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Govt filing 'ghost cases' to cling to power

BNP leader Khasru tells court that places him on six-day remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leaders Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and Zahir Uddin Swapan were remanded for six days each yesterday while another one was sent to jail over violence on October 28 in the capital.

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said law enforcers arrested over 4,800 party leaders and activists across the country from October 24 till yesterday afternoon.

Of the arrestees, 292 were picked up in 24 hours preceding yesterday afternoon, Rizvi told a virtual press briefing.

He said nine BNP leaders and activists have been handed capital punishment and 111 others sentenced to different jail terms in 17 "false cases" since July this year.

Yesterday, a Dhaka court placed BNP standing committee member Khasru and party Media Cell Convenor Swapan on six-day remand each in the case filed over the murder of police constable Amirul Islam Parvez.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Zaki Al Farabi passed the order after police's Detective Branch Inspector Tarique Islam, also the investigation officer of the case, produced the two before the magistrate seeking 10-day remand for each.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

NATIONAL ELECTION
Commonwealth likely to send assessment team Nov 19
EC may invite observers from 43 countries

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

A pre election assessment mission from the Commonwealth will visit Dhaka from November 19-22, ahead of the 12th parliamentary election. In an email last week, the Commonwealth conveyed to the Chief Election Commissioner, Kazi Habibul Islam Awal, its desire to send the mission.

Confirming the matter to The Daily Star yesterday, the CEC said, "I have informed them that they are welcome."

The foreign and home ministries would soon be informed of the visit as well, the CEC added.

According to an EC official, the Commonwealth will decide on sending a full observer mission after assessing the findings of the pre-election mission.

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 56 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe, and the Pacific.

It sent a two-member senior staff team to observe the polls in 2018 and 2008, as well as some previous elections.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

67 eminent citizens call for Fakhrul's release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sixty seven eminent citizens yesterday urged the authorities to immediately release BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

"It appears that Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir is a firm believer in peaceful political activities. His role is important and well-known in ensuring that political rivalry remains peaceful. We believe his release can play a significant role in avoiding political conflicts and reinstating the practice of democratic norms," reads the statement.

"Today, the nation is looking forward to establishing a democratic political society. The prime minister herself has spoken of her commitment to this. The demand for national polls under a non-partisan government within three months is intensifying with time," it adds.

Leftist politician Badruddin Umar, former Bangladesh Bank governor Salehuddin Ahmed, former Jahangirnagar University professor and economist Anu Mohammad, former Dhaka University vice-chancellor Prof Anwarullah Chowdhury, former Dhaka University professors Mahbub Ullah, Ahmed Kamal and Saidur Rahman, and Emeritus Professor ATM Nurul Amin, were among the signatories to the statement.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Palestinians gather at the site of Israeli strikes on houses in Maghazi, in the central Gaza Strip, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

WORKERS' DEMO
Temporarily shut RMG factories to reopen today

STAR REPORT

After over a week of labour unrest, the garment factory owners are going to reopen nearly 500 production units today.

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) instructed the owners to reopen those after a meeting with Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan on Wednesday.

"I requested the factory owners through a letter to reopen the factories from Saturday," BGMEA President Faruque Hassan told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

But if any factory sees any unrest, its management has been asked to close it for an indefinite period under section 13(l) of the labour law, which states "no work, no pay".

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Regional war a possibility if Gaza carnage goes on

Warns Hezbollah, says US 'entirely responsible' for war; dozens killed as strikes hit entrance of Gaza's largest hospital, ambulance convoy

AGENCIES

The leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah yesterday warned the United States that if Israel did not stop its assault on Gaza then fighting on the Lebanese front could turn into a wider war.

The warning from Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah movement, came as the death toll in Gaza reached 9,227 including 3,826 children and 2,405 women in a scorched-earth bombing campaign by Israel.

"America is entirely responsible for the ongoing war on Gaza and its people, and Israel is simply a tool of execution," he said in a televised broadcast, accusing Washington of impeding "a ceasefire and the end of the aggression."

Nasrallah warned Israel against attacking Lebanon and said the possibility of "total war is realistic."

He added Hezbollah did not fear the US naval firepower Washington has assembled in the region since the crisis erupted.

Meanwhile, top US diplomat Antony Blinken met Israeli leaders yesterday to call for more to be done to protect Palestinian civilians.

After meeting Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Blinken said he

had discussed the idea of "humanitarian pauses" to secure the release of hostages and to allow aid to be distributed to Gaza's beleaguered population.

And he reiterated Washington's long-standing support for the eventual

could be no "temporary truce" in Gaza unless Hamas releases the estimated 241 Israeli and foreign hostages it took during its October 7 attacks.

Both Israel and the United States have previously ruled out a blanket ceasefire.

Israel, meanwhile, began expelling thousands of Palestinian workers back to Gaza, despite ongoing fighting and air strikes that have killed thousands of civilians in the territory.

Israeli forces have urged Gazans to head south from Gaza City towards the southern end of the territory to escape the worst of the fighting, but the Hamas-run health ministry said that 14 fleeing Palestinians, including women and children, had been killed making this journey.

Witnesses said the strike hit Gaza's coastal road, which the Israeli military has previously told civilians to take to travel south.

Another Israeli strike hit entrance to al Shifa Hospital in Gaza, the territory's largest hospital, and ambulances carrying wounded to the south, Gaza's health ministry says. Dozens of people are reported killed and wounded.

The health ministry said the ambulances were carrying about 15 to 20 critically wounded patients.

Al-Shifa Hospital has over 5,000 patients

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Gaza death toll crosses 9,200; two-thirds of them women and children

Blinken says 'only way' for Israel security is Palestinian state

Netanyahu says no 'temporary truce' in Gaza without hostage release

Israel sends thousands of Palestinian workers back to Gaza

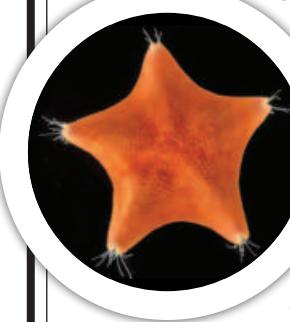
Raids kill 8 Palestinians in West Bank

recognition of a Palestinian state: "Two states for two peoples. Again, that is the only way to ensure lasting security for a Jewish and democratic Israel."

Netanyahu, however, warned that there

Starfish bodies aren't bodies at all

CNN ONLINE



The heads of most animals are easily identifiable, but scientists haven't been able to say the same for sea stars until now.

A starfish has five identical arms with a layer of "tube feet" beneath them that can help the marine creature move along the seafloor, causing naturalists to puzzle over whether sea stars have defined front and back ends -- and if they have heads at all.

But new genetic research suggests the opposite -- that sea stars are largely heads that lack torsos or tails and likely lost those features evolutionarily over time.

The researchers said the bizarre fossils of sea star ancestors, which appeared to have a kind of torso, make a lot more sense in evolutionary terms in light of the new findings.

The findings were published in the journal Nature recently.

"It's as if the sea star is completely missing a trunk, and is best described as just a head crawling along the seafloor," said lead study author Laurent Formery, postdoctoral scholar at Stanford University and the University of California, Berkeley, in a statement. "It's not at all what scientists have assumed about these animals."

The revelations, made possible by new methods of genetic sequencing, could help answer some of the biggest remaining questions about echinoderms, including their shared ancestry with humans and other animals that look nothing like them.



Traders sort out hilsa at the wholesale fish market on Barishal city's Port Road yesterday morning, hours after a 22-day ban on fishing and trading of hilsa ended on Thursday. The national fish was sold for Tk 14,000 to Tk 55,000 per maund, depending on size and quality.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Russian drones hit Ukraine's east, south

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russia launched a massive drone attack early yesterday, hitting critical infrastructure in the west and south of Ukraine and destroying private houses and commercial buildings in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city, officials said.

The air force said it shot down 24 "Shahed" drones out of 40 launched by Russia, the biggest drone attack in weeks to target Kharkiv in the northeast, Odessa and Kherson in the south and the region of Lviv on Ukraine's border with Poland in the west.

One X-59 missile was also shot down, the air force said.

"We realize that as winter approaches, Russian terrorists will try to do more damage. We will respond to the enemy," President Volodymyr Zelensky said of the attack, adding that air defences had been active in 10 different regions.

Officials say Ukraine is bracing for a second winter of Russian air strikes on the energy system, which they warn is more vulnerable than it was last year as it has less excess capacity and little in the way of spare equipment.

The air force said the latest drones were launched in several waves and flew to different regions in small groups. Air alerts in some regions lasted for several hours during the night.