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Supply fuel oil on deferred payment

Dhaka requests Riyadh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has requested Riyadh to supply crude or refined oil from Saudi public oil company Aramco on a deferred payment basis.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen made the request when Saudi Ambassador to Bangladesh Essa Yousef Essa Alduhailan paid a courtesy call on him at the ministry yesterday.

A statement issued by the foreign ministry said, "Reflecting on the current political instability in parts of Europe, the foreign minister urged the [Saudi] envoy to explore possible cooperation from Saudi Arabia in meeting Bangladesh's domestic energy and oil needs and take up the issue of considering [providing] crude/refined oil from Aramco on a deferred payment basis."

The Saudi envoy assured the minister of taking up the proposal with the authorities concerned in the Kingdom.

The issue of importing oil from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), a major source of Bangladesh's oil, at a deferred payment comes when Bangladesh's foreign reserve has dropped to a little over \$32 billion as of January 26.

The International Monetary Fund recently approved a \$4.7 billion loan to support Bangladesh's economy that, like many other countries, has been facing strains stemming mostly from the Russia-Ukraine war.

He handed over a letter to the minister from Saudi SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Women and children are left in the open as their homes were vandalised during a clash between two factions of the Awami League in Birgaon village of Narsingdi's Raipura upazila yesterday. At least three people were injured in the clash that took place over establishing supremacy in the area.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

BUSINESS

Remittance flow hits 5-month high in Jan

Remittance income rose to a five-month high in January as banks have made an all-out effort to mobilise dollars from abroad to overcome the stress in the foreign exchange market.

Expatriates sent home \$1.95 billion last month, the highest since September when \$1.53 billion flew into the country.

"The robust inflow in January has given a breathing space to both the government and the central bank to manage the ongoing crisis," a BB official said.

STORY ON B1

POWER LINES TO BANGLADESH PIL filed against Adani Group at Calcutta HC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

An Indian civil rights group has moved the Calcutta High Court against the installation of transmission lines by an Adani Group-owned power plant that will bring electricity to Bangladesh.

The Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR) and 30 fruit farmers said in the public interest litigation (PIL) that the power lines would have an adverse effect on the livelihood of people living at Farakka in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal.

The petitioners have stated in the PIL that since the majority of the people in the area through which the high-tension electricity lines will pass are dependent on mango and lychee farming, the overhead lines will impact their livelihood. They stated that the lines are over the orchards and should pass through an alternative area.

The electricity lines were being set up there by the Adani Group-owned Godda Thermal Power Station as part of a project stretching from Jharkhand's Godda district to Bangladesh, as mandated by a bilateral trade agreement.

A division bench of the Calcutta High Court comprising Chief Justice Prakash Srivastava and Justice Rajarshi Bhadravaj admitted the petition. The matter is expected to come up for a hearing on February 7.

The petitioners also stated that they protested against the issue in the past but were beaten up by the police.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

CUSTODY BATTLE Father held for going into hiding with daughter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh born US citizen Imran Sharif was detained after he allegedly went into hiding with his nine-year-old daughter, ignoring a court order that granted the child's mother the custody of two children.

The Rapid Action Battalion traced Imran with his daughter in Kalachandpur of Gulshan early yesterday after the Japanese mother Eriko Nakano filed a general dairy with Gulshan Police Station. Rab later handed them over to Gulshan Police Station.

Police later sent the girl to the Victim Support Centre, Shahnur Rahman, inspector (investigation) of the police station, told The Daily Star.

Gulshan Assistant Commissioner Newton Das told The Daily Star that the daughter wished to stay with her father while her mother wanted to take her away.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Longer-range rockets to escalate Ukraine conflict

Warns Kremlin as US readies \$2.2b aid package

AGENCIES

The Kremlin said yesterday that longer-range rockets reportedly included in an upcoming package of military aid from the United States to Ukraine would "escalate" the conflict but not change its course.

"This is a direct course to whipping up tension and to escalating the level (of fighting). But again, it won't change the course of events," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists, responding to a question about potential US supplies of missiles with long-range capabilities.

Peskov also told reporters that there were no plans for Russian President Vladimir Putin to hold talks with US President Joe Biden.

The US package of military aid, worth \$2.2 billion, is expected to include longer-range rockets for the first time, two US officials briefed on the matter told Reuters.

In Washington, the United States said Russia was violating the New START nuclear arms control treaty between the two countries. Biden's

administration has been eager to preserve the treaty but ties with Moscow are the worst in decades due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"Russia's refusal to facilitate inspection activities prevents the United States from exercising important rights under the treaty and threatens the viability of US-Russian nuclear arms control," a State Department spokesperson said.

In Ukraine, security services searched the home of one of the country's most prominent billionaires yesterday, moving against a figure once seen as President Volodymyr Zelensky's sponsor in what the authorities called a war-time anti-corruption purge.

The action, days before a summit with the European Union, appears to reflect determination by Kyiv to demonstrate that it can be a steward of billions of dollars in Western aid and shed a reputation as one of the world's most corrupt states.

Photographs circulating on social media appeared to show Ihor

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Boeing bids adieu to an icon, delivers last 747 jumbo jet

AFP, Everett



Boeing marked its final commercial delivery of the 747, "the Queen of the Skies" on Tuesday at a ceremony commemorating an aircraft that democratized flying and serves US presidents.

Thousands of current and former employees, celebrities and aviation industry brass converged on Boeing's plant in Everett, Washington, in the Northwestern part of the United States, a factory built for the assembly of the original "jumbo jet."

The existing fleet of planes are expected to fly for decades more, but in ceasing 747 production more than 50 years after the aircraft's first flight, Boeing is closing a chapter in the history of civil aviation.

John Diedrich, chief executive of Atlas Air, the cargo airline that purchased the final plane in the line, saluted the 747 as "the biggest, baddest commercial aircraft that's flying out there."

The celebration recounted the jet's origins, setting its decades-long evolution to popular music and video footage.

Others who spoke included top executives with Lufthansa Airlines, engine maker Pratt & Whitney

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

CLASSIFIED DOCS FBI searches Biden's house in Delaware

REUTERS, Washington

The US Justice Department was searching President Joe Biden's second home yesterday, a beach house in Rehoboth, Delaware, as part of its investigation into improper storage of classified materials from his time as vice president.

Biden's personal attorney, Bob Bauer, said in a statement that the search was planned and conducted with the president's "full support and cooperation."

The search by FBI agents appears to represent an expansion of the probe into Biden's handling of classified documents. Materials were earlier found at his home in Wilmington, Delaware, and an office he used during the time between his service as vice president under Barack Obama and his presidential election.

The issue has created a political headache for SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



BNP leaders and activists, carrying banners and festoons, stage a march through the capital's Kamalapur yesterday during a demonstration to press the party's 10-point demand, including national election under a non-party interim government.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Fitness sham Vehicle impounded during robbery attempt gets BRTA clearance; official suspended

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Police on March 15 last year seized a mini-truck for using it to attempt a robbery. Since then, the vehicle has been kept at Cumilla Sadar South Police Station. Despite this fact, the mini-truck (Chattogram Metro-NA-11 2608) got its fitness certificate in November.

The fitness clearance was issued from Barishal circle of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority without any inspection, which is a serious violation of the Road Transport Act-2018 and the relevant orders.

Finding the allegation to be true, the BRTA on Tuesday suspended responsible vehicle inspector Pranab Chandra Nag and attached him to its headquarters in Dhaka.

But this is not a standalone incident. A similar incident took place in July last year when a seized truck got its fitness clearance without any inspection.

Some brokers in collusion with a section of unscrupulous BRTA officials received fitness clearance without even getting the vehicles to its offices concerned, sources at BRTA said.

This correspondent talked to two people who also had fitness certificates of their vehicles renewed with the help of brokers without visiting BRTA offices and they said did so "to avoid hassle".

The lapse in the process came to the fore at a time when questions are being raised about the quality of the BRTA's inspection itself, which is generally carried out manually before issuing fitness clearance.

Unfit vehicles are considered a major reason for road SEE PAGE 6 COL 2