



Israel PM sees Iran nuke deal 'shortly'

Warns it'll be weak

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett yesterday said that Iran may "shortly" agree a new nuclear deal with major powers but warned it will be weaker than the original 2015 agreement.

Bennett was speaking ahead of a cabinet meeting following indications that the outline of a deal was taking shape at talks in Vienna.

"We may see an agreement shortly," Bennett said, adding that the deal that appeared to be in the making "is shorter and weaker than the previous one".

Bennett has been a staunch opponent of the deal and repeatedly warned any revenue Tehran sees as a result of new sanctions relief will be used to purchase weapons that could harm Israelis.

'Biggest war since 1945' on the cards

Warns UK PM if Russia invades Ukraine; Berlin, Kyiv push back against US warnings



AFP, London

Russia is preparing to plunge Europe into its worst conflict since World War II, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said, warning that any invasion of Ukraine would freeze Moscow out of global finance.

"The fact is that all the signs are that the plan has already in some senses begun," he said in a BBC interview broadcast yesterday from the Munich Security Conference, after two Ukrainian soldiers were killed in attacks around rebel-held enclaves.

"People need to understand the sheer cost in human life that could entail," he said, after previously indicating that the West would continue to support any Ukraine resistance after an invasion.

"I'm afraid to say that the plan we are seeing is for something that could be really the biggest war in Europe since 1945, just in terms of sheer

scale."

US President Joe Biden had said earlier on Friday that he was "convinced" Russian President Vladimir Putin had "made the decision" to attack Ukraine, sending fears soaring that a major conflict could break out in Europe. Johnson has urged western countries to be united like never before to face the challenge.

But the message of unity was slightly undermined by German FM Annalena Baerbock's refusal to echo US claims that Russia could invade Ukraine any moment now. "We do not know yet if an attack has been decided on," Baerbock said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, attending the same conference, also pushed back against Washington's dire predictions.

Speaking on the main stage in Munich, Zelensky said it was "difficult for me to judge" the US intelligence behind the warnings, but "I trust Ukrainian intelligence, who understand what's going on along our borders".

Saudi Arabia plans for fresh round of talks with Iran

REUTERS, Dubai

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said on Saturday the kingdom was looking to schedule a fifth round of direct talks with rival Iran despite a "lack of substantive progress" so far, and urged Tehran to change its behaviour in the region.

Saudi Arabia and Iran, which cut ties in 2016, launched talks last year hosted by Iraq as global powers sought to salvage a nuclear pact with Tehran, which Gulf states deemed flawed.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said if the 2015 nuclear pact was revived that should be "a starting point, not an end point" in order to address regional concerns, and that Riyadh remained interested in talks with Iran.

Earlier this month, Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi said Tehran was ready for more talks if Riyadh was willing to hold them in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect.

Sunni Muslim Saudi Arabia and Shia Iran are vying for influence in a rivalry that has played out across the region.

UK Queen catches 'mild' Covid: palace

AFP, London

Britain's 95-year-old Queen Elizabeth II tested positive for Covid-19 yesterday but her symptoms are "mild" and she intends to continue with light duties at her Windsor Castle residence, aides said.

The news comes after Prince Charles, the queen's eldest son and heir, tested positive on February 10, two days after meeting his mother at Windsor.

No information was given then on whether Queen Elizabeth -- who this month marked 70 years on the throne -- had taken any Covid tests herself.

She resumed in-person audiences at the castle last week, but complained to one attendee of suffering from stiffness and was photographed holding a walking stick.

While normally secretive about the queen's health, the palace has previously confirmed she is fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

Britain's Press Association said "it is understood a number of cases have also been diagnosed among the Windsor Castle team".

UK health secretary Sajid Javid, tweeted: "Wishing Her Majesty The Queen a quick recovery."

Keir Starmer, leader of the main opposition Labour party, also tweeted his best wishes for "a speedy recovery", adding: "Get well soon, Ma'am."

Nationwide celebrations to mark the queen's Platinum Jubilee are due to be held in June.

The queen, whose husband Prince Philip died aged 99 last April, has spent much of the coronavirus pandemic at Windsor Castle, with a reduced number of household staff dubbed "HMS Bubble". Respecting the government's then rules on Covid distancing, she sat alone at Philip's funeral.



Fresh hearing, fresh hope

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and ordered that Myanmar takes provisional measures to prevent further acts of genocide in the Rakhine State.

On October 23, 2020, The Gambia filed a memorial of more than 500 pages in its lawsuit against Myanmar, detailing how the Myanmar government was responsible for the Rohingya genocide.

Myanmar has not yet taken any initiative to grant citizenship or ensure other basic rights that Rohingyas have been deprived of.

Moreover, the Aung San Suu Kyi-led government while in power raised objections on January 20 last year over the eligibility of The Gambia for filing the case.

The political scenario changed in Myanmar with the country's military seizing control and the elected Suu Kyi-led government running a parallel government, the National Unity Government (NUG).

Although the NUG is yet to get international recognition, the UN

General Assembly has kept Kyaw Moe Tun -- appointed during the Suu Kyi-led government -- as the incumbent Permanent Representative for Myanmar to the UN.

On February 1, the NUG said it had withdrawn all preliminary objections to the case and that it accepts the jurisdiction of the ICJ for hearing the allegations.

The NUG also said it will work towards international criminal accountability and grant jurisdiction to the International Criminal Court for all crimes within Myanmar covered by the Rome Statute since July 2002.

It however is not certain whether this would affect the legal process as the NUG said that through a "bureaucratic idiosyncrasy" the ICJ has been communicating with Myanmar diplomats in Brussels who were under the junta's control.

"Should the ICJ recognise the military, it would embolden the junta to continue and escalate its daily atrocity crimes," the NUG said.

The NUG said given that the "illegal military junta itself has unlawfully detained Myanmar's agent and deputy agent", Ambassador Tun is the acting alternate agent authorised to engage with the ICJ.

According to a Reuters report, the registered representatives for Myanmar were junta-appointed Ko Ko Hlaing, its envoy for international coordination, and Myanmar Union Attorney General Thida Oo, who will head an eight-member legal team for the hearings.

International relations analysts say while the NUG is trying to gain international recognition by cooperating with the ICJ, its public statements of working for a federal democracy and supporting international criminal justice for Rohingyas could have far-reaching implications.

"Majority of Myanmar people are against military rule and we believe the NUG would regain power today or tomorrow as the legitimate elected government," said Nay San

Lwin, co-founder of Free Rohingya Coalition.

The NUG also has many secret documents proving the military junta's genocidal intent -- a fact that can establish the genocide case in the ICJ, he said.

Former Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque said it does not matter if the military or NUG represents at the ICJ. The issue is Rohingya justice, and the NUG is publicly pledging to ensure it.

"In recent times, the Rohingya genocide case appeared dormant. This hearing is bringing the issue to the fore again," he said.

Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of the Dhaka University's international relations department said the Myanmar military is now under serious international pressure and even the ASEAN is not including it in meetings.

"This is the right time for the international community to come together strongly on the case of Rohingya justice, their citizenship and repatriation," he said.

ACC puts up 13 allegations

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individuals suspected of corruption without a court order.

There was also an allegation that Sharif kept about Tk 93.6 lakh, which was seized from an accused, in his own custody for one year and four months.

Sharif said he kept the money at the vault at ACC office in Chattogram by informing his superiors, which is a common practice.

"I requested the bank to impose a no debit status on the accounts. It was a procedural mistake. It was done in good faith. I informed the bank that I would get a court order

soon."

In June 2021, Sharif was transferred to Patuakhali from Chattogram. A rights organisation then filed a writ challenging the transfer order. A fake order stating that "the High Court stayed his transfer" was circulated at the time.

The HC then asked the ACC to probe the matter. At the press conference yesterday, the ACC did not clarify whether Sharif had any involvement with the fake order.

Other allegations against Sharif were summoning innocent people, investigating at whim, and taking advantage by misusing power.

Sharif said the allegations were not true and said the ACC should prove the charges.

About the allegation that he failed to join the workplace in Patuakhali on time, Sharif said he had Covid at the time and medical documents about the infection were submitted to the commission.

Ten days before he was sacked, Sharif filed a general diary with Khulshi Police Station in Chattogram mentioning that his life had been threatened by individuals he was investigating.

The ACC secretary yesterday said the commission was not aware

of the matter.

However, The Daily Star has a copy of a letter Sharif wrote to the commission about the threats.

There was also an allegation that he misused power to get his brother recruited at Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited (KGDCL).

Sharif said in 2017, the KGDCL outsourced certain tasks to dozens of youths including his brother.

He said he didn't talk to any KGDCL official about recruitment.

Meanwhile, 10 Supreme Court lawyers, wrote to the registrar general, requesting him to examine the termination of Sharif.

Cabinet okays

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The cabinet secretary also cited a High Court order in 2020 that directed the government to take necessary steps to make "Joy Bangla" the national slogan.

"Joy Bangla" was the strongest slogan during the Liberation War and it helped Bangladeshis get united and fight against

the Pakistani regime.

The slogan, which translates as "Victory to Bengal", was not merely a political one, but a sign of commitment to the motherland and a symbol of national spirit and patriotism.

It became a rallying cry of people of all classes and ages irrespective of political affiliation during

the nine-month Liberation War in 1971.

National poet Kazi Nazrul Islam used the words "Joy Bangla" in his poem "Purna Abhinandan" in 1922.

Eighteen eminent citizens hailed the government's decision to make "Joy Bangla" a state slogan.

They are Abdul Gaffar

Chowdhury, Syed Hasan Imam, Anupam Sen, Ramendu Majumdar, Ferdousi Majumdar, Sarwar Ali, Abed Khan, Selina Hossain, Laila Hossain, Abdus Salam, Mofidul Hoque, Shofi Ahmed, Shahrir Kabir, Nasiruddin Yousuff, Muntassir Mamoon, Sara Zaker, Shimul Yousuff and Golam Quddus.

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রক্ত দিয়ে অর্জিত বর্ণমালা
আমার অলংকার
বিশ্বাসীর বিশ্বয়
আমার অহংকার

যাঁদের রক্তের বিনিময়ে অর্জিত বাংলা ভাষা
আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা দিবসে সেই সকল ভাষা শহীদদের জানাই
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Facing it together

FROM PAGE 12

returned to the hostel with a heavy heart.

After some time, we brought out a procession which went towards Race Course Ground. Police didn't stop us. Our procession returned to the Medical College gate and ended there. The whole area was devastated. We

returned to the hostel with a heavy heart.

Shafia Khatun was the vice president of Dhaka University Women's Students' Union during the Language Movement. Source: Bhasha Andolon Shatchallish theke Baanna (Ed. Mostofa Kamal, Bangladesh Co-operative Book Society Ltd, 1987).

Poet Quazi Rosy

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January 1, 1949, she was a former official of departments of information and films and publications.

Rosy received the Bangla Academy Award in literature in 2018 and the Ekushey Padak in 2021 for her contributions to

poetry.

"Pothghat Manusher Naam" and "Amar Piraner Kono Map Nei" are the prominent poetry books among her literary works.

After a state honour at her Dhanmondi home, the freedom fighter was buried at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' graveyard.

Diplomacy

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with Putin, Macron talked with Zelensky on the telephone, the French presidency said.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken yesterday said President Joe Biden ready to engage Putin "at any time in any format".

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