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Drone debris kills another Bangladeshi in the UAE

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Falling shrapnel from an intercepted drone in the UAE's Fujairah killed a Bangladeshi national yesterday, pushing the death toll of Bangladeshis in the US-Israel war on Iran to six.

"Shrapnel falling from the interception of a drone ... resulted in the killing of a person of Bangladeshi nationality," the UAE's official WAM news agency said in a post on X.

The identity of the deceased could not be ascertained till filing of this report last night.

The first victim of the war was Ahmed Ali, also known as Saleh Ahmed, who died in the UAE on February 28 when US-Israeli strikes on Iran began. SM Tareq, a 48-year-old migrant worker, died in Bahrain on March 2 after debris from an intercepted drone fell on an industrial area.

On March 8, Bacchu Miah of Kishoreganj and Mosharraf Hossain of Tangail were killed in a missile

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DANCIN' IN THE RAIN ... Young people enjoying a sudden downpour at Dhaka University's TSC last night. The rain, coming after a few days of scorching heat, provided a fleeting moment of relief and release.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

RUSSIAN FUEL US open to Dhaka's waiver request



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US will positively consider Bangladesh's request for a special waiver to buy refined diesel and other petroleum products from Russian sources, according to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office.

According to the statement, Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman met US Energy Secretary Chris Wright at the Department of Energy in Washington, DC, on Tuesday and explained the energy-related challenges Bangladesh is facing due to supply chain disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz amid the US-Israel war on Iran.

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First crewed lunar mission in 50 years launches today

REUTERS, Cape Canaveral

Nasa is set to launch four astronauts as soon as 4:24am today on a 10-day flight around the moon, marking the most ambitious US space mission in decades and a major step toward returning humans to the lunar surface before China's first crewed landing.

Nasa mission managers on Monday polled "go" to launch the Artemis II mission's towering, 322-ft (98-m) Space Launch System (SLS) rocket topped with the astronauts' Orion crew capsule as early as 6:24 pm EDT yesterday.



It will launch from Nasa's Kennedy Space Center in Florida just one pad away from where the last moon-bound astronauts of the US Apollo program lifted off more than half a century ago.

The Artemis II crew includes Nasa astronauts Christina Koch, Victor Glover and Reid Wiseman and Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen, who landed in Florida from Houston on Friday.

They had been in a two-week quarantine leading up to liftoff and spent time with their families over the weekend at the Kennedy Space Center's beach house, a spot where astronauts rest before blasting off into space.

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BRIBERY CLAIM AT ICT Initial probe finds CCTV hard drive swap: prosecutor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Crimes Tribunal Prosecutor Tanvir Hassan Zoha yesterday said preliminary findings suggest hard drives meant to remain inside the tribunal's CCTV system had been replaced.

"From our initial findings, we have learned that the hard drives were replaced. Completely new drives were installed there. This is now under investigation," Zoha said while speaking to reporters at the ICT premises.

The issue surfaced during an attempt to verify an allegation that a family member of an accused, who later became a state witness in the Ashulia body-burning case, had entered the room of ICT Prosecutor Gazi MH Tamim carrying a bag of money.

ICT Prosecutor BM Sultan Mahmud earlier alleged that a member of the family of former police sub-inspector Sheikh Abzalul Haque, an accused in the case, entered Tamim's room with a bag containing money.

"In the preliminary stage, we have seen indications in the CCTV footage and the registrar records that some of the hard drives were replaced with others, both old and new," Zoha said.

He added that the matter has

AGENCIES

India's oil ministry said yesterday that domestic jet fuel prices would rise as the Middle East war pushed up energy costs, but that it had cushioned airlines from an expected 100 percent jump.

Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) makes up a substantial chunk of airlines' expenses, and sustained increases could translate into higher airfares. State-run refiner Indian Oil Corporation said that ATF prices rose by 8.5 percent in the capital Delhi, with similar rises in other major cities.

"Due to the closure of Strait of Hormuz, and extraordinary situation in global energy markets, price of ATF for domestic markets was expected to increase by more than 100 percent on April 1," the Ministry of Petroleum said in a statement.

In Nepal, the state-run Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) has increased aviation fuel prices by up to 117.4 percent for international flights, effective after midnight on Tuesday.

The NOC said increases of 84.7 percent, 116.2 percent and 117.4 percent for international flights from Kathmandu, Pokhara and Bhairahawa, respectively, were needed to make payments to Indian Oil Corporation on time and avoid further supply disruptions.

Prices for domestic flights have been

increased by 97.6 percent, NOC said.

Nepal increased petrol and diesel prices by 9.55 percent and 7.0 percent, respectively, and started rationing cooking gas earlier this month, reports AFP.

In Cambodia, diesel price yesterday



reached double its level at the start of the war after the latest government increase, official figures showed.

Millions of Cambodian farmers are facing hardship as rising fuel and fertiliser costs are fuelling their production costs since the conflict began.

"When the price of fuel is rising, the prices of inputs, fertiliser, (and) services including transportation also rises, and smallholders are not profitable," Cambodian Farmer Federation Association of Agricultural Producers Chief Executive Sok Sotha told Bernama.

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India hikes jet fuel, commercial LPG prices

Nepal too raises aviation fuel cost; Cambodia increases diesel price

Italy miss out on WC again Congo, Iraq end long wait

AFP, Paris

Italy failed to qualify for a third consecutive World Cup as a play-off defeat on penalties to Bosnia and Herzegovina on Tuesday meant the Azzurri will not go to this year's tournament in North America, while Turkey, the Czech Republic and Sweden all secured their places at the finals.

Italy have won the World Cup four times, but they failed to qualify for the 2018 and 2022 tournaments and will once again have to watch from afar as the field is expanded to 48 teams in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Bosnia won 4-1 in the shoot-out in Zenica after their play-off final finished 1-1 at the end of extra time, with Sandro Tonali the only Italy player to score from the spot as Francesco Pio Esposito blazed their first penalty over and Bryan Cristante smashed his kick against the crossbar.

Moise Kean had given Gennaro Gattuso's Italy the lead on 15 minutes, but they were reduced to 10 men when Alessandro Bastoni was shown a straight red card late in the first half.

Bosnia equalised on 79 minutes through Haris Tabakovic, and with no further goals in extra time the tie was decided on penalties.



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29 dead as Russian military plane crashes

REUTERS

A Russian An-26 military transport plane crashed into a cliff in Crimea, killing 29 people on board, due to a possible technical malfunction, Russia's defence ministry said early yesterday, according to news agencies.

TASS news agency, quoting the ministry, said communication with the aircraft was lost at about 6:00 pm local time (1500 GMT) on Tuesday on a planned flight over Crimea. The peninsula, covered in sweeping mountains leading down to the coast of the Black Sea, was annexed by Russia from Ukraine in 2014.

"The defence ministry reported that a search team found the site of the catastrophe," TASS reported. "According to a report from the site, six crew members and 23 passengers on board were killed."

The ministry report did not say how many people were on board, but it made no mention of any survivors on the An-26, a light tactical military transport that has for decades been a mainstay that can carry cargo and up to 40 passengers over short and medium distances.

"There was no impact on the aircraft," TASS quoted the ministry as saying, implying that objects like missiles, drones and birds were not involved.

"The preliminary cause of the crash is a technical malfunction. A commission from the military is working at the site," it said.

Russia's defence ministry did not respond immediately to a request for comment outside normal business hours.



Workers unloading watermelons from a cargo vessel at the Sadarghat Launch Terminal in Dhaka yesterday. As the harvesting season peaks, massive shipments of the juicy fruit are arriving in the capital from the southern districts. Wholesalers are selling 100 watermelons for between Tk 10,000 and Tk 15,000, depending on their size.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

2 arrested over rape of schoolgirl

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhenaidah

Police yesterday arrested two people in a case filed over the abduction and rape of a class 10 student in Jhenaidah's Maheshpur and recording a video of the act on March 26.

The arrestees are Md Hazrat Ali, 22, of Bagdiar Aair village in Maheshpur upazila, and Aser Ali alias Raju, 18, of Samanta Charatla Para of the upazila, said Maheshpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mehedi Hasan.

The victim's aunt filed a case on Monday night with the police station accusing four people of rape and recording the video. Besides Hazrat Ali, the other accused are Md Shaon, 20, Nayan, 23, and Amin, 21-- from Bagdiar Aair village.

Police said they are conducting drives to arrest the other accused.

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