



## 5 hurt as cops disperse BCS protesters at Shahbagh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five people were injured yesterday as police baton-charged and used water cannons to disperse candidates of 47th BCS examination, demanding postponement of their written test, in the capital's Shahbagh area.

The clash ensued around 5:30pm when the protesters, who had been blocking one side of the road from the Faculty of Fine Art to the Shahbagh intersection since noon, attempted to break police barricades and march towards Jamuna, the residence of the chief adviser.

"We were preparing to march towards Jamuna. Police attacked us without any provocation. I was hit in the head," one protester told The Daily Star.

Khalid Monsur, OC of Shahbagh Police Station, said the protesters were still positioned in front of the Institute of Fine Arts (Charukola) as of 8:30pm.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Women activists from dozens of rights organisations stage a torch procession on Manik Mia Avenue in the capital yesterday afternoon to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Referendum to feature coloured ballot papers

### Expatriates can cast vote in both polls, referendum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Advisory Council yesterday approved the draft of the Referendum Ordinance, 2025, which includes a provision allowing expatriates to cast their votes in the referendum.

The decision was finalised at a meeting held at the office of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, who chaired the meeting.

The gazette of the ordinance will be issued within a day or two, said Law Adviser Asif Nazrul while briefing reporters after the meeting at the Foreign Service Academy.

For the first time, expatriates will have the opportunity to cast their votes in both the parliamentary elections and the referendum through postal ballots, said Election Commission Secretary Akhtar Ahmed.

Expatriates registering through the EC's app will receive ballot papers for both the parliamentary elections and the referendum in the same envelope; they will need to send the ballot papers back in the same envelope.

Two different coloured ballot papers will be used, and during counting, the ballots will be counted separately.

The referendum will be held on a single question, but it will have four parts pertaining to constitutional reforms.

For holding the referendum, a law is a must.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## Amid fire, comes an unnamed hero

### Teen saves wheelchair-bound neighbour as Korail slum burned

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

As a devastating fire swept through the capital's Korail slum last night, 45-year-old Bokul Begum was trapped alone in her small room.

Paraplegic and unable to move, she lay on her bed — terrified and helpless — while the flames closed in.

She screamed for help, but it vanished into the chaos. As she braced for the worst, a teenage neighbour burst through the smoke and appeared like a miracle.

"When the fire broke out, I panicked and started screaming. I didn't know what to do... I could only cry out for help," she told The Daily Star last night.

"But no one heard my cries. Everyone was rushing to escape, desperate to save their belongings. Amid that chaos, the boy from two homes down appeared out of nowhere... He carried me onto my wheelchair and pushed me through the smoke to safety."

Bokul recognised the boy but could not recall his name.

"The moments he gave to save me were moments he could have used to salvage his own

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Bokul Begum

## BNP eyes youth votes with pledge of one crore jobs

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP, in its election campaign, will pledge to create one crore jobs within 18 months if voted to power, along with a one-year allowance for educated unemployed youth.

According to sources, the party will run its campaign prioritising young voters.

However, catering to all segments of the population, the BNP, in its campaign, is also likely to highlight its plans to introduce family cards to provide food support, as well as farmers' cards, which will enable them to obtain seeds, fertilizer and other support, and healthcare cards, the sources added.

Pledges to ensuring safety, equal opportunity, and freedom for women and minority communities will also be a major focus, they added.

The campaign issues were discussed at a Standing Committee meeting at the party chairperson's Gulshan office on Monday night, where top leaders reviewed the party's likely campaign strategy. BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman joined the meeting virtually from London.

Talking to The Daily Star, a BNP Standing Committee member, who requested anonymity, said the party is trying to understand which messages and campaigning methods would best attract voters. To this end, the BNP

### KEY PLEDGES

- One-year allowance for educated unemployed youth
- Family, farmers' and healthcare cards
- Safety, freedom for women, minority communities
- Universal healthcare for all
- Planting 5cr trees; restoring waterbodies



has engaged several organisations to study voters' behaviour and provide guidance to grassroots leaders and activists, he added.

"Let your first vote be for the sheaf of paddy [BNP's electoral symbol]" is likely to be the party's slogan aimed at young voters, according to party insiders.

Sources said the BNP is preparing to centre its election campaign on seven major issues, taking its pledges directly to voters through a door-to-door campaign.

Party leaders said the focus areas are climate and environment protection, education and skill

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

## 11 Tangail BNP leaders submit their resignations

### Accuses Tangail-8 nominee of taking arbitrary decisions

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Eleven BNP leaders have tendered their resignations in protest, accusing the party's Tangail-8 (Sakhipur-Basail) nominee, Ahmed Azam Khan, of making arbitrary organisational decisions and attempting to rehabilitate Awami League activists.

Five of them posted their resignation letters on Facebook on Monday night, while another six did so yesterday.

In addition, more than two hundred union- and ward-level BNP leaders in Sakhipur upazila have also decided to resign on the same grounds, said Shahjahan Saju, the recently removed president of the upazila BNP.

The five leaders who tendered their resignation on Monday are Upazila BNP General Secretary and freedom fighter Abdul Based; Upazila BNP Vice

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## Gaza 'survival' is at stake: UN



PHOTO: REUTERS

AFP, Geneva

Israel's war in Gaza has ravaged the Palestinian territory's economy and is threatening its very survival, the United Nations warned yesterday, calling for "immediate and substantial" international intervention.

Rebuilding the Gaza Strip will cost more than \$70 billion and could take several decades, the UN Trade and Development agency (UNCTAD) said in a new report, warning that war and restrictions had triggered an "unprecedented collapse across the Palestinian economy".

"The military operations have significantly undermined every pillar of survival," from food to shelter to healthcare, "and plunged Gaza into a human-made abyss", it said.

"The sustained, systematic destruction casts significant doubt on the ability of Gaza to reconstitute itself as a liveable space and society."

Israel's assault on Gaza has killed more than 69,000 people, according to figures from the health ministry that the UN considers reliable.

The scale of destruction wrought on the territory has meanwhile "unleashed cascading crises, economic, humanitarian, environmental and social, propelling (it) from de-development to utter ruin", UNCTAD's report said.

## PURBACHAL PLOT SCAM Verdict in Hasina, Rehana, Tulip case on December 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The verdict of the graft case filed against 17 people, including deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her sister Sheikh Rehana and niece British MP Tulip Siddiq, will be delivered on December 1.

Judge Md Rabiul Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka set the date after hearing arguments from both prosecution and defence, said Belal Hossain, bench assistant of the court.

On November 23, the Special Judge's Court-5 of Dhaka fixed November 27 to deliver the verdicts in three other graft cases filed against 23 people, including Hasina, her daughter Saima Wazed Putul and son Sajeed Wazed Joy.

In addition, the trial of two other graft cases filed against 21 people, including Hasina, her nieces Azmina Siddiq and Tulip, and nephew Radwan Mujib Siddiq, is now pending at the Special Judge's Court-4, said the prosecution.

The Anti Corruption Commission — between January 12 to 14 — filed six separate cases with its Dhaka Integrated District Office-1 over alleged irregularities in the allocation of plots under the Purbachal New Town project.

The ACC alleged that Hasina, in collusion with senior Rajuk officials, unlawfully secured six plots. She was accused in all six cases filed in this regard.

On July 31, charges were framed against 29 people, including Hasina, Rehana, Joy, Putul, Bobby, Tulip and Azmina, in their respective cases.



Workers unload baskets of fish from trawlers hauling the day's catch from sea to shore. From all over the country, these workers travel to Dublar Char in the Sundarbans every year, where they spend six months catching fish and drying them into shutki, a local delicacy. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Woman, two children found dead in home Husband detained

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Police recovered the bodies of a woman and her two children in Bogura's Shajahanpur upazila yesterday.

The bodies were found inside their home in Khalisakandi village. The mother was found hanging from the ceiling, while the children were found on a bed with their throats slit, said Shafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shajahanpur Police Station.

The deceased are 25-year-old Sadia Akter and her two children, one a four-year-old and the other a two-year-old.

According to Sadia's in-laws, they repeatedly called out to her yesterday morning but got no response.

They later broke down the room door, found the three bodies and informed police. The OC said the husband has been detained for questioning. He reportedly slept in a separate room the previous night following an argument with his wife and claimed that Sadia took her own life after killing their children.

"The bodies were sent to a morgue for autopsy," the OC said. No case has been filed till filing of the report.