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DEMO FOR BETTER WAGE

160 RMG units
shut as workers,
cops clash

10 arrested; US labour dept calls for probe
into 2 workers' deaths in police firing

STAR REPORT

Police and protesting garment workers clashed again in Gazipur and Ashulia while over 160 factories were shuttered yesterday.

The workers, who have been demonstrating for better wages, also demand justice for the two fellow workers shot dead recently as police used firearms to disperse protesters.

Meanwhile, the US Department of Labor condemned the alleged police shootings and urged the Bangladesh government to “end the violent crackdown on workers and conduct a full investigation” of police involvement in the killings.

Amnesty International also called upon the Bangladesh authority to “end its violent repression of workers’ right to protest, and conduct an immediate investigation into these deaths”.

The workers have been demonstrating as they reject the new minimum wage of Tk 12,500 set by a wage board and demand at least Tk 23,000 a month.

Rab in a message sent to reporters last night said it detained 10 “criminals” on charges of blocking roads.

Around 9:30am yesterday, several hundred workers from different

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‘VIOLATION OF
LABOUR LAW’

Prof Yunus
pleads not
guilty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus told a Dhaka court yesterday that he was innocent after the judge read out the charges in a labour law violation case.

Yunus also submitted a statement before the court.

Sheikh Merina Sultana, chairman of the Third Labour Court of Dhaka, then set November 16 for arguments in the case, Khaja Tanvir Ahmed, a defence lawyer, told The Daily Star.

Prof Yunus, also chairman of Grameen Telecom, and its top officials – Ashraful Hassan,

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48-HOUR BLOCKADE

7 more vehicles
torched, 365 BNP
activists detained

STAR REPORT

Over 350 people were arrested, 13 more cases filed and seven vehicles set on fire yesterday, with the 48-hour nationwide blockade, called by BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, ending at 6:00am today.

However, no major clashes were reported anywhere in the country.

Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, senior joint secretary general of BNP, at a virtual press conference yesterday said that since October 28, law enforcers have arrested 9,831 party leaders and activists, including 365 yesterday.

With the 13 cases filed yesterday, the total number since October 28 stands at 199.

On October 28, BNP held a mass rally near the party's Nayapaltan headquarters, which was later foiled amid clashes between party workers and law enforcers.

Meanwhile, seven vehicles, including five passenger buses, were set ablaze across the country yesterday.

According to the fire service control room, five buses were set on fire in Dhaka from 5:00am to 11:50pm, a covered van was set ablaze in Gazipur's Sreepur around 1:45pm, and a truck was torched in Noakhali around 2:00pm yesterday.

Since October 28 till yesterday, 92 vehicles were torched and 200 vandalised during the hartal, blockade and rallies by BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, Khandaker Enayet Ullah, general secretary of Dhaka Road Transport Owners Association, said in a press release.

The statement came before a bus was torched around 11:50 last night.

Enayet congratulated the transport workers for what

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Blinken, Austin
meet Indian
counterparts
today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian defence and external affairs ministers will meet their US counterparts in New Delhi today to discuss bilateral and regional issues.

Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister for External Affairs S Jaishankar will meet US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin at the Fifth India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue.

US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Donald Lu will also be attending the meeting that is considered important for Bangladesh as it is a close neighbour of India, which is going to polls soon.

“The 2+2 will enable a high level review of progress being made in cross-cutting aspects of defence and security cooperation, technology value chain collaborations and people-to-people ties,” according to a statement of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.

50,000 Gazans flee to
south in a single day

Many pack hospitals in the north as fierce street-by-street combat rages in Gaza City

AGENCIES

Israeli forces fought Hamas fighters among ruined buildings in the north of the Gaza Strip yesterday, inching their way closer to two big hospitals as the plight of civilians in the besieged Palestinian territory worsened.

Thousands more Palestinians were fleeing from the embattled north to the south along a perilous frontline path after Israel told them to evacuate, residents say.

But many are staying in the north, packed into the Al Shifa Hospital and al Quds Hospital as ground battles rage around them and more Israeli air strikes rain down from above.

Israel says its Hamas foes have command centres embedded in the hospitals.

In Doha, the heads of the CIA and Israel's Mossad intelligence agency met with the prime minister of Qatar to discuss a possible deal for hostage releases and a pause in fighting, a source said. There were no details on how the talks went. Qatar has served as a mediator with Hamas in the past.

In Paris, officials from about 80 countries

- Gaza death toll hits 10,812; 26,905 wounded
- Aid conference presses for ceasefire
- Mossad, CIA chiefs meet Qatar PM on hostage deal
- 10 Palestinians killed in West Bank

and organisations were meeting to coordinate humanitarian aid to Gaza and find ways to help wounded civilians escape the siege, now in its second month.

“Without a ceasefire, lifting of siege and indiscriminate bombing and warfare, the haemorrhage of human lives will continue,” said Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, calling Israel's actions collective punishment.

The United Nations and the International Red Cross also called for a ceasefire. Israel and its main backer the United States say a full ceasefire would benefit Hamas, but limited pauses are possible.

Israel unleashed its assault on Gaza in response to a cross-border Hamas raid on southern Israel on Oct 7, killing 1400 people. Hamas also took about 240 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

But Israel's retaliation in the Hamas-ruled enclave has caused great concern as a humanitarian catastrophe has unfolded.

China for
Bangladesh
polls as per
constitution

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

China wants Bangladesh's elections to be held as per the constitution, and the relevant parties resolve their differences and maintain political and social stability, said Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen.

He said elections are internal affairs of Bangladesh and China will not interfere in the matter. It will continue its cooperation with Bangladesh.

Wen was addressing an event titled “BRI@10: Ushering in Next Golden Decade” at a city hotel jointly organised by the Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh, (DCAAB) and the Chinese embassy yesterday.

“Elections in all countries are internal and our policy is very clear. We hope the elections will be conducted as per the constitution, and after the elections, there will be stability, life will return to normal and our cooperation will continue,” he said.

“China sincerely hopes that all stakeholders in Bangladesh would take the fundamental interests of the people into full consideration, properly resolve their differences, and jointly maintain political and social stability.”

Asked about dialogue between political parties for resolving the current

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BUSINESS

‘Bangladesh
vulnerable to
BoP crisis’

Bangladesh's balance of payments faces moderate risk among four South Asian countries owing to a drastic fall in foreign currency reserves, according to global credit ratings agency Moody's Investors Service.

“Bangladesh has moderate susceptibility to balance of payments crises,” said the American firm in a report. Pakistan and Sri Lanka are the most vulnerable to BoP crises among the four South Asian countries, including India, the report said.

STORY ON B1



PHOTO: MOHAMMAD RIDWANUR RAHMAN

SPOT THE SPOTTED ... A couple of spotted owlets share a loving moment in the capital's Botanical Garden. Native to many South Asian countries, including Bangladesh, this bird prefers open habitats, including cities, but tends to avoid dense forests and wetter regions. Due to its diet – small mammals, rodents, birds, reptiles and insects – it's known as “the farmer's friend” as it helps keep pests away from farmlands. Spotted owlets are nocturnal and sit-and-wait predators, meaning they wait for the perfect opportunity to swoop on their prey. Though they play a significant role in the food chain of old-growth forests, habitat loss due to deforestation and timber harvesting has caused their global numbers to decline. Thus, the spotted owlet has been listed in the “near threatened” category of the IUCN's Red List.

Scientists detect
oxygen in noxious
atmosphere of Venus

REUTERS, Washington

Oxygen accounts for about 21 percent of Earth's air, with the rest of our atmosphere primarily nitrogen. And most living things - including people, as we well know - need oxygen to survive.

Earth's planetary neighbor Venus offers quite a different story. Its thick and noxious atmosphere is dominated by carbon dioxide - 96.5 percent - with lesser amounts of nitrogen and trace gases. Oxygen is nearly absent.

In fact, with Venus getting far less scientific attention than other planets such as Mars, the direct detection of its oxygen has remained difficult.

Using an instrument aboard the SOFIA airborne observatory - a Boeing 747SP aircraft modified to carry an infrared telescope in a joint project between Nasa and the German Aerospace Center - scientists have now detected atomic oxygen in a thin layer sandwiched between two other layers of the Venusian atmosphere.

They noted that this atomic oxygen, which consists of a single oxygen atom, differs from molecular oxygen, which consists of two oxygen atoms and is breathable.