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Yunus to helm interim govt

Protest organisers meet president, chiefs of three services at Bangabhaban to discuss outline for a govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus is set to become the head of interim government.

President Mohammad Shahabuddin agreed to appoint Yunus as head of an interim government that is yet to materialise as the country continues to stagger in a power vacuum for the second day.

Organisers of the student protests met the president and chiefs of the army, navy, and air force yesterday to discuss their proposed outline for the interim government that will steward Bangladesh until the next election, key protest organiser Nahid Islam told reporters in front of the Bangabhaban early today.

The president suggested finalising the other members of the interim government in consultation with political parties, noting the country's precarious situation warranted quick appointment of an interim government.

Emerging from a four-hour meeting at the Bangabhaban that continued well past Tuesday midnight, Nahid said they made a list of 10 to 15 people to help Yunus run the interim government. "But the list will be finalised after discussions with political parties."

A Bangabhaban press release sent to media outlets early today said the president requested that a freedom fighter be included among those to help Yunus.



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Key protest organiser Nahid Islam briefs journalists outside the Bangabhaban around midnight yesterday after he and 12 other organisers had a long meeting with the president and the chiefs of the three services on the formation of an interim government.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Hasina gave a short notice about going to India

Jaishankar tells Rajya Sabha

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Former Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina apparently made the decision to step down after a meeting with the leaders of the security establishment, India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said yesterday.

"At very short notice, she requested approval to come for the moment to India," the minister said in a suo motu statement in the Rajya Sabha on the situation in Bangladesh.

India simultaneously received a request for flight clearance from the Bangladesh authorities, he said, adding that Hasina arrived in Delhi on Monday evening.

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BLOODY MONDAY

At least 92 bodies recovered

STAR REPORT

At least 92 bodies, including those of students and cops, were recovered in different parts of the country yesterday following Monday's violent clashes between protesters and police and attacks on various establishments, including police stations.

In some areas, mobs vandalised and set fire to the homes and offices of Awami League leaders and government establishments over the last two days.

In the capital, at least 63 bodies were brought to different hospitals yesterday following clashes between the protesters and police the previous day.

Among them, 20 bodies, including two of cops, were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), and 10 to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

According to hospital sources, most of the bodies bore marks of bullet wounds.

The DMCH allowed the families of the deceased to take away the bodies without autopsies.

Twelve more bullet-hit bodies were taken to Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital, said Abdul Ahad, Ansar commander at the hospital.

They were killed after police opened fire on the protesters in Jatrabari and Bangshal areas, witnesses said.

Five bodies were taken to Uttara Adhunik Medical College Hospital.

Four charred bodies were found at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum on Dhanmondi-32, which was vandalised and set on fire on Monday afternoon.

Around 10:15am yesterday, a correspondent of The Daily Star found that the bodies were lying on the footpath in front of the museum.

Clashes broke out in some areas of the capital on Monday morning as law enforcers opened fire on the protesters who were trying to take part in the "March to Dhaka" programme defying curfew.

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Army goes thru major reshuffle

NTMC chief Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan relieved of service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Army has made changes to some top-ranking posts, said an ISPR press release yesterday.

Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan, director general of the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre (NTMC), has been relieved from service.

Maj Gen ASM Ridwanur Rahman has been appointed the DG of NTMC. Lt Gen Md Saiful Alam has been posted to the foreign ministry, reads the release.

Lt Gen Mizanur Rahman Shamim has been made chief of general staff of the army, Lt Gen Mujibur Rahman general officer commanding of the army training and doctrine command, and Lt Gen Ahmed Tabrez Shams Chowdhury quartermaster general.

Lt Gen Mohammad Shaheenul Haque has been made commandant of the National Defence College, the release added.



Ziaul Ahsan

AL stares at a 'political death'

Some leaders now say they're victims of Hasina's whim

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Trumpeted as a champion of democracy over the last 15 years by her party colleagues and followers, Sheikh Hasina, 77, has become a pariah overnight.

The five-time prime minister, who is also Awami League president since 1981, is now trying to secure refuge in the UK after fleeing to India on Monday in the face of an unprecedented anti-government movement in Bangladesh's history.

Party insiders say Hasina's "undignified exit" was unbecoming of her, and a damning indictment of the bankruptcy of a party that led the Liberation War against Pakistan in 1971.

This self-seeking decision, they point out, to leave everyone to fend for themselves not only reflected badly on her, but also set back Awami League for years, if not decades, before it can recover from this situation where it faces "political death".

Hasina's fleeing the country essentially sealed the fate of Awami League, which led all most all democratic movements before and after the birth of Bangladesh, they add.

The Daily Star yesterday randomly tried to speak to top party leaders by phone, but their phones were found switched off in most cases. A several others did not pick up the call. Only two leaders agreed to talk off the record.

They said Hasina's last moment's decision to leave the country placed them in terrific situation and that they did not get enough time to secure their own safety.

"We are victims of her whim," said a central committee member.

Another leader alleged Hasina never listened to party leaders and made decisions on her own, isolating herself from the party colleagues.

"In the January 7 election, many Awami League activists did not vote for the party-nominated candidates. And

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Act responsibly to deal with the current situation

Editors' Council urges all

STAFF REPORTER

The Editors' Council yesterday called upon the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement, all political parties and their affiliated organisations, and the general public to play responsible roles in tackling the situation following the resignation of Sheikh Hasina.

Describing incidents of violence across the country, it also urged the president to take immediate measures to stop those.

In a press statement, the Editors' Council said the resignation of the Hasina came after many sacrifices. In the past three weeks, over 400 people lost their lives and countless others were injured. Five media workers were among the dead and over a hundred were injured.

"The Editors' Council expresses its condolences

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2,400 get bail in cases over recent violence

Several BNP, Jamaat leaders among them

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A total of 2,400 people, including several top leaders of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, got bail yesterday in cases filed with different police stations in the capital over the violence centring the quota reform protests.

BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar, Bangladesh Jatiyo Party (Manju) Chairman Andaleev Rahman Partho and Ducus former vice-president Nurul Haque Nur are among them.

The magistrates working in the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka granted them bail after the defence lawyers filed petitions with the court yesterday, said court staffers.

The 2,400 were produced before the court between July 17 and August 4 after being arrested in some 178 cases.

Of them, 253 were held in cases filed with Jatrabari and Demra police stations, 220 with Pallabi and Rupnagar police stations, 214 with Paltan, Motijheel,

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Students are seen controlling traffic at the Bijoy Sarani intersection, a day after former prime minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled the country in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Khaleda Zia freed after presidential pardon

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Former prime minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, who was under house arrest for the last five years, was released yesterday after the president pardoned her punishments, a day after Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled the country in the face of a people's uprising.

Khaleda, 79, is currently receiving treatment at the Evercare Hospital, where she was admitted on July 15.

BNP leader Mirza Abbas, said: "Madam [Khaleda Zia] got very emotional after knowing that Sheikh Hasina was forced to resign and flee the country."

This is the first time since independence that the president has granted clemency to any former prime minister, according to senior Supreme Court lawyer ZI Khan Panna, who spoke with The Daily Star yesterday.

According to a home ministry circular

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