

ANNEXATION OF UKRAINIAN TERRITORIES

The United States condemns Russia's fraudulent attempt today to annex sovereign Ukrainian territory. Russia is violating international law, trampling on the United Nations Charter, and showing its contempt for peaceful nations everywhere.

US President Joe Biden

We are taking our decisive step by signing Ukraine's application for accelerated accession to Nato.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky

We firmly reject and unequivocally condemn the illegal annexation by Russia of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions. Russia is putting global security at risk.

27 EU leaders in a statement

Any decision to proceed with the annexation of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine would have no legal value and deserves to be condemned. It must not be accepted.

UN Chief Antonio Guterres

WAR IN UKRAINE

Attack on civilian convoy kills 25

AFP, Moscow

An attack on a frontline civilian convoy killed at least 25 people in southern Ukraine yesterday, just hours before Moscow was due to annex four occupied Ukrainian regions.

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday formally annexed Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Lugansk, which his forces mostly control, at a grand Kremlin ceremony. He has warned he could use nuclear weapons to retain control of the territory as the United States leads Western allies in vowing "never" to recognise the regions as anything other than part of Ukraine.

The attack in Zaporizhzhia in the south killed at least 25 people as civilians were preparing to leave to pick up relatives, Ukrainian officials said.

"Twenty five killed and about 50 wounded in an attack by the Russian military on a humanitarian convoy in Zaporizhzhia. Investigation launched," said the prosecutor general's office on Telegram.

Bodies of people wearing civilian clothes were left on the ground after the attack and windows of cars blown out, an AFP photographer said.

"Only complete terrorists could do this," said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. "Bloodthirsty scum! You will definitely answer," he added.

"The enemy launched rockets on a civilian convoy leaving the city centre," said Zaporizhzhia governor Oleksandr Starukh.

But pro-Kremlin regional chief Vladimir Rogov accused Ukrainian troops of carrying out a "terrorist act". "The regime in Kyiv is trying to portray what happened as shelling by Russian troops, resorting to a heinous provocation," he said on social media.



(L-R) The Moscow-appointed heads of the Kherson region Vladimir Saldo and Zaporizhzhia region Yevgeny Balitsky, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Donetsk separatist leader Denis Pushilin and Lugansk separatist leader Leonid Pasechnik join hands after signing treaties formally annexing four regions of Ukraine, at the Kremlin in Moscow, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

US and allies blew up Nord Stream pipelines

Says Putin; EU to cut power use, levy energy companies

AGENCIES

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday directly accused the United States and its allies of blowing up the Nord Stream pipelines.

"The sanctions were not enough for the Anglo-Saxons: they moved onto sabotage," Putin said. "It is hard to believe but it is a fact that they organised the blasts on the Nord Stream international gas pipelines."

"They began to destroy the pan-European energy infrastructure," Putin said. "It is clear to everyone who benefits from this. Of course, he who benefits did it."

A sharp drop in pressure on both pipelines was registered on Sept. 26 and seismologists detected explosions, triggering a wave of speculation about who might have sabotaged one of Russia's most important energy corridors.

The European Union said it suspected sabotage caused the damage to the Gazprom-led GAZP.

MM Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines in Swedish and Danish waters. The White House has dismissed Russian allegations it was behind the incidents.

Russia's top spy said that Moscow



had intelligence indicating that the West was behind what he said was a "terrorist act" against the pipelines.

Meanwhile, EU ministers yesterday agreed cuts to peak hour power consumption and windfall levies on energy companies in an urgent effort to bring down sky-high energy prices.

The decision, announced by the Czech Republic in its role holding the EU presidency, aims to mitigate energy costs sent soaring by Russia's war in Ukraine and as the northern hemisphere winter looms.

European households and businesses are already staggering under surging energy bills, fuelling record inflation that in the eurozone has hit 10 percent.

Many EU countries have deployed smaller-scale national measures to tackle the looming energy crisis, but several demanded European-level concertation, in part to clamp down on energy-buying competition between EU peers.

The two measures adopted were proposed by the European Commission. The EU executive believes it can raise 140 billion euros from the levies on non-gas electricity producers and on energy majors that are raking in outsized profits from the global energy demand.

US Senate approves \$12b in new Ukraine aid

AFP, Washington

The US Senate approved \$12 billion in new economic and military aid for Ukraine Thursday as part of a stopgap extension of the federal budget into December.

The measure, agreed by senators of both parties, includes \$3 billion for arms, supplies and salaries for Ukraine's military, and authorizes President Joe Biden to direct the US Defense Department to take \$3.7 billion worth of its own weapons and materiel and send them to Ukraine.

The new allocation for Ukraine took to \$65 billion the amount the US government has provided the country since the beginning of the year.

Putin eases citizenship rule for foreigners in Russian army

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a decree making it easier for foreigners to obtain Russian citizenship if they join the army, a document published by the government showed yesterday. "Foreign citizens or stateless persons who sign a contract to serve in the Russian Armed Forces... for at least one year and take part in military operations for at least six months" will be eligible for the simplified application procedure, the decree said. Foreigners who are injured in combat before six months of fighting are up and cannot return to the battlefield will also be eligible, according to the decree. The document comes over a week after Putin announced a mobilisation of hundreds of thousands of Russian men to bolster Moscow's army in Ukraine, which has recently suffered setbacks, particularly in the east of the country. The decree appeared to be targeted towards thousands of citizens of ex-Soviet countries in Central Asia who live and work in Russia and receive better salaries compared to their poorer, home countries. Four of the five - Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan - have recently urged their citizens not to join foreign armies. The spouses, children and parents of foreigners signing a contract with the army will also be able to benefit from simplified access to Russian nationality, according to the decree.

Our target

FROM PAGE 16 but would like to make the most of playing at their 'home venue'.

"It's not a challenge [playing at home] to be playing at home. Our target is to go match by match. We are not going to nit-pick the opposition's strengths and weaknesses. If we can execute our plans, we don't have to worry about challenges," she said.

Teams such as India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan will once again prove to be the main obstacles to Tigresses defending the trophy, but the skipper believes her team has improved as well.

"Every team has improved and so have we. We just want to maintain and go forward with our plans.

The women's [cricket team's] home venue is Sylhet, so of course we want to take advantage of that. Since the trophy belongs to us, we will try to defend it. The target is to retain the trophy," she said.

Medium pacer Jahanara Alam is set to feature in the tournament, having missed the World Cup qualifiers due to a hand injury, and Joty believed the pacer's experience would come in handy.

The weather at Sylhet has been pretty hot as teams gear up for the tournament, but Joty was not too concerned.

"We are not thinking of the weather. Since we played in Abu Dhabi, the temperature being high there provided us with good preparation. The good news is that no one faced pulled any muscles in that weather or had any other concerns which is a sign that everyone is fit," she concluded.

Suicide blast

FROM PAGE 16 "Deeply grieved at the loss of young lives in a horrific suicide attack at a learning center in Kabul. Words can't express this sheer barbarism. We send our deepest condolences & most sincere sympathies to the bereaved families & people of Afghanistan."

The UN special rapporteur for human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, also denounced the bombing.

Kharge, Tharoor, Tripathi



Mallikarjun Kharge

Shashi Tharoor

K N Tripathi

FROM PAGE 16

Tharoor, 66, was also a part of G-23 but it seems he has been left by his group colleagues to cut a lonely furrow as none of them endorsed his nomination papers filed on the last day of nomination filing yesterday.

This would be the first time a person from outside the Gandhi clan would head the grand old party after a long hiatus.

The Gandhi family did not go on record to convey its favourite candidate among the three. Neither Sonia nor Rahul Gandhi nor Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was present when the

three candidates filed nomination papers because they did not want to be publicly seen as taking sides.

But Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, considered close to the Gandhi family, said yesterday that all senior leaders had decided to back Kharge.

Tharoor, who was also part of the G-23 group, filed five sets of nomination papers while Tripathi filed a single set of poll papers with Madhusudan Mistry, the chairman of the Congress's Central Election Authority.

Tharoor said he has a vision to strengthen the Congress which should be a vehicle for "change."

Tell the world about BNP

FROM PAGE 1

Washington DC, said PM's Deputy Press Secretary KM Shakhawat Moon.

Hasina also asked them to disclose that those who are spreading anti-state propaganda abroad had committed crimes.

She said the country is moving forward as the democratic system has been continuing for a long time.

"Today, Bangladesh has attained the status of a developing country. Everyone will have to work together to continue this trend of development," she was quoted as saying.

Hasina said the Awami League has ensured a fair environment for the elections in the country. The people now can vote freely, she added.

The premier said the BNP destroyed the electoral system, made fake voters and snatched the voting rights of the ordinary people by sending hooligans to polling booths.

She said the BNP picked 700 candidates against 300 constituencies in the last national election. So, the people didn't vote for them due to their nomination business, the PM said.

Highlighting various investment opportunities in the country, Hasina urged the expatriates to invest in Bangladesh.

Reiterating her firm commitment, the PM said not a single person will remain homeless in Bangladesh.

The PM reached the US on September 19 to attend the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

On her way to the US, she went to London on September 15 and attended the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II at Westminster Abbey on September 19.

Hasina is expected to return home on October 4.

Probes in 12 cases

FROM PAGE 16

investigated two major cases filed over the incident, but they were waiting for the home ministry's approval to submit charge sheets.

Puja mandap will be set up this year in Nanua Dighir Par area where the incident took place last year, said Mohammad Kamrul Hasan, Cumilla deputy commissioner.

Considering last year's violence, security has been tightened there this time, he said.

Nirmal Paul, general secretary of Cumilla District Puja Celebration Committee, said 794 puja mandaps have been set up in the district this year. "We hope that the puja will be celebrated smoothly this time with the help of the administration and law enforcement agencies."

734 women

FROM PAGE 16

incidents, said the ASK report on human rights violation.

The report added that 66 journalists came under attacks while carrying out their professional duties.

It said during the nine-month period, 12 Bangladeshis were killed allegedly by Indian Border Security Force along borders.

Moreover, 54 people died in jail while 28 others were beaten to death by mobs.

UK teen died after 'negative effects of online content'

AFP, London

A 14-year-old British girl died from an act of self-harm while suffering from the "negative effects of online content", a coroner said yesterday, in a case that has shone a spotlight on social media companies.

Molly Russell was "exposed to material that may have influenced her in a negative way and, in addition, what had started as a depression had become a more serious depressive illness," Andrew Walker ruled at North London Coroner's Court.

Worktime set at 40 hours

FROM PAGE 1

higher education institutions. In addition, this policy will play an important role in preparing organograms of different departments of universities. Renowned academicians have cooperated with the UGC in formulating this policy," said Prof Dil Afroza Begum, acting chairman of UGC.

There are 15,500 teachers at 53 public universities. About 3.50 lakh students study at 50 of those universities.

In the policy, a teacher's weekly 40 work hours has been divided into two parts - Contact Hours and Non-Contact Hours. The 40 hours included five hours for prayers and lunch break.

Under the Contact Hours, a teacher will have to deliver lectures at the classroom, give lessons at practical classes, hold tutorial classes, and supervise projects, internships or theses of students for 13 hours per week.

A teacher's Non-contact Hours would cover preparation of course materials, conducting research, writing articles and books, preparing questions, evaluating exam answer scripts and attending academic and administrative meetings.

The policy says that the Contact Hours for the head of a department and institution will be six hours.

Universities will be able to apply to the UGC for having 20 percent additional teachers for a particular department or institute, if there is a possibility of disruption in educational activities due to study leave of a large number of teachers, it adds.

Universities will file such applications based on teaching load calculation of a particular department or institution.

According to the policy, if the number of teachers working in a particular department is found bigger after calculation of teaching load, the additional number of teachers will continue in their jobs till retirement. UGC Secretary Ferdous said there

were serious problems regarding determining how many teachers were needed due to absence of a policy.

"We have seen that 10 teachers were recruited against the requirement of five. In other cases, five teachers were appointed against the required 10," he said.

UGC officials said a policy of workload of teachers at Indian universities in place. A full-time teacher's working hours should not be less than 40 hours a week for 30 working weeks in an academic year, and the teacher must be available for at least five hours daily in the university/college.

Under the policy, professors and associate professors need to give 14 hours of direct teaching per week, whereas for assistant professors the requirement is 16 hours.

Prof Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, general secretary of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association, said they would be able to comment on whether the policy was bad or good only after it came into force.

"We have to improve the quality of education and the international rankings of the universities. To achieve these goals, we will need to conduct innovative researches and introduce research oriented education...if we can use the working hours positively, it will be good for us," said Nizamul, also the general secretary of Dhaka University Teachers Association.

2 units to start

FROM PAGE 16

In the meeting, the project director said the power production from this plant will begin in January 2024, and 82 percent of the structural work has been done.

Saber underscored the need to ensure that there was no waterlogging due to the construction of the power plant in the project area.

Local lawmaker Ashek Ullah Rafique said there were payments to labourers and locals pending and urged the chairman of the standing committee to look into the matter.