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POST-VIOLENCE CRACKDOWN

Over 8,000 held in 10 days

726 arrested in 36hrs; students detained despite promise of not being harassed

STAR REPORT

At least 726 more people were arrested in the capital and elsewhere in the 36 hours till 6:00pm yesterday as the nationwide crackdown against protesters and opposition parties continues.

They were arrested in cases filed over the recent violence across the country.

Over 8,000 people, including many BNP and Jamaat leaders, were arrested in 553 cases in 42 districts, including Dhaka, over the last 10 days.

Of them, 5,514 people were held outside the capital.

So far, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police has arrested 2,536 people in 207 cases filed with different police stations over violence, vandalism, and arson, said said KN Roy Niyati, additional deputy commissioner (media) of DMP.

Of them, 252 were arrested yesterday, he added.

According to court documents, 153 people, including several BNP and Jamaat leaders, were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka, in 51 cases yesterday.

Between 6:00am Thursday and 6:00pm yesterday, 466

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A deserted platform of Kamalapur Railway Station as train services across the country remain suspended since July 18 due to violence. The railway authorities said a decision on resumption of services may be taken within a day or two. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Office time 9 to 3, curfew pause 7am to 6pm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday extended curfew pauses and office hours for three days from today.

Public and private offices will be open for six hours from 9:00am to 3:00pm, which was 11:00am to 3:00pm last week.

However, banks will open at 10:00am and transactions will conclude at 3:00pm. The banks will stay open till 3:30pm.

The curfew pauses in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, and Narsingdi will be for 11 hours from 7:00am.

After Tuesday, the office schedule will be fixed again.

Following the quota reform protests that later turned violent, the government imposed curfew and deployed armed forces on July 19 night.

Government offices reopened on a limited scale on Wednesday after a three-day (Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday) general holiday.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal last night said district magistrates and police commissioners will fix the curfew time of the districts under their jurisdictions.

Webb discovers ‘super-Jupiter’ exoplanet

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A “super-Jupiter” giant exoplanet has been discovered orbiting a nearby star.

The observed exoplanet – a planet outside the solar system – is very bright and cold, with a mass more than six times that of Jupiter.

The detection is unusual in several ways, including that it shows the first exoplanet imaged with the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) that had not already been imaged from the ground.

It is also much colder than the gas planets JWST has studied so far.

The planet, named Eps Ind Ab, revolves around the main component of the nearby triple star system Epsilon Indi, or Eps Ind for short, which is only 12 light years from Earth. It needs around 200 years to orbit its star.

Elisabeth Matthews, a researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Astronomy in Heidelberg, Germany, one of the authors of the paper, said: “We were excited when we realised we had imaged this new planet.

“To our surprise, the bright spot that appeared in our MIRI (Mid-Infrared Instrument) images did not match the position we were expecting for the planet.

“Previous studies had correctly identified a planet in this system but underestimated this super-Jupiter gas giant’s mass and orbital separation.”

Vacate southern Khan Younis areas

Israeli military tells Gaza civilians ahead of new ops; 30 Palestinians killed in strike on school

REUTERS, Jerusalem

The Israeli military yesterday told Palestinians to temporarily evacuate southern neighbourhoods of Gaza’s Khan Younis region so it could “forcefully operate” there, telling them to relocate to a humanitarian area in Al-Mawasi.

The fighting underlined the difficulty the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) has in eliminating fighters of the Hamas group amid continued resistance.

On Friday, the military said troops battled Palestinian fighters in Khan Younis, a city in the south of the enclave, and destroyed tunnels and other infrastructure, as they sought to suppress small Hamas units that have continued to hit troops with mortar fire.

Palestinian official media said that at least 14 Palestinians were killed by Israeli attacks in Khan Younis since dawn yesterday and that their bodies were brought to Nasser Medical Complex.

In the west of Gaza’s Deir al-Balah, at least 30 Palestinians were killed in an Israeli attack on a school housing displaced people, Gaza’s Civil Defence service said.

More than 39,258 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli strikes in the enclave, according to Gaza health authorities, who do not

distinguish between fighters and non-combatants. The toll includes 83 deaths in 48 hours.

The military said yesterday its calls to evacuate were communicated to the population via several mediums in order to mitigate danger to civilians.

- » Heavy battles continue around Khan Younis areas
- » CIA chief to meet Israeli, Qatari, Egyptian officials for talks
- » Death toll in enclave now 39,258

UN and humanitarian officials accuse Israel of using disproportionate force in the offensive, which it denies.

CIA Director William Burns will meet this weekend in Rome with his Israeli and Egyptian counterparts and Qatar’s prime minister for talks on a ceasefire and the release of hostages by Hamas, a source familiar with the matter said on Friday.

The source, who requested

anonymity, said Burns would meet Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and the Egyptian and Israeli intelligence chiefs today.

The CIA declined to comment.

The meeting was first reported by Axios.

It comes as Israel seeks changes to a plan for a truce in Gaza and the release of hostages by Hamas, complicating a final deal to halt more than nine months of offensive that has devastated the enclave, according to a Western official, a Palestinian and two Egyptian sources.

In a separate development, US President Joe Biden and Jordan’s King Abdullah discussed efforts to secure a ceasefire and hostage deal in Gaza during a call on Friday, the two sides said.

In a statement, the White House said Biden briefed Abdullah on “preparations for a surge in humanitarian assistance during a ceasefire period.”

They also discussed reforms to the Palestinian Authority in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, and ensuring it has access to revenue, the White House said.

Jordan’s royal palace said the two men discussed what it described as the “dangerous developments in Gaza”.

Ensure inquiry into killings

140 scholars, writers, intellectuals urge UN rights chief on recent violence

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

More than 140 scholars, writers, and public intellectuals from across the world have urged the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk to press for an independent inquiry into the brutal killing and injuring of students and other protesters in Bangladesh.

Draconian measures such as arbitrary arrests and detention without show cause notice, denial of the right to be represented by a lawyer, infliction of injuries, and torture on the arrested call for immediate action to stop these blatant violations of human rights.

“As a group of scholars affiliated with universities and other educational institutions around the world, we write to express our grave concern about the brutal killing and injuring of students and others taking part in public protests, which not only violates the fundamental right to protest in a democracy but also makes a mockery of the right to life guaranteed under Article 32 of Constitution of Bangladesh,” they said in the open letter.

Indian writer Amitav Ghosh put the letter up on his X account yesterday, saying they are signing the letter in view of the fact that the government appears to be paying no heed to the various appeals against continuing repression, including the strong appeal made by the UN

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RECENT VIOLENCE

Two more injured die

Death toll now 162

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people, who were injured during the recent clashes between agitators and law enforcers, have died.

Yeamin Chowdhury, a 19-year-old garment worker, died in Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Abdul Majeed, 20-year-old transport worker, died at Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

With their deaths, at least 162 lives have been lost in the violence since July 16.

Yeamin, of Kishoreganj, who sustained bullet wounds in the capital’s Badda on July 19, died around 11:00am yesterday at the DMCH, according to hospital records.

Majeed, who suffered shotgun pellet injuries during clashes related to the quota reform protests in Chandpur district, died on Thursday noon at the CMCH, confirmed the hospital’s Director Brigadier General Taslim Uddin to The Daily Star.

Majeed of Khagrachhari was shot on July 18. He had been undergoing treatment at the Intensive Care of Unit of the CMCH since July 20.

An injured Palestinian man covers his face as another walks with him at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, in the aftermath of an Israeli strike in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Mobile internet may be restored by tomorrow

Says Palak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Government officials and mobile network operators will meet today to discuss restoring mobile internet, which has been switched off by the government for almost 10 days now.

“After discussing with the operators, we are trying to reopen the mobile 4G network by tomorrow [Sunday] or the day after,” said Zunaïd Ahmed Palak, the state minister for telecom and ICT, yesterday.

The government can resume mobile internet within hours if it wants, according to industry insiders who spoke to The Daily Star on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

The telecom sector has suffered physical damage amounting to Tk 500 crore and an additional Tk 500 crore in lost revenue due to the ongoing unrest, Palak said.

He was delivering a speech during the inauguration of the ‘Trees for Peace’ programme, in which 100,000 tree saplings will be planted to celebrate the birthday of Sajeeb Wazed, information and communication technology affairs adviser to the Prime Minister.

“The government hasn’t shut down the internet. The shutdown was due to the optical fibre cable connecting Dhaka-Chattogram being torched by miscreants and fire that made the data centres non-operational,” he added.

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