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Lankans 'ready' for high-flying India



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Will our RMG workers get an acceptable living wage?



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Thousands in Gaza need medical aid: WHO



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Ravaging a forest for fish farming

BETTER PAY FOR RMG WORKERS

Protests rage on amid search for middle ground

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid worker protests in and around the capital for pay hikes, factory owners yesterday said they will come to a middle ground with labour rights representatives while deciding the minimum wage.

A week ago, garment manufacturers proposed Tk 10,400 in minimum wage against the workers' proposal for Tk 20,393.

At the moment, the minimum pay in the readymade garment sector is Tk 8,000, which was set five years ago.

Yesterday, factory owners also threatened to shut down their production units and withhold wages if the workers continued demonstrations while discussions were underway.

Briefing reporters after the fifth meeting of the Minimum Wage Board at its office in the capital, Board Chairman Liaquat Ali Molla said owners will move up from their proposed minimum wage of Tk 10,400, although he did not give a figure.

"The minimum wage board is a bargaining process. We will increase our proposed figure, the workers will decrease theirs, and together we will settle on a figure we both agree on," Siddiqui Rahman, representative of the factory owners, told The Daily Star.

At yesterday's meeting, workers and owners also agreed to eliminate the first and second grades of the wage structure, he said.

The new wage structure is expected to come into effect next month.

At a separate meeting yesterday, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) decided to close down factories in line with section 13(l) of the labour law if the owners cannot run their factories.

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Carrying sticks, garment workers block the Mirpur-10 intersection in the capital yesterday demanding better wages and justice for Tuesday's attacks on their fellow workers. Police are seen trying to pacify the demonstrators. The protesters stayed at the busy intersection blocking traffic for several hours.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Govt open to talks but without any condition

Says home minister after meeting with British envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan has said the government is open to dialogues if they are held as per the constitutional framework.

"The door is not closed. We will engage with those who would come. But it has to be unconditional... If someone proposes something that is outside the constitutional framework, it will not be accepted," he told reporters at the secretariat yesterday.

Asaduzzaman earlier held a courtesy meeting with the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Sarah Cook.

Asked about the discussion with the high commissioner, the home minister quoted the envoy as saying, "Dialogue is the

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COUNTRYWIDE BLOCKADE Arson, sporadic clashes continue

STAR REPORT

At least 11 vehicles were torched, and chases and counter-chases took place between police and BNP men in Dhaka and some other districts yesterday – the second day of the BNP-Jamaat's three-day nationwide blockade.

Four buses were set on fire in the Bhatara, Mugda, Kafrul, and Shyamoli areas of the capital, and another one was set ablaze in Dhaka's Savar.

In Bogura, BNP men blocked the Dhaka-Rangpur highway at Tinmaha for about two hours from 8:00am. Police later fired shots and tear gas to disperse the demonstrators. BNP activists blasted four crude bombs and also vandalised three trucks there, said witnesses.

BNP ward-level leader Ashique, 42, died of his injuries at a local hospital in Kishoreganj's Bajitpur on Tuesday night, hours after being injured by tear gas fired by police during a clash in Bhairab.

Ashique was a member of the BNP's Bhairab municipality ward-7 unit.

Yesterday, long-haul bus services remained mostly suspended across the country. However, some buses operated on local and regional routes.

While the blockade significantly reduced river traffic, train services remained almost normal.

More vehicles plied the streets of the capital yesterday compared to the previous day. Most of the offices and a few educational institutions were open.

Arsonists set fire to a bus in Karnaphuli, two trucks in Rangunia and Sitakunda of Chattogram, two trucks in Bogura, a bus in Gazipur, and a motorcycle Dinaipur's Parbatipur.

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Govt out to eliminate BNP Alleges Rizvi, says 2,563 BNP activists held since Oct 28

UNB, Dhaka

The BNP has alleged that the government has become desperate to eliminate it and other parties by indiscriminately arresting the opposition leaders and activists across the country.

Speaking at a virtual press briefing, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday said arresting party leaders and activists and placing them on remand are now one of the best weapons of the government to cling to power.

He said police along with the "ruling party cadres" attacked the pro-democratic opposition activists at different places across the country on the second day of the three-day nationwide blockade yesterday like they did on the first day.

"The government is also

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EC invites BNP, other parties to dialogue

Asks admin to be neutral in polls; CEC talks to CJ about working of judges during vacation

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and BAHARAM KHAN

The Election Commission has written to the BNP and other registered political parties, inviting them to take part in talks that will be held on November 4, said sources.

The commission will inform the parties about its election preparations and also listen to their recommendations, according to EC officials.

However, EC Secretary Jahangir Alam yesterday refused to make any comment when a reporter asked him whether the EC would wait if the BNP asks for some time as many of its leaders are in jail.

Also yesterday, the EC held a meeting with top officials from different ministries, divisions, and Bangladesh Bank.

At the meeting, it asked administration officials to stay above politics and act sincerely and professionally while on duty during the national election.

The EC also asked officials to stay alert and ensure proper security for the international observers.

Exams and evaluation of scripts in schools should be done by November 30, the Election Commission told the officials concerned.

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Hasina, Modi open 2 rail links, Rampal unit-2

Bangladesh PM says Indo-Bangla relations example for world; Modi says ties reaching new heights



BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the joint inauguration of three India-assisted development projects demonstrated a rare kind of friendship and cooperation between Dhaka and New Delhi.

She said Bangladesh and India will attain many successes in future through mutual cooperation, which will strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

Hasina made the remarks after jointly inaugurating three development projects with her Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, through videoconferencing. The two leaders joined the event from Dhaka and New Delhi.

The three projects are the Akhaura-Agartala cross-border rail link, the Khulna-Mongla Port rail line, and

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What will follow the fiasco?

MAZHAR UDDIN from Delhi

A legion of Bangladesh fans gathered at the Eden



Gardens in Kolkata in hopes of taking back something to cherish from an abysmal World Cup campaign but they ultimately left in agony on Tuesday.

While the Shakib Al Hasan-led side reached Delhi for their next game against Sri Lanka, most of the fans left for home from the city of joy with questions in mind.

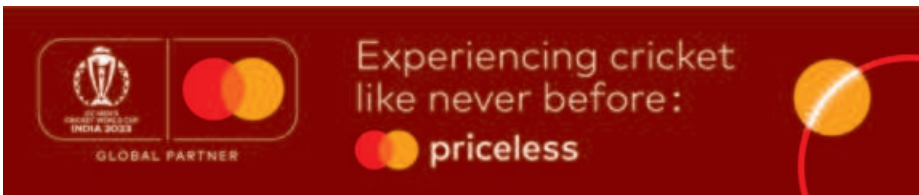
It's probably the men

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Quinton de Kock (R) celebrates with teammate Rassie van der Dussen after reaching a century against New Zealand – his fourth century in six matches in this World Cup – paving the way for a 190-run victory for South Africa at Pune's Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



Rampant South Africa blow away NZ

AFP, Pune

Quinton de Kock hit his fourth century of the World Cup while Rassie van der Dussen cracked his second as South Africa thrashed New Zealand by 190 runs yesterday to take a step closer to the semi-finals.

The Proteas' commanding 357-4 was built on De Kock's 114 and Van der Dussen's 133.

New Zealand, just days from only narrowly falling short chasing 389 in a five-run defeat by Australia, collapsed to 190 all out with more than 14 overs to spare in Pune.

Proteas paceman Marco Jansen finished with 3-31 with left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj claiming 4-46.

Victory left the Proteas, bidding for a first one-day international World Cup title, virtually assured of a semi-final spot.

But New Zealand's third loss of the tournament was a blow to their hopes of reaching the last four as they slipped to fourth in the table with eight points, two ahead of Pakistan as well as Afghanistan who have a game in hand.

Earlier, left-handed opener De Kock reached his 21st one-day international ton off 103 balls with eight fours and three sixes. He brought up his century with a huge six off Jimmy Neesham.

"It's nice that everything is coming together at an important time for us," said De Kock, who plans to quit ODI cricket after this tournament, at the innings break.

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