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All cases filed to quell protests will be withdrawn

Law ministry decides, sets up hotline for victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has said it would withdraw all cases filed with the intention of suppressing the recent mass uprising of students and the people, which resulted in the ouster of Sheikh Hasina's government last week.

The decision was made during a meeting between law adviser Prof Asif Nazrul and law ministry officials at the ministry's conference room yesterday, according to a press statement.

The ministry has decided to take steps within three working days to withdraw all the cases filed between July 1 and August 5 against innocent protesters.

Arrangements will be made within the next three working days to release juveniles from correctional facilities who were arrested in cases filed to harass them.

Additionally, through the Law and Justice Division's hotline number, 16430, the ministry will offer support to those who have been the victims of false cases.

During the meeting, the ministry also decided to swiftly hold trials against those involved in the killings during the protests.

The ministry said it would also take steps to withdraw the cases filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act and the Cyber Security Act.

Members of law enforcement and the paramilitary force had opened

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Members of the Hindu community, under several banners, gathered at the capital's Shahbagh intersection yesterday to protest the recent attacks on minority communities since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

ATTACKS ON HINDUS Protests go on across country

STAR REPORT

Members of the Hindu community and others yesterday took to the streets in the capital and at least seven other districts to protest the attacks on their houses, shops and temples since the fall of the Awami League government.

In Dhaka, they blocked the Shahbagh intersection for the second consecutive day to press for an eight-point demand, including the formation of a minority protection commission.

Other demands include the formation of a separate ministry for minorities; the enactment and strict enforcement of laws to prevent all forms of attacks; and allocation of 10 percent of parliamentary seats for them.

The agitators began gathering at the intersection around 3:00pm and kept it

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Khaleda will run in polls if able

Says Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has said party chief Khaleda Zia will run in the polls if she is fit.

"If she's physically fit, she will definitely contest the election," he told NDTV in an interview yesterday.

"She's very sick. She's in the hospital. She's suffering from multidisciplinary diseases. Her treatment was not going well in this country and we requested the judiciary as well as the government several times to send her abroad, but that didn't happen... Doctors say she's not fit to travel right now and we will have to wait for some time before taking her outside the country," he said.

The BNP leader said while his party is ready for polls at any point, the interim government would need more time to conduct them.

"The entire election machinery has become totally polluted and they are not in a position to hold a free-and-fair election. So, they will have to bring some reforms to the election system as well."

The BNP leader also said he believes that the Bangladesh army will not interfere in the political process going forward and also claimed that no extremist elements were involved in the protests.



Police not on the ground

Guarded by army, ansar personnel, cops in casuals perform office work in most stations

STAR REPORT

Five days after an uprising toppled the Sheikh Hasina administration, police have not yet resumed their work to ensure public security.

Officials who reported for duty in their stations, with the assistance of the army, have limited their work.

Some police stations are only recording general diaries and handling internal tasks, while others remain deserted with the policemen leaving after just marking their attendance.

"We're reporting to our stations but not going to the field out of fear of violent reprisals from the public as many of our colleagues had opened fire indiscriminately to kill protesters during the uprising," said an inspector who preferred anonymity.

Amid this situation, the Police Headquarters yesterday issued directives to form civic committees and resume police work at the stations to maintain law and order.

Yesterday, 538 out of 639 police stations in the country partially resumed operations with the assistance of the armed forces and Border Guard Bangladesh, according to the PHQ.

However, they refrained from patrolling the streets or managing traffic.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, over a dozen police personnel cited this absence of the law enforcers as a key factor behind plunderers targeting the public, especially members of minority communities.

This correspondent visited Kafrul, Shah Ali, Pallabi and Bhasantek police stations in Dhaka yesterday. Several police personnel were found in Shah Ali, where no general diary (GD) was filed in the past two days.

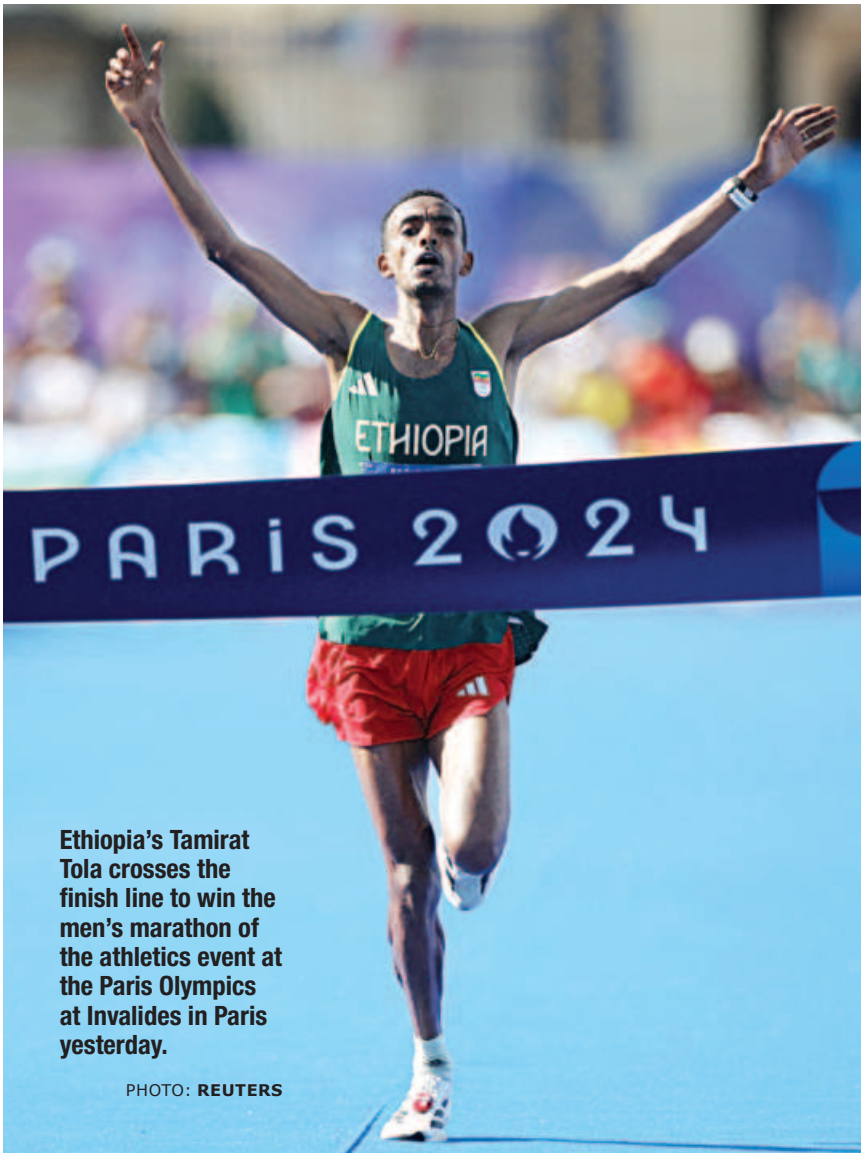
"We're living in fear. Our families don't even want us to leave the house. But I still come to the police station because I'm a government service holder," said a sub inspector of the station.

The SI suggested that police high-ups

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"We're reporting to our stations but not going to the field out of fear of violent reprisals from the public as many of our colleagues had opened fire indiscriminately to kill protesters during the uprising."

An inspector



Ethiopia's Tamirat Tola crosses the finish line to win the men's marathon at the Paris Olympics at Invalides in Paris yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

BNP expels 44, cites role in violence, other reasons

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

BNP and its associated organisations have taken strict action against some of their party men for their involvement in the recent violence and violation of organisational discipline.

Over the last five days, at least 44 leaders and activists from 17 districts have been expelled. Of them, 27 are from Jubo Dal, 10 from Chhatra Dal, six from BNP, and one from Swechhasebak Dal.

Additionally, show-cause notices have been served on at least 42 leaders and activists of the BNP and its associated bodies in three districts.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Chhatra Dal General Secretary Nasir Uddin Nasir stressed the need for maintaining discipline within the student organisation.

"After the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government, some Chhatra Dal leaders and activists got involved in a few isolated incidents.

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Withdrawal of cash from banks capped at Tk 2 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Bank yesterday ordered commercial banks not to allow cash withdrawal of more than Tk 2 lakh per customer this week because of a lack of security, a senior official of the central bank said.

It also instructed the banks to monitor cheque transactions and block any suspicious transfer of funds.

"Due to security problems of transporting cash to the bank branches, please do not allow withdrawals of cash more than 2 lakh in the upcoming week," the Bangladesh Bank said in a letter to the banks.

The directive comes as the law and order situation remains unpredictable since police have not resumed work following deadly attacks and clashes during the uprising that led to the fall of Sheikh Hasina on August 5.

The BB asked the banks, if possible, to stop disbursing cash among branches amid the weak security.

Smallest human species were even smaller than thought: study

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Homo floresiensis, a species of humans dubbed "Hobbits" for their short stature, were even smaller than previously thought, a new fossil study has revealed.



The species, related to modern humans, was first discovered in 2003 at the Liang Bua cave on Indonesia's island of Flores, after which they are named.

Archaeologists found that the small-brained people lived on the island as recently as 50,000 years ago, when our own species, Homo sapiens, was already long established in Australia to the south.

Initial fossils suggested that individuals of the species grew up to about three feet six inches tall with small brains and large teeth for their tiny size. The origin of the species remained a mystery, however, due to the rarity of their fossils.

It was initially believed that Homo floresiensis was a dwarfed descendant of the early Asian populations of human ancestor species Homo erectus.

Some researchers speculated that the "Hobbits of Flores" were a late-surviving remnant of a more ancient small-statured human ancestor species from Africa predating even Homo erectus.



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বিশ্ব বরেন্দ্র অর্থনীতিবিদ ও শান্তিতে নোবেল বিজয়ী
ড. মুহাম্মদ ইউনুস
সহ অন্তর্বর্তীকালীন সরকারের উপদেষ্টা মডলীকে
পারটেক্স পরিবারের পক্ষ থেকে জানাই আন্তরিক অভিনন্দন ও শুভেচ্ছা।

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