

US announces \$2.5bn in fresh military aid to Ukraine

REUTERS, Washington

US President Joe Biden announced \$2.5 billion in additional security assistance for Ukraine yesterday as he uses his final weeks in office to surge military aid to Kyiv before President-elect Donald Trump takes power.

"At my direction, the United States will continue to work relentlessly to strengthen Ukraine's position in this war over the remainder of my time in office," Biden said in a statement.

Biden's announcement includes \$1.25 billion in military aid drawn from US stockpiles and a \$1.22 billion Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) package. Under USAI, military equipment is procured from the defense industry or partners, rather than drawn from American stocks, meaning it can take months or years to arrive on the battlefield.

Anger in Germany at Musk attempt to 'influence' election

AFP, Berlin

Germany's government said yesterday US billionaire tech baron Elon Musk is trying to sway February elections by praising the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), a move strongly rejected by major parties.

Musk -- a key supporter of US President-elect Donald Trump, and his incoming "efficiency czar" -- posted on his social media platform X this month that "only the AfD can save Germany".

He then doubled down on the claim with an opinion piece in a German Sunday newspaper.

Yesterday, German government spokeswoman Christiane Hoffmann said that "it is a fact that Elon Musk is trying to exert influence on the parliamentary election".

"In Germany, elections are decided by voters at the ballot box," she told a regular press conference, adding that the country's "elections are a matter for Germans".

Europe's biggest economy will head to the polls on February 23 after the collapse of centre-left Chancellor Olaf Scholz's unruly coalition government last month.



Activists and journalists from the civil society take part in a solidarity stand to demand the participation of displaced Syrians and refugees in the political process and national dialogue in Damascus, Syria, yesterday, after president Bashar al-Assad was ousted. PHOTO: REUTERS

31 Kurdish, Turkish-backed fighters killed

Says Syria war monitor 'as both sides seek to advance' during ongoing battles in the country's north

AFP, Beirut

A Syria war monitor said 31 combatants had been killed since Sunday in ongoing battles between Turkey-backed groups and Kurdish-led forces.

Swathes of northern Syria are controlled by a Kurdish-led administration whose de facto army, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), spearheaded the fight that helped defeat the Islamic State group in the country in 2019 with US backing.

Turkey accuses the main component of the SDF, the People's Protection Units (YPG), of being affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which both Washington and Ankara consider a terrorist group.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that seven pro-Turkish fighters were killed in clashes yesterday in the northeastern Manbij region, in Aleppo province.

SDF fighters had infiltrated the city of the same name after it was retaken by Ankara-backed groups earlier this month, the monitor said.

Six other pro-Turkish fighters and three members of the SDF were killed the day before in the same part of Aleppo province, it said.

The SDF said yesterday that it



had carried out attacks elsewhere in the province that destroyed "two radars, a jamming system and a tank of the Turkish occupation" near a strategic bridge over the Euphrates.

According to the Observatory, 13 members of the pro-Turkey factions and two members of the SDF "were killed as a result of flaring battles" near the bridge and the Tishreen Dam.

The Britain-based Observatory said clashes in the area had been going on for around three weeks "as both sides seek to advance".

Turkey has staged multiple operations in SDF areas since 2016, and Ankara-backed groups

have captured several Kurdish-held towns in northern Syria in recent weeks.

The fighting has continued since rebels led by Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS) ousted longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad from power on December 8.

New Syrian leader Ahmed al-Sharaa, whose HTS group has long had ties with Turkey, told Al Arabiya TV on Sunday that the Kurdish-led forces should be integrated into the national army.

"Weapons must be in the hands of the state alone. Whoever is armed and qualified to join the defence ministry, we will welcome them," he said.

71 dead in Ethiopia road accident

AFP, Nairobi

The death toll from a road accident in southern Ethiopia has risen to at least 71, according to a local police official.

In a Facebook post late Sunday, the Sidama Police Commission Traffic Prevention and Control Directorate said that "68 males and three females are known to have died in the accident so far", citing Chief Inspector Daniel Sankura.

The police commission said the incident occurred at around 5:30 pm local time (1430 GMT) when the vehicle plunged off a road and into a river.

The post added that "two others have sustained heavy physical injuries", but did not detail any further information about the number of passengers onboard at the time of the incident.

The accident occurred in Sidama state -- some 300 kilometres (180 miles) south of the capital Addis Ababa -- in the Eastern Zone, in Bona Zuria Woreda.

Blurred images shared by the health bureau earlier showed a mass of people surrounding a vehicle, partially submerged in water, with many seemingly attempting to help pull it from the waters.

Pull back from 'road to ruin'

UN urges world as climate change brought extreme weather, heat in 2024

AFP, Geneva

Climate change sparked a trail of extreme weather and record heat in 2024, the United Nations said yesterday, urging the world to pull back from the "road to ruin".

The outgoing year is set to be the warmest ever recorded, the UN's weather and climate agency said, capping a decade of unprecedented heat.

Meanwhile emissions of greenhouse gases grew to new record highs, locking in more heat for the future, the World Meteorological Organization said.

"Climate change plays out before our eyes on an almost daily basis in the form of increased occurrence and impact of extreme weather events," WMO secretary general Celeste Saulo said.

"This year we saw record-breaking rainfall and flooding events and terrible loss of life in so many countries, causing heartbreak to communities on every continent.

"Tropical cyclones caused a terrible human and economic toll, most recently in the French overseas department of Mayotte in the Indian Ocean."

"Intense heat scorched dozens of countries, with temperatures topping 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit) on a number of occasions. Wildfires wreaked devastation," Saulo added.

Russia pledged to punish those responsible

Says Azerbaijan on Dec 25 plane crash

AFP, Baku

Azerbaijan said yesterday that Moscow had promised to punish those responsible for the downing of an Azerbaijan Airlines plane that Baku says was shot at by Russian air defences.

The AZAL Embraer 190 jet crash-landed in Kazakhstan on December 25, killing 38 of the 67 people on board.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has demanded that Moscow accept responsibility for mistakenly shooting the plane as it tried to make a scheduled landing at Grozny airport in south Russia.

Russia has not confirmed that one of its air-defence missiles hit the plane, though President Vladimir Putin told Aliyev in a phone call over the weekend that the systems were active at the time and that he was sorry the incident took place in Russian airspace.

Azerbaijan's General Prosecutor said in a statement yesterday that the head of Russia's Investigative Committee had told Baku: "Intensive measures are being carried out to identify the guilty people and bring them to criminal responsibility."

Russia has opened a criminal inquiry into the incident but has not said whether it agrees that the plane was hit by one of its air-defence missiles, and has not said anything about finding or bringing any perpetrators to justice.

Aliyev had issued a rare forthright condemnation of Moscow -- a close partner of Baku -- on Sunday.



A Jeju Air official bows his head and apologises to the bereaved families of passengers of the Jeju Air flight that crashed and burst into flames at Muan International Airport in Muan, South Korea yesterday. Inset, South Korea's opposition Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung meets family members of the victims. South Korea's acting President Choi Sang-mok has ordered an emergency safety inspection of the country's entire airline operation. PHOTO: AFP

Mamata ranks poorest among India's CMs

Says ADR report


INDIA TODAY ONLINE

India's Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is the richest chief minister in India with assets worth over Rs 931 crore, while West Bengal's Mamata Banerjee is the poorest with just Rs 15 lakh, according to an Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) report released yesterday.

The report said the average asset per chief minister (CM) from state assemblies and union territories is Rs 52.59 crore.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, with assets worth Rs 55 lakh, is the second poorest in the list and Pinarayi Vijayan is third with Rs 118 crore.

While India's per capita net national income was approximately Rs 1,85,854 for 2023-2024, the average self-income of a chief minister is Rs 13,64,310, around 7.3 times the average per capita income of India.



বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড

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e-Tender Notice

The Following e-Tenders is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of :

| SL No | Tender ID No. | Package No. | Reference No. | Description of Goods/Works | Last Selling Date and time | Closing Date and time | Opening Date and time |
|-------|---------------|------------------|--|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | 1056293 | GR-17 FY 2024-25 | 27.11.0000.304.25 .422.24 date: 29.12.2024 | Procurement of Charge Air Filter and Charge Air Cooler of Faridpur 50MW Peaking Power Plant, BPDB, Faridpur | 16-01-2025 13.30 | 16-01-2025 14.00 | 16-01-2025 14.00 |

This is online Tender. Where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

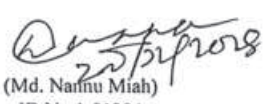
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Band Branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

For more details please contract to the PE's Support Desk (01755575443).

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জিডি- ১৩০৩



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