

VIOLENCE OVER QUOTA PROTESTS

# Criminals to be tried following due process

Foreign ministry assures int'l community; says innocents won't face harassment

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has assured the international community that law enforcement agencies will bring individuals responsible for the recent violence to justice using evidence, without any form of reprisal or harassment against protesting students or innocent civilians.

The law enforcement agencies have been given clear instructions to this end, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in a statement yesterday.

The government is ensuring that due process is followed in guaranteeing accountability and justice for reported terrorist acts and that law enforcement agencies avoid excessive use of force under any circumstances, it stated.

The statement comes after the United Nations (UN), western countries, and global rights bodies condemned the recent violence, encouraged a durable solution to the present crisis, and stressed due process in the justice system and upholding fundamental human rights.

As per the home ministry, the death toll in last week's violence reached 147, while according to independent media reports, it was close to 200.

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Construction workers, hit by days of unemployment amid the curfew, are whiling away the morning in the Bypass area of Khulna city in the hope of getting hired.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

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## Over 2 lakh accused

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Another case was filed against 8,000, two cases against 7,000, seven against 6,000, and three against 5,000.

Most of the accused face charges of gathering illegally, rioting, assaulting law enforcers, and damaging properties.

### ARRESTS IN DHAKA

Police produced 2,506, including 98 yesterday, before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in at least 158 cases between July 17 and July 28.

In 15 cases filed with Jatrabari Police Station, 335 people were arrested. The area saw continuous violence for almost a week starting on July 17.

Mirpur police arrested 168 people under 10 cases while Uttara (east) arrested 164 under 10 cases, Paltan police arrested 145 under eight cases, and Badda police arrested 130 people under four cases.

Mirpur, Uttara, Badda and Paltan areas too witnessed fierce clashes.

Five cases were filed over killing policemen, a student and a police informant. One was filed under Cyber Security Act.

## 70 pellets

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"The police could have shot my son in the leg. If they did so, he would have lived, even as a cripple. My son was intentionally killed by police," Kamrul Hasan told The Daily Star as tears rolled down his cheeks.

He said as the situation, stemming from the quota protest, was deteriorating, he had asked his son not to go outside.

Khalid would only go out for prayers, he said.

"My son was a threat to no one. He was not involved in the protest. The police unjustly shot my innocent son," said Kamrul, a teacher at a madrasa in Lalbagh.

A witness, who also suffered shotgun pellet injuries close to his eye, said, "Everything happened so fast that we could not fathom what was going on. We were getting out of the colony when the protesters ran inside. Before we could understand anything, a policeman pointed his gun at us and fired."

Some people later took Khalid and him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, he said, wishing anonymity fearing reprisal.

Hearing the news, Kamrul went to the DMCH. "I saw my son lying on a bed and blood oozing out of his mouth and nose. My innocent son was dead."

The family's ordeal didn't end there. He said they faced immense difficulties in getting Khalid's body from the hospital morgue.

"At 2:30am on July 20, I went to the Lalbagh Police Station for clearance, without which the hospital authorities would not release the body. The police questioned me and told me to come back at 9:00am," Kamrul told The Daily Star.

"I went again but they did not cooperate. Two days later, they finally gave the clearance, and I received my son's body. During this time, I visited the police station four to five times a day."

Around 4:30pm on July 21, Kamrul received his son's body. Khalid was buried at their family graveyard in Bhadashon village in Faridpur's Bhanga.

Kamrul said, "We had a hope that Khalid [his eldest son] would become a lawyer. Our family is poor, and he wanted to contribute to he family. Who will I ask for justice now?"

Khalid's mother gave to this correspondent just one line: "They did not let my son live."

## Those involved in the killings

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She emphasised that the government would not allow anyone to jeopardise the future of Bangladesh and its people. "We will not allow anyone to play with the fate of Bangladesh, so I need all-out cooperation and assistance from you."

Hasina expressed her determination to prevent such criminal activities from recurring in the country. "I don't know how to console you. But I can understand your pain," she said, addressing the grieving families.

Questioning the motives of the attackers, she asked, "What was the fault of general public? Why they were killed and had to face immense suffering? Killing people to topple the government? How it is possible?"

While trying to console the victims' families, Hasina shared her own losses. "... I am like you: an orphan who has lost parents and brothers. I understand your pain. I will be by your side."

Condemning the brutality of the

attacks, she remarked, "Burning down everything is never acceptable. It is unthinkable brutal to hang a person after killing them. How can a Muslim hang the body of another Muslim? Those who are involved in these crimes will surely face trial."

She stressed the need for bringing the culprits to book to ensure the safety of the people. "People cannot be protected unless they are tried."

She urged the victims' families to remain patient. "I am with you as long as I live."

### PM VISITS BSMMU, POLICE HOSPITALS

Later in the day, Hasina visited Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) and Central Police hospitals to see those who were injured in the violence.

She went to the Central Police Hospital around 5:00pm after visiting BSMMU. She enquired about the health of those undergoing treatment there.

in the video message.

Meanwhile, rejecting the statement of the six coordinators, Abdul Kader, another coordinator of Quota reform protest, announced protest rallies across the country today.

Kader via WhatsApp said he strongly condemns the scripted



Arif

Nusrat

statement of the coordinators made "at the DB office at gunpoint".

He said they were determined and will remain firm on their demands.

In the meantime, a seventh organiser was also picked up allegedly by DB officers.

Some eight to 10 men in plain clothes, identifying themselves as DB officials, picked up protest organiser Arif Soheli, a student of international relations at Jahangirnagar University, from his home near the campus around 4:00am, said Arif's younger sister Umme Khair Hridi.

"At 3:50am, the group of DB men gathered in front of the house and asked us to open the gate. When

The premier gave necessary instructions to the hospital authorities to ensure their proper treatment.

During her visit to BSMMU in Shahbagh, VC Prof Deen Mohd Noorul Huq and BSMMU Hospital Director Brig Gen Md Rezaur Rahman briefed the prime minister on the treatment measures taken for the injured.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun were among the officials present during her visit to the Central Police Hospital in Rajarbagh.

As many as 39 police members are now undergoing treatment at the Central Police Hospital. Three police personnel were killed, and 1,131 others injured in the mayhem.

Hasina also visited Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Friday and the National Institute of Traumatology & Orthopaedic Rehabilitation on Saturday to see the victims of the violence.

my father wanted to know their identities, they said they were DB police and showed their IDs. As we didn't want to open the gate, they threatened to break the gate down. Later we opened it, and they entered and took everyone's phones," Hridi told our Savar correspondent.

"They took some pictures from Arif's computer and then took Arif and my elder brother. They said they would take them to the Ashulia Police Station.

"Later, my elder brother was released in Genda area. But we have not been able to find Arif," she said.

Asked, Riaz Uddin Ahmed Biplab, officer-in-charge of Dhaka district North DB Police, told The Daily Star that no JU leader of quota reform protest was picked up.

Besides, men in plain clothes posing as detectives also detained Asif Mahtab, a former teacher of BRAC University, at his Uttara home early yesterday, his family said.

Shahabur Rahman, father of Asif, went to the DB office on Minto Road yesterday to know the whereabouts of his son.

He said his son was picked up from their Uttara home by a group of people identifying themselves as DB officials early yesterday.

"I want to know where he is. I want to know whether he is still alive," he said.

## Unconstitutional

"They were not detained or arrested in any case and therefore, there is no need to produce them before any magistrate," he said.

Rushad Faridi, an assistant professor of Dhaka University's economics department, found the DB's rationale for picking them up ridiculous.

"One, who needs security, and his family will decide where he or she will stay for their safety. No force can decide it. What type of security is it to pick up someone who is undergoing treatment at a hospital without the permission of the person and their family?"

"They [government] want to create a reign of terror. It indicates that the authorities will no longer tolerate any such protest in future."

## Dhaka eateries crying out for customers

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by 90 percent since it reopened on July 24, said Mohammad Rashedul Islam, team leader of the branch, which was shut from July 18 to July 23.

"A number of our food items have expired due to the six-day closure. As a result, we incurred losses," he added.

Bipu Chowdhury, chief executive officer of Nawabi Voj, which runs four branches in the capital, said the recent unrest could not come at a worse time.

"We have just returned to business after the fire incident on Bailey Road. Business was almost back to normal. Once again, I am counting a big loss," he said.

Customer turnout at Nawabi Voj's four branches started declining on July 15, when the students' quota reform movement picked up pace. The company had to keep its restaurants shut from July 19 to July 25.

After reopening, the chain is seeing just 30 percent of its usual turnout.

"It appears that there is a kind of fear among people," Chowdhury said.

The internet blackout for five days has also robbed them of online sales as the food delivery platforms were off-grid.

Parcel delivery has started by

## 55 police officers get postings, transfers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a major move, the government yesterday transferred and posted 55 police officers including two additional Inspector Generals of Police (additional IGP) and five Additional Deputy Inspector Generals (Additional DIG).

The list also includes 48 officers of the rank of Superintendent of Police (SP).

These transfers and postings were announced through four separate circulars by the Public Security Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

All of these officials got the promotion to supernumerary (officials who hold the same position and perform the same duties after their elevation) a year back. And now, they finally got the regular posting, according to officials of the Police Headquarters.

Among the two additional IGPs, Deputy Inspector General of Police Telecom (promoted to the post of Supernumerary Additional IGP) AKM Shahidur Rahman has been posted as the Additional IGP in the PHQ, and

the end of last week as broadband internet service resumed, but business has not been good, he added.

After opening the restaurant on July 25, customer turnout is gradually increasing but it was far from normal, said Sabikoon Nahar, manager of the Saudi Arabian fast food chain Herfly.

Imran Hassan, secretary general of the Bangladesh Restaurant Owners' Association (BROA), demanded the government ensure low-cost loans to help restaurant owners recoup losses and stay afloat.

This is the second big hit to the eateries in Dhaka in 2024 after the government agencies indiscriminately shut down establishments on health and safety grounds following a fire incident in the capital's Bailey Road in February that caused the loss of 46 lives.

The hit to the restaurant business also comes when establishments are struggling with the persistently high inflation for the best part of two years.

Hassan urged the authorities to extend the curfew relaxation period so that the eateries can remain open for longer.

Currently, Bangladesh has 4.81 lakh restaurants, employing 30 lakh people. Overall, two crore people are reliant on the sector, directly and indirectly, according to the BROA.

## Stars turn out in droves as Biles dazzles

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of America and we are so proud and excited for them. Let's go USA."

And Biles did not disappoint as she made a stunning return to Olympic competition, powering through left calf pain to get her multiple-medal bid off to a rousing start.

The US superstar, aiming to add to the four gold medals she won in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, tweaked her left calf warming up for her second apparatus, the floor exercise.

It didn't stop her from soaring through her signature Yurchenko double pike vault -- now known as the Biles II -- which even with a big step back on landing earned a 9.4 for execution for a massive total of 15.800 points.

She had another step back landing her second vault, but laughed as she crawled back towards her teammates on her hands and knees.

That was all it took for Biles's

coach Cecile Landi to know that for Biles "It's on. It's OK."

Landi, who said Biles aggravated a minor injury she'd been dealing with for a couple of weeks, said there was never any question the superstar gymnast would not continue.

"Never in her mind, no, no. Just no," Landi said, adding that she was also confident Biles would be ready to go for the team final on Tuesday and the individual events to follow.

Landi said Biles was already feeling better by the time she closed out her day by sticking the landing on her uneven bars routine -- receiving another huge ovation and beaming as she shared a dance with teammate Jordan Chiles.

With two of the five qualifying sessions complete Biles topped the all-around standings with 59.566 points.

"It was pretty amazing, 59.5," Landi said. "Not perfect, so she still can improve ... just really good."

## Govt puts death toll at 147 so far

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The Daily Star's count of the victims is based solely on hospital and police sources.

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

In response to a query, Asaduzzaman stated that the police exhibited maximum restraint and only resorted to using firearms when absolutely necessary.

Asked about the mass arrests over the attacks on government

establishments during the violence, he said that "no innocent person" was being arrested.

"The accused are being arrested based on video evidence. We will definitely identify those responsible and bring them to book. We will not spare anyone," he said.

Asked about arrests of children in block raids, the minister, "Did children take to the street for violence? There is information about using teen gangs in exchange for money in this work (violence)," he said.