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Germany okays tanks for Kyiv

Clears way for allies to send more

REUTERS, Berlin/Kyiv

Germany yesterday cleared the way for Europe to send scores of battle tanks to Ukraine while the US prepared to make a similar announcement -- moves hailed by Kyiv as a potential turning point in the war, and condemned by Moscow as escalation

Kyiv has been calling for months for Western main battle tanks that would give its forces greater firepower, protection and mobility to break through Russian front lines and potentially reclaim occupied territory in the east

Germany, previously the West's holdout, said it would send an initial company of 14 of its Leopard 2 tanks from its own stocks, and also approve shipments by other European countries.

The eventual aim would be to supply Ukraine with two battalions of Leopards, typically comprising three or four companies each, the first to arrive within three or four

"Germany will always be at the forefront when it comes to supporting Ukraine," Chancellor Olaf Scholz told the German parliament, to applause. He told a press conference later that Germany would

send further military aid to Ukraine beyond the Leopards delivery, including for example air defence systems, heavy artillery and multiple rocket launchers.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky thanked Scholz by phone and said he was "sincerely grateful to the Chancellor and all our friends in Germany"

The move lifts one of the last taboos in Western support

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Shopkeepers using fire extinguishers to douse a fire, caused by an electrical spark, on overhead cables on the footpath opposite the National Sport Council building in the capital's Purana Paltan yesterday. The fire started around 7:00pm and was successfully put out within around half an hour, before fire service officials could make it to the scene. PHOTO: COLLECTED

U-19 WOMEN'S T20 WC Bangladesh fall short in Super Six

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite beating the United Arab Emirates by five wickets in their last Super Six game, Bangladesh were unable to qualify for the semifinals of the ICC Women's Under-19 T20 World Cup in South Africa yesterday.

Bangladesh's chances of qualifying for the semifinals were slim going into the game, given that they were significantly behind in terms of net run

By the end of the Super Six stage, four teams from Group 1 -- including Bangladesh, hosts South Africa, Australia and India ended with six points, but the latter two progressed courtesy of superior net run rate.

India, with a net run rate of +2.844, and Australia (+2.210) took the top two spots to qualify for the semifinals while Bangladesh finished third

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Fertiliser-laden vessel sinks in Pasur river

It may pose risk to biodiversity of the river flowing through the Sundarbans

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A lighter vessel carrying 500 tonnes of fertiliser sank in the Pasur river near the Mongla port after a collision with another vessel early yesterday.

The propeller of the sunken vessel MV Shahjalal Express broke when it collided with Supreme Valor around 12:30am, Captain Mohammad Shaheen master of Mongla Port



Authority, told The Daily Star. "Plying of vessels was not hampered due to this incident. The owner has to salvage the vessel within 15 days as per rules. If not done, the port authority will take necessary steps," he said. Eight crew members of MV Shahjalal, which was

heading towards Nawapara of Jashore, managed to swim to a nearby lighter vessel.

Prof Dilip Kumar Datta of environmental science discipline at Khulna University told this correspondent that the fertiliser will dissolve in water and it may pose risks to the biodiversity of the Pasur river, one of the rivers flowing through the Sundarbans.

This incident happened a month after the sinking of an oil tanker in the Meghna in Bhola.

TACKLING OIL SPILLAGE

Committee there, but only on paper

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

high-powered national committee, formed to tackle oil or chemical spills along the shipping routes, has failed miserably to respond to the recent oil spill in the Meghna.

The failure laid bare the committee's sheer apathy and a lack of preparedness for such

The Meghna spill was the first since the committee was formed country so far. The 24-member

Committee on Oil and Chemical Spillage (NOCS), led by the secretary of the environment, forest and climate change ministry, was supposed to act swiftly as per the National Contingency Plan in case of any oil or chemical spill.

However, the spill exposed that the NOCS is not even aware of the terms of references. Add to that, it had no coordination or preparation in tackling the marine accident, even two years into its formation, DoE sources said.

After the December 24 Meghna oil spill, the committee, according

The NOCS formed in 2020 to tackle oil spills remains oblivious to its duties

Five spills since 2014 released around 17,70,000 lakh litres of oil into the Karnaphuli, Meghna and Shela rivers.

The authorities concerned are far from being able to contain such oil and chemical spills

7,000 vessels plying shipping routes do not submit any emergency plan to the DoE

No command structure was established, technical mechanism ensured or financial support sought for such operations

UNESCO's recommendation to strengthen the vessel management regime after the Shela river oil spill largely ignored

supposed to hold emergency meetings, select on-scene commanders. alert relevant government agencies, mobilise resources to contain the spilled oil, provide technical support and engage environmental scientists to assess the damage.

But the committee met 10 long days after the country's biggest oil spill, in which an estimated 12 lakh litres seeped into the river.

Instead, the Bangladesh Coast to its stated responsibilities, was Guard were the first responders to the disaster and conducted the entire operation to remove oil, and lift and tow away the vessel, after it came to know about the incident from its patrol team.

Officials of the Department of Environment, whose director general was made the committee's member-secretary, showed up at

the site 24 hours after the incident. The NOCS was formed 10 years after Bangladesh in 2010 signed a Memorandum of Understanding

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ChatGPT bot passes US law school exam

A chatbot powered by reams of data from the internet has passed exams at a US law school after writing essays on topics ranging from

ChatGPT from OpenAI, a US company that this week got a massive injection of cash from Microsoft, uses artificial intelligence (AI) to generate streams of text from simple prompts.

The results have been so good that educators have warned it could lead to widespread cheating and even signal the end of traditional classroom teaching methods.

Jonathan Choi, a professor at Minnesota University Law School, gave ChatGPT the same test faced by students, consisting of 95 multiplechoice questions and 12 essay questions.

In a white paper titled "ChatGPT goes to law school" published on Monday, he and his coauthors reported that the bot scored a C+

While this was enough for a pass, the bot was near the bottom of the class in most subjects and SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Saraswati Puja today



BSS. Dhaka

The Hindu community is set to celebrate Saraswati Puja today with enthusiasm and religious fervour by worshipping the goddess of knowledge, music, art and culture across the country.

President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in separate messages, greeted the members of the community

on the occasion. According to Hindu faith, the goddess represents Saraswati power, creativity and inspiration and presents herself when the weather is pleasant and nature is in its full grandeur.

The rituals of Saraswati Puja will begin in the SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Trucks illegally parked on Mayor Annisul Huq Road have narrowed the street outside the Tejgaon truck stand in the capital. The Dhaka North City Corporation had set up a separate lane for rickshaws and other non-motorised vehicles, but they cannot enter the lane due to the illegal parking. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BIJOY APP ON SMARTPHONES It's up to users whether to use it or not Says Mustafa Jabbar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It's mandatory for smartphone importers and local manufacturers to preinstall Bijoy app on all devices, but it's up to users whether to use the Bangla writing software or not, said Posts and Telecommunications Minister Mustafa Jabbar.

Jabbar made the comment yesterday at a press conference on the Digital Bangladesh Mela 2023 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka's Agargaon.

Bangladesh Mobile Phone Consumers' Association on Monday issued a legal notice, urging Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to withdraw its directive making it mandatory to preinstall

the Bijoy app. The telecom regulator has not changed its stance.

Jabbar said, "It only takes a second for users to uninstall anything on their phones. So, there is no need to use the word 'mandatory' here."

As per the BTRC's directive, all imported and locally manufactured android smart handsets must have the Bijoy app pre-installed before receiving the permission to market those.

Otherwise, the BTRC will not certify them.