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SHAH CEMENT

Mediate in conflict

Ukraine leader calls on Pope; more bombs hit besieged Mariupol

AGENCIES

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday called on Pope Francis to mediate in his country's conflict with Russia to help alleviate human suffering, nearly one month into Moscow's invasion.

Zelensky said he had held a telephone call with the Pope and that he had "told His Holiness about the difficult humanitarian situation and the blocking of rescue corridors by Russian troops."

Negotiators from Moscow and Kyiv have held ongoing talks aimed at ending nearly four weeks of fierce fighting, but have failed to announce any progress so far.

In a video address to the Italian parliament yesterday, Zelensky said there was "nothing left" of the city of Mariupol after weeks of Russian bombardment.

Two "super powerful bombs" slammed into the city, Mariupol local authorities said yesterday, without giving an immediate toll.

US President Joe Biden warned that Putin was considering using chemical and biological weapons in Ukraine as he held talks with European leaders on Monday on what he called Moscow's increasingly "brutal tactics".

Ukraine's defence ministry, meanwhile, claimed that they retook Kyiv suburb of Makariv early yesterday after a fierce battle.

The regained territory allowed Ukrainian forces to retake control of a key highway and block Russian troops from surrounding Kyiv from the northwest, reports AFP.



Women from Kharkiv are reunited with their friend from Chernihiv in Ukraine after fleeing to Romania, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, at the border crossing in Siret, Romania yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Homes for all homeless soon

PM promises to materialise Bangabandhu's dream

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed firm optimism that another dream of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would also be materialised soon by providing houses to all homeless people.

The PM was addressing the Ecnec (Executive Committee of the National Economic Council) meeting held at the NEC at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the

capital through a video conference from the Gono Bhaban.

She said reaching electricity to every house in the country has been a landmark achievement of her government.

She also said that by this achievement the government has been able to materialise a dream of the Father of the Nation.

She extended thanks to all concerned who worked hard

for reaching the target of full electrification of the country.

In this regard, Hasina pointed out the steps of her government to make the power sector open for the private initiative during its earlier 1996-2001 term.

She said that 450MW Meghna Ghat and 360MW Haripur Power plants were built with foreign investment under the private initiative for the first

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The bodies were charred beyond recognition.

7 die as dozen houses torched in West Bengal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

In a suspected case of an intra-party feud, miscreants set on fire about a dozen houses at a village in West Bengal's Birbhum district leaving at least seven people dead, police and fire brigade officials said yesterday.

The houses at Bogtui village were set on fire hours after Bhadu Sheikh, the deputy chief of ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) controlled Barshali gram panchayat, was killed in a bomb attack on Monday, police said. Sheikh was a resident of Bogtui.

Four masked men on two separate motorcycles attacked Sheikh, 38, with crude bombs on Monday, police sources said quoting eyewitnesses. He was brought dead at a local hospital.

However, fire brigade officials said ten bodies were recovered from some houses and seven of them from a single house. The bodies were charred beyond recognition, they added.

Locals alleged the houses were set afire during attacks by members of a faction of TMC.

Anubrata Mondal, the local strongman and TMC's district unit president, denied allegations of infighting and retaliatory attacks.

"The houses caught fire because of a short circuit -- there was no violence last night," Mondal said.

Fire brigade personnel, who did not want to be identified, said they found at least 10 houses on fire.

Only a forensic examination can ascertain the cause of the fire, said Nagendra Nath Tripathi, the district police superintendent.

"Seven bodies were found from one house. These have been sent for post mortem. I cannot say anything more before the matter is investigated," he added.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

With her mother busy hawking fruits around, a baby sleeps on the central reservation of a road in the capital's Science Laboratory intersection. She is on her own for long hours every day as her mother has to work to earn a living. The child could roll over in her sleep and fall on the fast lane of the street. The photo was taken recently.

LAUNCH CAPSIZE 3 more bodies recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Three more bodies, including that of a toddler, were recovered yesterday, taking the death toll of Sunday's launch accident on the Shitalakkhya to 10.

The authorities suspended rescue operations in the evening, saying no one else was missing.

The three deceased are Arohi Barman, Rajbongshi, 3, Abdullah Al Jaber, 30, and Muslem Uddin Hatem, 55, said Abdullah Al Arefin, deputy assistant director of local Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Firefighters recovered the floating body of Jaber near the 3rd Shitalakkhya bridge in Koylaghat area of Narayanganj Sadar upazila around 8:00am. He was a resident of the capital's Demra area.

Locals recovered the body of three-year-old Arohi, daughter of Joy Barman of Ispahairchar area of Munshiganj, from the bank of the river in Narayanganj's Bandar area around 10:30am.

Around 4:00pm, fire service members recovered the floating body of Hatem, a resident of Munshiganj's Jugnighat area, from the Shitalakkhya in Muktapur area of the district.

Tigers hoping for Centurion repeat

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will go into the third and final ODI against South Africa today at Centurion looking to make history by winning their first-ever ODI series in South African soil.

Bangladesh won the first ODI by 38 runs at the same ground before succumbing to a seven-wicket defeat in the second ODI at the Wanderers to leave the series poised at 1-1.

The Tigers will be bolstered by the fact that ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan decided to remain with the side and play the third ODI despite a number of his family members facing health complications back home.

Spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz talked to the media yesterday and said that the Tigers were looking to keep supporting Shakib through the turmoil. The premier all-rounder's availability for the series had been in focus before the series after he admitted to not feeling mentally or physically prepared for international cricket.

However, the all-rounder later informed that he was



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Powering a nation

Our heartiest congratulations to Bangladesh-China Power Company (Pvt) Limited and all related stakeholders for achieving this momentous milestone – completing and commissioning the largest power project of the country, the 1,320 MW Payra ultra super critical power plant. Bangladesh has become the first South Asian nation to achieve 100% electrification, and this milestone was a key enabler in this incredible achievement. Standard Chartered Bank Bangladesh is proud to be associated with this landmark project as Account Bank and Security Agent.

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