



A man flying the national flag as he travels on a rickshaw in the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque area after Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled the country yesterday. Top right, people rejoice on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. Bottom right, an endless stream of people march towards Bijoy Sarani to celebrate Hasina's departure. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED, ANISUR RAHMAN

Hasina moved to a safe house in India

Reports PTI



Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina has been moved to a safe but undisclosed location in India, PTI reported quoting unnamed sources.

It was unlikely that she would leave India last night, it added.

The sources said Hasina's plan was to leave for London. However, certain issues have made that plan uncertain.

India decided to provide a safe passage through the Indian airspace to Hasina's aircraft following a request from Bangladesh, the sources said.

Bangladesh's military aircraft carrying Hasina landed at Hindon Air Base near Delhi last evening.

Indian government sources said New Delhi is closely following the fast-paced developments in Dhaka.

There is no official word in India on Hasina's arrival in Delhi.

Hours after Hasina landed at the airbase near Delhi in a C-130J military transport aircraft of the Bangladesh Air Force, Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval met her, the sources said.

Separately, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the rapidly unfolding situation in Bangladesh.

Jaishankar also separately apprised the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi of the developments.

Modi later chaired a meeting of his cabinet committee and discussed the developments in Bangladesh.

Hasina falls, flees

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the general's convoy and some even rode on his car as the convoy slowly glided through the teeming millions who hailed the army chief like a triumphant hero.

Aside from his announcement of an interim government, there were no statements about the nature of the government or the transition process till later in the evening when the president met with the military chiefs, political parties and civil society representatives.

A Bangabhaban press release said that the meeting had unanimously decided to immediately free BNP chief and former prime minister Khaleda Zia.

The meeting also decided to form an interim government immediately and urged everyone to show patience and tolerance. The military will strictly maintain law and order and prevent lawlessness. Parliament will be dissolved and all those arrested during the anti-quota protests will be

released.

The delegation included BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir; BNP leaders Mirza Abbas and Major General (Retired) Fazle Elahi Akbar; Jatiya Party (JP) chairman GM Quader; JP Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunu; JP Senior Co-chairman Anisur Islam Mahmud; Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna; Hefajat-e Islam leaders Mamunul Haque, Monir Kasemi and Mahabubur Rahman; Jamaat chief Shafiqur Rahman; Jamaat leader Sheikh Md Masood; Jaker Party Secretary General Shamim Haider; Bangladesh Khilafat Majlis leader Maulana Jalal Uddin Ahmad; Zonayed Saki of Gonosonghoti Andolon; Gono Odhikar Parishad leader Golam Sarwar Jewel; Dhaka University teacher Asif Nazrul and Firoz Ahmad; and student protest leaders Abdullah Al Hossain, Arif Talukder, Omar Faruq and Mobashwera Karim Mimi and Engineer Md Anisur Rahman.

Jubilation as freedom

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She won the 2018 election amid widespread allegations of voter fraud. There were reports of Awami League men stuffing ballot boxes the night before the voting day.

The latest election held in January, in which she won a landslide victory, was boycotted by the major opposition parties.

Hasina's government was facing a financial crisis as high inflation eroded the value of taka and foreign currency reserves fell. People were angered by corruption and rising costs of living.

The student protest started on July 1 with a demand for reformation of quotas in public service. It turned into an anti-government movement on Saturday.

From July 16 to August 3, at least 208 people were killed amid widespread violence. Most of the deaths were caused by indiscriminate firing by law enforcers, members of Border Guard Bangladesh and ruling party activists.

At least 93 people were killed on Sunday in a fresh wave of violence as ruling party activists and police clashed with anti-government protesters on the first day of the student-led non-

cooperation movement.

The day started yesterday amid tension as the protesting students were set to defy the curfew and enforce the Dhaka March programme, demanding the government's resignation and justice for the killings.

Students started to gather in Uttara, Jatrabari, Mirpur, Shahbagh and other places. Before noon, thousands of them were marching towards Central Shaheed Minar.

Protesters and law enforcers chased each other on Badda-Rampura road. As the news of Hasina's resignation spread, the protesters rejoiced. A big portion started to march towards the Shaheed Minar while some went towards the Gono Bhaban, the official residence of the country's PM.

People started to gather at Shahbagh at noon. The intersection was filled with people by 2:00pm. The crowd cheered at the news of Hasina's resignation, chanting slogans that literally translates as "People are free as the dictator has fallen".

Many of the protesters then left for the Gono Bhaban.

Thousands of people took to the streets at Motijheel, Paltan, Press Club, Malibagh, Mogbazar, Mirpur and other places.

He hoped that the students will bring the situation under control after hearing his message.

Waker-Uz-Zaman said the army will continue working to maintain peace and discipline in the country.

Replying to a question, the army chief said if the situation improves, there would be no need for imposing curfew and an emergency rule.

"I have ordered the army and police not to open fire. I hope the situation will improve after my speech. We are moving towards a beautiful environment."

Top leaders from the BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, Hefajat-e-Islam, Gonosonghoti Andolon, Islami Andolon Bangladesh, and civil society leaders, including Prof Asif Nazrul, were present.

However, no Awami League leader attended the meeting.

Hindu houses, businesses attacked in 27 districts

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senior joint general secretary of the Oikya Parishad, said they never thought they would see such attacks on their community.

"There are no areas or districts left where communal attacks have not taken place. We're continuously getting reports from different parts of the country about attacks on houses and business establishments ...

"They're crying, saying they are being beaten up, and their houses and businesses are being looted. What is our fault? Is it our fault that we are citizens of the country?"

Mentioning that the Hindus in the country are fearing more attacks, Monindra asked, "Where would we go if such attacks continue here? How can we console the members of the Hindu community?"

In Dinajpur town and other upazilas, at least 10 Hindu houses came under attack.

The attackers also tried to vandalise a temple at Railbazarhat in the town, but locals obstructed it.

Sources said the houses of late Koilash Chandra Roy of Barabandar area; Nitya Gopal of Barabandar; Bunu Biswas of Gunjabari area; and Roma Kanta Roy of Biral upazila, in Dinajpur came under attack.

In Khansama upazila, three Hindu homes were attacked, said Uttam Kumar Roy, general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad.

Goutam Mazumder, assistant organising secretary of the Oikya Parishad in Laxmipur, said over 200-300 attackers torched his two-storey building around 7:30pm.

In Khulna, the houses of the Oikya Parishad President, Biman Bihari

Amit, and Jubo Oikya Parishad President Animesh Sarker Rintu were ransacked around 5:00pm, our district correspondent reports.

The homes of Shyamal Kumar Das and Swajan Kumar Das of Haisgati village under Rupsha Police Station were also attacked and looted.

Biman added that they were getting reports of attacks and looting of Hindu houses and business establishments in Rupsha, Paikgachha, and other upazilas.

In Barishal's Gouranadi, mobs attacked, vandalised, and looted the house of Aditri Adhikary at Mahilara Union around 6:00pm, said Anwar Hossain, officer in charge of Gouranadi Police Station, our district correspondent reports.

He added they were also getting reports of attacks on other Hindu homes and establishments across the district.

Oikya Parishad General Secretary Tapan Kumar Chakrabarty of Bogura said a warehouse and a shop of his were looted at Sathmatha and Sonatola.

Another warehouse owned by a Hindu family was also looted at Sathmatha, he said.

In Patuakhali, a Hindu house and a temple were attacked, vandalised, and set on fire, our district correspondent reports.

Ananta Mukherjee said a group of 20 to 25 attackers suddenly carried out the attack.

Oikya Parishad claimed that there were attacks in 21 more districts and gave details on a few of them.

In Sherpur, the house of Sreebordi upazila Jubo Oikya Parishad President was vandalised and looted.

In Narsingdi, Puja Udjapan Parishad member Dipak Saha's house

and office suffered the same fate. In Kishoreganj, two Hindu houses were set ablaze in Kuliarchar.

In Chattogram's Raozan upazila, two other Hindu homes were attacked and ransacked.

In Jashore, the warehouse of Babul Saha, chairman of Bhagarpara's Narikelbaria, was attacked and looted, while 22 shops of Hindu community there were looted, and several houses vandalised and plundered.

In Satkhira, several shops belonging to the Hindu community were ransacked and looted in Kolaroa area.

The house of Biswajit Sadhu, the Oikya Parishad president, was looted and torched.

In Habiganj, the shop of Asit Baran Das, Shayestaganj upazila Oikya Parishad president, was attacked.

In Narail, Hindu homes were attacked and plundered in Lohagara upazila.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust in a statement demanded that the Bangladesh Army and administration identify the perpetrators of the arson, vandalism, and lootings, and take appropriate steps for the security of the minorities.

"An anarchic situation is prevailing across the country, which is illegal and against the constitution. Article 32 of the constitution states that no person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty save in accordance with law. Article 28(1) of the constitution states that the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth."

It also urged everyone to ensure public safety and maintain peace.

Justice will be served

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everyone to come forward to ensure communal harmony and security for minorities and protect government properties.

He requested everyone to play an effective role in keeping the country's economy, administration, and industries running.

President Shahabuddin assured that educational institutions would soon be opened, subject to discussions with agitating student representatives and teachers.

Besides, he said, those who are involved in the recent killings and violence, will be brought to justice through impartial investigations.

According to the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the current parliament will be dissolved immediately, said the president.

"All offices and courts in the country will start functioning as usual from tomorrow [today]," he added.

President Shahabuddin informed the countrymen that "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has submitted her resignation letter to me today [yesterday] and I have accepted it."

The prime minister's resignation and the situation arising from

the quota protests discussed at the Bangabhaban yesterday with the chiefs of the armed forces, leaders of various political parties, civil society representatives, and some coordinators of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

At the outset, the president was apprised by the army chief of the overall situation.

At the meeting, a motion was adopted in memory of the victims of the student movement.

Besides, it was decided to form an interim government on an urgent basis.

The president stated that an interim government would be formed in consultation with all parties and stakeholders to hold general elections as soon as possible.

He said all the prisoners, including those detained in the student movement and various false cases, will be released.

He also said compensation would be paid to the families of the victims, and all necessary assistance would be provided for the proper treatment of the injured ones.

The president mentioned that it was unanimously decided to release BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

N Korea deploys 250 missile launchers to southern border

AFP, Seoul

North Korea has deployed 250 ballistic missile launchers to its southern border, with leader Kim Jong Un describing the weapons as a "powerful treasured sword" to defend its sovereignty, state media said yesterday.

The olive green mobile launchers were displayed during a special "transferring" ceremony in the capital Pyongyang on Sunday, the official Korean Central News Agency reported.

The missile launchers were an "up-to-date tactical attack weapon", Kim was quoted as saying in a speech.

It was the first time North Korea had publicised the scale of an arms transfer to its border units, Han Kwon-hee of the Korea Association of Defence Industry Studies told AFP.

Each launcher was designed to hold four missiles, Han said, adding that Pyongyang's supply of arms to Moscow might have "interfered with the North's capacity to actually produce 1,000 missiles".

Help restore peace and discipline

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members, he said, "Please cooperate with me. We will not be able to achieve anything through confrontation. So, please refrain from all kinds of destruction, anarchy and conflict. If Allah wills, together we will move towards a beautiful future."

The army chief was addressing the nation following a meeting with the leaders of some key political parties at the Army Headquarters in the afternoon.

"You should not take the path of confrontation anymore. Return to the path of peace and discipline."

He said the country has suffered a lot, the economy has been hit, and many people have been killed.

"We will ensure justice for all killings and injustice. Please keep faith in the army and the armed forces. I am taking all the responsibilities

and vowing to protect the people's lives and properties. I am giving you a word, you will not be disappointed."

Waker-Uz-Zaman said all the demands will be met and peace and discipline will be restored. "Have patience. Give us some time. Together, we will be able to solve all the problems."

He said much damage has been done, properties have been damaged and people are dying. "Refrain from such activities and help me."

Regarding his discussion with the leaders of different political parties, the army chief said, "We had a nice discussion. We have decided that we will run the country after forming an interim government."

He said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has resigned.

The army chief said Prof Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University has conveyed a message to the students.