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AL activists to take positions on streets from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League has decided to take positions on the streets from today and continue to do so throughout August while holding programmes to mark the National Mourning Day (August 15).

Today, they will gather at every ward of the capital, all districts, metropolitan areas, and thana headquarters.

They party yesterday communicated the decision with its district-level leaders.

It also announced a mourning procession from the Engineers Institute to Bangabandhu Bhaban in Dhanmondi 32 on Monday. According to sources, the ruling party will try to ensure maximum participation "to show its strength".

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader made the announcement of the programmes at a press conference at the party president's Dhanmondi office yesterday.

"We had scheduled programmes for yesterday [Friday] and today [yesterday]. We avoided those as we don't want any conflict," he said.

"The demands of the quota reform protesters have been met. The movement is now in the hands of a third party that wants to make Bangladesh a failed state. We can't allow their evil efforts to succeed."

He called upon the students to behave responsibly and alleged that vested quarters are spreading propaganda on social media.

Quader said the incumbent AL government was democratically elected under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina, but now the BNP-Jamaat alliance is attempting to overthrow it.

"BNP-Jamaat is trying to turn the quota movement into an anti-government movement. The Sheikh Hasina government is addressing the situation with patience and restraint."

QUOTA PROTESTS 104 more students get bail in cases over violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 104 students, including 68 HSC examinees, who were arrested over the recent violence centring the quota reform protests across the country, secured bail yesterday.

With this, a total of 182 students got bail in the last two days.

Yesterday, 55 students got bail in Dhaka, 15 in Rajshahi, 12 in Rangpur, eight in Chattogram, six in Sylhet, and four each in Mymensingh and Khulna divisions, according to law ministry sources.

During a meeting with Peshajibi Somonnoy Parishad (Professionals' Coordination Council) at Gono Bhaban, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the authorities concerned to release the general students who have been detained over the recent violence.

Earlier on Friday, different courts in Dhaka, Chattogram and Khulna divisions granted bail to 78 HSC examinees following an initiative taken by the law ministry.

Earlier on Friday, different courts in Dhaka, Chattogram and Khulna divisions granted bail to 78 HSC examinees following an initiative taken by the law ministry.

On Thursday, separate press releases from the home and education ministries stated that if any detainees involved in recent violent incidents are current HSC examinees, they would be provided legal assistance for securing bail.

The education ministry requested that any information regarding the detention of other HSC examinees be sent to helpsc24@gmail.com.

ABUSES IN BANGLADESH See that govt officials complicit in those punished 22 US congressmen write to State Dept; UN rights chief for steps to prevent violence

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-two US congressmen have urged the State Department to take actions to hold complicit Bangladesh government officials accountable for the abuses against the people.

"In order to prevent the further deterioration of democracy, the US must partner with the international community to support the right of the people to a representative democratic government that upholds human rights and respects individual freedoms," they said in a bipartisan letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday.

"The US must condemn all acts of violence, ensure critical civil liberties, such as the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, are protected, and take action to hold complicit government officials accountable for the above abuses against the Bangladeshi people," the letter said.

More than 200 people were killed and thousands injured during the recent violent clashes surrounding students' protests demanding reforms to the quota system in government jobs. More than 11,000 have also been arrested in the last couple of days.

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Two vehicles were vandalised on the parking space of Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury's house in Chattogram city's Sholoshahar area around 7:00pm yesterday. Soon after the incident, a vehicle, inset, was torched near the entrance to the house of BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury in Mehedibagh around 8:30pm. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Ensure the security of people's lives, properties
Army chief tells officers



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Army Chief General Waker Zaman yesterday directed the army personnel to ensure security of people's lives, properties, and important state establishments in any circumstances.

"Bangladesh Army is the symbol of trust of the people. It always stood by the people and will do so for the sake of people and in any need of the state," he said at a programme at the Army Headquarters, said an ISPR press release.

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AFTERMATH OF HAMAS LEADER'S KILLING Fears of Middle East war grow

US to deploy more warships, fighter jets to ME; Iran says expects Hezbollah to hit deeper inside Israel

AGENCIES

Fears of a regional Middle East war grew yesterday after the assassination of Hamas's political leader, blamed on Israel, triggered vows of vengeance from Iran-backed Middle East groups.

The United States said it would move additional warships and fighter jets to the region as the Iran-aligned "Axis of Resistance" readied its response to the killing of Ismail Haniyeh.

The groups from Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and Syria have already been drawn into the nearly 10-month war in Gaza between Israel and the Palestinian movement Hamas.

Iran yesterday said it expects one of those groups, Lebanon's Hezbollah, to hit deeper inside Israel and to no longer be confined to military targets.

With such talk growing, the Pentagon said it was bolstering its military presence in the Middle

East to protect US personnel and defend Israel.

An aircraft carrier strike group led by the USS Abraham Lincoln will replace one helmed by the USS Theodore Roosevelt in the region, the Pentagon said.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin also ordered additional ballistic missile defence-capable cruisers and destroyers to the Middle East and areas under United States European Command, as well as a new fighter squadron to the Middle East.

On Friday, thousands of people in Qatar attended funeral prayers for Haniyeh, who was buried north of the capital Doha two days after his death.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards yesterday said he was killed by a "short-range projectile" fired "from outside the accommodation area" where he was staying.

Haniyeh had been in Iran to attend the swearing-in of President Masoud Peshkian on Tuesday.

- Britain says situation worsening in the region rapidly
- Iran says 'short-range projectile' killed Hamas chief
- Five killed in Israeli West Bank air strike

ABU SAYED MURDER ASI, constable suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two police personnel, including an assistant sub-inspector and a constable, were suspended over the killing of Rangpur Begum Rokeya University student Abu Sayed during a quota protest on July 16.

They are ASI Amir Hossain and constable Sujan, Rangpur Metropolitan Police Commissioner Md Moniruzzaman told The Daily Star yesterday.

They were suspended due to their unprofessional behaviour, negligence in discharging duty, and violation of legal order given by the high-ups, he said.

Earlier, police formed a four-member committee led by Additional Commissioner Saifuzzaman Faruki to investigate the incident.

The committee submitted a preliminary report and based on the findings, they were suspended on Thursday, the police commissioner said.

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Committee on nat'l security to sit today amid protests PM to chair meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Committee on Security Affairs will hold a meeting today amid nationwide protests demanding the government's resignation.

The meeting is scheduled for 11:00am at the Gono Bhaban with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

This will be the first meeting of the committee, which is the highest policy-making authority on national security, since November 15, 2023, about one and a half months before the January 7 national election.

All members of the 27-member committee, including the ministers for home affairs, information, law, finance, foreign affairs, planning, industries and commerce; the cabinet secretary; principal secretary at the Prime Minister's Office; and the chiefs of the army, navy, and air force, among others, have been asked to attend the meeting.

Between July 16 and July 22, at least 203 people, including children, died from bullet wounds in Bangladesh. Two more

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Cheptegei relishes 'special day'

REUTERS, Paris

World record holder Joshua Cheptegei claimed the Olympic 10,000 metres title he so desperately wanted on Friday when he found a late surge to win a fantastic race and take the Games' first track gold.

The 27-year-old Ugandan, who took silver in Tokyo and gold over 5,000m, produced a devastating last 600 metres to come home in 26:43.14 minutes.

"I said, 'one day I want to be Olympic champion. It is the most special day. I can't describe the feeling,'" Cheptegei told reporters as he was overwhelmed at the prospect of his dream coming true.

"I've wanted this for a long time. When I took silver in Tokyo I was so disappointed. I just wanted to win the 10,000m."

Cheptegei's run at the revolutionary purple track -- introduced at the Games for the first time

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Uganda's Joshua Cheptegei wears a broad grin as he crosses the finish line to win the men's 10,000 metres gold medal at the Paris Olympics on Friday, the first track medal of the athletics programme. Cheptegei produced a record-breaking performance, timing 26 minutes 43.14 seconds to break Kenenisa Bekele's 16-year-old Olympic record.

PHOTO: AFP