



**Fire-fighters pour foam into a burning CNG-run bus at Zero Point in Dhaka yesterday afternoon. The passengers of this city bus managed to escape the blaze after they had forced the bus to stop when smoke was seen bel-lowing from the engine. The bus was apparently leaking gas as well.**

PHOTO:  
BANGLAR CHOKH

# West disappointed after Ukraine scraps EU deal

AFP, Kiev

Ukraine yesterday faced accusations from the West it had missed a historic opportunity and caved into Kremlin pressure after the government scrapped plans to sign a deal to deepen trade and political ties with the European Union.

Hundreds of pro-EU Ukrainians turned out late at night on Independence Square in central Kiev to protest the decision, with opposition leaders calling for a mass rally on Sunday which they hope will muster 100,000 people.

The government unexpectedly announced Thursday that it was halting all preparations to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union at a summit in Vilnius next week, a deal which would have marked a historic break from the Kremlin.

The announcement came after lawmakers failed to agree a bill that would have allowed jailed ex-premier Yulia Tymoshenko, the arch political foe of President Viktor Yanukovich, leave for treatment in Germany, a key condition set by EU leaders for the agreement.

"This is a missed opportunity," British Foreign Secretary William Hague said in a statement, while EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said it was a "disappointment" for both the EU and the people of Ukraine.

State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said: "We believe there was ample time to resolve all remaining obstacles to signing the association agreement in Vilnius with sufficient effort and commitment."

The Ukrainian government said that its

decision was forced by national security concerns, prompted by problems in trade with Russia.

The Kremlin, which wants Ukraine to join a Russia-led Customs Union, had threatened trade retaliation if Ukraine signed the deal. Yanukovich had made a trip to Moscow earlier this month for secret talks with President Vladimir Putin the substance of which has yet to be revealed.

The Association Agreement is seen as a first step to eventual EU membership and also came with a major free trade deal that would have made Ukraine's membership of the Customs Union impossible.

EU envoys Aleksander Kwasniewski and Pat Cox, who visited Ukraine more than two dozen times to secure the deal, expressed "deep disappointment" at the "unilateral" decision of the Ukrainian government.

"We take note... of the dramatically increased pressure from Russia in recent weeks," they said in a joint statement.

They warned that the "time-out formula" adopted by the Ukrainian government "is likely to last for a considerable time".

EU officials have repeatedly warned that failing to sign the agreement in Vilnius will close a window that may not open again for several years, with the EU Commission set to be renewed in 2014 and Ukraine facing presidential elections in 2015.

Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, who has been closely involved in moves to integrate Ukraine closer with the EU, was even more blunt, writing on Twitter: "Ukraine government suddenly bows deeply to the Kremlin."

# US urges global help for stricken Central Africa

AFP, Washington

The United States is calling for deeper international involvement to halt violence in Central African Republic, amid growing alarm that the impoverished nation is on the brink of a possible genocide.

US Secretary of State John Kerry on Wednesday unveiled \$40 million in new funding to help the country, with the bulk of the aid going to support the African Union-led peace-keeping mission known as MISCA.

"It's a very, very serious situation right now," a top State Department official told AFP, asking not to be named.

"It will require extensive, continued and deepened international commitment working with the CAR government to address the humanitarian crisis, to strength MISCA so that it can carry out its security mission, civil protection mission and lay the ground work for" elections set to take place in February 2015, the official added.

In the latest in a long line of rebellions and coups, the Seleka rebel coalition ousted president Francois Bozize in March and put the CAR's first Muslim leader, President Michel Djotodia, in power.

But the move has unleashed unprecedented sectarian bloodshed, with fighting between the mainly Muslim former rebels who seized power in March and militia groups set up to protect Christian communities, which make up about 80 percent of the population.

The unrest has displaced almost 400,000 of

the country's estimated 4.6 million people, left 2.3 million in need of assistance and some 1.1 million scrambling to find food, according to the latest UN figures.

France's Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said Thursday that the country was "on the verge of genocide," while a Kerry deputy told US lawmakers this week that it was in a "pre-genocidal" phase.

"The needs are so extensive, it's really hard to say one is greater than the others," the US official said in an interview.

"One area there's going to be a serious need in over the coming year is in food aid, and that's because the population has been so terrorized and traumatized by what's happening in the country, that it's had a serious impact on the planting season and necessarily that's going to cause greater food insecurity in the months ahead."

The US is supporting moves at the United Nations to boost an AU-led force to some 3,652 troops made up of soldiers from Chad, Cameroon, Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Equatorial Guinea with a contribution also expected from Burundi.

The UN Security Council plans to vote in early December on a resolution to allow CAR's neighbors, the African Union and France to intervene in the sprawling nation.

French President Francois Hollande said Paris was planning to "significantly increase" its contingent in the country, where it already has 400 soldiers in place to help protect the airport in Bangui and French nationals.

# Islamists reject Kerry charge they 'stole' Egypt revolt

AFP, Cairo

Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood yesterday dismissed comments by US Secretary of State John Kerry accusing them of stealing the revolution, saying Washington backed the ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi.

Unrest has spiked in Egypt since the military overthrew Morsi in July following popular protests against his one-year rule and accusations that he concentrated too much power in the hands of the Brotherhood.

Kerry had defended the army's action and Washington said Morsi had failed to live up to calls for an inclusive, transparent government based on democratic principles.

Morsi was Egypt's first freely elected president taking over from the military junta which

replaced veteran strongman Hosni Mubarak after he was ousted by massive protests in 2011.

But on Wednesday Kerry delivered his harshest assessment to date of Morsi and his Islamist backers saying the revolt "got stolen by the one single-most organised entity in the state, which was the Brotherhood".

The group's secretary general Mahmoud Hussein hit back saying the Brotherhood won parliamentary and presidential elections after Mubarak's ouster through "transparent" polls organised by the military which was ruling the country at the time and observed by former US president Jimmy Carter.

Hussein charged that the US administration "backed and participated in the coup" that toppled Morsi.

## Hopes in the hills

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occupied by majority Bengali speaking people and different government agencies.

Indigenous leaders and rights activists say, around 70 percent land disputes will remain unresolved or out of the CHT land commission's jurisdiction if the act is not amended properly.

Six commissions have been formed since the Land Disputes Resolution Commission Act was passed in 2001 but none of them were functional as they were not empowered enough to resolve the land disputes in the region.

The AL-led government took initiatives to amend the act only a few months back and prepared the draft of the CHT Land Disputes Resolution Commission Act (Amendment) Bill 2013 containing 13 points of amendment agreed upon by indigenous leaders and an inter-ministerial committee. On June 16, the land ministry placed the bill in the parliament and the speaker sought opinion from the parliamentary standing committee on the ministry within seven days, a deadline never kept.

In several statements, the International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission (CHTC) demanded that the government take the opportunity of fulfilling its own election pledge by implementing the peace accord.

However, the government turned a rather deaf ear to the demand and did not pass the bill and, thus, did not keep its promise.

## Pay commission

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On October 30, the finance minister had announced that they would form a permanent pay commission by November 15.

The last pay commission for government employees was formed in 2008 which took 14 months to submit its report.

## Nepal crisis deepens

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Emerging results suggest the Maoists have been routed at the polls, leading or winning in just 11 percent of all 240 directly elected seats, and trailing their two key opponents, the Unified Marxist-Leninist party and the Nepali Congress.

Counting is also underway for an additional 335 seats, which will be awarded via proportional representation.

The Kathmandu Post warned the Maoists that "disavowing the poll results is self-defeating".

The party's poor showing should be an occasion "for self-inspection to find out the reasons for its loss", the newspaper said in an editorial.

Senior leaders such as Prachanda and Hisila Yami, wife of former premier Baburam Bhattarai, both finished a distant third to successful Nepali Congress candidates in their Kathmandu constituencies.

The Maoists, who ended their "People's War" against the state in 2006, swept elections two years later, ending royal rule and ushering in a secular republic, with Prachanda becoming Nepal's first post-war prime minister.

Since then, a string of coalition governments have squabbled and failed to write a constitution, forcing the collapse of the first constituent assembly in May 2012.

## Maduro tries out new super powers

AFP, Caracas

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro exercised new emergency powers for the first time Thursday, signing decrees limiting business profit margins and tightening regulation of imports.

He acted as part of a so-called "economic war" against a crisis for which he blames the opposition "bourgeoisie" and imperialism.

Under new powers granted to Maduro on Tuesday, the two new laws aim to control prices and profits in the business sector and closely monitor imports and exports and hard currency that comes in from oil sales, Venezuela's main source of revenue.

Maduro's government says the business sector has been chalking up profit margins of up to 1,000 percent on imported goods.

The center-right opposition has called a rally for Saturday to protest the emergency powers granted to Maduro, the handpicked successor of the late populist president Hugo Chavez.

Venezuela's economic woes are marked by inflation running at 54 percent and shortages of basic goods, among other problems.

The opposition says the new powers are a tool granted to the government for electoral gain ahead of municipal elections on December 8.

These are seen as a test of popular sentiment toward Maduro, who took power after narrowly winning an April election weeks after Chavez died of cancer.

# Israel's opposition elects new leader

AFP, Tel Aviv

Israel's opposition Labour party yesterday announced that its members have elected a new leader -- former government minister Isaac Herzog -- seen as more open to joining the right-leaning ruling coalition.

Herzog defeated incumbent Shelly Yachimovich with 58.5 percent of the vote in Thursday's election among the party's some 55,000 members, official results showed.

Herzog's victory could affect the make-up of rightwing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ruling coalition, with the new Labour leader reportedly more favourable towards joining the government than his predecessor.

Earlier this month, Justice Minister Tzipi Livni, who is also Israel's chief negotiator with the Palestinians, urged Labour to join the coalition, as the government struggles with internal squabbles over the peace talks.

## Bangladesh urges global

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that the most vulnerable countries were expecting to take shape in the conference. But it failed because of disagreement of some developed nations like Australia, Canada and Japan.

Bangladeshi civil society climate alliance asked world leaders to listen to the science and reach an agreement to save the planet from possible climate catastrophe by reducing carbon emission.

The call came at a press conference at the Warsaw National Stadium on Thursday.

In a statement, Ahsan Uddin Ahmed, on the group's behalf, said by delaying the legally binding agreement by 2015 and a road map towards climate financing of \$100 billion by 2020, the developed countries were in fact giving death sentences to thousands of people

of the least developed countries.

Ziaul Haque Mukta of Oxfam Asia, who moderated the press conference, criticised the attitude of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) as they were ignoring the spirit of the Kyoto Protocol by refusing to reduce their emission level.

BRICS leaders said reducing their carbon emission would hurt their development. Because of their refusal, many developed countries spoke against a new legally binding climate treaty.

Abdul Matin of BAPA criticised the colonial attitude of the rich and developed countries for not listening to the logics and even the science.

Asaduzaman of BIDS mentioned that parties in climate conference were bypassing the agriculture and sea acidification issues.

## Country to stop on polls

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He said the opposition would tomorrow stage protest rallies in every thana, upazila and municipality areas of the country to press home its demand for holding the election under a non-party caretaker government.

The BNP spokesperson also said though Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia had urged the president to take steps to resolve the ongoing political crisis, he did nothing until now.

He alleged that the EC was working to ensure the Awami League's victory in the next election.

Fakhrul also termed the polls-time cabinet "illegal".

BNP Dhaka city unit convener Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Jamaat leaders Izzat Ullah and Abdullah Mohammad Taher, and Secretary General of Liberal Democratic Party Redwan Ahmed also spoke at the rally.

Meanwhile, in its reaction to the opposition's warning, the ruling Awami League said Fakhrul had issued the threat at a time when

the premier urged him to hold talks with his AL counterpart.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury told The Daily Star, "If the opposition tries to create any chaos in the name of agitation, law will take its own course."

She said the door for discussion was still open and that the next election would be held in participation of all parties.

**JAMAAT THREAT**

At the Suhrawardy Uddyan rally, Dhaka city Jamaat's Assistant Secretary Shafiqul Islam Masud threatened that if anything untoward happens over Quader Molla verdict, the 56 thousand square miles (entire Bangladesh) would be set on fire.

Referring to the recent arson and vandalism at Chittagong's Sitakunda, Jamaat leader Abdullah Mohammad Taher said, "Sitakunda is just an example."

The whole country will turn into Sitakunda if a one-sided election is held, he added.

## Crooked doc prevails

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launched a probe and found that the doctor who had been suspended for corruption related to issuing false certificates was back to his old tricks even though he was no longer an employee of DMCH, said Deputy Director of the hospital Mushfiqur Rahman.

Sources said a few hospital staff had helped Jahangir in his wrongdoings but the cohorts were yet to be identified. They brought Jahangir clients and provide him with letterheads and seals of DMCH, which he used to make the fake certificates.

After Jahangir was handed over to Shahbagh police, the DMCH authorities began doing

their paperwork to file a case against the suspended doctor.

But before they could file a case, Jahangir walked out of the police station unchallenged.

Officer-in-Charge (investigations) Abdul Jalil of Shahbagh Police Station said Jahangir was kept in the duty officer's room since none of the guards took him to be a criminal.

He said before the duty officer could take Jahangir into custody, the suspect escaped taking advantage of the crowd inside the station.

As of filing of this report at 9:00pm, Jahangir was still untraceable.

## ILO-backed inspection on

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said Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) yesterday.

It also urged its members to cooperate with the Buet teams during the inspection.

The university has signed an agreement with the ILO to assess about 200 factories within two months. The number will gradually increase.

Experts will assess factories that are not covered under the Accord on Fire and Building Safety, dominated by more than 100 buyers, mostly European, and the Alliance for

Bangladesh Worker Safety, a coalition of 26 brands, mostly American.

The Accord published a list of about 1,600 garment factories to be inspected by it while the Alliance will look into about 600 factories, though none has started the work. They will mostly inspect the factories that make their products.

A top official of BGMEA, the association for factory owners, said the Accord might start its inspection at the end of this month and the Alliance by the first week of next month.

## Monster blast in the space

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the big bang that created the universe, and no one was around to see that.

The blast was a gamma ray burst, an explosion that happens when a massive star dies, collapses into a brand-new black hole, creates a supernova and ejects energetic radiation that is as bright as can be as it travels across the universe at the speed of light.

Nasa telescopes in orbit have been seeing these types of bursts for more than 20 years, spotting one every couple of days. But this one was special. It set records, according to four studies published on Thursday in the journal

Science.

It flooded Nasa instruments with five times the energy of its nearest competitor, a blast in 1999, said University of Alabama at Huntsville astrophysicist Rob Preece, author of one of the studies.

It started with a star that has 20 to 30 times the mass of our sun, but is only a couple of times bigger in width, so it is incredibly dense.

One of the main reasons this was so bright was that relative to the thousands of other gamma ray bursts astronomers have seen, the monster was pretty close.

For scientists who look for gamma ray bursts, this was an extraordinary moment.

## Fourteen SMS

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Of the detainees, Rakesh Bhowmick and Sadia Sultana were held from Sheikh Borhanuddin Postgraduate College; Opu Chandra Shil, Atikur Rahman and Fahmida Zaman Jui from Government Teachers Training College; Golam Shahriar Shaon and Mehedi Hasan from Home Economics College; Mozammel Haque Mollah from Mohammadpur Preparatory Girls School, Basetul Hasan from Engineering University School and College, Jewel Rana from Willes Little Flower School and College, Saiful Islam from DU Institute of Information Technology, Amrita Sarkar from Agrani School

and College, Rezaur Rahman Rajib from Dhaka City College and ASM Rabbi Pathan from Siddheswari Girls' College.

According to a DU press release, 70,934 examinees sat for the admission test against 1,618 seats under the "Ka" (science faculty) unit this year.

DU Vice-chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique, pro-vice chancellors (academic) Nasreen Ahmad and Shahid Akhtar Hossain (administration) and science faculty Dean Yousuf Ali Mollah, also "Ka" unit admission test coordinator, among others, visited different examination centres.