

# Nightlong violence rocks Kamrangirchar

Two rival BCL groups fight; cop injured; police van vandalised; power lines snapped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kamrangirchar at the edge of Dhaka city was thrown into chaos and panic on Thursday night over a tripartite clash involving police and two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League.

The clash, which police believe was rooted in BCL men's attempts to establish supremacy and take control of local drug trade, started around 6:30pm and went on for nine hours.

A police officer sustained head injuries, a van of the law enforcers was vandalised and the power lines to the area were snapped during the fighting, witnesses and police said.

Kamrangirchar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Shahin Fakir told The Daily Star the two groups of the pro-Awami League student front are led respectively by Saidur Rahman Ratan and Mursalin Hossain.

However, Mursalin, a joint convener of Kamrangirchar BCL, claimed he is a supporter of Ratan, former president of the unit.

He said the clash ensued between Mohammad Hossain and Ratan

groups. "Hossain aided by Parvez Hossain Biplab, convener of the BCL unit, attacked us," Mursalin said, adding that three of their men were injured.

Mohammad Hossain, councilor of ward-56 and also a former president of the BCL unit, refuted the allegation and put the blame on Ratan group.

The OC said, "The two groups have long been at loggerheads over establishing supremacy and taking control of drug trade in the area."

A witness, seeking anonymity, said it all began after some men of Ratan vandalised a business establishment of Shakil, a follower of Mursalin in Kalunagar area around 6:30pm.

Around 300 activists of the two groups pelted brick chips at each other and blasted several handmade bombs, he said.

Kamrangirchar police took position between the two groups and tried to bring the situation under control by shooting teargas shells, OC Fakir said. Later, a platoon from Rajarbagh Police joined them.

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Left, activists of Tehreek-e-Insaf party distribute sweets in Peshawar yesterday while celebrating the Supreme Court decision against Nawaz Sharif that disqualified him from serving as prime minister for corruption. A probe in his wealth was started after the Panama Papers leak in April 2016. Right, supporters of Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) protest against the SC decision in Multan.

PHOTO: AFP

## Nawaz Sharif ousted by court

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The decision came after Nawaz Sharif met with senior party leaders after the court ruling. After chairing the meeting as president of his party, Nawaz Sharif recommended his own brother to be his replacement as the prime minister of Pakistan, Geo News reported.

A name has not been announced for the interim prime minister, who will fill the 45 day vacuum until Shehbaz Sharif is elected to a National Assembly seat.

The incoming leader will have to tackle Pakistan's worsening ties with the United States, frayed relations with India, and persistent attacks by Islamist militants including the Pakistani Taliban and Islamic State. The economy is benefiting from vast investment from China, but economists are concerned about falling currency reserves and dwindling exports.

The ouster of Sharif, 67, who has now had three separate stints as prime minister, raises questions about Pakistan's fragile democracy. No prime minister has completed a full term since independence from British colonial rule in 1947.

The court verdict marks a major political victory for opposition leader Imran Khan, a former cricket star who last year threatened mass street protests unless Sharif's wealth was investigated.

Khan pounced on the leaking of the Panama Papers, which revealed Sharif's family had bought expensive London apartments through offshore companies.

"Today is a victory day for Pakistan," said Khan. "Today onward, big thieves will be caught."

Khan is himself under a Supreme Court investigation on allegations he failed to declare sources of income, a charge he denies.

Sharif has not spoken in public since the court ruling, but his railways minister, Khawaja Saad Rafiq, implied that the military was in some way involved.

"We know very well what the crime of Nawaz Sharif and the Muslim League is. What do we ask for? We ask for civilian supremacy in Pakistan," Rafique told a news briefing.

"We come through elected votes and are humiliated and dislodged and end up in jails."

Sharif's two previous stints in power were also cut short, including

"He is no more eligible to be an honest member of the parliament, and he ceases to be holding the office of prime minister," Judge Ejaz Afzal Khan said in court.

The written court decision cited Sharif's failure to declare monthly income, equal to \$2,722, from a Dubai-based company his son owned in disclosure papers filed for the 2013

by security fears and a tough business climate.

The benchmark stock index tumbled 3.4 percent after the announcement but then regained some ground.

The index, which was one of the world's best performing in 2016, recorded major outflows during the two-month investigation into Sharif. The rupee currency, which is part of a managed float, has largely been stable.

Sharif has always denied any wrongdoing and has called the investigation into him biased and inaccurate.

The Supreme Court ruled in April there was insufficient evidence to remove Sharif from office - by a 3-2 verdict - but it ordered a probe by an investigative panel that included members of the military intelligence agencies.

The Joint Investigation Team (JIT) this month returned its findings in a 254-report that said Sharif's family assets do not match their earnings. The panel also accused his children, including daughter Maryam, of signing forged documents to obscure ownership of the London flats.

The Supreme Court's decision to include two members of the country's military intelligence agencies as part of the six-person JIT team fuelled rumours Pakistan's powerful generals had a hidden hand in the probe against Sharif. The military, however, has distanced itself from the proceedings.

Analysts expect Sharif to push for one of his allies to form a government until elections are held next year, when his brother Shahbaz, who is the chief minister in Punjab province, may take over the party leadership.

Sharif's daughter Maryam, who will now face a criminal investigation, tweeted photos of top PML-N figures and said the party remains united.

"Today will pave the way for Nawaz Sharif's resounding victory in 2018. He will be unstoppable. Insha'Allah," she tweeted.

"He [Nawaz Sharif] is disqualified as a member of the parliament so he has ceased to be holding the office of prime minister."

JUSTICE EJAZ AFZAL KHAN  
SAID IN SUPREME COURT  
RULING YESTERDAY

"There has been an injustice against us. Nawaz Sharif will step down as premier of Pakistan despite reservations regarding the verdict."

SHARIF'S PARTY, THE PMLN  
SAID IN A STATEMENT  
FOLLOWING THE VERDICT

by a military coup in 1999, but he returned from exile to win a resounding victory in general elections in 2013.

Pakistan's military has denied any involvement in the legal case and did not respond to requests for official comment yesterday. Khan's party has said the ruling party often blames the military to deflect from its own failings.

The Supreme Court's five-member panel ruled unanimously that Sharif should be disqualified, enacting little-used Article 62 of the constitution which allows dismissal of any lawmaker found to be dishonest.

The court's decision follows a two-month probe by a Supreme Court-appointed panel that alleged the Sharif family could not account for its vast wealth.

elections his party won.

Sharif's legal advisers say he never actually received the salary. They argued on Friday that the court had overstepped its remit, saying that no charge of corruption or abuse of authority has been proved in a criminal trial.

"Those who are happy and dancing will cry tomorrow," said Abid Sher Ali, a junior minister.

"They have stabbed democracy in the back."

After the court ruling, supporters of Khan's PTI opposition party gathered outside, shouting: "Go, Nawaz, Go," and jeered politicians from Sharif's party.

Political turmoil could unnerve foreign investors, who are already reticent to invest in Pakistan, deterred

# Defiant N Korea launches another ballistic missile

AFP, Washington

North Korea launched a ballistic missile yesterday, the Pentagon said, just weeks after Pyongyang tested an intercontinental rocket capable of hitting parts of the United States.

South Korea's military and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also confirmed the launch. In Seoul and Tokyo, the governments convened meetings of their national security councils.

Pentagon spokesman Navy Captain Jeff Davis said the launch occurred at about 1445 GMT, but it was not immediately known what type of missile it was.

"I can confirm that we detected a launch of a ballistic missile from North Korea," Davis told Pentagon reporters.

"We are assessing and will have more information soon."

South Korea's Yonhap news agency, citing the country's military joint chiefs of staff, said the missile was launched from North Korea's Jagang province, and landed in the East Sea (Sea of Japan).

"There is a possibility that it landed within our EEZ (exclusive economic zone). We will be analyzing it immediately and do our best for the safety of our people," Abe told reporters in Tokyo.

The US military and South Korea had in recent days warned that North Korea appeared to be prepping for another missile test -- likely of an intercontinental

ballistic missile (ICBM), or else an intermediate-range rocket.

Pyongyang triggered global alarm on July 4 when it test-fired its first ICBM, which experts believe could have the potential to reach Alaska.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un, who personally oversaw that launch on America's Independence Day, described it as a gift to the "American bastards."

The test raised tensions in the region, pitting Washington, Tokyo and Seoul against China, Pyongyang's last remaining major ally.

After the test, the United States launched a push at the United Nations for tougher measures against Pyongyang.

In all, six sets of UN sanctions have been imposed on North Korea since it first tested an atomic device in 2006, but two resolutions adopted last year significantly toughened the sanctions regime.

Meanwhile, the US military is preparing to conduct another test of a missile-intercept system in Alaska, perhaps as soon as Saturday.

That test of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system had been scheduled before yesterday's developments.

The United States has layers of missile defense capabilities comprising several components designed to take down different types of missile at different phases of flight.

## Sugar not so sweet for mental health

AFP, Paris

Sugar may be bad not only for your teeth and your waistline, but also your mental health, claimed a study Thursday that was met with scepticism by other experts.

Researchers at University College London (UCL) compared the reported sugar intake of more than 8,000 people in a long-term British study, to their mood.

The study participants, civil servants, were monitored from 1985-1988, and filled out a questionnaire every few years thereafter.

Researchers examined data from that study for an association between sugar intake and "common mental disorders" (CMD) such as anxiety and depression.

The UCL team found "an increased likelihood" for men with a higher intake of sweet foods and drinks to develop CMD after five years, and a general "adverse effect" on mental health for both sexes.

And they concluded, in a study published in the journal Scientific Reports, that "lower intake of sugar may be associated with better psychological health."

But dietician Catherine Collins, a spokeswoman

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KAPTAI, RANGAMATI

## Villagers suffer as bridge damaged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A bridge connecting Dulonnye to the rest of Kaptai upazila in Rangamati has remained damaged for around one and a half months, causing untold sufferings to the villagers.

Heavy rains and onrush of hill water caused a waterbody to swell, resulting in huge damage to the bridge over it on June 14.

The 150-foot bridge was built by Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board in 2013 for light vehicular movement and crossing it on foot. It is the pathway for all modes of transport to come to the village in Waggya union or travel out of it.

Specially affected are the children who have to cross the bridge to get to school but now have to cross the waterbody in order to do so. Farmers also use this bridge to get their produce to the local Ghagra

Bazar.

Hiron Tanchangya, 38, a local, said more than 200 families of Dulonnye village depend on the bridge for communication.

"If the bridge is not repaired immediately, things will definitely get worse during the monsoon," he said.

Arun Talukder, 35, headman of Waggya Mouza, said students were the worst sufferers.

Suvash Tanchangya, a teacher at Agunia Chara Government Primary school, reiterated the problem. "It's very risky for them to cross the waterbody and go to school every day."

Contacted, Muhammad Mujibul Haque, executive engineer of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board, said the bridge was damaged due to the overflowing stream. "We are working to repair it as soon as possible," he said.

## Govt to seek more time

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lower court judges]," Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told The Daily Star.

He said he would seek two weeks' time tomorrow, as the gazette notification was not issued.

Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star the chief justice is likely to consider the issue, as the draft of the rules has been submitted to him.

The minister, however, refused to

say if the chief justice had made any comments on the draft.

"I will be informed once the chief justice approves the rules," he said.

The minister on Thursday met the CJ at his SC office and submitted the draft to him.

After submitting the draft, Anisul told this correspondent that if the CJ consented to the rules after scrutiny, it (rules) would be sent to the president for approval

for the issuance of the gazette notification.

During hearing the Masdar Hossain case, popularly known as the judiciary separation case, the SC on several times ordered the government to issue a gazette notification after finalising the rules.

Subsequently, it had expressed dissatisfaction with the government's failure to do so on several occasions.

The judiciary was officially sepa-

rated from the executive in November 2007, but the conduct rules for the lower court judges have yet to be finalised.

The government drafted the conduct rules and sent those to the SC for opinion around two years ago.

The apex court revised the draft in light of the 1999 verdict in the judiciary separation case and asked the government to issue a gazette notification after finalising the rules.

## 6 injured in blast

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System Ltd.

The fire raged for about two hours until the Fire Service and Civil Defence controlled it.

Musa said the blast was caused by big leak in the gas supply line of the city.

Three units of firefighters brought the fire under control around 2:15pm after two hours of frantic efforts, he added.

Nurul Islam, team leader of the firefighters, alleged that the authorities of Jalalabad Gas had delayed in their response, making it difficult for them to control the situation earlier.

After the gas authorities had shut off the main connection, they controlled the fire, he added.

The manager of South Surma of Jalalabad gas did not receive any call despite repeated attempts.