

“Neither Member is considered to have in place a fit for purpose detailed governance and administrative structure and systems,” the ICC said in a statement after its annual conference in Colombo, adding that both had 12 months “to rectify their current non-compliance”.

Mushfiquur, Mominul to play in ‘A’ team’s Pak tour

SPORTS REPORTER

Veteran Bangladesh batters Mushfiquur Rahim and Mominul Haque are expected to be part of Bangladesh 'A' team's tour of Pakistan, which takes place ahead of the national team's Test tour of the country in August-September.

Mushfiquur and Mominul, currently with Bangladesh Tigers programme, will play the first four-day fixture of the A team, a BCB official informed The Daily Star.

The team is slated to depart for Pakistan on August 6 after holding three days of practice sessions in Dhaka. The team will play two four-day games in Pakistan, the first of which will take place from August 10 to 13 and the second one is slated for August 17 to 20. The last three fixtures are scheduled for August 22, 25 and 27 respectively.

Along with Mushfiquur and Mominul, players mostly from the Bangladesh Tigers programme will form the 'A' team's squad. Two other national team batters may join up to acclimatise with the conditions in Pakistan.

The national team would play two Tests in Pakistan from Aug 21-25 and Aug 30 to Sept 3 in Rawalpindi and Karachi respectively.

“We are trying to ensure that the players get maximum match practice and avail all the facilities. This is how we have been trying to schedule so that our players [members of the national team] can already play a match there [in Pakistan before the Tests],” Shahriar Nafees, in-charge of BCB cricket operations, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The national team players will, meanwhile, train in Dhaka from August 3 to 16 before departing for the Pakistan Tests.

AFP, Nottingham

Ben Stokes said Shoaib Bashir had “showed the world” he belonged in international cricket after the 20-year-old off-spinner bowled England to a series clinching victory over the West Indies in the second Test at Trent Bridge on Sunday.

Bashir took 5-41 as the West Indies collapsed to 143 all out on the fourth evening, with England triumphing by 241 runs to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in a three-match campaign.

It was Bashir's third five-wicket haul in just five Tests but first in England after he twice achieved the feat on spin-friendly Indian pitches earlier this year.

His latest exploits were all the more impressive given Bashir did not bowl a single ball and was out for a duck during England's innings and 114-run thrashing of the West Indies in the first Test at Lord's.

Bashir removed Kirk McKenzie, Kavem Hodge and Alick Athanaze -- all top-order batsmen -- in quick succession before bowling Jason Holder and last man Shamar Joseph as West Indies, set 385 to win, slumped to 143 all out.

“I think what Bash has done today is to show the world what he can do,” said England captain Stokes.

“That wicket hardly offered anything for a spinner throughout the whole Test match and look at what he was able to do today.



“The way in which he can change his pace, produce over-spin and under-spin...I think he showed his full bag of tricks. He's got so much talent and the ceiling is so, so high. He's got an unbelievable desire and a will to get better and learn.”

Stokes added: “It's really good for a young guy

to come out and put in a performance that wins England a Test match, it's pretty cool for him.”

For all his success in India, rising star Bashir was unable to break into the Somerset side at the start of the season after the side opted for a more experienced England spinner in Jack Leach.

That led Bashir to go on loan to Worcestershire last month, but England kept faith with him all the same.

“The decisions we make are all based around not only how far we think their talent can take them, but whether we think they're good enough for international cricket straight away,” explained Stokes.

“I don't want to sound like it's an ‘I told you so’ kind of thing but it sort of is.”

Defeat left West Indies with just pride to play for in next week's third Test at Edgbaston.

They actually managed a much-improved showing with the bat in Nottingham while making 457 in reply to England's first innings 416 prior to Sunday's spectacular slump, which saw all 10 of their second-innings wickets lost in 23 overs.

“The big positive was our first innings, scoring 400 runs was great,” said West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite.

“The two defeats are gone but we still have five Tests matches remaining for this year. So we keep learning and by the end of the year we'll be better off, once we have that correct mindset.”





**WITH BSRM FASTBUILD
YOUR HOME WILL BE BUILT ON TIME
WITH THE BEST QUALITY RODS**



**COMPLETE
GUIDANCE APP FOR
HOME BUILDING**





ARSON ATTACK 3 bodies found at shopping centre

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Three charred bodies were recovered from the second floor of Haji Ibrahim Shopping Centre in Shimrail area of Narayanganj yesterday.

Agitators torched the eight-storey building on Saturday during a clash with members of law enforcement agencies. The building was completely burnt.

The second floor of the building housed Shimrail Branch of Dutch Bangla Bank where several construction workers were working on its interior. When the clash broke out and the building was set on fire, all but the three of them were able to escape, said police.

Abu Bakar Siddique, officer-in-charge of Siddhirganj Police Station, said two injured workers, who were undergoing treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, informed police that their three fellow workers got trapped in the building.

He said as the clash was going on, police and fire service personnel could not reach the building. Yesterday, locals went into the building and found the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



People throng the Desco office in the capital's Mirpur-1 yesterday to recharge their prepaid electricity meter cards. Thousands of electricity consumers are struggling to recharge their cards as the country has been without internet for the last four days. The photo was taken around noon.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

DEATHS DURING DEMO Judicial body to visit spots once situation calms down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The judicial commission, formed to probe the deaths in violence centring the quota protests, will begin visiting the flashpoints of clashes as soon as the situation improves.

Led by Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman, a High Court judge, the commission is now formulating its plan of action in order to properly conduct the inquiry into the violence, a source close to the commission told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The commission will work as per the relevant terms of condition," according to the source.

The source, however, did not clarify whether the commission will probe all deaths since the violence broke out or only the deaths of six people on July 16.

On July 18, Cabinet Secretary Md Mahbub Hossain issued a notification saying that the commission will learn the reasons behind the deaths of six persons

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

IT, BPO firms staring at a bleak future

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The country's promising export-oriented IT firms and business process outsourcing (BPO) companies, which fetch close to \$1 billion a year, are fearing getting dropped by their foreign clients after abruptly going off the grid on Thursday night for the internet blackout.

The nature of their work needs them to provide services to their clients round-the-clock and also submit tasks within a strict timeframe.

Bangladesh's internet blackout from 9:00pm Thursday, which came without any warning, meant that the companies could not inform their clients of the impending service disruption.

"We have not been able to inform our clients of our current situation — even during the depths of the pandemic there was no service disruption," said Md Riajul Islam, chief executive officer of Bright River Bangladesh.

Bright River provides services to clients in 16 countries in North America and Europe and saw a bump in client intake following the pandemic as the firm proved itself to be a dependable service partner.

But now, due to this service disruption, the foreign clients will divert orders to other countries even if the rates are not as competitive as Bright River's.

"I don't know how many employees I have to say goodbye to now," Riajul said, while urging

the government to restore the internet service immediately and block social media if need be so that they can at least do some damage control.

Being without internet for even a day is disastrous for BZM Graphic, which does photo processing for e-commerce companies with 3-12 hours' deadline, according to its Managing Director Apel Mahmud Khan.

BZM mostly works as the production partner of Pixelz, which processes photos for 50,000 e-commerce platforms around the world.

"We have built this relationship with Pixelz over eight years of quality work with great reliability."

But now, this partnership is most definitely in jeopardy as BZM was not even able to ask the client to look for a temporary vendor.

"Our clients would not only be deserting our company but also our country. They may lose confidence in Bangladesh completely," Apel Mahmud added.

The daily financial losses to the IT industry due to the internet outage is about Tk 80 crore, said Russell T Ahmed, president of the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services.

"If it continues longer, the overall image of Bangladesh as a reliable partner in IT services will be tarnished. The progress that Bangladesh made in digital services will also be on halt."

Supporting the government's move to stop the violence, he said a mechanism should be

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

HQ of ex-Pak PM Imran's party raided

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan police raided the headquarters of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party yesterday, a week after the military-backed government vowed to ban the political movement.

An AFP journalist at the scene saw the headquarters of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) sealed off by police, who led a number of party workers into waiting vans.

Pakistani media initially reported party chairman Gohar Ali Khan, a barrister, was among those taken away.

However, an official at Islamabad Police, who asked not to be identified because he was not authorised to speak to the media, told AFP that they had not arrested him.

The official confirmed the arrest of Raoof Hassan, a founding member of the party and head of its press department.

"Raoof Hasan was arrested but the police did not arrest Gohar Ali Khan," the police official said.

The government's information minister said last week it would ban Khan's PTI, just days after the Supreme Court made a crucial ruling in the party's favour that dealt a huge blow to the government.

Candidates loyal to Khan won the most seats in February elections but were kept from power by an alliance of usually feuding parties, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, with the key backing of the powerful military.

On the run for 4th time

Residents of Khan Yunus flee as Israel prepares offensive; 45 more killed in Gaza

AFP, Palestinian Territories

The Israeli military yesterday ordered Gaza civilians to leave the eastern part of Khan Yunis city, saying it was preparing to "forcefully operate" there after rockets were fired from an area designated as a humanitarian zone.

"Due to significant terrorist activity and rocket fire toward the state of Israel from the eastern part of the humanitarian area, remaining in this area has become dangerous," the military said in a statement.

In recent months the Israeli army has launched intense military operations in several areas of Gaza that were previously declared free of Hamas fighters.

Yesterday, it prepared to launch an operation in parts of Khan Yunis governorate, whose namesake city is the largest in the Palestinian territory's south.

Youssef Abu Taimah, from the town of Al-Qarara in Khan Yunis, told AFP yesterday that this evacuation order was the fourth time his family was displaced.

"We left amidst ongoing air and tank shelling, and drones firing shots," said the 27-year-old, who saw "injured and dead people transported by tuk-tuk (three-wheeled motorcycle) and

donkey cart to Nasser Hospital" on the way.

Abu Taimah said his family headed to the humanitarian area of Al-Mawasi, but found there was no space for them in the crowded makeshift encampment.

"We will stay on the street, and even the sidewalks are full of people and tents. We are tired and fed up. Enough of this displacement."

Ahmed al-Bayouk, a 53-year-old man from Khan Yunis, felt similar despair. "Al-Mawasi is packed with people. There is no empty space," said Bayouk, who was displaced for the third time, "each time harder than the last".

"We barely settle for a few days before the army comes, bombs, displaces us, and destroys more," he told AFP. "Where should we go? Every place is at risk of bombing."

According to the Gaza health ministry, more than 39,028 Palestinians have been killed in the Israeli military offensive in Gaza since October 7. The toll includes 45 deaths in 24 hours, reports Al Jazeera online.

Earlier this year the military had carried out a sweeping operation in Khan Yunis for months that saw swathes of the city reduced to rubble and tens of thousands of people displaced to a nearby humanitarian zone.

- » Heavy tank shelling reported in town of Al-Qarara
- » No space for displaced in crowded makeshift encampment
- » Gaza death toll rises to 39,028

WOMEN'S ASIA CUP Tigresses bounce back

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh bounced back from a first game defeat with a seven-wicket victory against Thailand in their Women's Asia Cup Group B match in Dambulla yesterday.

Young leg-spinner Rabeya Khan took four wickets for 14 runs as Bangladesh restricted Thailand to 96 for nine after being asked to bowl first. Opener Nattaya Boochatham scored innings-high 40 off 41 deliveries for the Thai women.

Bangladesh, who suffered a seven-wicket defeat against Sri Lanka on Saturday, romped to the victory target in 17.3 overs, thanks to a 55-ball 50 from opener Murshida Akter.

The Tigresses will play against Malaysia in their final group match tomorrow.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



Due to a lack of rain, a farmer couple resorts to irrigating their farmland to ensure the proper growth of the Aman seedlings they planted this season. The photo was taken in the Shaktipur village of Gaibandha's Gobindaganj upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHOBUJ

US PRESIDENTIAL RACE Biden exit offers scope, pitfalls for Democrats

AFP, Washington

Joe Biden's withdrawal from the US election offers Democrats the precious opportunity for a late reset in a campaign that was going badly — but ushers in an uncertain few weeks that will make or break their chances against Donald Trump.

Grassroots voters will hope to be better served than they were during the initial nomination race, when Democrats put up no serious competition to the 81-year-old president's candidacy despite worries over his age.

"Remarkable leadership shown by Joe Biden. Now it falls to the (Democrats) to show equal leadership by having an open process to determine the best candidate(s) to take on Trump-Vance in November," said entrepreneur Andrew Yang, who ran against Biden for the party's nomination in 2020.

"The goal should be simple — to win," he wrote on X.

With Biden's endorsement, Vice President Kamala Harris, 59, starts out

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2