

## EU ministers seal ‘historic’ migration deal

REUTERS, Brussels

European Union ministers agreed on Thursday on how to share out the responsibility for looking after migrants and refugees, after 12 hours of negotiations got Italy and Greece to sign up to a deal that has eluded the bloc for nearly a decade.

Home affairs ministers from the 27-member bloc sealed the deal, hoping to end years of division dating back to 2015 when more than a million people – mostly fleeing war in Syria – reached the EU across the Mediterranean.

Germany’s Nancy Faeser hailed the agreement as “historic”. The bloc’s top migration official said it amounted to “a win-win” situation for member states. “This is a great, great achievement, showing that it’s possible to work together on migration,” home affairs commissioner Ylva Johansson said.

## INDIA’S MANIPUR

### 3 killed, 2 hurt in shooting by ‘insurgents’

NDTV ONLINE

Fresh violence in India’s Manipur state has claimed at least three lives, including of a woman. Two others were injured in the attack, by suspected insurgents in Khoken village yesterday, Army sources said.

The Khoken village lies on the boundary between Kangpokpi and Imphal West district.

The suspected militants and the victims belonged to different communities.

According to police sources, the attackers camouflaged themselves in army fatigues and drove vehicles resembling those used by the military.

They went to the Khoken village early yesterday morning and fired upon the villagers with their automatic rifles.



A Lebanese protester plants the national flag across the fence from an Israeli tank during an anti-Israeli demonstration near the “blue line” area, a demarcation line drawn by the UN to mark Israel’s withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, near the Lebanese southern village of Kfar Shuba yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## SUDAN CONFLICT

# US, Saudi mediators announce new truce

Warn warring sides of adjourning talks if ceasefire fails

AFP, Khartoum

Sudan’s warring generals have agreed to a 24-hour ceasefire from today, US and Saudi mediators said, acknowledging that previous attempts to pause a conflict now nearing its third month had proved abortive.

“Representatives of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) agreed to a 24-hour countrywide ceasefire beginning on June 10 at 6:00 am (0400 GMT),” said a joint statement from the mediators released by Saudi foreign ministry yesterday.

Multiple ceasefires have been agreed and broken, and Washington slapped sanctions on both the warring generals after the last attempt collapsed at the end of May, blaming them for the “appalling” bloodshed.

“Should the parties fail to

observe the 24-hour ceasefire, facilitators will be compelled to consider adjourning” talks in the Saudi city of Jeddah which have been suspended since late last month, the mediators said.

Since April, fighting between the regular army and the paramilitary RSF has gripped Khartoum and the flashpoint western region of Darfur, defying a series of truces.

Upwards of 1,800 people have been killed, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, and the UN says nearly two million people have been displaced, including 476,000 who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

The Saudi and US mediators said they “share the frustration of the Sudanese people about the uneven implementation of previous ceasefires”.

“If observed, the 24-hour ceasefire will provide an important opportunity... for the parties to undertake confidence-building measures which could permit resumption of the Jeddah talks,” the statement said.

Yesterday’s announcement comes a day after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken wrapped up a three-day visit to Saudi Arabia, where he held discussions on Sudan with top Saudi officials.

It also comes a day after Sudanese authorities loyal to the regular army declared UN envoy Volker Perthes “persona non grata”, accusing him of taking sides. UN chief Antonio Guterres has repeatedly defended Perthes.

Witnesses yesterday reported hearing clashes near the Yarmouk weapons manufacturing depot plumes of smoke were seen rising,

## GOVT STUDY

### 11 percent of Indians diabetic

REUTERS, New Delhi

Some 11 percent of Indians are diabetic, a government study found, adding that diabetes, hypertension and obesity are much more common in India than previously estimated.

The study of more than 113,000 people also found that around 15 percent of Indians were pre-diabetic and around 35 percent have hypertension. It was conducted between October 2008 and December 2020 across 31 Indian states and territories.

“It is quite evident from the study results that India has a substantial population at risk of cardiovascular disease and other long-term organ complications,” R.S. Dhaliwal, head of the non-communicable diseases division at ICMR, said.

## China slams US over reported ‘spy base’ in Cuba

AFP, Beijing

China warned the United States yesterday against “interfering in Cuba’s internal affairs”, in response to reports that Beijing was planning to set up a spy base on the island just off American shores.

The media reports, based on comments by anonymous US officials to The Wall Street Journal and CNN, were dismissed by Cuba’s deputy foreign minister as “mendacious and unfounded”, while the White House called them inaccurate.

When asked about the alleged spying base at a regular press briefing, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said he was “unaware of the situation” before criticising US policy on Cuba.

“As we all know, spreading rumours and slander is a common tactic of the United States, and wantonly interfering in the internal affairs of other countries is its patent,” said Wang.

“The United States should reflect on itself and stop interfering in Cuba’s internal affairs under the banner of freedom and democracy, and immediately cancel economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.”

The reports suggested that the Chinese spying base would be capable of eavesdropping on communications across broad swathes of the southeastern United States.

The developments come as Chinese leader Xi Jinping has pushed a rapid expansion of the country’s security presence around the world.

A base in Cuba, which lies 90 miles (150 kilometres) off Florida’s southern tip, would present the most direct challenge yet to the continental United States.

## Saudis not asked to choose between US, China: Blinken

AFP, Riyadh



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Saudi Arabia was not being forced to choose between Washington and Beijing, striking a conciliatory tone in Riyadh following tensions with the long-time ally. Blinken, appearing alongside his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan at the end of a three-

day visit, denied that Saudi Arabia’s warming ties with China were a problem for the US. He added that the United States supported the humanitarian goals that Prince Faisal said were behind lifting Syria’s suspension from the Arab League, a move that was condemned by Washington. “We’ve... been very clear we’re not asking anyone to choose between the US and China,” Blinken told media after a meeting of the global coalition fighting the IS group. “We’re simply trying to demonstrate the benefits of our partnership and the affirmative agenda that we bring.” China demonstrated its growing clout in the Middle East when it brokered a surprise rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran in March.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Rescuers, servicemen and volunteers evacuate local residents from a flooded area after the Nova Kakhovka dam breached in Kherson, Ukraine, yesterday.

## Many Dhaka dwellers

FROM PAGE 1

as Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) blamed load shedding.

They include people from Mohammadpur, Dhanmondi, Aftabnagar, Banashree, Jowarsahara, Badda, Shahjadpur, Dayaganj, KB Road, Madhya Basabo field-adjacent area, Maniknagar, Chan Mia Housing, Adabar, Shyamoli, East Rajabazar, Mohakhali, Jurain, Matuail, Azimpur New Paltan Lane, Gandaria, Rahmatpur, Konapara, Kadmatli, Utara Sector II & I2, Uttarkhan and Dakshinkhan, Ibrahimpur, Kafirul, and Bhashantek, said Wasa hotline sources.

Johirul Islam, of Dhalkanagar Lane, Gandaria, yesterday said he had to wait all day for Wasa’s tap water supply.

Despite claiming to have the capacity to supply water in surplus every day, Wasa has been failing to provide sufficient water to city dwellers when they needed it the most, the hottest time of summer.

Wasa claims to have the capacity to supply an average of 280 crore litres of water per day against the daily demand of 255-260 crore litres.

Dhaka Wasa’s Managing Director Taqsem A Khan said on Thursday that there is a water supply crisis in 5 out of 10 zones of Dhaka Wasa due to load shedding. “The pumps could not be operated for a sufficient amount of time due to the power crisis.”

“Last week, 158 of Dhaka Wasa’s 914 pumps remained idle for about 275 hours due to power outages. There is no alternative source of power to run the pumps.”

Adil Mohammed Khan, executive director of the Institute for Planning and Development, suggested that Wasa carry out a proper assessment of water demand while taking every possible situation into consideration.

He also suggested the agency keep ready alternative ways to solve the water crisis in the summer.

## 5 killed in Munshiganj

FROM PAGE 12

Police seized the truck but its driver managed to flee.

Meanwhile, tragedy struck a family twice as a man was killed in a road accident while returning home with his father’s body who died at a hospital in Dhaka due to old-age complications.

The deceased was identified as Emdad Hossain Shaon, 28, son of late Delwar Hossain of Miyapur village in Noakhali’s Begumganj upazila.

The accident happened when Delwar’s body was being taken to Begamganj for burial by an ambulance while a microbus carrying Emdad and his relatives was accompanying it.

When they reached the Baushia Pakhir Mor area under Munshiganj’s Gazaria upazila on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway at around 3:30am, an unidentified vehicle suddenly hit Emdad’s microbus from behind.

The microbus hit a road divider and overturned, leaving three of its passengers and the driver seriously injured, said ASM Rashedul Islam, in charge of Gazaria Bhabberchar Highway Police Outpost.

Locals took them to a local health complex where on-duty doctors declared Emdad dead, he added, quoting the victim’s family members and witnesses.

Two of his relatives – Ratna Begum, 40, and Kajal, 35, – and the microbus driver Al Amin, 28, were seriously injured in the accident.

“An unidentified vehicle hit the ambulance and fled the scene quickly. We are trying to trace the vehicle,” the police official said adding that Emdad’s body was handed over to his family members without autopsy on their request.

[Our correspondents from Munshiganj] and Jamalpur contributed to the report]

## No question of Prof Yunus dodging tax

FROM PAGE 12

Yunus Trust, (PMYT)”, a usual philanthropic trust, and the other, a smaller one (6 percent of the total money), for the benefit of his family members, called the “Yunus Family Trust (YFT)”.

He incorporated a provision in the trust deed of the YFT so that the remaining fund of this trust is transferred to the PMYT after one generation, read the statement.

He did it to ensure that the money in the trusts would be safe under the supervision of the trustees during his lifetime, and beyond and that the trustees would be active in achieving the objectives of the trusts, the statement also read.

How did the question of gift tax arise, the statement questioned.

If he had kept his money with him he would actually have to pay less tax, because the rate of personal income tax is lower than institutional tax. His income tax advisor advised that he would not have to pay gift tax if he donated the money to PMYT because it is a philanthropic trust.

As for the YFT, his tax advisor’s advice was that in such a case (the case of making some arrangement

for the safety of his wealth in his absence) he would not have to pay any tax because the law allows it, the statement read.

On the basis of this advice, Prof Yunus did not pay any tax at the time of transferring the money to both trusts. But the tax officer concerned, after Prof Yunus’s tax return was submitted, imposed a gift tax since there was a declaration of gift in the tax return, read the statement.

In consultation with his tax lawyer, Prof Yunus decided to seek a decision from the court. The court has given its opinion in favour of paying the tax.

There is no question of “evading tax” as being accused in the press. It was Prof Yunus who went to the court to seek a decision on whether he had to pay the tax. The government did not go to court to demand the tax. Tax authority never said, at any stage, that he evaded tax. There is no question of tax evasion here. The question was all about the interpretation of the law relating to the matter, the statement also read.

Now that the lower court has given a verdict in favour of paying the tax, Prof Yunus will have the option to pay the tax or go to the higher court

to get their judgement on the issue. If the relevant tax law does not require Prof Yunus to pay the tax, then he will have the opportunity to use the money for the benefit of the people and the planet in the way he thinks would be best. That was his sole concern with regard to the payment of the tax. He does not personally benefit from either paying or not paying this tax, the statement read.

A question has been raised in the media by some important people that Prof Yunus spends a large chunk of the trust money on his frequent personal travels abroad. It is not true at all, the statement added.

All his international travel expenses are borne by the host organisations who invite him to speak at their conferences and other events. In addition, host organisations pay all costs for an additional person to travel with him as his companion, the statement also read.

## Arafat

FROM PAGE 12

According to the election schedule, the last date for submitting nomination papers is June 15, while the date for scrutinising nomination papers is June 18. And, the last date for withdrawal of candidacy is June 25.

Responding to a query, Quader said the government does not have any plan to hold dialogue with the BNP at this moment.

“No decision was made to hold dialogue and we have no such plan now,” he said adding that only future can tell what will happen in the days to come.

Pointing out BNP’s three conditions – resignation of the prime minister and the government, and restoration of the caretaker government system – the AL general secretary said no such situation prevails in the country that requires resignation of the PM, the government and the caretaker government is a dead issue.

Quader also reiterated that the next national election will be held in the way elections are being held in other democratic countries.