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# Hasina falls, flees

## Army chief meets politicians, civil society members to discuss formation of interim govt



Hundreds of jubilant people at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban complex soon after Sheikh Hasina resigned and left the country yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: NAIMUR RAHMAN

TANIM AHMED and PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Bangladesh's iron lady of 15 years bowed out to a people's uprising yesterday. Serving as the prime minister since 2009, Sheikh Hasina was forced to resign and flee the country as hundreds of thousands marched towards Dhaka defying a curfew amid a continual morning drizzle.

The streets of the capital that had convulsed with violence and death over the last three weeks, reverberated with wild celebrations as soon as the Bangladesh army chief, General Waker-Uz-Zaman, confirmed the rumours of Hasina's resignation. He went on to say that a new interim government will be formed soon.

Millions took to the streets gridlocking the entire capital well into the evening while many found it hard to believe that Hasina's absolute hold on authority and Awami League's fabled political fortress could crumble, faced with a three-week campaign initiated by students.

Revelers stormed the prime minister's residence, office and the parliament. They also ransacked Awami League offices and residences of high-ranking ministers across the country.

Even while thousands converged on Shahbagh from early afternoon, there were reports of violence between demonstrators and police officials on the fringes of Dhaka and from around Bangladesh amid the vacuum that was left in the wake of Hasina's hasty departure without so much as a statement or press release.

A fledgling student protest against reserved quotas for government jobs that began on July 1 started to gain momentum as the government dealt with them harshly. Despite reassurances of no harassment, the AL government employed excessive force to subdue a campaign leading to over 300 deaths. That protest transformed into

outside the capital and marching towards it, braving all obstacles. The strong tide turned on the back of university students.

About 43 years after Hasina had flown into Dhaka as the newly elected AL president for the first time, she took off on a military helicopter with her younger sister Sheikh Rehana to India.

chaired a high-level meeting with key ministers and intelligence chiefs who briefed him about the unfolding situation in Bangladesh, according to reports in Indian media.

Hasina's son Sajeb Wazed Joy, the former PM's ICT affairs adviser, told BBC that his mother would not "come back" to politics.

Back in Dhaka, before he took the podium at the army headquarters to address the nation, flanked by the air chief and naval chief, General Waker-Uz Zaman met with several politicians and members of the civil society including representatives of BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, other politicians and teachers. The AL was not represented. The student campaigners were not present there either. Leaders of the student protest campaign have announced that they will present an outline for the interim government soon.

In the context of hundreds of violent deaths, the army chief reassured everyone that justice would be ensured for each. He said it was now everyone's responsibility to remain calm.

"Together, we hope to go towards a better situation," he said addressing the media. "I am taking full responsibility."

"The country has suffered a lot, the economy has been hit, many people have been killed. It is time to stop the violence."

On his way to the presidential palace, Bangabhaban, the army chief was greeted by jubilant crowd. Hundreds thronged around

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- Parliament to be dissolved soon, an interim govt to be formed
- President asked armed forces to be strict in protecting lives, properties
- Outline of interim govt within 24 hours: protest organiser Nahid Islam
- President orders release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia
- Offices, factories to open today, educational institution soon

a strong anti government campaign over the last week and culminated in a people's uprising yesterday as the student campaigners called for their compatriots to "march to Dhaka". This was particularly in reply to AL's show of political force on Sunday, which left at least 93 dead in a single day's violence. Another 66 were killed yesterday in Dhaka alone.

Droves of people began gathering in neighbourhoods of Dhaka and its outskirts ready to converge in the capital's Shahbagh from early morning. There were also thousands gathering

The five-time prime minister landed in Agartala, the capital of India's northeastern state of Tripura. Thereafter, the 77-year-old premier was flown to Hindon Air Force Base in Ghaziabad, about 30km from the Indian capital of New Delhi, according to Indian news outlets India Today and NDTV.

Hasina was reported to have met with the Indian national security adviser, Ajit Doval, in the evening at Hindon. It is widely reported that Hasina will seek asylum in London. Later in the evening Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

## Justice will be served

### Says president about recent killings



BSS, Dhaka

President Mohammed Shahabuddin yesterday urged political parties to restore law and order and stop looting and destructive activities.

"I ask the armed forces to take strict action to protect the lives and properties of the people," the president, also the supreme commander of the Armed Forces Division, told a televised address to the nation.

The Head of State urged

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## Help restore peace and discipline

### Army chief urges the nation



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz Zaman yesterday urged all, including the students, to cooperate with the armed forces and refrain from vandalism, killings and clashes.

Seeking cooperation from all quarters, including the political parties, the media and civil society

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## Jubilation as freedom in the air

STAR REPORT

Hundreds of thousands of jubilant people poured out into the streets of the capital, celebrating Sheikh Hasina's resignation and departure.

The crowds chanted slogans and waved the national flag as complete strangers shook hands and hugged each other.

Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Mirpur Road and Rokeya Sarani were filled with people of all ages. Large groups of people walked through Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue from 2:30pm to 7:00pm. Many said they would go to the Gono Bhaban.

Coordinators of the quota-reform movement, which spearheaded the movement that led to the fall of the government, Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud said in a joint statement, "Power must be transferred to the proposed interim national government of the students. No other government will be accepted. A new Bangladesh and political settlement will be established. No one will leave the streets until the ultimate victory is achieved."

Dhaka University student Rafat Alam said, "I have goosebumps. We waited for this day for a long time. I was not able to talk freely, I was not allowed to cast the vote."

Hasina had been the prime minister for 14 and a half years. In the 2008 national election, her party, the Awami League, won two-thirds of the seats in parliament.

She took power again in 2014, when 153 MPs, out of 300, were "elected" without any competition. The election was boycotted by the main opposition.

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The organisers of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement pose for a photo during a live television programme yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Hindu houses, businesses attacked in 27 districts

STAR REPORT

Hindu houses and business establishments were attacked by mobs while their valuables were also looted in at least 27 districts yesterday.

In Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, they vandalised and plundered the house of Pradip Chandra Roy, secretary of Lalmonirhat Puja Udjapan Parishad, in Telipara village last evening, reports our district correspondent.

They also ransacked and looted a computer shop owned by Muhin Roy, a municipality member of the district's Puja Udjapan Parishad, on Thana road.

Besides, homes of four Hindu families were vandalised and looted in Chandrapur village in the district's Kaliganj upazila.

In Hatibandha upazila's Purbo Sardubi village, 12 Hindu houses were torched last night, reports our district correspondent.

In Panchagarh, several Hindu houses were vandalised and looted in Sadar upazila.

Contacted, Monindra Kumar Nath, SEE PAGE 2 COL 4