



Two police cars in flames near the BNP headquarters in Nayapaltan during a clash between police and party activists yesterday. More photos on page-3.



Awami League leaders and activists gather on Mirpur Road in front of the Gono Bhaban where Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressed Awami League nomination hopefuls yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Sudden clash hurts polls atmosphere

*20 BNP activists, as many policemen injured in pitched battles in front of party office; 2 police vehicles torched; ministers, BNP put blame on each other*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The peaceful electoral atmosphere that prevailed in the country for the last two weeks was suddenly marred by yesterday's clash between BNP activists and police in front of the party's Naya Paltan central office.

At least 20 BNP men were injured -- some by rubber bullets -- in the clash that broke out around 12:45pm when police moved to disperse hundreds of party activists gathered there during sale of nomination forms.

Vehicular movement from Bijoy Nagar to Fakirapool intersection remained suspended for over three hours till 3:30pm.

Police claimed that 20 law enforcers were wounded as BNP activists hurled brick chips at them.

Earlier on Saturday, two teenage "supporters" of an Awami League nomination seeker were run over and killed by a pickup fleeing an attack allegedly by a rival group in the capital's Mohammadpur.

Since 9:00am yesterday, the Naya Paltan office

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## Oikyafront wants polls 3 weeks later

*Places demand to EC; AL urges EC to stick to its schedule*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Oikyafront yesterday demanded that the Election Commission defer the election, set for December 30, by three more weeks. But the ruling Awami League termed the proposal illogical and urged the commission to stick to its schedule.

The new opposition alliance comprising BNP and several other parties placed the demand at a meeting with the EC at

SEE PAGE 12 COL 5

## Promise you'll go by my decisions

*Hasina to AL nomination seekers; rebels would be expelled from party for life, Quader warns*

RASHIDUL HASAN

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday made the MP aspirants from the party promise to accept whoever she nominated for the upcoming election and work together for them.

"You will have to promise me [by] raising your hands if you accept and [will] abide by my decision. If you don't work together following my decision, I will not be there [in the party]," she said while addressing the party's nomination hopefuls at the Gono

Bhaban.

Afterwards, all the nomination seekers raised their hands and promised to work together for the party nominees, several of the aspirants told this correspondent.

Before Hasina's address, AL's General Secretary Obaidul Quader warned the aspirants saying, "If anyone goes against the party's decision, they will be expelled from the party forever."

Over 4,000 nomination seekers, flanked by their supporters, gathered at Hasina's Dhanmondi office, where the meeting was

## POLLING OFFICIALS

## Police gathering personal info

STAR REPORT

Police are gathering a host of personal information, including political leanings, about probable polling officials in many districts, causing concern among them.

Many of the prospective polling officials, mostly school and college teachers said they worked as presiding officer, assistant presiding officer and polling officer in past elections without having to go through such verification.

Dozens of teachers in Narayanganj, Pabna, Dinaipur, Satkhira and Kushtia talked to The Daily Star recently about their concerns.

The information being gathered by police includes the names of possible polling officers and their family members and political affiliations of all members of the families.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said his party raised the issue at a meeting with the

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4

## Minipack menace

*Plastic packets, hard to decompose, are everywhere; their alarming spread may turn into an environmental disaster, experts fear*

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Sachet marketing -- selling products in small quantity, usually in minipacks -- has practically revolutionised the business of consumer products over the last few decades. Gradually, however, it is turning into a serious cause for concern.

Cheaper and convenient, these minipacks have made their way to even the most far-flung corners of the country. From shampoo to pickle, minipacks of almost everything are now everywhere.

But its spread threatens to become an environmental disaster.

According to a 2015 study conducted by Waste Concern, an independent pro-environment group,

more than 95 percent of the soiled plastic waste generated in Dhaka comprised of poly-packaged throwaways, including pet bottles, polythene bags and sachets of fast food and non-food consumer goods such as toiletries, food items and toothpaste.

The recycling industry absorbs just about six percent of the 257 tonnes of soiled plastic waste dumped in the landfills of Dhaka every day.

The plastic sachets have multiple layers of different materials for the airtightness and so they cannot be segregated during the recycling process, unlike pet bottles.

"Basically, minipacks and large amount of packaging materials have no

recycle value because of the multiple layers of film coating under the plastic to keep the products intact. Middleclass consumers like them because they are cheap and convenient," said AH Md Maqsood Sinha, executive director of Waste Concern, an organisation working on improving waste management and recycling in the country.

There has not yet been any definitive study on the extent of damage these minipacks are causing to the environment.

However, studies have shown that plastic does not decompose; rather, it breaks into micro-plastic. A single pet

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3



The ubiquity of single-use plastic packages is a major environmental concern.

PHOTO: STAR



## Riyad sets stage for bowlers

MAZHAR UDDIN

Bangladesh's spinners struck twice late on the fourth day yesterday to keep the upper hand created by skipper Mahmudullah Riyad's long-awaited second Test hundred in the hosts' quest for a series-saving win in the second Test against Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Over the tea break, Bangladesh declared their second innings on 224 for six and set a huge target of 443 runs for Zimbabwe, who ended the day on 76 for two. The visitors, who have only ever won two away series in their

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Bangladesh skipper Mahmudullah Riyad jumps in the air and pumps his fist, celebrating his second ever Test century and first since 2010, during the fourth day of the second Test against Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 150 Rohingyas to return today

*Safety concerns remain*

MOKAMMEL SHUVO and MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT, from Cox's Bazar

The first batch of Rohingyas is all set to be sent back to Myanmar today amid reports that many of the refugees listed for return are hiding in fear of forcible repatriation.

It comes more than 14 months after the Rohingya influx began following a brutal military crackdown in Rakhine State. "One hundred and fifty Rohingyas of 30 families will be repatriated through the Ghundhum point of Bandarban tomorrow morning. They are fully prepared. We have made all arrangements," Bangladesh's Refugee, Rehabilitation and Relief Commissioner Mohammad Abul Kalam said yesterday.

The rest of the 2,260 returnees, verified by the Myanmar authorities, would be sent back in the next 15 days, he told reporters following a meeting with officials from the UN, law enforcement agencies and local administration at his office in Cox's Bazar.

The authorities have built two repatriation centres -- one at Kerantoli of Teknaf and the other at Ghundhum, a bordering area in Naikhyangchhari -- each having 33 semi pucca rooms. The refugees will be kept in the rooms before their return to their home in Rakhine.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) began interviewing the Rohingya families on Tuesday to determine whether they were ready to go back.

Asked, UNHCR spokesperson in Cox's Bazar, Firas Al-Khateeb, said they informed the agency's country office in Dhaka about their findings.

"The UNHCR country office will make a decision in this

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1