



Law enforcers escort a man from Shahbagh intersection to the police station yesterday. He was beaten up by agitating DU students when he pulled out a gun on students, following an altercation regarding letting his car pass through a blockade. Inset, an agitator snatches away the firearm from the man's hand.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## DEMAND TO DEFER CITY POLLS Cops foil students' EC march, Shahbagh blockaded yet again

DU CORRESPONDENT

After failing to march towards the Election Commission (EC) office, a group of Dhaka University students yesterday blockaded the Shahbagh intersection for the second consecutive day, demanding deferment of Dhaka north and south city corporation elections scheduled for January 30 -- as it coincides with Saraswati Puja.

Holding placards, they gathered in front of the Raju Memorial Sculpture on DU campus around 11am, shouted slogans and held a brief rally there.

While speaking at the rally, spokesperson of the protest Utpal Biswas condemned the remarks made by Election Commission Senior Secretary Md Alamgir about holding polls on the day of puja.

Expressing solidarity, Assistant General Secretary of Dhaka University Central Students' Association Saddam Hussain threatened the authorities concerned to resist the polls if it is held on the day of Saraswati puja.

Later, agitating students began a march towards the Election Commission office in Agargaon, before they were stopped by police at Shahbagh.

Students then blocked Shahbagh intersection at 1:50pm and kept it blocked till 3pm to press home their demand.

The agitators announced to stage sit-in in front of Raju Memorial Sculpture today and urged students of all the educational institutes of Dhaka to hold protest programmes.

On Wednesday, students had given an 18-hour ultimatum to the authorities concerned and threatened to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Discussion on Sir Abed today Razzaq Foundation to organise the event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation is going to organise a discussion on the life and works of Brac founder Sir Fazle Hasan Abed today.

The event is scheduled to begin at 4pm at the foundation's auditorium in the capital's Dhanmondi, said a press release.

Eminent economist Prof Rehman Sobhan, chairman of Centre for Policy Dialogue, will preside over the programme, where National Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury will be present as the chief guest.

Besides, former governor of Bangladesh Bank Salehuddin Ahmed; Brac Chairperson Hossain Zillur Rahman; Campaign for Popular Education Executive Director Rasheda K Choudhury and several other distinguished personalities will also be present at the programme

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## Fresh cracks in JP leadership

Raushan appoints 16 to central posts, GM Quader snubs it

RASHIDUL HASAN

Rift between Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader and the party's chief patron Raushan Ershad became evident yesterday again, after Raushan "appointed" 16 JP leaders including her son Saad Ershad to different top-level posts of the party.

In a press release sent to the media, Raushan -- also leader of the opposition in the parliament -- said she appointed Saad and MA Sattar as the party's co-chairmen.

She also included 11 others -- including Maj (ret'd) Khaled Akhter, Delowar Hossain, Raushan Ara Mannan and Mahjabeen Morshed -- in the JP presidium body, and gave Amanat Hossain and Md Yahiya the JP vice chairman posts.

Claiming that it was as per the power bestowed on her in the party's

December 28 council, Raushan yesterday also appointed Jashim Uddin Buiyan and Rejaul Karim as the party's joint secretary generals.

Immediately after Raushan's press release, Delowar Jalali, deputy press secretary of JP chairman GM Quader, in a counter release called upon all to ignore the one Raushan had sent.

Urging media not to publish the "confusing news", Delowar said Raushan has no jurisdiction, according to the party charter, to appoint any leaders to any party post.

He also said it is the party chairman who has the authority to do so.

GM Quader, younger brother of Ershad, did not respond to requests for comments over phone, despite several attempts.

The Daily Star also could not reach Raushan for her comments.

According to JP insiders, Raushan

wanted to bring those deprived leaders by her side by giving them posts in the party.

A JP leader who Raushan included in the presidium body last night told this correspondent that he was not aware of his post.

"Through media, I came to know that I was made the JP presidium member," said the leader, a close relative of late founding chairman of the party HM Ershad.

"Raushan madam's latest move is a clear indication that rivalry between her and GM Quader has become open, which will definitely harm the party," he also said.

Party insiders said a section of JP leaders are backing Raushan to pit her against Quader to make Raushan the party's chairperson and tighten their grip in the party.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Students extend support to Swapan mama

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University's Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) based socio-cultural organisations yesterday extended their support towards the beloved tea vendor Swapan mama, whose daughter was raped by a neighbour in Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila last year.

Though trial of the rape case is still ongoing, Swapan mama and his family members are now living in fear of arrest as the family of the accused have recently filed two cases against them.

At a press conference held at Dhaka University Journalists'

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## 'Withdraw comments endorsing crossfire at once'

Rights activists urge lawmakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights activists yesterday expressed deep concern and frustration over parliament members' demands of killing rapists "in crossfires".

They said such remarks from the legislature will hinder establishment of rule of law in the country. It will also encourage a culture of impunity and increase the number of extrajudicial killings.

They also demanded that parliamentarians withdraw their "injudicious" comments immediately.

Several senior lawmakers, from both the treasury and opposition benches, at Jatiya Sangsad on Tuesday said law enforcement agencies should "kill rapists in crossfires" to stop rape incidents, which have alarmingly increased in recent times.

Yesterday, in a press statement, Human

Rights Forum Bangladesh (HRFB) said the forum and its members were "stunned and outraged" after hearing such comments at the parliament, the highest legislature of the country.

"When lawmakers ask to defy laws themselves, it will definitely impact the country's human rights situation and establishment of justice," said HRFB, a platform of rights activists.

Termining crossfires brutal and inhuman, the forum said law enforcement agencies have already developed a tendency of breaking laws and misusing their power by carrying out crossfires.

"The state visibly expressed its lack of confidence on its own judiciary [by favouring crossfire], which has put the efforts of establishing justice in danger," it added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## Tabith, Ishraque complain of polls code violations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP's mayor candidate for Dhaka North City Corporation Tabith Awal yesterday complained that polls code is being violated incessantly but the Election Commission is not doing anything about it even after complaints were lodged in this regard.

"The Election Commission is encouraging people to break the electoral code of conduct," he alleged while campaigning in Badda.

Tabith said they submitted a written complaint to the EC on Monday in this regard but the EC is yet to cooperate. "The violation [of electoral code] is getting out of their [the EC] control," he told journalists.

"In the last six days, we saw various kinds of violations. We also faced obstructions while campaigning. If such environment prevails, we may not have a fair election," he claimed.

It is the EC's constitutional obligation

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION

## Info Commission must assert mandate: activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Information Commission has to play a pivotal role in upholding the true spirit of Right to Information (RTI) Act -- not only for people's empowerment but also for enhancing the government's image, noted RTI advocates said at a seminar in the capital yesterday.

"The Information Commission must assert its legal mandate to make public information accessible," said Md Abdul Halim, a Supreme Court advocate and RTI activist.

Halim pointed out to the chief information commissioner, present at the seminar, that neither the Supreme Court nor any lower court and tribunal across the country has a designated officer to facilitate disclosure of much-needed public information to justice seekers.

Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB) organised the seminar on the findings of a 15-month project titled "Advancing Accountability and Transparency through the RTI" at Cirdap auditorium. It was funded by National Endowment for Democracy.

Project Coordinator Ruhii Naz in a presentation said a total of 4,700 RTI applications were filed under the project in view of government's commitment to Sustainable Development Goals and achievement of its seventh five-year national development plan, and created 70 RTI activists.

Of the total applications, 58 percent received full and partial responses with information from various public offices, while 34 percent received no response with eight percent are still pending, she said.

Of the non-responded applications, 437 were forwarded to the appellate authorities and 57 to Information Commission as complaints, she added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Vendors use these large baskets to transport poultry to the nearby Karwan Bazar in the morning, and keep them on the side of the footpath for the rest of the day. The photo was taken near Bangladesh Film Development Corporation yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

# NEW PROJECT LAUNCH - GULSHAN

## CONCORD Shenandoah

DRAMATIC ENTRANCE

ROOFTOP SWIMMING POOL

FULLY EQUIPPED GYMNASIUM

HOT-LINE 16594