

# ARSON VICTIMS Ruling 14-party holds prayers countrywide tomorrow

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance will hold gayebana namaz-e-janazas across the country tomorrow for the salvation of the departed souls of those who were killed in violence during the ongoing blockade enforced by the BNP-led 20-party coalition.

In Dhaka, the janaza will be held at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, said AL leader Mohammad Nasim, spokesperson of the 14-party, yesterday.

Outside the capital, the prayers will be offered in all the district and upazila headquarters, he told reporters after a meeting with pro-government Sramik-Karmachari-Peshajibi-Muktijoddha Samannaya Parishad at AL chief's Dhanmondi office.

## SC to get more judges soon to reduce case backlog

**Anisul Huq tells the press after meeting with new Chief Justice SK Sinha**  
**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha would take necessary steps immediately to appoint some new judges to the Appellate and High Court Divisions of the Supreme Court for quick disposal of cases.

The president will take advices of the prime minister and appoint the judges from a pool of names proposed by the chief justice, he told reporters after a meeting with Justice Sinha at the latter's office.

The minister said the two discussed different issues of the judiciary particularly how the backlog of pending cases of the courts across the country

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**Clockwise from bottom left, school students joining Jago Rangpur's 5km human chain in Rangpur city yesterday demand withdrawal of the blockade ahead of SSC exams. At the capital's Jatiya Press Club, where several organisations condemned the political violence, Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna addresses a sit-in of the National Labour Party. The human chain of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front accuses the two major parties of keeping away from the people. At the same venue, Bangladesh Rural Journalists Association forms a human chain, demanding withdrawal of an arson case against journalist leader Shawkat Mahmud.**

PHOTO: STAR, BANGLAR CHOKH

# People's voice against blockade atrocities getting louder

**STAR REPORT**

With the blockade death toll mounting by the day and with no end in sight, the general people are increasingly converging at the capital's Jatiya Press Club to protest the atrocities on innocent civilians, which they say is a result of the two major political parties scrambling for power.

At least four organisations arranged protest programmes there yesterday, in which they held accountable the Awami League and the BNP for the civilian casualties and demanded an immediate stop to violence and a permanent solution

to the ongoing political deadlock. Alluding to the BNP-led alliance's blockade, which is marked by arson attacks and street rampage, Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna told a human chain that democracy could not be protected by perpetuating terror or throwing bombs.

He also slammed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her comments that there would be no vote under an unelected administration. "You and your government are unelected, too," he said, observing that the ruling party retained power through a fraudulent election.

Manna called for a national dialogue to settle the debate, once and for all, on how to hold the national election in a free and fair manner every five years.

People raised their voices elsewhere too.

In Rangpur city, several thousand students of 24 schools and people of all walks of life formed a 5km human chain from Rangpur Zilla School to Begum Rokeya University.

Demanding withdrawal of the indefinite blockade, which started January 6, the speakers said if the political parties really wanted the welfare of students, they would

accept the call.

Some 18 lakh students are supposed to sit for the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and equivalent exams beginning on February 2, said Syed Mamunur Rahman, a physician at Rangpur Medical College Hospital and member secretary of Jago Rangpur, the organiser.

Its convener Mosaddek Hossain Bablu, a freedom fighter, was present.

At its human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club, left student body Samajtantrik Chhatra Front urged the people to reject both parties for development and safety of the

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## REMARKS ON AZHAR VERDICT Jamaat lawyer apologises to war crimes tribunal

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Tajul Islam, a defence lawyer for convicted Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, yesterday apologised to the International Crimes Tribunal-1 for allegedly demeaning the court.

Tajul's lawyer Badruddoza Badal offered an "unconditional apology" on his behalf in response to a show cause notice that the tribunal issued on January 12 to Tajul and five leaders of Jamaat and Islami Chhatra Shibir for their media statements on the verdict of war crimes convict ATM Azhanul Islam.

However, a member judge of the tribunal, Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim, reminded Tajul's lawyer, "The apology must come from heart, not from pen. Only offering apology will not be enough."

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## With the public hospitals struggling to cater to a rising number of burn patients in the ongoing spate of political violence, a six-bed burn unit opens at Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital in the capital yesterday, which the authorities said, would provide free treatment and medicines to the burn victims.



PHOTO: STAR

## KYAMC, Ibrahim Medical College to take part in int'l competition

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Khwaja Yunus Ali Medical College (KYAMC), and Ibrahim Medical College are going to participate in Siriraj International Microbiology Parasitology and Immunology Competition-2015, known as SIMPIC, to be held from tomorrow till Monday.

SIMPIC is an annual international competition, hosted by the Faculty of Medicine of Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University, Thailand, which focuses on medical students who are interested in infectious medicine. The competition contains both academic and non-academic activities, says a press release.

From KYAMC, Adhara Madhuri, Dowlotuzzaman

# Gonoshasthaya Hospital opens 6-bed burn unit

**Offers free treatment to blockade arson victims**  
**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Coming to the aid of the increasing number arson attack victims, Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital yesterday opened a six-bed burn unit on its Dhanmondi premises in the capital, declaring to provide treatment and medicine free of cost.

Initially four doctors will provide round-the-clock, basic lifesaving treatment. Upgraded facilities including intensive care and high dependency units and more beds will be gradually introduced, the hospital authority told a press briefing on the premises.

"What we will do is ensure necessary and emergency treatment, essential for a burnt patient at the initial stage," said Prof Mohammed Shawkat Ali, head of the forensic medicine department.

He said the hospital was thinking of opening burn units at its branches in Savar of Dhaka and Tongi and Sreepur of Gazipur.

Despite being a private hospital run by trustees, the Gonoshasthaya hospital

welcomes donations from philanthropists and different tiers of society, said Prof AKM Rezaul Islam of the surgery department.

The launching comes at a time when people irrespective of age and identity are being targeted nearly every day centring the ongoing blockade of the BNP-led 20-party alliance.

Over 500 patients, including 50 arson victims, are now admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital's 300-bed burn unit, a situation doctors there say they deal with often.

Apart from the medical equipment, this correspondent found mosquito nets on the beds of the Gonoshasthaya hospital's burn unit on the third floor.

"A burn patient without dressing and lying inside mosquito net is less vulnerable to infections," explained Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, the hospital's founder and trustee.

He suggested avoiding dressings for

# AL failed to protect secularism in 15th amendment

**Says Sultana Kamal**  
**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Secular people in Bangladesh are continuously being marginalised, human rights activist advocate Sultana Kamal said yesterday.

Women are trying to find security under veils while the first words children learn to utter are of their religious identity, she told a programme on presenting a memorial speech on Bangladesh's constitution.

Banglar Pathshala Foundation, a socio-cultural organisation, held the programme at Dhaka University's (DU) Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury

Senate Bhaban.

Regimes under two generals during 1975 and 1990 directly patronised extremist and militant Islamisation, added the executive director of Ain o Salish Kendra.

It affected ordinary people's lives so much that the ruling Awami League, which held the spirit of secularism and led the Liberation War, failed to take a clear stance on the question of secularism in the 15th amendment to the constitution, she said.

The present constitution says Islam is the state religion while simultaneously

talks about secularism, something that is contradictory, speakers said.

Bangladeshis are generally pious but never fanatics. However, through the 5th and 8th amendments, Islam was made state religion while anti-liberation forces were rehabilitated during 1975 and 1990, said Sultana Kamal.

"As a result, the state held the character of a communal and reactionary one. It had a profound impact on politics and on social, economic and cultural spheres," she said.

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