RUSSIAN INVASION Nato vows to modernise Ukraine's military AGENCIES

Nato yesterday branded Russia the most "direct threat" to allied security after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and vowed to modernise the beleaguered Ukrainian military, saying it stood four-square with Kyiv in "the heroic defence of their country".

Completing a summit dominated by the geopolitical upheaval caused by the invasion, Nato formally invited Sweden and Finland to join the alliance and pledged to reinforce combat-ready and rapid-reaction forces on its eastern flank, closest to Russia.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Nato's expansion was "destabilising" and would not boost its members' security.

President Joe Biden announced additional US land, air and sea deployments across Europe, including a permanent army headquarters with accompanying battalion in Poland, the first full-time US deployment on Nato's eastern fringes.

As Western leaders met in Madrid, in Ukraine officials complained that Russian missiles had hit civilian housing and businesses in and around the cities of Dnipro, Mykolaiv and Kharkiv, leaving at least seven dead and 14 wounded, reports

Russian said it had inflicted severe casualties on Ukrainian troops defending the town of Lysychansk, in the eastern Donbas region, and said the Kharkiv attack had hit Ukrainian command centres and a training base for foreign "mercenaries".

Britain's Ministry of Defence said Russia was likely to keep making major strikes in an effort to hamper Ukrainian resupplies to frontlines, casualties were likely.



Two Indian fishing trawlers anchored at Kheya Ghat in Mongla yesterday. Bangladesh Navy seized eight Indian trawlers and detained 135 crew members from the Bay of Bengal on Monday night. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Petrobangla has to return Tk 12,227cr

BERC says in public hearing verdict; the state-owned oil company took the money from security, development funds

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission in the verdict of a public hearing has ordered the Petrobangla to return Tk 12,227 crore taken from its security and development funds.

The state-owned oil company took Tk 9,227 crore from its Energy Security Fund to import liquefied natural gas from the international market. It also deposited in the exchequer Tk 3,000 crore from the Gas Development Fund as surplus money.

The public hearing on gas price adjustment was held on March 21-24 where a consumer rights body, energy experts and political leaders demanded refund of the money. They said it is a misuse of public money as it is not the income of Petrobangla.

The verdict was released on Monday. Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) representative Prof M Shamsul Alam at the hearing said the funds operated by the Petrobangla without any concern of BERC is a "conflict of interest".

separately how much gas they imported

from the spot market and how much under long-term agreements. "With the gap between the figures, it created the scope of misappropriation of the money," he added.

But the Petrobangla representative didn't agree with the arguments. AKM Benjamin Riazi, director (finance) of the company, claimed they had no surplus money for the LNG import purpose.

However, the BERC's Technical Evaluation Committee found that from August 2018 to June 2021, Petrobangla's expenditure for LNG import stood at Tk 47,214 crore while it generated Tk 49,752 crore for this purpose, leaving a surplus of Tk 2,538 crore.

According to the verdict, Petrobangla in fiscal 2019-20 and 2020-21 imported 558 mmcfd and 589 mmcfd (million cubic feet daily) of gas on an average respectively. The import estimation was 850 mmcfd in the 2019 gas pricing order of BERC.

The commission said Petrobangla also imported LNG at less than the projected cost, and the total distribution cost at consumer level decreased by Tk 7,284

crore and Tk 7,648 crore respectively. "Compared to the LNG import cost

till June 30, 2021, the Petrobangla's LNG charges and related income were higher and that's why it should return the money taken from the Energy Security Fund," said the order.

Besides, the BERC ordered refunding the Gas Development Fund's Tk 3,000 crore, which was deposited with the government treasury as surplus money of Petrobangla. The return has to be with

The company took Tk 12,227 crore from the two funds since 2018 till June 30, 2021. In January 2020, parliament passed the Deposit of Surplus Funds of Autonomous, Semi-Autonomous, State-Owned, and Public Non-Financial Corporations into

the Government Treasury Act. Under this act, Petrobangla deposited Tk 5,871 crore with the government treasury. Of that amount, Tk 3,000 crore was collected from the consumers for GDF. The fund was created by an order of

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Eid-ul-Azha: Committee to fix date today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee is going to be held today to fix the date of Eid-ul-Azha.

It will be held at the Islamic Foundation office at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at 7:15pm with State Minister for Religious Affairs Faridul Haque Khan in the chair, said a press release of Islamic Foundation.

The committee will announce the date of Eidul-Azha after reviewing information about the sighting of the Zilhajj moon.

If anyone sees the moon anywhere in Bangladesh sky, they have been requested to inform the committee over the following phone

The telephone numbers are: 02-223381725, 02-41050912, 02-41050916 and 02-41050917, while the fax numbers are: 02-223383397 and 02-9555951.

Youth held for 'hurting religious sentiment'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A Khulna court yesterday placed a youth on a two-day remand for allegedly hurting religious sentiment and inciting public anger.
Utpal Mandal, 29, was sued in a case filed by police under the Penal Code, said Mahbub

Hossain, superintendent of Khulna police. The accused made a "provocative" comment

on one of the Facebook posts of Islamic preacher Mizanur Rahman Azhari, he said. On Tuesday, some youths vandalised Utpal's

house after he made the comment. Locals resisted the attackers and informed police, said Shafiqul Islam Sardar, a union parishad member. On information, police detained five

men, including Utpal, and filed a case in this connection.
Later, the four attackers were released through

arbitration but Utpal was shown arrested in the case. Doctor, who set herself on fire, dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A female doctor, who set herself on fire following a family feud on Friday, died at a city hospital yesterday.

Adity Sarker, 38, breathed her last around 10:00am at Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, said Samanta Lal Sen, chief national coordinator for plastic surgery and burn projects in Bangladesh.

She was a doctor at the pediatric department of Mitford Hospital in Dhaka. She was being treated at the burn institute's intensive care unit with 50 percent burns.

Kabir Hossain Hawlader, officer-in-charge of Wari Police Station, said the woman in her dying declaration stated that she did not blame anyone for the incident.

Body of newborn girl found in Dinaipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The body of a newborn girl was found in Dinajpur's Hakimpur upazila yesterday. The body was wrapped in a rag and could not be identified immediately, said police.

Abu Sayem, officer-in-charge of Hakimpur Police Station, said they recovered the body on information, it was sent to M Abdur Ranim Medical College Hospital for autopsy, he added.

Fresh floods loom as rivers keep swelling

The Dharla was flowing 23cm above the danger level at Shimulbari point in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila yesterday morning, while the Teesta was flowing just 7cm below the danger level at Teesta Barrage point, according to the local WDB office.

Low-lying villages of Mogholhat, Kulaghat and Barabari unions in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila have been inundated again due to the recent rise in water level, said locals.

"In the first phase, we had to leave our house and stay at a flood shelter for 10 days. We returned home on June 22 as the water had receded.

"Everyone has to increase

has to be economical.

Everyone has to protect

something by practising

government

discouraging the import

of luxurious goods, Hasina

urged all not to import

goods which are not very

She said the government

would take proper steps

to reduce dependency on

imported goods. In this

context, she urged all to

of local products and

government has been

able to placesuch a large

budget of Tk 6,78,064

crore despite an adverse

that

themselves by

austerity," she said.

essential.

services.

their own savings; everyone

under around three feet of water today [yesterday]," said Sakhina Bewa, 60, a resident of Char Falimari village in Mogholhat union.

"If water continues rising, we will have to leave the shelter," she told The Daily Star yesterday.

house "Our the first phase and we are yet to repair it. The flood become very difficult for us to survive," said Nazrul Islam, 65, a farmer of Char Shiberkuti village at Kulaghat union.

Rahman, chairman of Mogholhat Union Parishad.

started swelling again since vesterday morning.

"The water level was our house again and go to receding for the last four days. But it has started rising again today [yesterday] due to excessive rain upstream. damaged by flooding in If the rains continue, flood may hit the region again," said Md Nasir Uddin, subhas hit us again and it has divisional engineer of WDB in Sirajganj.

> Flood-hit people are in fear of further hardship.

"We have been stuck in floodwater for the last

River erosion is also couple of weeks. We have

But our house has gone taking a serious toll on come to a flood shelter and some areas, said Habibur then felt relief as we saw water receding. That relief was short-lived ... we are In Sirajganj, the Jamuna worried again as the water is rising once more. We don't know when we will be able to return home," said Sharif Hossain, a resident of Choto Koyra village in Sirajganj

> Chowdhury, Dwoha Mintu Deshwara, S Dilip Roy and Ahmed Humayun Kabir Topu contributed to this report]

Sadar upazila.

undisclosed assets stashed away abroad looks handy on paper.

"If the NBR can pursue it in good faith and set examples in a clean way, it would be beneficial in cracking down on tax evasion and money laundering," said Mansur, also the chairman of Brac

The amended finance bill accommodated another feedback, and this time it was from the business community.

the In proposed finance bill placed in the

Businesses found the

parliament on June 9, the corporate tax for non-listed companies was slashed by 2.5 percentage points to 27.5 percent provided the banking system is used to accept all income and receipts as well as for expenses and investments of more than Tk 12 lakh.

Tk 12 lakh threshold impracticable and hence to 500 percent.

corporate tax would evade

the benefit of the reduced

Govt takes aim at wealth stashed abroad

Now, in the amended finance bill, the ceiling for cash transactions has been raised from Tk 12 lakh to Tk 36 lakh.

In another amendment, the supplementary duty of cars of 2,001-3,000cc has been increased from 200 percent to 250 percent and for cars from 3,001-4,000cc from 350 percent

17 of the suggestions made by the members of parliament on the budget. Were the economic conditions normal, more of their observations would have been there," Kamal

He also said Bangladesh saw the highest increase in GDP in the world between 2009 and 2019: 188 percent. China's GDP expanded the

next highest in that period: by 177 percent.

selling SIM cards

calls, despite BTRC's earlier instructions to do so.

enforced the ban in the face of numerous complaints from policymakers and general customers.

Mustafa Jabbar, telecom minister, said the operator will have to improve their services if they want to gain

According to the results of a nationwide drive-test published in March, GP's average call drop rate was at 0.29 percent in Dhaka division, with exception to city corporation areas, in

Meanwhile, Robi's call drop rate was at 0.23 percent, Banglalink's at

among the operators. According to BTRC's policy, the call drop rate should be less than two percent.

Market

Grameenphone has 8.49 crore subscribers as of this May - 46.11 percent of all mobile subscribers in the country.

Earlier in a statement, GP said it has been "way ahead" of the benchmark set by the BTRC and the International Telecommunication Union.

It has also been collaborating with the BTRC to improve the service quality, statement read.

"Against this backdrop, we are currently assessing this recent unexpected letter to determine our next course of action. We believe that constructive dialogue with the regulator is the best way to resolve issues in the best 0.32 percent and Teletalk's interest of our existing and

Culprit arrested, finally FROM PAGE 1 with Ashulia Police Station accused is given as less certificate and registration

Practise austerity as much as you can

Covid-19 pandemic. thinkthat we would be able measures to place it [the budget], but we've been able to do so.

"We'll be able to market. implement the budget, placed for the 2022-23 fiscal year, successfully with all-out support of the people," said Hasina.

added Bangladesh will have to go forward facing the adverse impacts of the war and pandemic, and will be able to do so.

"We're making the impossible things possible overcoming hundreds prioritisethe consumption of obstacles at home and abroad."

Bangladesh The premier said the successfully been able to maintain its economic progress when many developed countries are facing difficulties due to situation caused by the global instability, Hasina Ukraine war following the mentioned.

She said the government "Many people couldn't is taking all necessary to control inflation due to price hike of goods in the global

Hasina said the main strategy to keep inflation under control would beraising the supply of goods. "To reduce inflation is our big target."

She said the recently opened Padma Bridge to traffic, which brought revolutionary change in the communication system, is easing the supply of goods to a great extentand will also help reduce the inflation rate.

The government is not imposing the increased prices of fuel, electricity and gas on the people, but insteadproviding these at subsidised rates. But the subsidy amount is very high, Hasina added.

documents for Junior Dakhil exam, the principal and teachers of the institution said Jitu is more than 19 years old.

Saiful Islam, principal, told The Daily Star that the student earlier studied in a madrasa and was irregular in his studies. He had study gaps before he was admitted to this institution.

"We admitted him to class 9 in 2021 according to the date of birth mentioned in his birth certificate, which mentioned that he was born on January 17, 2003. He appeared in the Junior Dakhil exam in 2020 from Tanjimul Ummah Alim Madrasah in

Earlier yesterday, police arrested Jitu's father Ujjal Hossain from Kumarkhali area of Kushtia. A Dhaka court placed Ujjal on fiveday remand in the case filed by Aseem Kumar Sarkar, the victim's elder brother,

on Sunday, accusing Jitu and several unnamed people. Utpal Kumar Sarkar, the

victim of the assault, died while receiving treatment for his injuries at Enam Medical College Hospital on Monday Utpal, a lecturer in

political science at Haji Yunus Ali School and College, was struck on the head with a cricket stump by Jitu on the college field on Saturday, according to teachers and students present at the spot. He was the chairman of

the disciplinary committee of the institution. Aseem Kumar Sarkar, Utpal's brother, demanded that Jitu's real age be

mentioned in the case. "If the real age is not mentioned, the student will be tried in juvenile court," he said.

Quamruzzaman Khan. officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said if the age of the

than the actual age in the FIR, there is scope for mentioning the correct age later. Victim's brother Aseem

said the student hit Utpal because the teacher had taken disciplinary action against him for stalking girls.Meanwhile, students and teachers of the institution held a protest rally in front of the college around 9:30am yesterday and also formed a human chain there wearing black badges.

Requesting anonymity, teachers alleged that Maruf Hossain, Dhaka superintendent district of police (SP), instructed college authorities to stop the ongoing agitation yesterday.

Denying the allegations, the SP told The Daily Star, "Why should I do that? The education ministry will give instructions. I went to the college to look into their [teachers' and

GP barred from

FROM PAGE 1

The regulator said it

"We have already sent a letter to GP instructing it not to sell SIMs," Subrata Roy Maitra, vice-chairman of the BTRC, told The Daily

new subscribers.

December. at 2.69 percent -- highest new customers."