



### Cable makers hit by slowdown in construction

B1



### Russian forces attack power station in Kyiv

P5



### This award is truly exceptional for me: Pori Moni

P8



### Asia Cup T20 kicks off today in UAE

P10, 11

## Hopes run high as DU goes to vote today

ASIFUR RAHMAN and MAHATHIR MOHAMMAD

The much-anticipated Ducusu and hall union elections are set to be held today after a six-year pause, bringing renewed hope for campus democracy.

With nearly 40,000 registered voters and 471 candidates vying for 28 central posts, the stakes are high – not just for student leadership, but for the future of participatory politics at Dhaka University.

The DU campus, which had long been dominated by ruling party-backed student wings, has come alive in recent weeks with vibrant campaigning, creative leaflets, and intense debates among candidates pledging academic reforms and a safer, more inclusive environment.

Security has been tightened, with over 2,000 law enforcers deployed to ensure peaceful polling.

Voting will take place across eight centres on the campus – all outside dormitories for the first time.

A total of 39,775 voters are registered to cast their ballots in 810 booths. Among them, 20,873 are male and 18,902 female.

Each student will vote for 41 positions – 28 in Ducusu and 13 in hall unions. Besides 471 candidates for Ducusu, 1,035 are contesting 234 posts in 18 hall unions.

The last Ducusu polls were held on March 11, 2019,



An aerial view shows demonstrators gathered outside Nepal's Parliament during a protest in Kathmandu yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## 'Open fire or lose jobs'

### SI tells ICT-1 about superior command on Aug 5 last year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A police sub-inspector told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday that he and his colleagues were threatened with dismissal if they refused to open fire on protesters during the "March to Dhaka" programme at Chankharpuol on August 5 last year.

Testifying as a prosecution witness in a case against ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and two of her senior aides, SI Ashraful Islam alleged that Shah Alam Mohammad Akhtarul Islam, then additional deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Ramna Zone, personally ordered police to shoot the demonstrators and verbally abused officers who hesitated.

Former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and ex-IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, who has already pleaded guilty and turned an approver, are the other accused.

"ADC Akhtar told us, 'You take government salaries and rations – why won't you fire? If you don't, you'll lose your jobs,'" Ashraful said. He said he refrained

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### AT A GLANCE

#### DUCSU ELECTIONS

Total candidates in 28 posts **471**

VP candidate **45**

GS candidate **19**

AGS candidate **25**



Number of Polling Centres **8**

Total posts in 18 hall unions **234**

Contesting for hall unions **1,035**

Total Voters **39,775**

Male **20,873**

Female **18,902**

POLLING TIME 8:00AM TO 4:00PM

after 28 years, and were marred by intimidation and irregularities. Nurul Haq Nur, then a quota reform leader, was elected vice president, while Golam Rabbani of the now-banned Chhatra League became general secretary. Voter turnout that year was 59.5 percent.

As of yesterday, no major untoward incidents had been reported. The authorities said all-out measures were taken to hold the election in a festive atmosphere.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan told reporters, "We've reached the final stage of the process after crossing all hurdles ... The opportunity to create a new history is ahead of us."

Following last year's student-led July uprising, holding student union elections was one of the key demands. DU is the first major public university to hold polls after the movement.

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## Why is 'Gen Z' of Nepal 'protesting'?

REUTERS

At least 19 people died in Nepal yesterday and dozens more were injured as police fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse protesters who tried to break into parliament.

Thousands of young Nepali people, many in their 20s or even younger, got together to protest in the capital Kathmandu and other cities in the Himalayan country. Many of the protesters were students and joined the demonstrations in their school or college uniforms. The organisers called the protests "demonstrations by Gen Z".

Last week, Nepal's government blocked access to several social media platforms after the companies missed the deadline to register under new regulations, aimed at cracking down on misuse.

Nepal's government has said social media users

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## 19 killed as Nepal's youth demand change

### Police crackdown on protesters also injures 400 as they try to storm parliament complex

AGENCIES

Police clashed with young protesters yesterday in Kathmandu, killing at least 19 people as the unrest in the Himalayan country over the social media ban turned into a wider protest against endemic corruption.

Some protesters tried to storm the parliament complex by breaking through a barricade, a local official said, setting fire to an ambulance, and hurling objects at riot police.

Police responded with rubber bullets, tear gas, water cannon and baton charges.

Nepal's Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak resigned yesterday on "moral grounds". He tendered his resignation to Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli during a Cabinet meeting at the prime minister's residence in Baluwatar yesterday evening.

According to The Kathmandu Post, at least 400 people were injured in the clashes.

"The police have been firing indiscriminately," one protester told the ANI news agency. "(They) fired bullets which missed me but hit a friend who was standing behind me. He was hit in the hand."

Nepali media reported police used live fire against the protesters, a claim AFP could not immediately verify.

Young protesters demand an end to 'institutionalised' corruption

Curfew imposed near parliament, other key areas; army deployed

Home minister resigns on 'moral grounds'; UN calls for probe

"Sixteen people have sadly died," Shekhar Khanal, spokesman for the Kathmandu valley police, told AFP. "About a hundred are under treatment, including police."

However, a Reuters report put the death toll at 19.

The district administration imposed a curfew in several key areas of the city, including the parliament, the president's residence and Singha Durbar, which houses the prime minister's office.

Ekram Giri, a parliamentary spokesperson, said some protesters had entered the parliament premises but not the main building, SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## JULY CHARTER Commission to meet parties on implementation

### Meetings likely on Thursday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Consensus Commission is likely to hold a series of meetings with political parties on Thursday to discuss how to implement the July National Charter.

This will mark the commission's fourth round of consultations with political parties. In the first two phases, discussions focused on identifying key issues and building consensus. The third round was held after the draft of the July Charter was prepared.

Following a commission meeting yesterday, Vice President Professor Ali Riaz told The Daily Star that, as the charter has now been finalised, the commission will hold a series of meetings with political parties to discuss methods of implementation.

"The parties are not formally aware of what the experts have proposed or what each party has suggested. So the meetings are needed," he said.

He added, "Proposals made by the parties and the experts will be presented during the meetings. Based on these, the commission will advise on the most suitable method of implementing the July Charter."

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## Sometimes army gets called in too late

### Says army HQ about mob situation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The army yesterday said delays in its response are often unavoidable, as troops are called in only when police and other agencies struggle to contain law-and-order situations, by which time crucial minutes may already have been lost.

Col Shafiqul Islam, colonel staff at the Military Operations Directorate of Army Headquarters, made the remark when a reporter asked about the force's handling of mob violence.

Briefing journalists at the Officers' Mess in Dhaka Cantonment, he stressed that the army always responds once requested.

"The army is requested if police or other agencies fail to control a situation. By the time the request comes through and approval is obtained from headquarters, the

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Members of the DMP's K-9 Unit conduct security sweeps on the Dhaka University campus yesterday ahead of the Ducusu elections.

PHOTO: STAR

### Star INTERVIEW

#### GRADUATION FROM LDC

## 'We have 2.5 options to seek deferral'

### Debapriya says decision must rest on solid evidence, strong backing from dev partners

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Bangladesh should view its LDC exit not as a burden but as a milestone, an opportunity to advance long-delayed reforms for structural transformation of the economy, economist Debapriya Bhattacharya has said.

Asked what options Bangladesh has if it wants more time, Debapriya told The Daily Star in a recent interview that there are "two and a half" routes.

Debapriya, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), is an independent expert serving on the UN CDP. He is also the country rapporteur for Lao PDR.

This newspaper spoke to him amid local entrepreneurs' fear that their businesses will be severely affected as Bangladesh prepares to graduate from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) group in November 2026.

A group of businessmen is preparing to send letters to the chief adviser and the UN secretary-general, requesting

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