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Internet shutdown sets a dangerous precedent

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Responsibility lies squarely with the govt

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CASES AFTER VIOLENCE

Over 2 lakh accused in Dhaka city

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI and TUNIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Over 2.13 lakh people, most of them unnamed, are accused in around 200 cases filed with police stations in the capital over the recent violence centring the quota reform movement.

Almost all the cases were filed by police, and in at least 16 of them, between 5,000 and 10,000 people have been accused, records show.

Law enforcers have arrested over 2,500 people, including political leaders, activists and students, in the last 12 days in different parts of the city, according to the court documents.

However, the actual numbers of cases and arrests could be much higher and are likely to rise further as law enforcers continue to raid different neighbourhoods in the capital.

The country witnessed violence on an unprecedented scale over the last week. The peaceful demonstrations turned deadly on July 15 when Chhatra League attacked the protesting students on different university campuses.

In the following days, violence escalated in Dhaka and elsewhere, leaving at least 162 dead as per The Daily Star data. However, the death toll from the violence between agitators, law enforcers, Border Guard Bangladesh members, and ruling party activists, could be much higher as this newspaper could not reach many hospitals, where dozens of critically injured patients were taken.

Also, many families reportedly took 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 and police sources.

According to Prothom Alo, at least 210 people were confirmed dead as of yesterday.

The government is trying to bring the situation under its control by imposing night-time curfews, deploying army across the country, and carrying out raids.

Meanwhile, rights activists, family members of those arrested or injured, and political parties are decrying law enforcers' high-handedness and misuse of power. The government maintains that the cases are based on specific evidence.

CASES FILED IN CAPITAL

Dhaka Metropolitan Police filed 229 cases with 50 police stations as of yesterday.

This newspaper has so far been able to get documents related to 178 cases filed since July 17. The number of accused in these cases is 2,13,834. Of them, only 1,310 were named.

It is not known how many people are accused in the remaining 51 cases. The unnamed accused leaves room for the law enforcers to arrest anyone they want.

Police had not mentioned any name or number of accused in 60 cases, and in at least two, 10,000 unnamed people were accused.

One of the two cases was filed with Badda Police Station on July 18 over violence near Brac University in Merul Badda area.

The other one was filed with Lalbagh Police Station on July 21 over violence in Azimpur. The accused are unnamed BNP-Jamaat activists.

The Metro rail authorities filed a case against 9,000 unnamed people in connection with vandalism at Mirpur-10 metro station on July 19.

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QUOTA PROTESTS

Govt puts death toll at 147 so far

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 147 people have so far lost their lives in the recent violence over the quota reform protests, said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan.

The victims include students, people from various professions, police personnel, Awami League leaders and activists, said the home minister during a press meet at the secretariat while revealing the first official death toll.

"We have a list of those who lost their lives in the violence. Our investigation is on. If we get news of one or two more, we will include them [in the list]," said Asaduzzaman Khan.

The home minister said they are putting the death toll forward to quash any confusion.

According to The Daily Star database, at least 162 lives have been lost in the violence since July 16.

However, the overall death toll from the violence between agitators, law enforcers, Border Guard Bangladesh members, and ruling party activists, could be much higher as The Daily Star could not reach many hospitals, where dozens of critically injured patients were taken.

Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.

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Jhunu Begum, 65, wailing in front of a Narayanganj court moments after her grandson, 19-year-old mason Arif Hossain, was taken away in a prison van. Jhunu was pleading to the police that her grandson was innocent and that he was not involved in politics. Arif was picked up from his Parameshwardi home in Narayanganj on July 23 following the recent violence.

PHOTO: SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM

From 'DB office', 6 organisers lift protest programme

One more organiser 'picked up by DB'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six organisers of the quota reform protest, who are in custody of the Detective Branch of police, yesterday announced the withdrawal of their protest programmes apparently from the DB office on Minto Road in the capital.

Nahid Islam, one of the key organisers, along with five other coordinators made the announcement via video message, which was distributed to media outlets from the DB office.

Nahid was seen reading out a statement last night, minutes after a photo posted by Harun or Rashid, chief of the DMP's detective branch, on Facebook that showed them having food with Harun in a room apparently at the DB office.

The Daily Star could not reach Nahid despite repeated calls to his phone.

"Many people were unexpectedly injured and killed due to the quota

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WHO CAN PROVIDE MORE SECURITY THAN THE FAMILY? - PAGE 3

PROTEST COORDINATORS Detention by DB unconstitutional

Say legal experts, academician

ASHUTOSH SARKAR and MD ABBAS

The Detective Branch's picking up of key coordinators of the quota reform protest "for the sake of security" is unconstitutional, said two legal experts and an academician.

They heavily criticised the move while talking to The Daily Star. However, a Supreme Court lawyer said such move could be made "considering the prevailing situation".

The DB picked up six coordinators of quota reform protest, including Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud, over the last three days.

At a press briefing at the DB headquarters yesterday, its chief Harun or Rashid said they took the coordinators into their custody "to prevent any harm to students or the protest", reports UNB.

Zi Khan Panna, a Supreme Court lawyer, said according to the Appellate Division's guidelines in detention and remand-related cases, if anybody is detained or arrested, he or she must be informed about the reason within three hours of detention.

Their nominated lawyers and parents must be allowed to meet them and be produced before the nearby magistrate's court within 24 hours after the detention, he said.

"The law enforcers kept protesting students detained in violation of the Supreme Court guidelines and the relevant provisions of the law and constitution," said Panna, also a human rights activist.

Jyotirmoy Barua, another SC lawyer, said there are no laws in the country under which anyone can be arbitrarily picked up.

"There is no terminology for picking up someone to provide security. Picking up someone is abduction, and abduction is a criminal offence. If they [police] want to arrest anyone, they have to comply with the directives of the Supreme Court."

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70 pellets in 16-year-old student's body

Father claims police unjustly killed his son

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

It was around 5:30pm on July 18. Khalid Hasan, a first-year student of Ideal College in Dhanmondi, was heading back to his Amligola home in Lalbagh after offering Asr prayers at the Azimpur Government Staff Quarter mosque.

As he took a few steps, the 16-year-old saw a group of protesters rushing inside the colony and scatter.

Puzzled, Khalid stood there for a few moments in his attempt to figure out what was going on.

But police personnel appeared out of nowhere and started firing indiscriminately.

Khalid along with three to four others was shot. Khalid died instantly. His body had at least 70 shotgun pellet wounds in the tummy and chest.

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Khalid Hasan



Makbul Hossain, father of Abu Sayed who was killed in police firing in Rangpur during the quota reform protest, meets Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: P10

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