

Russia wants 'fair' US-Iran nuclear deal

Putin tells Iranian president

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday told his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian that Moscow wants a "fair" nuclear deal between the United States and Iran and was ready to help advance talks, the Kremlin said.

"The Russian side confirmed its readiness to contribute to the promotion of this dialogue with the goal of reaching a fair agreement based on the principles of international law," the Kremlin said in a readout of a call between the leaders.

The latest round of talks between Tehran and Washington, initially set for May 3, was postponed, with Oman citing "logistical reasons" for the delay.

The two countries have held three rounds since April 12, their highest-level contact since US withdrew from deal with Iran in 2018.



Firefighters work at the site of the Barabashovo market hit by Russian drone strike in Kharkiv, Ukraine yesterday. Ukrainian officials said at least two people were killed in the country by Russian attacks. PHOTO: REUTERS

ARMED CONFLICT Myanmar junta calls new ceasefire after quake

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's junta declared a new post-earthquake truce yesterday, days after the expiry of a previous humanitarian ceasefire it was accused of violating with a continued campaign of air strikes.

The March 28 magnitude 7.7 quake near the city of Mandalay killed nearly 3,800 and has left tens of thousands homeless as the summer monsoon season approaches. Monitors say junta aerial bombardments breached the first truce in April.

A statement from the junta information team yesterday said the new armistice "to continue the rebuilding and rehabilitation process" would last until the end of May.

UN warns of 'unsettling' dev slowdown in 2024

AFP, United Nations

Humanity recorded an unexpected and "unsettling" slowdown in development in 2024 as the global post-pandemic recovery began losing steam, well before President Donald Trump dramatically cut US international aid, the UN warned yesterday.

The world had rebounded from the shock of the Covid-19 pandemic by 2023, as measured by the UN's Human Development Index (HDI), which charts living standards, health and education.

But that rebound appears to be losing momentum, according to the United Nations Development Programme's annual report, released yesterday.

If that "unsettling" slowdown becomes the new normal, achieving levels of human development once hoped for by 2030 "could slip by decades -- making our world less secure, more divided, and more vulnerable to economic and ecological shocks," warned UNDP

head Achim Steiner.

Recent drastic cuts to international aid announced by several countries -- most notably the United States, where Trump has slashed programs and dismantled USAID, the country's main foreign development arm -- will exacerbate the issue, Steiner told AFP in an interview.

UNDP report shows post-pandemic recovery slowing, with 2030 human progress goals at risk of slipping by decades.

If wealthy countries stop funding development, "this will ultimately impact economies, societies, and yes, I think it will also register maybe a year or two down the line in the Human Development Index, lower life expectancy, declining incomes, more conflicts," Steiner said.

UNDP experts are not yet certain

of the underlying causes of the slowdown observed in 2024.

But they have identified one of the driving forces as a slackening of progress in life expectancy, perhaps linked to the side-effects of Covid, or to the wars that are multiplying around the world.

There is a potential glimmer of hope: artificial intelligence could create the conditions for kickstarting development, the UNDP suggested.

AI "is perhaps the greatest potential pivot in putting development of individual economies, but also of maybe poor people, wealthy people, on a different trajectory. It will change virtually every aspect of our lives," Steiner said.

The report stressed that it would come down to how people use the technology, however.

There are risks. Access to AI in poorer countries is not the same as in wealthier ones, and cultural biases could influence the way the tools are developed, it said.

Ukraine fires 100 drones on Moscow Flight restrictions imposed at a dozen airports

AFP, Moscow

A barrage of Ukrainian drones forced Russian airports, including in Moscow, to restrict flights yesterday -- three days before the Kremlin will hold its grand military parade on Red Square to mark the defeat of the Nazis.

Flight restrictions were introduced at more than a dozen airports, including four in Moscow, Russian news agencies reported.

Ukrainian officials said at least two people were killed in the country by Russian attacks yesterday. Emergency services said one person was killed in the southern Odesa region.

Merz elected German chancellor after initial shock defeat

REUTERS, Berlin

German conservative leader Friedrich Merz was elected chancellor by parliament yesterday in a second round of voting after his new alliance with the centre-left Social Democrats was dealt a surprise defeat in the first attempt.

Merz's failure to win parliamentary backing at the first time of asking was a first for post-war Germany and an embarrassment for a man who has promised to revive economic growth at a time of global turbulence.

His CDU/CSU alliance won February's federal election and secured a coalition deal with the centre-left Social Democrats.

Their deal has mapped out plans to revive growth, such as reducing corporate taxes and lowering energy prices. It is also promising strong support for Ukraine and higher military spending.

Merz, 69, who began his political career as a European lawmaker in 1989, has yet to demonstrate his leadership abilities in the political executive as his appointment marks his first time holding a government office.



Trump admin freezes future grants to Harvard Orders curb on virus research

REUTERS, Washington

The US Department of Education informed Harvard University on Monday that it was freezing billions of dollars in future research grants and other aid until the nation's oldest and wealthiest college concedes to a number of demands from the Trump administration, a senior department official said.

In a letter to Harvard, US Education Department Secretary Linda McMahon said the university must address concerns about antisemitism on campus, school policies that consider a student's race, and complaints from the administration the university has abandoned its pursuit of "academic excellence" while employing relatively few conservative faculty members.

Meanwhile, Trump on Monday ordered new limitations on a form of biological research his administration says caused the Covid-19 pandemic through a lab leak in China.

The United States will halt funding in certain countries for so-called "gain-of-function" experiments -- aimed at enhancing the properties of pathogens -- according to an executive order Trump signed Monday at the White House.

Aggressive, disrespectful

FROM PAGE 12

to inform the media about the decisions made in the meeting of the advisory council.

Responding to a journalist's question, the adviser clarified that the proposals made by the Women's Reform Commission are those of the commission itself and not government decisions.

He noted that all the reform commissions that have been formed so far have drawn differing opinions to some extent, and the Women's Reform Commission is no exception.

"Differences of opinion are natural," he said. "In most cases, these have been expressed respectfully. However, in some instances, the reactions have been extremely hateful, aggressive, and not only derogatory toward women but disrespectful to the entire nation. We do not expect that."

Asif Nazrul further said, "No major reform will be implemented without political consensus. And keep in mind, this is a commission's proposal -- not a government decision. We hope that everyone will show tolerance and decency while expressing differing opinions and reactions."

In a statement, cultural organisation Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigoshthi has strongly condemned the derogatory remarks made against women and members of the Women's Reform Commission during a recent rally of the Hefazat-e-Islam and demanded exemplary punishment for those responsible.

Udichi's central committee president and general secretary, the organisation expressed outrage over the offensive speeches delivered at Hefazat's rally on May 3.

The remarks, they said, were not only aimed at discrediting the Women's Reform Commission but also amounted to a denial of the historic role played by women in Bangladesh's democratic struggles.

"Women's extraordinary contributions were instrumental in the anti-Ershad dictatorship movement, the Shahbagh protest, and most recently, the student-masses uprising in July 2024," Udichi said.

Udichi leaders accused Hefazat of making "highly objectionable and insulting" remarks targeting women in their public rally and of launching personal attacks against the members of the Women's Reform Commission.

The organisation also recalled that Hefazat had previously revealed its anti-women stance through its infamous 13-point demand in 2013, where women were clearly discriminated against.

Condemning these recurring attempts to restrict women's rights, Udichi demanded that the government take immediate and exemplary action against the Hefazat leaders who made the remarks at the May 3 rally.

In addition, Udichi called upon the government to review and implement the progressive recommendations of the Women's Reform Commission without delay.

Ganosamhati Andolon has strongly condemned the recent use of derogatory and violent language against women in response to the Women's Reform Commission's report.

The statement, signed by its Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki and Executive Coordinator Abul Hasan Rubel said, "We denounce the offensive attacks made against women in light of the reform report. Using mob pressure to justify unjust demands is an undemocratic and fascist mentality."

They emphasised that women in Bangladesh still lack full access to their legal rights, dignity, and recognition.

The commission's report, they noted, is a crucial step toward ending systemic discrimination against women, especially in informal sectors where female workers remain highly vulnerable.

While some recommendations of the commission may spark debate, Ganosamhati leaders said democratic discourse -- not hostility -- is the proper avenue. Highlighting the risk of renewed political division, the statement warned against hate speech and called for constructive discussions.

"Violent language and attitudes toward women will never establish justice," the statement read.

The party urged the government to play a proactive role in upholding women's dignity and rights and to ensure the reform process is inclusive and representative of all citizens.

Dhaka wants

FROM PAGE 12

ministry yesterday evening, he said, "We will observe whether all parties agree. Even if they do, it does not automatically mean that we will provide humanitarian aid. There are other considerations. Bangladesh wants Rohingya representation in the new governing body being formed in Arakan."

Bangladesh is in talks with the Arakan Army through the UN and the Myanmar junta government on the UN-proposed channel as a means of stability in Rakhine state that could eventually lead to Rohingya repatriation.

There was no agreement, however, as there was no consensus on this with the Myanmar junta and the Arakan Army.

Rohingyas are fleeing to Bangladesh every day to escape a famine-like situation and alleged repression by the Arakan Army.

"The Rohingyas who are there [Rakhine state] must not be subjected to persecution or discrimination and compelled to flee to Bangladesh in large numbers. These conditions must be met. Bangladesh will never accept ethnic cleansing," said Khalilur, also chief adviser's high representative on the Rohingya issue and priority matters.

He said Bangladesh is trying to prevent the entry of new Rohingyas, and through the UN, conveyed to the Arakan Army that Bangladesh wants to see the inclusion of Rohingyas at all levels of the new administration being formed in Rakhine.

"If they [the Arakan Army] fail to do this, it will amount to ethnic cleansing. We cannot support it under any circumstances. If the Arakan Army does not take this step, continuing discussions with

them will be very difficult."

Asked if the Arakan Army responded, Khalilur said it was yet to.

"Once we get an answer, we will evaluate the nature of the response. There is no ambiguity here. The matter is black and white. Either they support ethnic cleansing, or not."

"This is a test for the Arakan Army. We are waiting to see whether they can pass it."

Asked how Bangladesh can communicate with a non-state actor, Khalilur said Bangladesh is a sovereign state and can speak with whomever it wants based on national interests. "It doesn't matter what others say."

"We have developed and are implementing an independent foreign policy. Myanmar has labelled the Arakan Army as a terrorist organisation, yet they also maintain contact with them."

He added that the Arakan Army currently controls the region across the Bangladesh border in the southeastern region and thus Bangladesh must manage, protect, and maintain peace along this border. Communication with the Arakan Army is necessary.

"They are present across the border, so we have to work with them...If the Myanmar Army regains control of the border area, then we will contact them, as we did previously."

Khalilur said Bangladesh also has understanding with the Myanmar government on Rohingya issue, trade, and other matters. Bangladesh extended assistance without waiting for a request from Myanmar.

"Solving any problem requires communication with all parties involved; the problem otherwise will not be resolved."

Housing & Building Research Institute

120/3 Darus-Salam, Mirpur, Dhaka-1216.

Memo No: HBRI/SRE(Procure)/2024-25/06 Date: 06-05-2025

Invitation For Tender for Non-Consultant Svices (NCT - OTM)

01	Organization/Agency	: Housing and Building Research Institute (HBRI), Dhaka				
02	Procuring Entity	: Director General, Housing and Building Research Institute (HBRI), Dhaka				
03	Invitation for	: Supply of security guard for Housing & Building Research Institute (HBRI), Dhaka for period 01 July, 2025 to 30 June, 2026				
04	Source of Fund	: GoB				
05	Tender Reference No	: HBRI Memo No-25.44.2600.000.11.018.09.24-25/17, Dated: 05.05.2025				
06	Tender Document last Selling Date & Time	: 03/06/2025, Time: 05:00 p.m.				
07	Last Date & Time for Tender Submission	: 04/06/2025, Time: 02:30 p.m				
08	Officer & Office Selling and receiving Tender Document	: Md Ibnul Warah, Senior Research Engineer (A. C.), HBRI, Dhaka, Room No- 102.				
09	Tender Opening Date & Time	: 04/06/2025, Time: 03:00 p.m.				
10	Eligibility of Tenderer in brief (Details can be seen in Tender Data Sheet)	: (i)- Experience as service provider of non-consultancy service shall be at least 6 (six) years in any Government/ Semi-government/ autonomous institutions in Bangladesh. (ii)- Minimum specific experience as prime contractor having satisfactory completion of providing security service of at least 1 (one) contracts within the least 3 (Three) years, with a value of at least Tk. 35.00 lacs (Taka Thirty five Lacs) in any Government/ Semi-government/ autonomous institutions.				
11	Brief description of Services	: Supply of Manpower (security guard) for providing security of all buildings, gates, lands and other properties situated in the premises of Housing and Building Research Institute				
12	Tender Document Price (Taka)	: Tk. 1,000/00 (Taka One thousand)				
13	Lot No	Identification of Lot				
		Location				
		Tender Security Amount (Taka)				
		Start Date				
		Completion date				
	01	Supply of Outsourcing Manpower (security guard) for Housing and Building Research Institute, Dhaka for the period 01 July, 2025 to 30 June, 2026.	Dhaka	Tk. 1,00,000 (One lac) only	01/07/2025	30/06/2026

N.B. Procuring Entity (PE) reserves the right to reject all Tenders or annul / cancel the Tender proceedings

(Md Ibnul Warah)
Senior Research Engineer (A.C.)
Housing and Building Research Institute (HBRI), Dhaka.

GD-1086