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Asia

Bangladesh protesters call for march to Dhaka in defiance of curfew



People participate in a rally against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government demanding justice for the victims killed in the recent countrywide deadly clashes, in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Aug 4, 2024. (AP photo/Rajib Dhar)

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DHAKA: Protesting students in Bangladesh have called for a march to the capital Dhaka on Monday (Aug 5) in defiance of a nationwide curfew to press Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resign, a day after deadly clashes in the South Asian country [killed nearly 100 people](#).

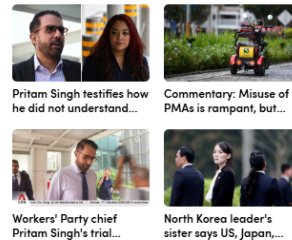
Bangladesh has been engulfed by protests and violence that began last month after student groups demanded scrapping of a controversial quota system in government jobs. That escalated into a campaign to seek the ouster of Hasina, who won a fourth straight term in January in an election boycotted by the opposition.

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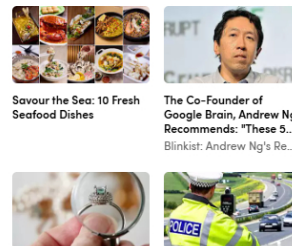
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At least 91 people were killed and hundreds injured on Sunday in a wave of violence across the country of 170 million people as police fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse tens of thousands of protesters. Starting Sunday evening, a nationwide curfew has been imposed, the railways have suspended services and the country's huge garments industry has closed.

Sunday's death toll, which included at least 13 policemen, was the highest for a single day from any protests in Bangladesh's recent history, surpassing the 67 deaths reported on Jul 19 when students took to the streets against the quotas.

The government declared the indefinite nationwide curfew starting at 6pm local time on Sunday and also announced a three-day general holiday starting from Monday.

"The government has killed many students. The time has come for the final answer," protest coordinator Asif Mahmud said in a statement on Facebook late on Sunday. "Everyone will come to Dhaka especially from the surrounding districts. Come to Dhaka and take a position on the streets."

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The Bangladesh army urged everyone to obey the curfew rules.

"The Bangladesh army will perform its promised duty in line with the Bangladesh constitution and existing laws of the country," it said in a statement late on Sunday.

"In this regard the people are requested to abide by the curfew as well as give full cooperation to this end," it said, adding that the curfew was imposed to ensure the security of people's lives, properties and important state establishments.

Over the weekend, there have been attacks, vandalism and arson targeting government buildings, offices of the ruling Awami League party, police stations and houses of public representatives, local media reported. Violence was reported in 39 of the country's 64 districts.

Source: Reuters/fh/rj



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