

Russia, China reject 'unilateralism, bullying'

In Moscow, Putin, Xi cast themselves as defenders of a new world order no longer dominated by US

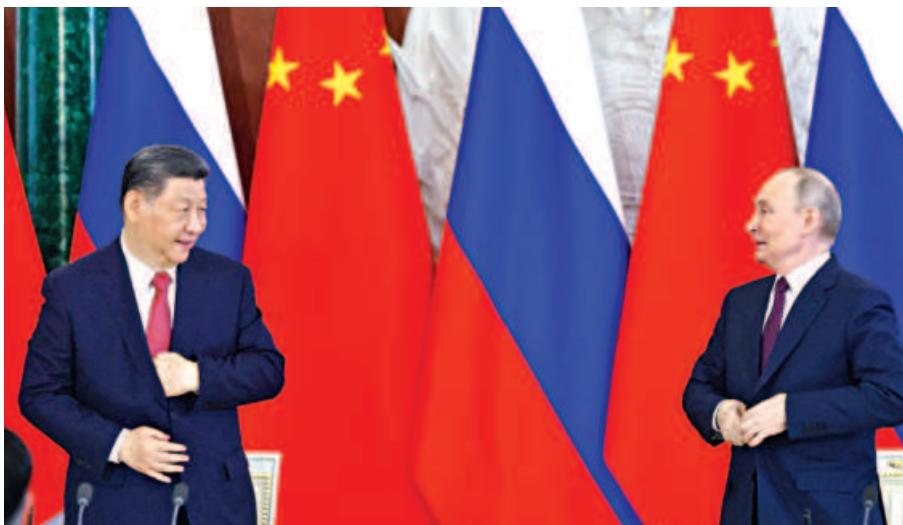
REUTERS, Moscow

Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday told Russia's Vladimir Putin their two countries should be "friends of steel", as they pledged to boost cooperation to a new level at a time of heightened confrontation with the West.

At talks in the Kremlin, the two leaders cast themselves as defenders of a new world order no longer dominated by the United States.

Xi is the most powerful of more than two dozen foreign leaders who are visiting Moscow this week to mark Thursday's 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two -- a celebration of huge significance for Putin.

Xi's participation is an important boost to Putin at a time of acute geopolitical



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping look at each other during a signing ceremony at the Kremlin in Moscow yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

"be true friends of steel that have been through a hundred trials by fire", Xi told Putin in televised comments.

The two countries should solidify the foundations of their cooperation and "eliminate external interference", said Xi, whose country is currently engaged in a tariff war launched by US President Donald Trump.

Putin and Xi have met dozens of times and signed a "no limits" strategic partnership in February 2022, less than three weeks before Putin sent his army into Ukraine. China is Russia's biggest trading partner and has thrown Moscow an economic lifeline that has helped it navigate Western sanctions.

Putin said the two leaders would personally oversee all key elements in the relationship, aiming for a substantial boost to trade and investment by 2030.

Domestically, the World War Two anniversary offers Putin a chance to rally Russians in remembrance of a historic feat that is central to the country's national identity. The Soviet Union lost 27 million people in the war, including many millions in Ukraine, which was also devastated.

On the world stage, Putin aims to show that he has powerful allies and to demonstrate that years of Western sanctions have failed to isolate Russia.

In opening remarks after greeting Xi in one of the Kremlin's most opulent halls, Putin thanked him for coming to Moscow to mark 80 years since the "sacred" victory over Adolf Hitler.

"The victory over fascism, achieved at the cost of enormous sacrifices, is of lasting significance," Putin said.

"Together with our Chinese friends,

we firmly stand guard over historical truth, protect the memory of the events of the war years, and counter modern manifestations of neo-Nazism and militarism."

Putin has portrayed his war in Ukraine as a struggle against modern-day Nazis from the start. Ukraine and its allies reject that characterisation as a grotesque falsehood, accusing Moscow of conducting an imperial-style invasion.

Xi said the two countries, as world powers and permanent members of the UN Security Council, would work together to counter "unilateralism and bullying" - an implied reference to the United States.

Putin last week announced a unilateral three-day ceasefire in the war with Ukraine, beginning yesterday. Ukraine has not committed to abide by it, calling it a ruse by Putin to create the impression he wants to end the war. Instead, it has declared its willingness to join a ceasefire lasting at least 30 days.

Both countries are under pressure from Trump to reach a peace deal, and Washington has threatened repeatedly to walk away from talks unless there is clear progress.

Ukraine targeted Moscow with drones for three days earlier this week, but the skies above the capital were calm yesterday. With so many foreign leaders present, any attacks during the May 9 events could embarrass Putin and would likely draw a tough response from Moscow.

Chinese troops will take part in today's military parade on Red Square, the centrepiece of the commemorations. Xi has called for talks to end the conflict in Ukraine and has accused the US of stoking it with weapons supplies to Kyiv. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has in the past urged him to try to persuade Putin to halt the war.

Step down Mahfuj, Asif
NCP Jt Convener Tajnuva
urges them to stand by the
people once more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mahfuj Alam and Asif Mahmud, the two student representatives in the interim government's advisory council, should step down from their positions and stand with the people on the streets, opined National Citizen Party (NCP) Joint Convener Tajnuva Jabeen.

"I'm saying this not as an NCP member but as Tajnuva -- someone who was among the general public before July. Mahfuj and Asif should step down from the government and stand beside the people on the streets once again," she wrote in a post on her verified Facebook page yesterday.

Tajnuva believes the government the two are a part of is no longer pro uprising.

"You no longer belong there. Step down and reassure the people. Be accountable to the July martyrs. I myself am deeply distressed -- how must the [families of] martyrs and the injured feel, seeing the perpetrators get away with their heads held high."

Arson at Khulna daily for referring to Hasina as PM

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A mob set fire to the office of Desh Sanjog, a Khulna-based daily newspaper, allegedly for referring to Sheikh Hasina as the incumbent prime minister in a news report.

The incident took place around 7:00pm yesterday in the city's Chhoto Mirzapur area. The identities of the perpetrators remain unknown.

According to witnesses, after the Magrib prayers, a group of 30 to 40 people broke the lock of the office's shutter, brought furniture and other materials out onto the street, vandalised those, and then set them on fire.

Locals later managed to bring the fire under control. Upon receiving information, police and journalists arrived at the scene.

Khulna Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Hawlader Sanowar Hossain Masum told The Daily Star, "I visited the office and informed higher authorities. We are trying to find those behind the arson."

tensions from the Middle East to South Asia, and as Russia comes under pressure from the United States in faltering talks aimed at ending the war in Ukraine.

China and Russia should safeguard international fairness and justice and

Rivals trade drones, missiles

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Earlier yesterday, Pakistan said it shot down 25 drones from India, while India said its air defences had stopped Pakistani drone and missile attacks on military targets, dashing hopes they would soon bow to pressure to end their worst confrontation in more than two decades.

World powers from the US to Russia and China have called for calm in one of the world's most dangerous and most polluted nuclear flashpoint regions.

Yesterday's reported exchanges came a day after India said it hit nine "terrorist infrastructure" sites in Pakistan in retaliation for what it says was a deadly Islamabad-backed attack in Indian Kashmir on April 22.

Pakistan says it was not involved and denied that any of the sites hit by India were militant bases. It said it shot down five Indian aircraft on Wednesday, a report the Indian embassy in Beijing dismissed as "misinformation".

However, two US officials yesterday told Reuters that a top Chinese-made Pakistani fighter plane shot down at least two Indian military aircraft on Wednesday.

One US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said there was high confidence that Pakistan had used the Chinese-made J-10 aircraft to launch air-to-air missiles against Indian lighter jets -- bringing down at least two.

According to another official, at least one of them was a French-made Rafale fighter aircraft.

The escalation came after Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, in an interview with Reuters, said Pakistani retaliation "is increasingly becoming certain now" after Wednesday's Indian missile attacks.

"I will still refrain from saying it is 100 percent. But the situation has become very difficult. We have to respond," he added.

Earlier, Indian Foreign Minister

Hamid off to Thailand

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the Special Branch.

The actions followed a warning from Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, who said those who facilitated Hamid's departure would not be spared.

According to a notification issued by Police Headquarters, disciplinary action was taken after it was found that the officials had failed to perform their duties properly in this regard.

The PHQ said it has formed a three-member inquiry committee, led by the additional inspector general (admin), to investigate the matter.

"The former president went to Thailand for medical treatment. We allowed it as there is no court restriction or any embargo by any agency against him," an HSIA source told The Daily Star.

Hamid's family sources confirmed to The Daily Star that he had travelled to Thailand for medical treatment and was accompanied by his younger son, Barrister Riyad Ahmed Tushar, and his brother-in-law, ANM Naushad Khan, principal of President Abdul Hamid Medical College.

They said he went abroad following

Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said New Delhi did not intend to escalate the situation.

"However, if there are military attacks on us, there should be no doubt that it will be met with a very, very firm response," he said at an India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting.

Before yesterday's attacks, analysts said there were signs that the conflict may not escalate. However, the drone attacks by India and Pakistan's retaliation have put that hope in doubt.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar yesterday told Reuters that there have been contacts between the offices of the national security advisers of the two countries, and the hotline between their heads of military operations was also working. He did not give more details.

His comment came a day after Khawaja Asif told the New York Times that Pakistan reserved the right to strike to the Pakistani army's heavily fortified headquarters, he added.

One drone hit a military target near Lahore, and four personnel of the Pakistan army were injured in the attack, Chaudhry said.

The Indian defence ministry, in a statement, said Pakistan attempted to engage a number of military targets in northern and western India from Wednesday night into yesterday morning, and they were "neutralised" by Indian air defence systems.

In response, Indian forces targeted air defence radars and systems at a number of locations in Pakistan yesterday, the ministry said. The "Indian response has been in the same domain with the same intensity as Pakistan," it added.

The Indian ministry accused Pakistan of increasing the intensity of its firing across the ceasefire line, the de facto border, in Kashmir. Sixteen people, including five children and three women, were killed on the Indian side, the statement said.

Pakistan said at least 31 of its civilians were killed and about 50 wounded on Wednesday's strikes and in cross-border shelling across the frontier.

Yesterday, Indian ministers told a meeting of all political parties in New Delhi that the strikes on Pakistan had killed more than 100 militants and that the count was still ongoing, government sources said.

Pakistan's Information Minister Attaullah Tarar told parliament that Pakistani forces had killed 40-50 Indian soldiers on the de-facto border in Kashmir and had "blown" Indian military installations.

Pakistan military spokesperson Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said Pakistan also yesterday shot down 25 Israeli-made drones from India at multiple locations, including the two largest cities of Karachi and Lahore.

One drone was also shot down over the garrison city of Rawalpindi, home to the Pakistani army's heavily fortified headquarters, he added.

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Hours after Hamid left the country, controversy erupted on social media over how an accused in a July uprising related case managed to leave.

Gono Odhikar Parishad and its youth wing, Jubo Odhikar Parishad, submitted a memorandum to the home ministry, demanding the resignation of adviser Jahangir and accusing him of facilitating Hamid's departure.

Meanwhile, the home adviser yesterday announced he would "leave [the position]" if he fails to take action against those who assisted the former president in leaving the country.

He made the remarks after being questioned by student activists of the July uprising while leaving the Dinajpur deputy commissioner's office, following a meeting with the district's law and order committee.

Jahangir said, "No one who aided former president Abdul Hamid in fleeing the country will be spared. Action will definitely be taken ... Under no circumstances will they be let off the hook. Those involved will be held accountable."

About Hamid being accused in a case, Akeruzzaman said, "The agency handling the case did not inform us. There was no prior alert regarding him in

TIME 100 Health names

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across TIME's social platforms.

His selection not only honours his own achievements, but also serves as an inspiration to young Bangladeshi scientists and researchers, demonstrating that through hard work, passion, and unwavering dedication, they too can earn a place on the global stage, the press release added.

Dr Tahmeed said, "It is a profound honour to be included in TIME's 2025 Health100 list.

"This recognition is not mine alone -- it belongs to the brilliant scientists and staff of icddr,b, to our collaborators around the world, and to the communities we serve."

He added, "I am deeply grateful to TIME for this spotlight, which I hope will help bring greater urgency to the fight against malnutrition and the need to invest in science that improves lives -- not in war, conflict, or division, but in equity, health, and human dignity."

In 2021, Dr Tahmeed Ahmed became the first Bangladeshi in

history to be appointed executive director of icddr,b, a renowned international public health research organisation.

Tahmeed, who obtained his medical degree from Mymensingh Medical College, joined the organisation in 1985. Over the years, he has held various roles and was appointed senior director of the Nutrition and Clinical Services Division in December 2015.

A celebrated scientist with a distinguished career in public health nutrition, Tahmeed has earned global recognition for his research and vital contributions to preventing childhood malnutrition and simplifying its treatment.

He has received numerous awards from health organisations, including the Ambulatory Paediatric Association in the United States, the Commonwealth Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition, and the Indian Paediatric Association.

In 2018, he won the Islamic Development Bank's Transformers Roadshow award. The Gates

Foundation honoured Dr Tahmeed as one of its Goalkeepers Champions in 2024.

The 2025 TIME100 Health list also includes the Princess of Wales, Kate Middleton; US Olympic athlete Ilona Maher; former NBA player Dwyane Wade; CEO of Eli Lilly David Ricks; Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese; CEO of GSK Emma Walmsley; philanthropist Melinda French Gates; World Health Organization director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus; actor and advocate Colin Farrell; US Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F Kennedy Jr; actors and Hilarity for Charity founders Seth Rogen and Lauren Miller Rogen; activist Rachel Sweet; science educator and television host Bill Nye; CEO of Novartis Vas Narasimhan; Apple's vice president of health Sumbul Desai; Global Health Council president Elisha Dunn-Georgiou; and US FDA commissioner Marty Makary, among others.

trial of Awami League. No decision has been made regarding the banning of AL and the cancellation of its registration as a political party. Those accused are being granted bail. The president of an illegal fascist government has been allowed to escape before our eyes."

He added that the party could not trust the government on the question of justice.

"One of our July [uprising] commitments is the trial of the murderers. Another is that Mujibbadis will never be able to do politics on this soil again. The fate of the Awami League has to be decided tonight.

At the demonstration, protesters chanted slogans demanding the ban of Awami League and justice for the victims. Nahid joined the demo early today.

At 10:44pm, local government Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain wrote on Facebook that AL's affiliated organisations Jubo League and Sweekhchasebok League would be incorporated to try the AL.

However, Adviser Mahfuj Alam yesterday said the provision would be incorporated to try the AL.

The process began about a week ago and the formalities have been done, he wrote.

"The ban and political eradication of the genocidal Awami League and its affiliated organisations is a pledge of the July mass uprising."

2ND TRIBUNAL

Families of the people who were killed or severely injured during the protests that toppled the AL regime in early August last year have often expressed dissatisfaction over the delay in the investigation and the trial proceedings.