



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

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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

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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 summery 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

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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.

## Parts of Dhaka left charred

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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.

## Won't spare BNP-Jamaat this time: PM

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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 Mahubul 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 Mahubul 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.

## ‘Normalcy to return soon’

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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.