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Russia doesn't want to destroy Ukraine

Says Putin, rules out more 'massive' strikes 'for now'

AGENCIES

Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday there was no need for massive new strikes on Ukraine and that Russia was not looking to destroy the country.

Putin told a news conference at the end of a summit in Kazakhstan that his call-up of Russian reservists would be over within two weeks and there were no plans for a further mobilisation.

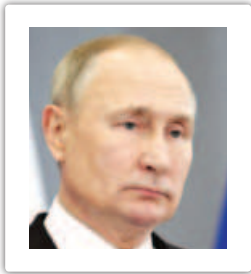
He also repeated the Kremlin position that Russia was willing to hold talks, although he said they would require international mediation if Ukraine was willing to take part.

Taken together, Putin's comments appeared to suggest a slight softening of his tone as the war nears the end of its eighth month, after weeks of Ukrainian advances and significant Russian defeats.

"We do not set ourselves the task of destroying Ukraine. No, of course not," Putin said. There was "no need for massive strikes" now because most designated targets had been hit.

"What is happening today is not pleasant. But all the same, (if Russia hadn't attacked on February) we would have been in the same situation, only the conditions

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Bus Rapid Transit project authorities put up a fence as a road divider on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway for public safety and prevention of accidents. However, a man who seems to have no regard for his own safety is still attempting to cross the highway through a whole in the fence. The photo was taken in Kunia Targachh area of Gazipur.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Sultan of Brunei flies in today



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Brunei Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah will arrive in Dhaka today on a three-day state visit to Bangladesh.

A red carpet will be rolled out to welcome the Sultan at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. He will also be honoured with 21-gun salutes.

President Abdul Hamid will receive the Sultan, his family members, cabinet members and officials who will fly in on a special VVIP flight.

His visit is reciprocal

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Five injured in BCL-JCD clash

Cop among them; no arrest yet



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

At least five people, including a police official, were injured in a clash between Bangladesh Chhatra League and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal in Lalmonirhat's Hatibandha upazila yesterday.

Witnesses said a group of BCL men intercepted BNP central committee member Hasan Rajib Pradhan in Medical Mor around 12:30pm when he along with party activists was crossing the area after attending a meeting at the Hatibandha Upazila BNP office.

Hearing the news, JCD leaders and activists rushed to the area and chased the BCL men. At one stage, the BCL activists clashed with the JCD men. Activists of the rival students' fronts threw brick bats at each other.

On information, police reached the area, used batons on the clashing groups and brought the situation under control, said Shaha Alam, OC of Hatibandha Police Station.

Hasan Rajib said Chhatra League leaders and activists suddenly swooped on them without any provocation after they left the party office.

However, Hatibandha upazila AL General Secretary Mahmudul Hasan Sohag told journalists that Chhatra Dal men attacked Chhatra League activists, triggering the clash.

Hatibandha Police Station OC Shaha Alam said that the police brought the situation under control.

He said the injured, including Sub-Inspector Mahidul Islam, received treatment at local medical facilities.

BLOGGER OYASIQUR KILLING

Complainant 'unavailable'

Justice ever elusive

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI and CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

Seven years into the murder of secularist blogger Oyasiqur Rahman Babu, the complainant of the case appears uninterested in justice and the police are clueless about his whereabouts.

Till July 24, the court summoned the complainant, Monir Hossain Masud, 63 times and even ordered his arrest, only to get his all-important testimony. And the prosecution and the police could not produce him, stating every time that he has been living in Saudi Arabia, according to court documents.

But Masud, who is a cousin and also the brother-in-law of Oyasiqur, now lives in Dhaka and The Daily Star caught up with him in Arambagh area, where he runs a grocery shop.

"I went to Saudi Arabia almost a month after the case was filed and returned home one and a half years ago. I did not get any court order since then," Masud told this newspaper recently.

He, however, showed his reluctance in testifying before the court. "Actually, I have no interest in the case now," he said without any elaboration.

According to the FIR, Masud's permanent address is Uttar Hazipur

under Ramganj upazila in Lakshimpur.

Opting not to be named, a few of his acquaintances in the locality said Masud's attitude towards the brutal killing changed abruptly after he somehow become convinced that Oyasiqur was killed for "anti-Islamic writings".

"Anti-Islamic writings" was the twisted justification of fundamentalists who went on the killing spree targeting bloggers and free-thinkers since 2013.

Armed with machetes, a gang of banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team (ATB) hacked Oyasiqur, known for his secularist views and write-ups against fundamentalists in online spheres, in broad daylight at the Teigaon industrial area on March 30, 2015.

Locals caught two of the attackers on the spot and handed them over to the police.

It was a year that witnessed three more killings of secularist bloggers -- Avijit Roy on February 26, Ananta Bijoy Das on May 12, Niladri Chattopadhyay Niloy on August 7 -- and also Faisal Arefin Dipan, publisher of Avijit's books, on October 31.

Masud filed a murder case against four named and some unnamed

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Sri Lanka grab centre stage

AFP, Geelong

A confident Sri Lanka open the Twenty20 World Cup on Sunday fresh from being crowned Asian champions, but face negotiating a tricky preliminary round to join the big guns in the main draw.

They kick off the global showpiece in Geelong against a Namibian team looking to spring another surprise after making the Super 12 stage on their tournament debut last year.

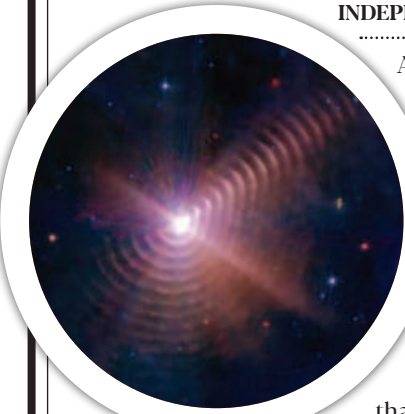
Originally scheduled to take place in 2020 before being moved because of Covid, the eighth edition of the event begins with a double-header at the 36,000 capacity Kardinia Park outside Melbourne.

Later Sunday, the United Arab Emirates face the Netherlands, before two-time champions the West Indies, Scotland, Zimbabwe and Ireland join the fray in Hobart on Monday.

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Webb telescope reveals 'fingerprint' created by two stars

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



A new image from the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) shows at least 17 dust rings -- resembling a "fingerprint" -- created by a rare type of star and its companion, locked in a celestial dance.

Sitting more than 5,000 light years from Earth, the duo is collectively known as Wolf-Rayet

140 (WR 140).

Each ring was created when the two stars came close together and the streams of gas they blow into space collided, compressing the gas and forming dust.

The orbit of the stars brings them together about once every eight years, and like the rings of a tree's trunk, the dust loops mark the passage of time.

Ryan Lau, an astronomer at the National Science Foundation's NOIRLab, said: "We're looking at over a century of dust production from this system. The image also illustrates just how sensitive JWST is. Before, we were only able to see two dust rings, using ground-based telescopes. Now we see at least 17 of them."

In addition to Webb's overall sensitivity, the Mid-Infrared Instrument (MIRI) is uniquely qualified to study the dust rings, or what researchers call shells. This is because it sees in infrared light, a range of wavelengths invisible to the human eye.

The UK Astronomy Technology Centre (UK ATC) played a key role in designing and building

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4 more die from Covid

346 test positive for the virus in a day

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh reported four more Covid-19 linked deaths and 346 fresh cases in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the latest count, the country's total fatalities rose to 29,393 and the total caseload to 2,031,797, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

The daily positivity rate dropped to 7.15 percent from Thursday's 8.92 percent as 4,840 samples were tested.

The latest deceased were three women and a man. Of them, two were from Dhaka division one was from Sylhet, and another from Mymensingh.

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Traders selling pets and accessories on the footpath near the Anandabazar Veterinary Hospital in the capital yesterday. The Dhaka South City Corporation carried out an eviction drive in the area to clear footpaths of illegal traders a couple of months back, but it appears to have had little effect.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

US CAPITOL RIOT PROBE

Lawmakers vote to subpoena Trump

AFP, Washington

Lawmakers probing the 2021 attack on the US Capitol voted on Thursday to subpoena former president Donald Trump to testify on his role in the violence, in a major escalation of the sprawling enquiry weeks before it is due to wind up.

During what was expected to be its final hearing before the midterm elections, the House panel of seven Democrats and two Republicans agreed unanimously to compel Trump's appearance before investigators.

"We need to be fair and thorough and gain a full context for the evidence we've obtained. But the need for this committee to hear from Donald Trump goes beyond our fact-finding," said Bennie Thompson, the chairman of the committee.

"This is a question about accountability to the American people. He must be accountable. He is required to answer for his actions."

Subpoenas from the panel have proved difficult to enforce, with former White House aide Steve Bannon the only target yet convicted of contempt of Congress for refusing to comply.

Trump is notorious for his ability to run down the clock on congressional investigations and legal action, and it remains highly unlikely that he would agree to give evidence.

"Why didn't the Unselect Committee ask me to testify months ago? Why did they wait until the very end, the final moments of their last meeting?" thundered Trump, who has had a standing invitation to appear before the committee.

Reacting on his right-wing Truth Social platform, Trump said the committee was a "total 'BUST' that has only served to further divide our Country."

Any subpoena would expire in any case with the new congressional term in January. Control of the House of

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