

# 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

Xi tells Putin that Russia and China should be ‘friends of steel’

Putin says they stand together against ‘neo-Nazism’

Kremlin seeks boost from visit of powerful ally marking WWII commemorations

“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 counteract 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 Maghrib 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.”

## Rivals trade drones, missiles

FROM PAGE 1

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 populated 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 fighter 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 Muhammad 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

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 if India mounted further attacks but was ready to de-escalate.

Amid the rising tensions, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio yesterday urged de-escalation and expressed support for direct dialogue in separate calls with Jaishankar and Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif.

To Jaishankar, Rubio reaffirmed his commitment to work with India in the fight against terrorism. He expressed sorrow to Sharif for the reported loss of civilian lives in the current conflict between the two neighbouring countries, while also urging Pakistan to take steps to end support for terrorist groups.

The relationship between India and Pakistan has been fraught with tension since they gained independence from colonial Britain in 1947. The countries have fought three wars, two of them over Kashmir, and clashed many times.

The countries that both claim Kashmir in full and rule over parts of it separately acquired nuclear weapons in the 1990s.

## Hamid off to Thailand

FROM PAGE 1

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 HSA 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

recommendations from local doctors, reports our Kishoreganj correspondent.

Police sources said Hamid arrived at the airport around 11:15pm on Wednesday and completed all necessary formalities before leaving the country.

A former Awami League lawmaker, he is accused in a case filed with Kishoreganj Sadar Police Station, alongside ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, in connection with an attack on a procession during the July uprising.

AKM Akteruzzaman, special superintendent of Immigration (Operations) of the Special Branch, told The Daily Star, “We let him go as there was nothing mentioned about him in the system... He was not even listed [for travel restrictions].”

Asked whether the former president had indeed left the country for treatment, he replied, “We do not know much about it. He left with a boarding pass. We only check whether a passenger has a boarding pass and is cleared in the system.”

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

our system.”

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 Dinaipur 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.”

## TIME 100 Health names

FROM PAGE 1

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 and founder of Pivotal Ventures 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.

## Govt forms ICT-2 to speed up trials

FROM PAGE 1

Currently, 22 cases are pending with the ICT and 339 complaints have already been filed with the ICT investigation agency over the July atrocities.

The ICT-1 was originally formed in March 2010 by the Awami League government to try the perpetrators of the crimes committed during the Liberation War in 1971. Later the then government formed ICT-2 in 2012.

**LLEGAL PROVISION TO TRY AL**

The interim government in its first draft for the amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act-1973 included a provision to allow the trial of organisations.

The draft kept a provision that allows the banning of a political party for up to 10 years for committing crimes against humanity and genocide.

But the provision was not incorporated in the draft approved by the advisory council.

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

Late last night, Hasnat Abdullah, chief coordinator (south) of the National Citizen Party (NCP), led a group of protesters to Hare Road and began demonstrating in front of Jamuna, the residence of Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

He wrote on Facebook that the protesters would not leave until there is a roadmap on how “the Awami League will be brought to justice, and its political activities will be banned.

This is the first time the NCP has demonstrated against the chief adviser.

NCP Convener Nahid Islam wrote on Facebook: “We are seeing that there is a lot of dilly-dallying regarding the

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 Swechhhasebak League would be banned.

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.

Prosecutors sought to form a second trial and different political parties also expressed similar demands.

According to the law ministry gazette issued last night, the ICT-2 has been formed considering the increasing number of complaints and accused individuals and the need for quick disposal of cases.

Justice Nozrul retired from the High Court Division in December 2015 and began appearing in the Appellate Division to move cases as a lawyer in January 2016.

He represented Jamaat leader Mir Quasem Ali at the appeal hearing at the Supreme Court. Quasem was convicted of crimes against humanity and executed.

Justice Nozrul, however, stepped down from the defence team of Quasem, citing “a seriously adverse environment”.

## Robert Prevost

FROM PAGE 1

Leo thanked Francis in his speech and repeated his predecessor's call for a Church that is engaged with the modern world and “is always looking for peace, charity and being close to people, especially those who are suffering”.

He had not been seen as a frontrunner and there was a brief moment of silence when his name was announced to the packed St. Peter's Square, before people started to clap and cheer.

“I'm just thrilled. I hope this can bring to America a more loving community. I think there's a lot of hate in America. I think there's a lot of racism. I have experienced it,” said Lailah Brown, 28, from Seattle, Washington, an African American.

“I hope America does not embarrass the pope,” he said.