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At least 20 hurt in BNP-Jamaat campaign clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least 20 people were injured as BNP and Jamaat activists clashed over election campaigning at Char Gargari village in Shahpur union of Pabna's Ishwardi upazila yesterday.

Each side blamed the other for the attack. In protest, Jamaat men held a rally in the area last night.

Tension has been prevailing in Ishwardi as the two groups remained positioned against each other.

Police and locals said the clash broke out around 4:30pm when Jamaat-backed Pabna-4 candidate Abu Taleb Mondol went to Char Gargari for campaigning and BNP activists allegedly attacked them without warning, triggering an hour-long clash.

At least 20 people from both sides were injured, and seven were admitted to Ishwardi Upazila Health Complex.

Abu Taleb alleged that BNP men carried out the attack.

However, BNP-nominated candidate Habibur Rahman Habib told journalists that villagers chased the Jamaat men as they were

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Khaleda Zia shifted to the CCU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia was shifted to the coronary care unit (CCU) at the capital's Evercare Hospital yesterday, where she is being treated for lung and heart infections.

"Pneumonia and lung infection are still in a stable condition. She was mainly shifted to the CCU so that if any other parameter goes up or down, proper care can be taken immediately. After moving her to the CCU, her physical condition has remained stable," Dr Rafiqul Islam, health affairs secretary of the BNP, told this newspaper last night.

He said Khaleda is receiving treatment there for closer monitoring and observation. "Doctors and nurses are providing round-the-clock care."

Party sources said Khaleda is under the supervision of a medical board that includes both local and foreign specialists. Since her admission, she had been receiving treatment in a cabin.

Khaleda, 80, has long suffered from multiple health complications, including heart, liver and kidney

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After losing her home in the Korail slum fire, Minara Begum feeding bread to her grandchildren inside a makeshift shelter, stitched together with salvaged clothes, built exactly where their house once stood. With the children's mothers out working in people's homes, the family -- having lost everything -- is now trying to survive on whatever little they have left. The photo was taken yesterday.

KORAIL SLUM Piecing back life after fire

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MUNTAKIM SAAD

As the afternoon sun beat down on the charred remains of Korail yesterday, one of Dhaka's largest and most crowded slums, Shukur Ali sat quietly with his wife, children and grandson amid the dust and twisted iron sheets that once sheltered their home.

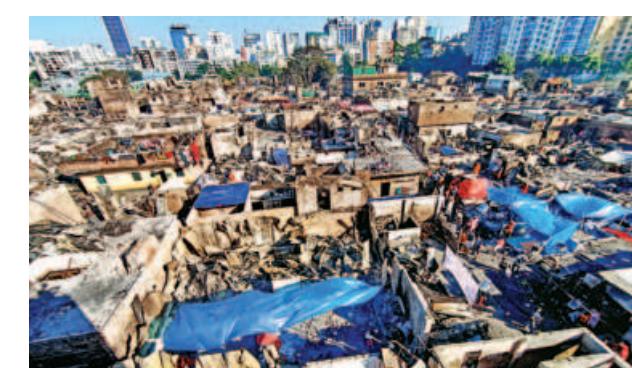
The fire that tore through the settlement on Tuesday left them homeless.

More than 1,300 homes were reduced to ashes, leaving nearly 6,000 residents without shelter in a slum that is home to nearly 1.50 lakh people. The flames devoured everything in their path: homes, shops and part of a mosque.

For Shukur Ali, the loss is deeply personal. "I came here in 1992 with my parents," he said. "My father built two rooms and set up a small shop. This land is all we have. If we lose it, where will we go in our old age?"

He spent yesterday afternoon clearing debris. He said debt of around Tk 60,000 from a previous fire in 2017 still burdens him.

Meanwhile, aid has been limited. BRAC provided a small cash grant and warm clothing, while neighbours shared meals as families coped without kitchens or clean water.



"How long can we live like this? How long can we depend on others?" he said.

Under the open sky, amid dust and scattered iron sheets, Korail's residents clung to the fragile hope of rebuilding lives the fire tried to erase.

Around 3:00pm, Anowara Begum, 40, sifted through the burnt remains of a shop beside her destroyed shanty. For the past two nights, she, her husband and children have slept on the street near the ruins, trying to protect what little they have left.

"Right now, there's so much burnt tin, wood and bamboo scattered everywhere. We haven't been able to clean it all yet," she said. The debris, she added, will take several more days to clear.

With the shop owner's permission, Anowara and her family are temporarily staying in the abandoned shop next to their destroyed home. Once the cleanup is complete, they hope to rebuild and move back.

Her son, Anwar Hossain, works as a daily labourer in Banani, and his earnings support the family.

About eight years ago, they moved into this slum. "We worked hard to build that one room," she said. "Now it's gone."

Along with their home, the fire destroyed years of savings and belongings. Though she escaped unharmed, Anowara lost everything. "I don't know where to find help or how to replace what I've lost," she said.

Since the fire, the family has relied on food from relief groups, but for how long remains uncertain.

Some residents were seen selling off scraps burnt in the fire to get immediate cash.

For three decades, Asiya Begum has lived in the slum, building four houses and a small shop. On the ground floor, she sold tea and cigarettes, supporting her family, while she and her husband lived in two of the houses and rented out the others.

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July martyrs, injured to get flats in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Housing and Public Works is set to undertake two projects to provide housing for families of the martyrs of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and the injured protesters.

Both projects will be implemented on land owned by the National Housing Authority in the Mirpur Housing Estate.

- 2,364 flats for martyrs, injured
- NHA projects to cost Tk 2,105cr
- Flats to be built in Mirpur by 2029

Under the plans, 804 flats will be built for the martyrs' families and 1,560 flats for families of the injured. The proposals may be placed before the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council next week.

The two projects have been estimated to cost Tk 761.16 crore and Tk 1,344 crore. Both will be fully government-funded and are expected to be completed by 2029.

These projects are being undertaken with the aim of providing dignified housing to the bereaved families of the fearless martyrs of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and to the disabled heroes, as a minimum

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THE FOREST FORAGER

A slender Northern Palm Squirrel nibbles on a fig as it rests on a tree branch along Chattogram city's CRB road. Found across South Asia in gardens, orchards and evergreen forests, it feeds on fruits, nuts, seeds and the occasional insect, helping disperse seeds of two to four young who venture out after a few weeks. Threatened mainly by habitat loss, this tiny forager remains a vital thread in the forest's tapestry.

Anisul-led JP faction moves to form new alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Party faction led by Anisul Islam Mahmud is likely to form a new political alliance, comprising several JP factions.

"Several other parties may also join us, as discussions are underway. But the Jatiya Party faction led by GM Quader will not be in the alliance," Presidium Member Masroor Mawla told The Daily Star.

Faction's Chairman Anisul said the name and details of the alliance will be announced within a week.

The factions led by Anwar Hossain Monju, Mostafa Jamal, and other political parties will join the new alliance, said Mujibul Haque Chunnu, the party's executive chairman. "Everything will be clear in the first week of December as talks are going on with like-minded parties."

In mid-July, leaders of four JP



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PHOTO: KOMOL DAS