

## EU unblocks \$106b loan for Ukraine after Hungary row

AFP, Brussels

The EU yesterday gave the green light to unblock a 90-billion euro (\$106 billion) loan for Kyiv, after the deadlock was broken in a months-long row between Ukraine and Hungary over a damaged pipeline.

Diplomats said the definitive sign-off should come by today as Budapest waits for Russian oil to arrive through the Druzhba pipeline after Kyiv said operations had restarted.

The bitter feud over the pipeline pitted Hungary's nationalist premier Viktor Orban against Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, stalling the vitally needed funds for Kyiv.

Resolving the standoff will allow Brussels to start paying out the loan in the coming months that Ukraine requires to plug its budget four years into Moscow's invasion.

Kremlin-friendly Orban — who suffered a crushing election defeat this month — had vowed that he would not budge until Ukraine repaired the pipeline.

## Attacks in Lebanon strain ceasefire on eve of talks

Hezbollah and Israel accuse each other of ceasefire violations

REUTERS, Beirut/Jerusalem

An Israeli strike killed two people in southern Lebanon yesterday, Lebanon's state news agency reported, and Hezbollah said it launched an attack drone at Israeli forces in the south, further straining a ceasefire between the Iran-backed group and Israel.

On the eve of talks in Washington between Lebanese and Israeli ambassadors, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said Beirut would seek an extension of the 10-day, US-mediated ceasefire, which is set to expire on Sunday.

Hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel reignited on March 2, when the Lebanese group opened fire in support of Iran.

The US-brokered ceasefire in Lebanon emerged separately from Washington's efforts to resolve its conflict with Tehran, though Iran had called for Lebanon to be included in any broader truce. The United States has denied any link between the tracks.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said the Israeli strike hit a car in al-Tiri, a village in south Lebanon, killing two people inside. The Israeli military didn't immediately respond to a request



for comment.

Hezbollah said it attacked an Israeli artillery position in southern Lebanon with a drone, in response to what it said was an Israeli violation of the ceasefire. The Israeli military said it had intercepted "a hostile aircraft" launched by Hezbollah towards Israeli soldiers in south Lebanon.

More than 2,400 people have been killed in Lebanon since Israel launched an offensive in response to Hezbollah's March 2 attack, according to Lebanese authorities. Israel has seized a belt of territory

at the border where its troops remain, saying it aims to create a buffer zone to shield northern Israel from attacks by Hezbollah, which fired hundreds of rockets at Israel during the conflict.

Israeli attacks on Lebanon also damaged or destroyed more than 62,000 housing units in the country, a government estimate found yesterday.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is set to attend today's meeting. Israel will be represented by its ambassador to Washington, Yechiel Leiter.

## MANDELSON ROW UK PM says he won't resign

AFP, London

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer yesterday insisted he would not resign, claiming allegations of misleading MPs over his appointment of a party loyalist as UK envoy to Washington had been "put to bed".

Starmer's remarks in parliament came as the beleaguered premier faced fresh calls to step down over his admitted error of judgement in appointing veteran former politician Peter Mandelson to the coveted post.

The premier spoke to lawmakers a day after the foreign ministry's most senior official, Olly Robbins, gave evidence to a parliamentary committee, having been fired by Starmer over the affair last week.

Starmer has accused Robbins of failing to tell him about problems that emerged during Mandelson's security clearance.

Starmer told MPs that Robbins clearly answered "no" when asked if he had shared the recommendation "with me, number 10 or any other ministers".

"That puts to bed all the allegations levelled at me ... in relation to dishonesty," he said.

The exact nature of the risks raised by vetting officials has not been made public. Robbins has said that they did not relate to Mandelson's relationship with late US sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

## Nepal home boss quits after weeks in office

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's home minister stepped down yesterday over growing criticism of his finances, the second member of the cabinet to leave the new government just weeks after it was formed.

Sudan Gurung, a key figure in the Gen-Z protests in September that toppled Nepal's previous government, said he was leaving his post to ensure a "fair investigation".

"For me, morality is greater than a position, and there is no greater power than public trust... Public life should be clean, leadership should be accountable," said 38-year-old Gurung, who took office on March 27.

Gurung is the second minister to leave the new government after the labour minister Deepak Kumar Sah was dismissed over allegations of committing misconduct by getting his wife appointed to a health insurance board.

Dipa Dahal, press advisor to Prime Minister Balendra Shah, confirmed Gurung's resignation had been received.

Gurung participated in the deadly protests that began as a demonstration against a brief social media ban, but were fed by wider grievances over corruption and a poor economy.

At least 76 people were killed and more than 2,500 wounded during the two days of violence in September.

In January, Gurung joined the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) and won a seat in parliament after the party swept to a landslide victory in the March elections.

Gurung made headlines a day after taking his oath of office for arresting former prime minister KP Sharma Oli and ex-home minister Ramesh Lekhak for their alleged involvement in the deadly crackdown on protesters in September.

But soon he himself was beset by allegations over his financial investments and assets, as well as links with a businessman being investigated for money laundering.

Last week, Shah and his cabinet disclosed their assets to the public, in line with local laws requiring lawmakers to declare their financial status.

Soon after the disclosure, local media reported that Gurung had not revealed some of his financial investments.



## We are open to opposition input

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He said the current parliament was earned through the blood of many martyrs and reflects the hopes and aspirations of the people of Bangladesh for a brighter future.

"The issue we discussed today is undoubtedly an important one ... It's not only crucial for Bangladesh; considering global politics and realities, it is an issue of great importance for all of the world."

He, however, did not mention the word "crisis" in his speech.

At the start of the discussion, Shafiqur in his notice said it was unfortunate that while the nation is suffering from fuel shortages, government representatives continue to deny the crisis and issue misleading claims.

He noted that people across the country are unable to get fuel despite waiting in lines for hours on end at the filling stations, creating a multifaceted crisis in public life.

Taking the floor later, the opposition leader said, "If the ruling party feels it

is necessary, we can form a common committee to fully address this issue and find a comprehensive solution. We have some proposals, which we will hand over to you, since execution will be through the government.

State Minister for Energy Aninda Islam Amit said the government has been acting responsibly to tackle the current fuel situation triggered by turmoil in the Middle East.

He noted that reserves are secured until May and

despite mounting pressure. "We had to make this adjustment based on practical realities," Aninda said, adding that long lines of bikers and cars at pumps do not reflect the actual state of fuel supply.

Opposition MP Masud Parves, from Jamaat-e-Islami, said farmers had to travel 15-20 kilometers for irrigation but received only two-three liters of fuel.

"Alongside the fuel price hike, LPG [Liquefied petroleum gas] prices have also been raised, and it is not available at the government-fixed rate," he said, adding that business leaders are saying that fuel shortage has already transferred many work orders from Bangladesh to neighbouring countries.

Another opposition MP from the Jamaat-led alliance, National Citizen Party's Atiqur Rahman Mujahid blamed the government's domestic and international management failure for the current fuel situation. He said a lack of accurate information has provoked

public uncertainty.

He added that forming a national crisis committee with members from both treasury and opposition benches would be a solution.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed rejected claims of a "fuel crisis". "Have any mills or factories shut down? Are schools and colleges closed? Cultivation is continuing as normal — then where is the crisis?"

Energy Minister Iqbal Hassan Mahmood said the government has increased the supply to the pumps since the war on Iran began. He added that some queues at petrol stations are being crowded by individuals with dishonest intentions, preventing genuine consumers from getting fuel.

He questioned whether everyone in line genuinely needed fuel, or if some riders were simply trying to resell it for profit.

"The so-called crisis being talked about does not exist; we are supplying as much fuel as required."



**Have any mills or factories shut down? Are schools and colleges closed? Cultivation is continuing as normal — then where is the crisis?**

Salahuddin Ahmed  
Home Minister

"We can only cooperate by offering advice ... The government may adopt what it finds useful and discard what it considers irrelevant — there is no problem with that. We want to sit with an open heart."

Shafiqur added, "But we do hope that our sincere submissions will not be rejected unnecessarily — for the sake of the country and the nation."

efforts are underway to extend them through July.

After the war broke out, fuel prices rose by 38 percent in Pakistan, 40 percent in Sri Lanka, and 50 percent in the United States. Meanwhile, India restructured its tariff system. In contrast, Bangladesh increased prices by only 10-17 percent. Considering the farmers, the government initially avoided price adjustments

## Nato 'will always defend' Turkey

Says alliance chief amid tensions in the Middle East

AFP, Ankara

Nato chief Mark Rutte yesterday said the alliance would do "what's necessary to defend" its members including Turkey after intercepting four missiles fired from Iran and heading into Turkish airspace over the past weeks.

A member of the US-led defence alliance, Turkey, which borders Iran, has been largely spared the sort of retaliation from Tehran suffered by countries in the Middle East before the ceasefire.

Nato forces had shot down ballistic missiles fired from Iran for four times, prompting the alliance to deploy a new Patriot missile battery at Incirlik air base in southern Turkey.

"Iran is spreading terror and chaos, and you feel this prominently here in Turkey," Rutte told journalists on a visit to Turkey's largest defence electronics company Aselsan.

"In recent weeks, Nato has successfully intercepted ballistic missiles heading to Turkey from Iran on four separate occasions," he said.

"Nato is prepared for such threats and will always do what is necessary to defend Turkey and all others. And we cannot do it alone," he added.

Rutte's visit comes ahead of a July summit by Nato leaders to be held in Ankara.

Praising the progress made by Turkey in the defence field, Rutte said: "We can learn a lot from what Turkey is doing here".

"This is needed because we live in a more dangerous world... and that means we need strong defences to protect our security".

Rutte said: "Turkey has gone through a defence industrial revolution. I could really say it's a revolution in recent years".

The Nato chief is due to meet with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has urged the US and Israel as well as Iran to stop fighting that has roiled the global economy.

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বিষয়: দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি সংবাদের প্রকাশ।

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**নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

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*M. Hossain*  
২২/০৪/২০২৬  
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সুপ্রসচিব (প্রশাসন)  
ও  
সভাপতি  
বিভাগীয় নির্বাহন কর্মী  
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