

34m Afghans in poverty under Taliban rule: UN

AFP, Kabul

The number of Afghans in poverty nearly doubled to 34 million as the nation was racked by the collapse of the US backed government and the Taliban takeover, the UN said yesterday.

After the US-backed republic fell in 2021, vast foreign subsidies were halted and aid programmes dramatically cut back as many countries refused to deal with the Taliban.

In December last year, those NGOs still providing vital help were dealt a further blow by a Taliban government order barring Afghan women from working for them.

This month, curfews were extended to UN's Afghan female employees and the organisation said it faces an "appalling choice" over whether to continue aid schemes. Yesterday, UNDP released data estimating 34 million Afghans were living below the poverty line.



People search for survivors next to damaged supply vehicles after a landslide close to the Torkham border in Pakistan yesterday. A landslide during a thunder and lightning storm on the main road through northwest Pakistan's Khyber Pass buried more than 20 trucks yesterday, killing at least two people, with dozens more feared trapped, officials said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Saudi FM meets Syria's Assad in Damascus

AFP, Damascus

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad met with Saudi Arabia's top diplomat in Damascus yesterday, state media reported, ending more than a decade of diplomatic deep-freeze between the two countries.

"President Bashar al-Assad meets Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan," Syria's official news agency SANA reported.

The Saudi prince arrived in Damascus yesterday afternoon on the first visit to Syria's capital by a Saudi official since the start of the country's civil war in 2011.

Assad has been politically isolated in the region since the conflict began, but a flurry of diplomatic activity has been underway in the past week as regional relations shift following a decision by Saudi Arabia and Damascus's ally Iran to resume ties.

The trip comes less than a week after Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad visited Saudi Arabia.

TENSIONS WITH CHINA, RUSSIA G7 ministers stress unity

Promise to intensify sanctions on Moscow for its war on Ukraine

REUTERS, Karuizawa

The Group of Seven industrial powers drew together yesterday to criticise China's coercion of Taiwan and Russia's threat to station nuclear weapons in Belarus, promising to intensify sanctions on Moscow for its war on neighbouring Ukraine.

"The strength of the solidarity between the G7 foreign ministers is at a level not seen before," Japan's Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi told a news conference after hosting a meeting of the group in the Japanese resort town of Karuizawa.

The show of unity comes after French President Emmanuel Macron this month said the European Union should reduce its dependency on the United States and cautioned against being drawn into a Taiwan crisis.

Beijing, which views Taiwan as Chinese territory and has not renounced the use of force to take the democratically governed island, rebuffed the G7 comments as gross interference in its internal affairs, however.

The G7 communique highlights how the dual issues of Russian military intervention and fears of

similar action by China against Taiwan have been a focus of the three-day meeting.

The group, which comprises the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Canada, described Russia's threat to put nuclear weapons in Belarus as "unacceptable". It said "any use of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons in Ukraine "would be met with severe consequences."



Russian President Vladimir Putin last month said Russia would station shorter-range, so-called tactical nuclear weapons because the Nato military alliance was expanding towards Russia's borders.

It was the first time since the Cold War ended three decades ago that Russia has suggested stationing nuclear forces in another country, raising the

stakes in its intensifying standoff with the West over Ukraine.

In a bid to limit Moscow's ability to wage its war, the G7 ministers in their communique also warned other nations, which the US and other Western nation worry could include China, not to supply Russia's armed forces.

"We will reinforce our coordination to prevent and respond to third parties supplying weapons to Russia," they said.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken last month said China had not yet supplied Russia with lethal aid, but US officials are also concerned about dual-use products, such as electronics components that can be used in missiles and other weapons.

In a news conference after the G7 meeting, Blinken criticised Russia after a days-long pause in the inspection of ships moving grains from Ukraine under a UN-brokered initiative. Yesterday, Russian media said inspections had restarted.

Taking direct aim at China, the ministers also agreed that peace and security in the Taiwan Strait were critical and opposed militarisation of the South China Sea. They called on Beijing to act.

Israeli forces shoot seven in West Bank raid

AFP, Nablus

Israeli forces shot and wounded seven people in a raid yesterday in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian health ministry said as the Israeli army confirmed an operation was underway.

The ministry reported "six minor injuries from live fire" reached Jenin governmental hospital, while another person shot had been admitted to a nearby hospital following the raid in the northern West Bank city.

A statement from the Israeli military said "security forces are currently operating in the Jenin (refugee) camp", without giving further details.

There was no immediate confirmation of the identity of those wounded in Jenin, a hotbed for Palestinian armed groups.

Frequent incursions by Israeli forces have led to clashes with local youth or militants, with at least 25 Palestinians killed in the city this year.

EASTERN CITY OF BAKHMUT Russia steps up assault

Detained US reporter denied bail in Moscow

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russian forces stepped up heavy artillery bombardments and air strikes on the devastated eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut, while President Vladimir Putin has met his commanders in two regions of Ukraine that Moscow claims to have annexed.

The Kremlin said Putin had attended a military command meeting in Ukraine's southern Kherson region and visited a national guard headquarters in eastern Luhansk. It did not say when the visits took place.

Putin heard reports from commanders of the airborne forces and the Dnieper army group as well as other senior officers who briefed him on the situation in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions in the south.

"It is important for me to hear your opinion on how the situation is developing, to listen to you, to exchange information," Putin, 70, told the commanders.

In Moscow, US journalist Evan Gershkovich's appeal against his pre-trial detention in a Moscow prison was rejected by a Russian court yesterday.

Gershkovich has been ordered to be held at least until May 29 on espionage charges. Before the hearing got underway, Gershkovich turned around when one of the Russian reporters in the courtroom told him to "Stay Strong!" and relayed to him that everyone said "Hi". A masked man with "FSB" written on his black uniform stood beside the cage as the judge rejected the appeal.

US man charged with shooting Black teen

AFP, Washington

Prosecutors in the US state of Missouri announced felony charges on Monday against an 85-year-old white man after he allegedly shot and severely wounded a Black teenager who mistakenly rang his doorbell. Ralph Paul Yarl, 16, was in critical condition after he was shot twice, once in the head, last Thursday night when he rang the doorbell at the wrong house while trying to pick up his twin brothers from a friend's home nearby. Outrage rose over the case throughout the weekend, after it was revealed that the homeowner had been released without charges following 24 hours in custody.

Mexico president slams US 'spying'

AFP, Mexico City

Mexico's president said Monday that his country would not tolerate spying by US on its security institutions, as an intelligence leak sparked new diplomatic tensions between the neighbours. "Acts of spying cannot be used to find out what our security institutions are doing and, furthermore, with the arrogance of leaking the information to The Washington Post," Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said. He was referring to a report citing a leaked US classified document on tensions between branches of Mexico's armed forces.



Participants are seen before the annual March of The Living to honour the victims of the Holocaust at the Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau on the site of the Auschwitz concentration camp in Oswiecim, Poland yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Toxic alcohol kills at least 27 in Bihar

AFP, Patna

Toxic hooch has killed at least 27 people in the eastern Indian state of Bihar where alcohol is banned, officials said yesterday, with unconfirmed reports putting the death toll at 40.

Selling and consuming liquor is prohibited in several parts of India, driving a thriving black market for potent and sometimes lethal backstreet moonshine that kills hundreds every year.

Initial investigations into the latest tragedy showed that poisonous methyl alcohol was mixed with spirit that proved deadly.

Police official Jitender Kumar told AFP that 27 deaths had been reported since Saturday.

Kumar said most of the victims were from poor families and used to consume locally made cheap tiple known as "Desi Daru".

Some local media put the toll at 40. Police have arrested 174 people in connection with illegal manufacturing, sale and supply of liquor over the last three days.

They have also seized and destroyed over 900 litres (240 gallons) of toxic liquor during raids.

CLIMATE POLICY EU Parliament adopts sweeping reforms

REUTERS, Strasbourg

The European Parliament yesterday approved sweeping reforms to make EU climate change policies more ambitious, including an upgrade of the bloc's carbon market that is set to hike the cost of polluting in Europe.


Europe's carbon market forces power plants and factories to buy CO2 permits when they pollute. It has slashed those sectors' emissions by 43 percent since 2005, but is facing a revamp to hit more ambitious EU climate change targets.

Parliament voted to approve, with a large majority, a deal agreed last

year by negotiators from EU countries and Parliament, to reform the carbon market to cut emissions by 62 percent from 2005 levels by 2030.

Under the upgrade, factories will lose the free CO2 permits they currently receive by 2034, and shipping emissions will be added to the CO2 market from 2024.

Lawmakers also backed the EU's world-first plan to phase in a levy on imports of high-carbon goods from 2026, targeting imports of steel, cement, aluminium, fertilisers, electricity and hydrogen.



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e-Tender Notice

This is to notify that the following tenders are invited in the national e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd):

Sl No.	Tender ID, Reference No.	Procurement Title	Type, Method	Publishing Date	Closing Date, Time
1.	808342, ISDSD/Services/12/126/2023	Supply of OEM services for Network Items	ICT, OTM	16-Apr-2023	28-May-2023 04:00 PM BST
2.	808329, ISDSD/Services/12/129/2023	Supply of OEM services for ICT Items	ICT, OTM	16-Apr-2023	28-May-2023 03:30 PM BST
3.	808310, ISDSD/Services/12/131/2023	Supply of OEM services for Servers	NCT, OTM	16-Apr-2023	07-May-2023 12:00 PM BST
4.	817780, ISDSD/Services/12/132/2023	Procurement of Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning, Implementation and related services of Database	ICT, OTM	16-Apr-2023	28-May-2023 04:00 PM BST
5.	817656, ISDSD/SERVICES/12/125/2023	Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning and Implementation of Network Switches including related services for Information Systems.	NCT, OTM	18-Apr-2023	09-May-2023 12:00 PM BST

These are online Tenders 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 portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

DCP: 48/2023-1024
Date: 18-04-2023

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ব্যাবকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে স্বরণানির শিকার হলে কিংবা
কোনো অবিভাগে থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

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