



"I am not happy with the Russian strikes on Kyiv. Not necessary, and very bad timing. Vladimir [Putin], STOP!"
Donald Trump on Russian strikes on Ukraine capital

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Star

SECOND EDITION

THE DAILY

ON FRIDAY



DHAKA FRIDAY APRIL 25, 2025

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 97

BAISHAKH 12, 1432 BS

www.thedailystar.net

SHAWWAL 26, 1446 HJRI

16 PAGES: Tk 15.00

India-Pakistan tensions soar

Islamabad expels diplomats, closes airspace, suspends trade; Modi vows to pursue attackers to 'ends of the Earth'

STAR REPORT

India and Pakistan exchanged an escalating series of tit-for-tat diplomatic measures yesterday after New Delhi blamed its arch-rival for backing a deadly shooting attack in contested Kashmir.

The tit-for-tat announcements took relations between the nuclear-armed neighbours, who have fought three wars, to the lowest level in years.

The latest diplomatic crisis was triggered by the killing of 26 men at a popular tourist destination in Indian Kashmir on Tuesday, in the worst attack on civilians in India since the 2008 Mumbai shootings. All 26 killed were Indian nationals, except one from Nepal.

New Delhi said there were cross-border elements to the attack and downgraded ties with Pakistan on Wednesday, suspending a 1960 treaty on sharing waters of the Indus River and closing the only land crossing between the neighbours.

While the measures are largely symbolic, some fear New Delhi's diplomatic moves may just be an opening salvo -- with the potential risk of military action between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

Indian police published notices naming three suspects and saying two were Pakistanis, but New Delhi has not offered any proof of the links or shared any more details.

Police have offered a two-million-rupee (\$23,500) bounty for information leading to each man's arrest.

Yesterday, Pakistan said it was closing its airspace to Indian-owned or operated airlines, suspending all trade, including through third countries and halting special

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AFTERMATH OF J&K TERROR ATTACK

Pakistan says violation of Indus water treaty will be treated as 'an act of war'

Vows to retaliate against any threat; suspends all visas to Indians

Threatens to suspend all pacts with India, including Shimla Agreement

Indian all-party meet condemns 'heinous and inhumane' attack

Kashmir police say two attackers are Pakistani



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

A MOTHER NEVER FORGETS ... For Meherunnesa, the pain of losing her son, Abul Kalam Azad, in the Rana Plaza collapse 12 years ago is still fresh. On the anniversary of Azad's tragic death, she came from Satkhira to visit the site of the collapsed building in Savar yesterday morning. Overwhelmed with emotions, she kept asking, "What was my son's fault?" Story on page 3.

US wants Bangladesh's work plan to reduce trade gap

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The United States Trade Representative (USTR), the US government's chief trade negotiation body, wants to see Bangladesh's work plan on narrowing the bilateral trade gap before the Trump administration makes a call on reciprocal tariffs.

The work plan must not exceed five pages, Brendan Lynch, the assistant USTR for South and Central Asia, told a Bangladesh delegation during a meeting on the

sidelines of the World Bank IMF Spring Meetings in Washington, DC, on Wednesday.

He also called for Bangladesh's work plan on non-tariff issues such as matters related to labour rights and intellectual property rights. The Daily Star has learnt from officials with direct knowledge of the meeting.

In response, the Bangladesh delegation said a draft of the amendment to the labour law has been prepared and Bangladesh will share it before finalising it.

Much difference from the US

is unlikely since the draft is based on international standards, the officials said.

At the meeting, the Bangladesh delegation highlighted Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus's assurance of importing more US goods to narrow the trade gap in his letter to President Donald Trump. They also noted Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin's letter to USTR Jamieson Greer, offering duty-free import of 100 more US goods along with the existing 190 products.

Trade between the two countries

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Qatar will help rebuild Bangladesh

PM Sheikh Mohammed Mohammed assures Yunus



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Qatar Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani has assured that the Gulf nation will provide all possible help to rebuild Bangladesh.

During a meeting with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday at the former's office in Doha, the Qatari PM said he would designate one of his close aides to take the relationship with Bangladesh to a new height.

Prof Yunus was in Qatar on a four-day visit to attend the Earthna Summit 2025.

"We count on your continued leadership," Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani told Yunus, expressing his confidence that Bangladesh would come out of this reform and rebuilding process much stronger in the years to come.

Prof Yunus sought full diplomatic, financial, and

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An elderly man crawls under a barbed wire divider to cross a busy street, though a footbridge (not in the frame) is close by. This risky maneuver is not uncommon, with many opting for it simply to save a few minutes. The photo was taken on Bir Uttam Rafiqul Islam Avenue in the capital's Badda area yesterday. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

FURNACE OIL BPC drowning in stock overload

Power producers sought high supply but refusing to receive fuel now

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Based on private electricity producers' request, the Power Development Board (PDB) asked Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) to nearly triple its import of furnace oil to around 500,000 tonnes a month so that the electricity demand in the summer can be met.

The PDB, however, took just 70,000 tonnes of furnace oil in March, the highest intake this year, straining BPC's storage facilities with more consignments coming in soon.

For their unwillingness to take furnace oil from BPC, the private power plants have flagged quality concerns and a lack of options to delay payments.

A backlog of undischarged fuel from incoming vessels creates the risk of costly delay fees. If vessels are forced to wait, BPC may have to pay the penalties, which are ultimately borne by PDB.

Moreover, the state-owned Eastern Refinery Limited (ERL), which produces about 1,100 tonnes of furnace oil daily, is facing shutdown as distribution companies are not collecting the furnace oil, BPC warned the Energy and Mineral Resources Division in a letter on Tuesday.

BPC was able to discharge 35,428 tonnes this month, as of April 22.

"We don't have any storage capacity left after receiving the last consignment on April 18," BPC wrote in the letter seen by The Daily Star.

"We have four more consignments scheduled through late April and May. If the power plants don't take the furnace oil in time, we will be

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Kuet VC to be relieved of duties

Students end hunger strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The government has begun the process of relieving Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet) vice-chancellor and pro-vice-chancellor of their duties.

According to a press release issued by the information ministry, a search committee will soon be formed to appoint new candidates to the two posts.

Meanwhile, a senior professor will be temporarily assigned the responsibilities of the VC to ensure the continuation of regular activities at the university.

Students of Kuet ended their 57-hour hunger strike early yesterday following the announcement of the government's move to relieve the VC and pro-VC of their duties.

They ended their strike after Prof Tanzimuddin Khan, a member of the University Grants Commission and a faculty member at Dhaka University, offered them juice around 1:00am.

Later, the students took out a procession on the campus.

Before that, Prof Tanzimuddin

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*Participation is by invitation only.