

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 (USAID) package. Under USAID, 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.

The SDF said yesterday that it



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.

As 2024 draws to a close, the year presents both progress and persistent challenges. While there have been achievements in football, cricket, and hockey, the need for comprehensive reform and greater investment in sports infrastructure is more evident than ever.

For now, the sports community continues to wait for the realisation of the long-promised changes that will take Bangladesh sports to the next level in the foreseeable future, if not in 2025.

Progress in sport setbacks, and a call for reform

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more by the ongoing drama surrounding the squad. At the centre of it was Shakib Al Hasan, who called it quits from T20Is, and his Test farewell was overshadowed by his political affiliations. This was followed by a bowling ban, adding to the already controversial atmosphere surrounding his career. Fellow stalwart Mahmudullah Riyad also called time on his T20I career, quietly stepping away, much like his well-known predecessors.

The women cricketers, too, showed signs of progress but not without going through trials. A first-ever T20 World Cup victory, which came against Scotland, broke

a long-standing rut for the Tigresses, but getting whitewashed in home series by Australia and India left a bitter taste. Nevertheless, the introduction of the country's first first-class tournament for women late in the year was a landmark decision.

The youth, meanwhile, kept on giving. Bangladesh footballers claimed both the SAFF U-19 Women's Championship and U-20 Men's Championships, while the young cricketers defended their U-19 Asia Cup crown, underlining the potential of grassroots development when executed effectively.

In hockey, 2024 proved to be a pivotal year. Despite its illustrious past in Bangladesh, the sport is hanging by a thread,

and the youth team's qualification for the FIH Junior World Cup offered a beacon of hope for a sport at risk of fading into obscurity.

On the administrative front, hopes for a more progressive sporting environment were high following the political shift in August, with leadership changes raising expectations for improvements in planning, management, and infrastructure. However, the full impact of these transitions has yet to be seen, although these are still early days.

The year also saw the long overdue passing of the torch in the leadership of two major sports bodies. Faruque Ahmed took over as president of the

Bangladesh Cricket Board, while Tabithi Awal replaced Kazi Salahuddin at the helm of the BFF. These changes have sparked hopes for a brighter future, and results are expected to be fully realised sooner rather than later.

Alongside these shifts, the sports community in Bangladesh mourned the loss of two legends. Chess grandmaster Ziaur Rahman, a pioneer who inspired generations of players, and Zakaria Pintu, the captain of the Swadhin Bangla Football Team during the Liberation War, passed away, leaving a legacy that will be remembered for generations to come.

Bangladesh's participation in the Paris Olympics, for the eleventh

time, was again marked by disappointment. The country once again failed to secure its first-ever medal, while the gap between Bangladesh and top-tier sporting nations remains increasingly wide.

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Hasina sued at ICT for enforced disappearance

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SM Moiul Karim, another prosecutor, said, "ICT's investigation agency will investigate the complaint before the complaint is filed as a case."

The UPDF leader also submitted a towel, which

according to him was used to blindfold him when he was kidnapped. Mikel was accompanied by writer and activist Rahnuma Ahmed yesterday.

On December 18, Mikel filed the verbal complaint to the ICT chief prosecutor. He

also told reporters how he was abducted, where he was taken, and what he faced while in detention.

"During interrogation, they asked me about a rally held in Khagrachhari in 2013. Supporters of our organisation had blocked the

road, causing a two-hour delay for the rally attended by Sheikh Hasina. At the rally, Hasina threatened to take action against those who created the obstruction," he said.

Meanwhile, the ICT investigation agency interrogated

inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun, who is accused of crimes against humanity during the July mass uprising.

The tribunal asked the agency to wrap up the investigation by February 20.

INTERNATIONAL

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.

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.

Azerbaijan 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.

AL can join

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voters' doubts by going door-to-door to include those left out of the voter list.

The process of updating the voter list will begin shortly, and strict

measures will be taken

against anyone attempting to register illegally.

He further said, "I want to tell you that this election will not be like the previous ones. We will make every effort for this. We will need everyone's cooperation for this."

Dentist 'taken'

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picked my niece up. They hit my sister [the victim's mother] on the head and neck when she tried to protect her daughter."

The relative further said that the victim's father was injected with sedatives, and when he came to his senses, the abductors dumped him on a highway in Sirajganj. He was then later rescued by police.

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.

"We're currently at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, where my sister is under treatment. We still don't know where my niece is," he told The Daily Star.

Contacted, Md Moniruzzaman, officer in-charge of Sholongha Police

Speaking to The Daily Star around 9:30pm, Matiur Rahman, OC of the station, said, "The victim's father was under treatment. We are working to file a case. We are working to rescue the girl and will take legal action upon investigation."

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 Goods/Works	of 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 contact to the PE's Support Desk (01755575443).

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বিদ্যুৎ/জন-৬১৩(২)/৩০/১১/২৪
 জিডি- ১৩০৩