

GAZA REBUILDING Europe hails Arab plan

AFP, Berlin

Britain, France, Germany and Italy yesterday backed a proposal by Muslim-majority nations to rebuild Gaza as a “realistic path”.

The counter-proposal to US President Donald Trump’s plan to take over Gaza and displace its residents “promises – if implemented – swift and sustainable improvement of the catastrophic living conditions for the Palestinians living in Gaza,” the foreign ministers of the four countries said in a joint statement.

The 57 member Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at an emergency meeting in Saudi Arabia, on Saturday formally adopted a plan put forward by the Arab League.

The Egyptian-crafted plan, an alternative to Trump’s widely condemned takeover, proposes to rebuild the Gaza Strip under the future administration of the Palestinian Authority.

Unlike the Trump plan, it aims to do so without displacing the territory’s 2.4 million inhabitants, who have suffered 17 months of war.

The OIC, which represents the Muslim world, in a statement urged



People stare at overturned vehicles on a road following a heavy storm that hit Bahia Blanca, 600 km south of Buenos Aires, Argentina, yesterday. At least ten people died and more than 1,000 were evacuated in the Argentine port city of Bahia Blanca as torrential rains flooded homes and hospitals, destroyed roads and forced authorities to cut power.

PHOTO: AFP

532 Alawites killed by Syrian security forces, allies

AFP, Beirut

Syrian security forces deployed heavily in the Alawite heartland on the Mediterranean coast yesterday, after a war monitor reported that government and allied forces killed more than 500 civilians from the religious minority in recent days.

Residents of the region continued to report killings of civilians after deadly clashes broke out on Thursday between Syria’s new authorities and gunmen loyal to toppled president Bashar al-Assad, himself an Alawite.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that “532 Alawite civilians were killed in the coastal regions of Syria and the Latakia mountains by security forces

and allied groups”.

The Britain-based Observatory said they were killed in “executions” carried out by security personnel or pro-government fighters” and accompanied by “looting of homes and properties”.

The civilian deaths brought the overall toll since Thursday to 745, after fighting killed 93 members of the new government’s security forces and 120 pro-Assad fighters, according to the Observatory’s figures.

The official SANA news agency reported that security forces had deployed to Latakia, as well as Jableh and Baniyas

farther south, to restore order.

Baniyas resident Samir Haidar, 67, told AFP two of his brothers and his niece were killed by “armed groups” that entered people’s homes, adding that there were “foreigners among them”.

He managed to escape to a Sunni neighbourhood, but said: “If I had been five minutes late, I would have been killed... we were saved in the last minutes.”

Though himself an Alawite, Haidar was part of the leftist opposition to the Assads and was imprisoned for more than a decade under their rule.

Defence ministry spokesman Hassan Abdul Ghani said the

security forces had “reimposed control” over areas that had seen attacks by Assad loyalists.

“It is strictly forbidden to approach any home or attack anyone inside their homes,” he added in a video posted by SANA.

The killings followed clashes sparked by the arrest of a wanted suspect in a predominantly Alawite village, the Observatory reported.

The monitor said there had been a “relative return to calm” in the region on Saturday, as the security forces deployed reinforcements.

A defence ministry source told SANA that troops had blocked roads leading to the coast to prevent “violations”, without specifying who was committing them.



Ex-MP’s house occupied, turned

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Miste, originally from Tangail’s Delduar upazila, currently resides in a rented house in Tangail’s Housing area. A year ago, she established an ashram for mentally ill individuals in a rented space in Santosh, Sadar upazila, under the name Al Mukaddas Foundation, they added.

Locals said the house belongs to Joaherul Islam Joaher, former AL lawmaker for Tangail-8 and district AL general secretary. He and his family have been on the run since the AL government fell on August 5 last year, leaving the house abandoned.

Joaher is accused of orchestrating attacks on SAD activists during the July-August uprising. Several cases, including for murder, have been filed

against him in different district police stations.

Speaking to local journalists, Miste said she had previously announced on Facebook that the homes of AL leaders would be converted into shelters for mentally challenged individuals.

Miste also claimed that they had plans to demolish the house. However, a man, on behalf of the owner, offered to build an ashram there instead.

She also said she would not live in or profit from the house.

Meanwhile, Sher Shah, member secretary of SAD’s Tangail district unit, told The Daily Star that they have no affiliation with Miste. While she participated in student protests, she holds no position in SAD.

“We learned about the occupation

through the media. No one from our movement is involved,” he said. He also said that SAD would not take responsibility for any crimes committed in the name of their movement.

Asked, Tangail Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Tanvir Ahmed said police have questioned Miste.

“She has refused to vacate the house. Authorities are assessing the next steps,” he added.

Speaking over the phone, Joaher’s daughter, Jakia Islam, said the house has remained vacant as most of her family members face legal charges.

“There is no rule of law and thus such chaos,”

She further alleged that on February 6, Miste led a mob that vandalised and looted their house.

Disturbing details emerge

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Gen Md Asaduzzaman said, adding that the child has been in critical condition from the beginning.

“Although she was under treatment at the DMCH, excessive presence of attendants was causing disruptions for other patients. Additionally, repeated interference from attendants was affecting the medical team’s ability to provide proper care.

“Considering these factors, it was decided to transfer the child to CMH for better medical attention and management.”

The DMCH had formed a four-member medical board to oversee her treatment, but doctors expressed little hope for her recovery.

“The injury to her neck is severe, and there are also injuries to her genitals. She was put on life support around 9:00pm on Friday. Doctors have almost given up hope,” said Brig Gen Asaduzzaman.

Earlier on Wednesday, the child, a third-grader, had gone to visit her elder sister’s house in Magura town to spend Ramadan holidays. She was raped that night.

On Thursday morning, her sister’s mother-in-law took her to a hospital, after which neighbours informed the child’s parents, who live in a different upazila of Magura.

SISTER WASN’T SPARED EITHER

Speaking to reporters, the victim’s elder sister alleged that she too had previously been subjected to attempted sexual assaults by her father-in-law, leading her to go back to her parents’ house.

She alleged her family pressured her to return to her in-laws’ house, disregarding her fears.

Quoting from the case statement,

police sources said the sister had married one of the accused four months ago and lived with his family in Magura’s Nijnanduali.

In the complaint, the child’s mother alleged the accused rapist had previously made inappropriate advances towards her elder daughter, which was known to other family members and had led to disputes.

On March 5, around 2:30am, the victim’s elder sister woke up to find her lying unconscious on the floor instead of beside her on the bed.

The child later complained of severe pain and burning in her genital area. She said her brother-in-law had unlocked the door, allowing his father to come in and rape her, said police quoting from the case statement.

The victim said she was forcibly taken to another room, gagged, and raped before being left unconscious on the floor of the room her sister was in.

The case statement further said that when the elder sister tried to inform their mother over the phone, her husband snatched the phone and physically assaulted her.

He also threatened to kill the child if she disclosed the incident. The two sisters were then locked in separate rooms.

At one point, the child lost consciousness.

Later that morning, a neighbour arrived at the house. Taking advantage of the distraction, the rapist’s elder son went into the room the child was kept in and poured water on her so she regained her senses.

However, as her condition kept worsening, the sister’s mother-in-law, with the help of some neighbours, took her to a local hospital around 10:30am

Recent attacks on women

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said while speaking as the chief guest at a ceremony marking the International Women’s Day at Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

The event honoured outstanding women with “Indomitable Women’s Award 2025” for their significant contributions to various fields as part of government initiative to pay due respect and inspire them.

He said they will definitely confront the anti-women forces that are trying to raise their heads, along with all the people of the country.

He said there are still many people who, instead of standing by the side of oppressed women, look down on them with contempt.

“However, if we want to prevent violence against women, oppression of women, and build a discrimination-free, beautiful Bangladesh, there is no alternative but to stand by women and support them,” he said.

Yunus urged men to come forward to establish the rightful place of women in the society.

“No matter how many obstacles we face, we will make the full use of the opportunity that history has given us. We will build a new Bangladesh. This is our promise,” he said.

The CA said the girls of the country are playing an important role in their respective fields with great courage and they are contributing to the overall progress of the country, including politics and economy, by overcoming hundreds of obstacles. “We must be as vigilant now as we were in a war like situation. Be extremely vigilant in protecting the safety of women and children.

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Take firm actions

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Criticising the interim government, she said, “Today, I ask the current interim government – why are women in the country being raped? Why are children being raped? During the past fascist regime, women were subjected to rape and oppression because there was a culture of impunity. But why are women still being raped on buses today? Why is there no action being taken? What is the government doing? The government cannot

Build social unity against oppression. Stand by each other. Cooperate with the government to build a beautiful and peaceful society,” said the chief adviser.

In Bangladesh, he said, women have also been struggling for their rights for centuries. From anti-British movement to the Language Movement, and in the Liberation War, the women’s community of Bangla has played an active role.

“Today, I remember those martyred women who made the ultimate sacrifice in the July Uprising. I pay tribute to the women fighters who were injured in July. I pray that they can return to a healthy and normal life soon,” Dr Yunus said, adding that preventing violence against women is one of the government’s priorities.

Women and Children Affairs Adviser Sharmeen S Murshid chaired the event attended by members of the Council of Advisers, diplomats stationed in Dhaka, women leaders and senior government officials.

Sharifa Sultana, Halima Begum, Marina Besra, Lipi Begum, Muhin Mohona, players of Bangladesh National Women Cricket team members are among the recipients of the awards.

UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Gwyn Lewis and Prof of Mass Communication and Journalism Prof Gitara Nasreen spoke as special guests while Senior Secretary to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Mamta Ahmed, delivered welcome remarks.

A documentary was screened at the event. A cultural event was held highlighting the July uprising.

afford to be lenient.”

Noting that women’s participation in Chhatra Dal is falling, she said, “There are a few MPs now who were previously involved with Chhatra Dal. But why are there no female leaders in Chhatra Dal? This is a very difficult question. Women are not present in politics. During our time, there were some female students in the organisation, but now we no longer see female leaders. We need to increase female leadership. Women must be valued.”

Myanmar junta chief says election to be held by January

AFP, Bangkok

Myanmar’s junta chief said the country would hold an election in December or January, the first in the war-torn nation since the military staged a coup in 2021.

“We are planning to hold the election in December 2025 or ... by January 2026,” General Min Aung Hlaing was quoted as saying in the state-run newspaper Global New Light of Myanmar published yesterday.

The vote would be “free and fair” he said on Friday during a state visit to Belarus, adding that 53 political parties had “submitted their lists” to participate.

“We also invite observation teams from Belarus to come and observe” the slated election, he said during a meeting with Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko in Minsk.

The Myanmar military seized power in 2021, making unsubstantiated claims of massive electoral fraud in 2020 polls won resoundingly by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy (NLD).

It has since unleashed a bloody crackdown on dissent and as fighting ravages swathes of the country had repeatedly delayed plans for fresh polls that critics say will be neither free nor fair.

The junta is struggling to crush widespread opposition to its rule from ethnic rebel groups and pro-democracy “People’s Defence Forces”.

S Korea’s impeached president released from detention

AFP, Seoul



Impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol was released from detention yesterday after a court voided his arrest on procedural grounds -- but he remains under investigation over his declaration of martial law.

The suspended president, who was detained in a dawn raid in January on insurrection charges over his December 3 attempt to subvert civilian rule, walked out of the detention centre smiling, before bowing deeply before a small crowd of cheering supporters.

“I bow my head in gratitude to the people of this nation,” Yoon said in a statement released through his lawyers.

A court had cancelled his arrest warrant a day earlier on technical and legal grounds -- a decision that prosecutors probing Yoon called “unjust”.

Yoon was freed after the prosecutors waived their right to appeal the court verdict, which specifically concerned technical details of his detention on criminal charges.

‘Do not make us lose restraint’

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“Even after the uprising, we see a small girl from Magura fighting for her life [after she was gangraped].... We also witnessed how a student at Dhaka University was forced to conform to a certain ideology regarding her dress.”

NCP Joint Convener Nusrat Tabassum said, “We have never been able to celebrate International Women’s Day with joy. Rape has become a daily occurrence.... One of the primary goals of our party is to ensure women’s safety.”

Jannatul Ferdous Shafa and Amena Begum, both of whom lost their husbands during the mass uprising, spoke at the event.

Hasina, 14 others

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Kabir Nanak, former member of parliament from Dhaka-13; Mirza Azam, former member of parliament from Jamalpur-3; AFM Bahauddin Nasim, former member of parliament from Dhaka-8; Brig Gen (ret’d) Muhammad Shamsul Alam, former commander, 44th Rifle Battalion; Lt Gen (ret’d) Molla Fazle Akbar, former DG of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence; Hasan Mahmud Khandaker, former DG of Rab; Abdul Kahar Akond, former police officer; Nur Mohammad, former inspector general of police; and Monirul Islam, former additional IGP.

The witnesses were asked to inform the commission within seven days when they want to testify.

It said they could testify via video conference as well.

Bangladeshi shot

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the killing and demanded the return of Al Amin’s body. The BGB also urged its Indian counterpart to detain any Bangladeshis involved in cross-border crimes and hand them over to the BGB instead of using lethal force.

The BGB assured that appropriate legal action would be taken against any Bangladeshis involved in such activities.

The BSF side stated that their personnel were compelled to open fire after “the smugglers attacked a BSF member and tried to snatch his weapon”, Bodrudoza said.

The BSF assured that Al Amin’s body would be returned to Bangladesh after completing the necessary formalities, he added.