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Will take foreign help for judicial probe body  
Says PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government will seek foreign technical assistance for the judicial probe committee investigating the deaths centring the quota protests, to ensure a thorough and standard inquiry.

“We will take foreign technical assistance for the judicial inquiry committee to make it appropriate and standard,” she said.

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GUARDIANS BESIDE CHILDREN. Holding a placard that says “Why did you kill my children?”, a guardian leaves the premises of Dhaka Medical College yesterday after law enforcers barred them from holding a sit-in protest there.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Guardians barred from staging sit-in protest at DMC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police barred a group of people from holding a sit-in protest under the banner “Santaner Pashe Obhibhabok (Guardians beside children)” in front of the Dhaka Medical College yesterday.

The protesters announced the programme at the main entrance of the DMC, demanding answers for the deaths of their children who were killed in clashes centring the quota reform protests.

Shima Dutta, a guardian, said they wanted to hold a silent sit-in to protest the killings of their children.

“We requested the police to permit us to hold the sit-in for just 10 minutes. But they refused. We have the right to stand anywhere to express ourselves. The constitution guarantees this,” Shima told the media.

Md Aktarul Islam, additional deputy commissioner (Ramna zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that they were not allowing the demonstration because these people had not obtained permission from the DMP.

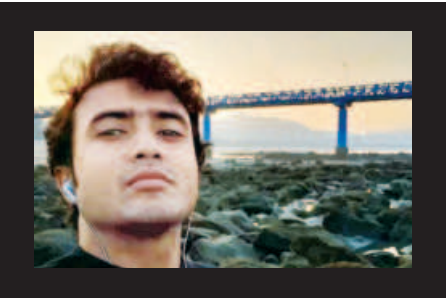
“Without permission, we cannot allow them to hold their programme here,” he added.

Later, the protesters visited injured students undergoing treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The students suffered injuries during recent clashes with law enforcement agencies and pro-government groups during the protests.

**We requested the police to permit us to hold the sit-in for just 10 minutes. But they refused. We have the right to stand anywhere to express ourselves.**

## More than just NUMBERS

**A 28-year-old father shot and killed in Dhaka. A 35-year-old farmer died from bullet wounds in Mymensingh. A 25-year-old son fatally shot in Cox’s Bazar. At least 162 lives (the actual number could be much higher) were lost when law enforcers opened fire on protesters. But these victims are not just statistics; they were children, husbands, and friends. In this report, we try to know the stories of three such names among these tragic numbers.**



### Why isn’t father calling me?

4-year-old daughter of Priyo, who was shot dead on July 19, keeps asking

MD ABBAS

On July 19, journalist Tahir Zaman Priyo was fatally shot in the head as law enforcers opened fire to disperse quota reform protesters in the Science Lab area of the capital.

Priyo’s friends, present at the protest, saw him fall as the shots rang out.

Despite trying to reach him several times, they were forced back by the police gunfire. Later, they watched as officers retrieved Priyo’s body and took it away.

As the situation calmed, Priyo’s friends searched from one police station to another for Priyo’s body.

Their search met deadends as no station provided information about Priyo’s whereabouts.

The next day, a lead took them to the morgue of Dhaka Medical College.

After obtaining the necessary police clearance, they entered the morgue, bracing for the worst. Their worst fears were realised as they saw their Priyo’s body lying in the morgue among other victims.

**THE CHILD WHO LOST HER FATHER**

Priyo left behind his four-year-old daughter Sadira Zaman.

The bond between Sadira and Priyo was a cherished one, built through nightly video calls that kept them connected despite the physical distance.

“Why isn’t my father calling me,” she

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### One bullet claims two lives Grandfather dies from stroke after Saiful was shot dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

For the last couple of days, two year-old Sayma Akter holds a mango in her hand, hoping her father will return home so that they can share their favourite fruit together.

But her father, Md Saiful Islam, 35, will never return home. He was killed after a bullet pierced through him, when law enforcers opened fire at Amuakanda Bazar area in Phulpur municipality of Mymensingh on July 20.

However, this would not be the only death in their family that week.

“Hearing the news of Saiful’s death, my grandfather Aftab Uddin, 80, cried out and suffered a stroke from the sorrow. He died on July 23, three days after Saiful,” said Hafizul Islam, Saiful’s younger brother.



Meanwhile, Sayma still firmly believes her father will return home with more mangoes.

“I cannot bear the pain when Sayma says, ‘abba ashbe, aam niye’ (father will return with mangoes),” said Rahima Akter, Saiful’s widow.

A father of three children, Saiful

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### I leave it up to the Almighty to deliver justice Says mother of 25-year-old Ahsan who died from bullet wounds

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, Cox’s Bazar

Hasina Begum has become numb since her eldest son, Ahsan Habib, 25, died after being shot in the neck during a clash centring the quota reform protest on July 18.

“Who will I blame for the death of my child? I am leaving it up to the Almighty to deliver justice,” she kept on saying.

Ahsan used to work as an office assistant at a cable service centre in Cox’s Bazar town to support his family, besides studying in pass course at Chakaria Degree College.

His father, Helal Uddin, a vegetable seller and resident of Fasiakhali village under Chakaria upazila, hardly earns enough to sustain his family of six. As such, Ahsan’s contribution to the family



was significant, especially since he bore the cost of education for his two younger siblings as well as for himself.

All hopes of the family were dashed after a bullet took Ahsan’s life early on July 19.

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### David Hasanat sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent garment exporter KM Rezaul Hasanat David, chairman and CEO of Viyellatex Group, to jail on completion of his five-day remand in a case filed over vandalising and setting Setu Bhaban on fire on July 18.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Saifur Rahman passed the order after Shikder Mohitul Alam, an inspector of the Detective Branch of Police and also the investigation officer of the case, produced him before the court in the case.

David was accused of financing the perpetrators.

The court also directed the jail authorities to provide

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### Curfew relaxed from 7am to 8pm for four days

#### Normal office hours resumes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to relax the ongoing curfew for 13 hours for four days starting today.

The curfew will remain in force from 8:00pm to 7:00am till Saturday.

The decision will be effective for four districts -- Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, and Narsingdi. In other districts, the local administration will decide on the curfew.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan made the disclosure yesterday around 6:45pm after a special meeting at the secretariat.

At the same time, all public and private offices will run their operations as per their normal schedule -- 9:00am to 5:00pm -- from today.

The Ministry of Public Administration sent an SMS to the media in this regard yesterday.

From July 28, public and private offices were operating for six hours, from 9:00am to 3:00pm.

At the special meeting, the home minister said the violence did not stop even after accepting all the demands of the students during the quota movement.

“So, we were forced to impose a curfew. We discussed the peace and law-and-order situation across the country.

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### No journo should be in danger for doing their job Says IPI, calls for probe into killings of 3 journos

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The International Press Institute (IPI) global network has called for a swift investigation into the deaths of three journalists, who were killed while covering the recent protests in Bangladesh, and ensuring a safe working environment for media.

Besides, around 30 journalists have sustained injuries while covering the protests demanding reforms to the quota system in government jobs, said IPI in a statement on Monday.

Hasan Mehedi, a journalist at Dhaka Times, was killed while covering clashes between protesters and police on July 18 in Dhaka. On the same day, Md Shakil Hossain, a correspondent for Daily Bhorer Awaj, was killed in Gazipur city, while on July 19, Abu Taher Md Turab, a correspondent for Daily Naya Diganta, was shot in Sylhet while covering the violent clashes.

“IPI strongly condemns the killings of Hasan Mehedi, Md Shakil Hossain, and Abu Taher Md Turab and calls for a thorough investigation into the circumstances of their deaths,” said Amy Brouillette, director of advocacy at IPI. “No journalist should be in danger for doing their job.”

“We once again renew our call on the government to take action to improve press freedom in the country and hold

those responsible for crimes against journalists accountable,” she also said.

Regarding injured journalists, some of them were caught up in the clashes, while others were attacked by the police or by the counter-protesters supporting BCL, according to Reporters Without Borders.

An IPI monitoring report from October

#### An IPI monitoring report from October 2022 to March 2023 indicates that journalists in Bangladesh operate in a hostile and difficult environment even when protests are not occurring.

2022 to March 2023 indicates that journalists in Bangladesh operate in a hostile and difficult environment even when protests are not occurring.

They often face physical attacks, threats, and legal harassment, as well as censorship and surveillance.

In May 2023, IPI published an open letter calling on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, expressing concerns about the state of media freedom in Bangladesh and demanding that the government take steps to protect press freedom.