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PROPERTY DISPUTE CASES 5 Transcom officials secure bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to five officials of Transcom Group, who had been arrested in connection with three cases filed over property disputes.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Shanta Akter passed the order after the defence lawyers filed three separate petitions, seeking their bail, said a sub-inspector at the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

The five officials are Transcom Group's Executive Director (corporate affairs and law) Md Fakhruzzaman Bhuiyan, Director (corporate finance) Kamrul Hasan, Director (corporate finance) Abdullah Al Mamun, Assistant Company Secretary Mohammed Mossadeq, and Manager (company secretary) Abu Yusuf Md Siddik.

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An aerial view of Amar Ekushey Bôi Mela at Suhrawardy Udyan. Yesterday was the last Friday of this month-long fair and a large number of people visited on the weekend. There are 764 bookstalls at the Suhrawardy Udyan and 173 on the Bangla Academy premises.

PHOTO: NAIMUR RAHMAN

MYANMAR BORDER Gunshots, blasts ring out after 3 days' lull

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

After three days of lull, fighting resumed across the Bangladesh-Myanmar border yesterday morning, with sound of gunshots and explosions travelling to residents in the nearby Balukhali area of Teknaf upazila in Cox's Bazar.

"Residents awoke to the loud sounds of gunfire and explosions coming from the other side of the border at 7:00am today [Friday], which continued till 10:00am with brief intervals in between," Sirajul Mustafa, a member of the Whykong union parishad, told The Daily Star.

The resumption of fighting near the border has sparked fresh fear among the residents, he added.

Locals say the rebel Arakan Army has already occupied the region in Myanmar across the

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Consider cost of environment degradation in estimating GDP Wahiduddin Mahmud tells SANEM conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cost of environmental degradation should be considered during estimation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), particularly in Bangladesh, economist Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud said yesterday.

He made the recommendation after a keynote by Prof Jean-Louis Arcand, president of the Global Development Network (GDN), highlighted the use of remote sensing of night lights for economic research.

Arcand presented the paper on "Econometrics from the Sky: How Remote Sensing Data Can Help Democratise Development Research" at the 7th South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) Annual Economists' Conference 2024 that took place virtually.

Prof Wahiduddinsaid satellite data was a good way of reconciling many of the national economic data, including survey data.

He said that in Bangladesh, illumination data can be used to identify development problems like losses of wetland and forest land.

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Israel bombs homes in southern Gaza

More than 100 Palestinians killed in 24hrs; Israeli spy chief heads to Paris for fresh truce talks

AGENCIES

Israeli air strikes targeted homes in the southern Gaza Strip, witnesses said yesterday, adding to what aid groups describe as an increasingly hopeless humanitarian situation despite efforts towards new truce talks.

Israeli media reported a delegation led by David Barnea, head of the Mossad intelligence agency, was heading to Paris for fresh truce discussions with Hamas.

His trip follows what the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said was the death of more than 100 people in the past 24 hours.

Israeli bombardment obliterated one house and left a gaping hole in the earth east of Rafah, on the border with Egypt, where about 1.4 million Gazans have converged in a futile search to escape the fighting.

"We were sleeping in our house when we heard the sound of a missile," said Abdul Hamid Abu el-Enein. "We rushed to the site and found people martyred and injured" in the strike which "completely erased" the two-storey home.

Witnesses reported several other houses targeted during the night, and an AFP reporter described heavy air strikes in the city of Khan Yunis several kilometres



- Israel conducts heavy air strikes in Khan Yunis
- Humanitarian situation is acute in Gaza's north: aid agencies
- Death toll in the enclave now 29,514

(miles) to the north, as well as in Rafah itself.

Israel's military said fighting, including with drone strikes and sniper fire, continued in the western Khan Yunis area. More than four months of relentless fighting and bombardment have flattened

much of Gaza and pushed its population of around 2.4 million to the brink of famine as disease spreads, according to the United Nations.

The UN humanitarian agency OCHA has blamed "limitations on the entry of aid" as well as the combat and growing insecurity for severely hampering assistance.

Aid agencies say the humanitarian situation is particularly acute in Gaza's north, reports AFP.

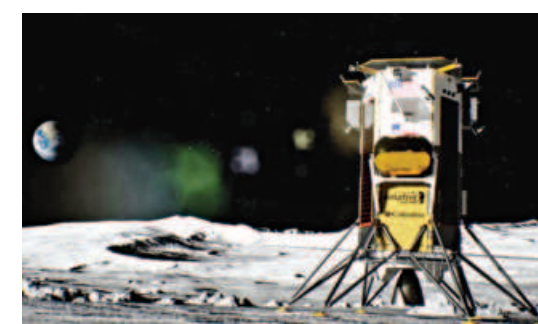
Israel's campaign, aiming to destroy Hamas, has killed at least 29,514 people, mostly women and children, according to the latest count by Gaza's health ministry.

The toll has seen pressure grow on the administration of US President Joe Biden to rein in its ally Israel -- which it provides with billions of dollars in military aid.

Israeli media reported yesterday that David Barnea, head of the Mossad intelligence agency, would travel with Ronen Bar, chief of the Shin Bet domestic security agency, for the truce talks in Paris.

Barnea and his US counterpart from the CIA helped broker a week-long truce in November that saw the release of 80 Israeli hostages in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails.

US returns to lunar surface for first time in 50yrs



REUTERS

A spacecraft built and flown by Texas-based company Intuitive Machines landed near the moon's south pole on Thursday, the first US touchdown on the lunar surface in more than half a century and the first ever achieved by the private sector.

Nasa, with several research instruments aboard the vehicle, hailed the landing as a major achievement in its goal of sending a squad of commercially flown spacecraft on scientific scouting missions to the moon ahead of a planned return of astronauts there later this decade.

But initial communications problems following Thursday's landing raised questions about whether the vehicle may have been left impaired or obstructed in some way.

The uncrewed six-legged robot lander, dubbed Odysseus, touched down at about 6:23 pm EST (23:23 GMT), the company and Nasa commentators said in a joint webcast of the landing from Intuitive Machines' LUNRO mission operations center in Houston.

US slaps sweeping sanctions against Russia

Targets over 500 people, entities ahead of Ukraine war anniversary

REUTERS

The United States yesterday issued sweeping sanctions to mark the second anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, targeting over 500 people and entities as Washington seeks to increase pressure on Moscow.

The measures targeted the Mir payment system, Russian financial institutions and its military industrial base, sanctions evasion, future energy production and other areas. They also included officials involved in the death of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, the Treasury and State departments said in statements.

The action seeks to hold Russia to account over the war and the death of Navalny, US President Joe Biden said in a statement, as Washington looks to continue to support Ukraine even as it faces acute shortages of ammunition and US military aid has been delayed for months in Congress.

"They will ensure Putin pays an even steeper price for his aggression abroad and repression at home," Biden said of the sanctions.

The US Treasury Department targeted nearly 300 people and entities, while the State Department hit over 250 and the Commerce Department added over 90 companies to the Entity List. That was an increase from

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Fortune Barishal's left-arm spinner Taijul Islam celebrates one of his three wickets with his teammates during their six-wicket victory over Comilla Victorians in a BPL fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The comfortable victory earned Barishal a spot in the last four as the line-up for the playoffs was completed.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Barishal victory settles BPL top four

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Skipper Tamim Iqbal's crucial 66 off 48 deliveries saw Fortune Barishal complete a six-wicket win over Comilla Victorians to seal their spot in the qualifiers of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka yesterday.

With the win, Barishal finished third in the points-table, put Khulna Tigers out of contention for a spot in the knockout phase and settled the top four of the table on the final day of the group stage.

Barishal will next face fourth placed Chattogram Challengers in the eliminator match on February 26 while Comilla, who finished second, will take on table-toppers Rangpur Riders in the first qualifier, an evening match on the same date.

The winner of the

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