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Student protests enters seventh day

Tapos Kanti Das and Rashad Ahamad | Updated at 03:05am on August 05, 2018



A group of students bring out a procession seeking justice to the deaths of Shaheed Ramiz Uddin School and College at Shapla Square in Motijheel as the students protester enters seventh day on Saturday. There is hardly any public transport out on the streets. — Ali Hossain Mintu

School and college students, mostly teenagers, continued protests for road safety for the seventh straight day on Saturday amid attacks on them in Dhaka and elsewhere by ruling Awami League's student front Bangladesh Chhatra League activists and the police that left scores injured.

The protesters came under attack at Jigatala, Mirpur and Basundhara in Dhaka and in Feni district town while the protests were foiled at Gazaria in Munshiganj.

The AL president's office at Dhanmondi-3 was also attacked during clashes and AL general secretary Obaidul Quader blamed the Bangladesh Nationalist and the Jamaat-e-Islami for the attack.

Students took to the streets after two of their fellows were killed as a bus while racing two others ploughed through a crowd of students and other waiting for bus at Kurmitola in Dhaka on July 29.



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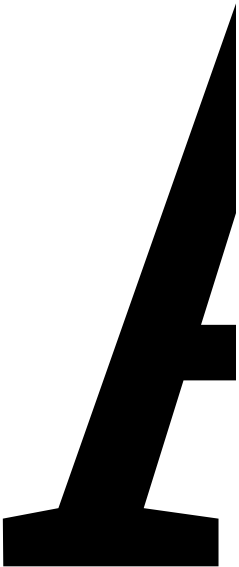
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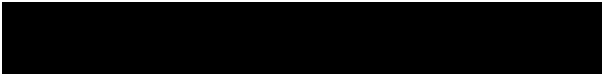
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Young protesters came under attack by Chhatra League activists and cops although Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Md Asaduzzaman Mia at a briefing on Saturday said that police were showing highest patience in handling the situation.

Asking the protesting students to return to classrooms, he announced that the police would begin 'Traffic Week' from today taking the spirit of students' protests into consideration.

Braving rains, the young protesters demonstrated on all the major roads, points and intersections carrying handwritten posters, chanting slogans, disciplining traffics and talking to the drivers and passengers to create awareness of traffic rules.

Tailbacks were seen at places as the students checked driving licenses and documents of vehicles and even blocked the road at places.

The students kept an emergency lane for ambulance and other patient-carrying vehicles and stopped vehicles keeping space at zebra crossings to allow people to cross the road without hindrance.

Agitating students stopped a flag carrying car, carrying state minister for education Kazi Keramat Ali, at Mahakhali at about noon and found that the driver having no valid license. Students urged police for filing a case against him and let the car to leave.

About 30-40 Government Titumir College Chhatra League activists rushed to the spot soon after the state minister left the area and asked the protesters to go back.

Protesting students halted the vehicle of Bangladesh Police Bureau of Investigation chief Banaj Kumar Majumdar in Science Lab intersection in Dhaka at about 10:20am and found it driver's licence expired. The students allowed the car to leave the place after about 20 minutes after the on-duty police sued the driver, said inspector Sher Ali on the spot.

Commuters in Dhaka suffered immensely as there was almost no public bus on city roads. Transport owners and staff kept their vehicles off the roads.

Thousands of people were seen walking to reach their destination while some others opted for rickshaws and CNG-run auto rickshaws spending higher fare than that of normal days.

The students put blockades at almost all the major points, including Shahbagh, Farmgate, Kakrail, Jatrabari, Science Laboratory, Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur, Agargaon, Mirpur, Kakoli, House Building Road to Jasim Uddin Road of Uttara, Matijheel, Mouchak, Banglamotors, Rampura, Technical and Shantinagar.

The young protesters also took to the streets in different divisional cities, including Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi, and district towns, including Narayanganj, Gazipur, Madaripur, Barisal, Pabna, Kushtia, Kurigram, Manikganj and Meherpur.

Shaheed Ramiz Uddin School and College students Diya Khanam Mim and Abdul Karim Rajib were killed and at least 12 others were injured as a bus, racing two others, ploughed through a crowd of students waiting for buses in front of Kurmitola General Hospital on Airport Road on July 29.

The protesters raised nine-point demands, including justice for the deceased, apology of shipping minister Shajahan Khan and safe roads.

At Jigatala, over 100 protesters and Chhatra League activists were injured as a group of stick-wielding Chhatra League and Juba League activists, some in helmets, along with police attacked the protesting students at about 1:30pm

In retaliation, the protesters, with sticks and whatever they found near them, chased the attackers and pushed them into the Awami League president's office on Dhanmondi road 3.

The attackers being reorganised with more people and attacked the protesters again leaving several of them injured. Passers-by and journalists who tried to take photos of the incident were also beaten up.

The attackers also snatched away cameras and mobile phone and smashed those.

Police in armoured personnel carriers reached the spot at about 3:30pm and dispersed the protesters. Border Guard Bangladesh personnel also took position between the clashing groups to restrain them from clashing.

During the time, panic gripped the area and the shops and shopping centres were closed.

The protesters alleged that Chhatra League activists and police attacked them without any

provocation and scores of them were injured and were rushed to nearby hospitals and clinics.

Dhaka north city Chhatra League former vice-president Ismail Hossain claimed that they came out only after the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Jamaat 'infiltrators' attacked the AL president's Dhanmondi office.

He claimed that over 50 of their activists were injured and were given treatment at different hospitals and clinics.

Popular Hospital deputy manager Jahangir Alam at a press conference at the hospital at Dhanmondi-2 in the evening said that they had treated 30-35 injured and all were released after treatment.

Jigatala's Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital supervisor Kawser Ahmed told New Age that the hospital treated 25-30 injured and admitted six of them.

Dhanmondi police station officer-in-charge Abul Kalam Azad said that none was arrested for the incidents.

At Mirpur-2, protesting students came under attack allegedly by about 50 Chhatra League activists at about noon at Mirpur-2 Shopping Complex. The attackers chased the protesters towards Mirpur-10, reported United News of Bangladesh.

According to witnesses, a number of protesters belonging to a private university came under attack by police at the entrance of Basundhara residential area in Dhaka in the evening.

At Mahakhali, students of Bangladesh Air Force Shaheen College, Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology, BRAC University, South East University, North South University, Universal Nursing Institute, Adamjee Cantonment College and Daffodil International University gathered at Aamtoli at about 10:00am.

The protesters checked driving license and registration papers of vehicles amid rain.

Students forced police sergeant Kamallesh to fine a pick-up van of an NGO Tk 1,500 for having no route permit.

The protesters claimed that in two hours they checked 10 vehicles of 'VIPs' and found irregularities and forced police to take actions against them.

Traffic police sergeants appreciated the students.

One of them said that he was doing something what he could not do in the past although that was his duty.

For example, he said that they could not signal any vehicle carrying powerful people like political leaders, members of the parliament, ministers, journalists, police and officials of other forces to check papers.

The students did not allow capturing their photo as they were in fear of actions against them by their educational institution authority.

The scenario was almost same at almost all the points where students took to streets.

New Age correspondent in Feni reported that at least five protesters, including three girls, were injured as they came under attack allegedly by Chhatra League activists at Trunk Road at about noon.

In Munshiganj, the police and Chhatra League activists foiled the students pre-scheduled programme at on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Gazaria at about 10:00am, New Age correspondent

in Munshiganj reported.

The information ministry issued notice on July 2 asking private television channel Ekattor Television to refrain from telecasting any kind of programme, news and picture in violation of National Broadcast Policy 2014 that might instigate public disorder. It stated that the television channel broadcasted some videos on students' protests on August 1 and 2 that caused fear of panic and public disorder.



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