

THE BEST QUALITY EVERY TIME GUARANTEED BSRM

THE NATION'S LARGEST ROD MANUFACTURER

BSRM building a safer nation

HIGHEST SELLING CEMENT for more than **20 YEARS**

SHAH CEMENT

BTRC asked to block AL websites and social handles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Cyber Security Agency (NCSA) has requested the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to immediately block or remove all websites linked to the Awami League, its associated, affiliated, and like-minded organisations.

The agency, in a letter, also requested the BTRC to ask platforms such as Meta (Facebook), X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, and TikTok to block all social media handles linked to the political group.

Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser for telecom and ICT, confirmed the issuance of the letter.

The move comes after the government on May 12 banned all activities of the Awami League and its affiliated organisations, including in cyberspace, until the completion of ongoing trials of its members at the International Crimes Tribunal.

Additionally, the Election
SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Supporters of BNP leader Ishraque Hossain demonstrating outside Dhaka South City Corporation headquarters yesterday afternoon, demanding that he be sworn in and given the responsibilities of the city mayor following a court order.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

REDEFINING FREEDOM FIGHTER Ministry, Cabinet Division at odds over the move

BAHARAM KHAN

The legal expert committee of the Cabinet Division has opposed the Liberation War affairs ministry's proposal to redefine the term "freedom fighter," saying legal and hierarchical complications may arise from it.

The ministry, on the other hand, seems to be firm on its stance as it recently resubmitted the proposal to the Cabinet Division without changing the segment that deals with the definition of freedom fighter. Now it's up to the Advisory Council to make the final call.

In its draft amendment to Jatiya Muktiyoddha Council Act, 2022, the ministry proposed separate definitions of "freedom fighter" and "associates of the Liberation War".

Upon reviewing the draft, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Legal Draft Review and Opinion" under the Cabinet Division said that such a change could lead to legal and hierarchical complications. It sent the draft back to the ministry in March for further review.

The ministry argues that the redefinition is justified as there will be no changes to the existing benefits enjoyed by freedom fighters.

"We hope the Advisory Council will resolve the issue. That is why we have resubmitted the draft to the Cabinet Division without any changes to the segment," a joint secretary at the ministry told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

'Contact me if you face any trouble'

Asif Nazrul tells migrant workers in Malaysia

PORIMOL PALMA

Asif Nazrul, adviser for law and expatriates' welfare ministries, has given his contact information to some Bangladeshis working in Malaysia, urging them to contact him if they face any trouble.

He was talking to the migrants during a visit to Mediceram, a hand gloves company in the Malaysian state of Negeri Sembilan, yesterday.

He requested the Bangladeshi workers to resolve any problems through discussion instead of doing anything that could be harmful to them and the company.

"Please directly communicate with me," he told the migrants, asking them to collect his phone number and email ID from his Private Secretary Sarwoer Alam.

Nazrul is visiting Malaysia and is scheduled to hold meetings with Malaysian Human Resources Minister Steven Sim and Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail in Putrajaya today.

The Bangladeshis employed by Mediceram said nearly 200 of them were recruited in 2018 and 2023, but they were underpaid and their payments were irregular.

"This prompted us to hold demonstrations, and report to the labour department and even to our high commission, but nothing happened," a migrant told this correspondent from Malaysia yesterday.

Having spent Tk 4-5 lakh on recruitment, the migrants were indebted and frustrated. They then communicated with a migrants' rights group and demanded repayment of the recruitment fees.

At one point in time, Mediceram agreed to repay the recruitment fees, 22,500 Malaysian Ringgit (RM) each, since April in 12 instalments.



SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

ACC 'working' to bring back Hasina, Tulip

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission is "actively working" to bring back ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her niece, British lawmaker Tulip Siddiq, both accused in separate corruption cases.

Speaking to reporters yesterday, ACC Chairman Dr Mohammad Abdul Momen stated that the commission is actively working to ensure both individuals return to face legal proceedings.

Regarding Sheikh Hasina's repatriation, Momen noted, "A prisoner exchange agreement was signed with India during the Awami League government's tenure in 2011. Under that agreement, it is possible to bring her back. We will act in accordance with the court's directives."

Tulip Siddiq was summoned to appear before the ACC at 10:00am yesterday for questioning over allegations of abuse of power and receiving undue privileges. However, she failed to appear.

"She has lost the opportunity to defend

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

70 killed across Gaza as Israel intensifies strikes

Hamas military leader among dead; Trump envoys pushing for new hostage release deal

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli military strikes killed at least 70 Palestinians across the Gaza Strip yesterday, local health authorities said, in a significant escalation of the bombardment as US President Donald Trump continued his visit to the Middle East.

Medics said most of the dead, including women and children, resulted from a barrage of Israeli airstrikes that targeted several houses in the Jabalia area in northern Gaza.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment and said it was trying to verify the reports.

Israeli press reports yesterday cited security officials as saying they believed Hamas military leader Mohammad Sinwar and other senior officials had been killed in a strike on Tuesday on what the Israeli military described as a command and control bunker under the European Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis.

There was no confirmation either from the Israeli military or Hamas. Yesterday, witnesses and medics said an Israeli airstrike hit a bulldozer that approached the area of the strike at the European Hospital, wounding several people.

Late on Tuesday, Islamic Jihad, an Iranian-backed group in Gaza allied with Hamas, fired rockets towards Israel. Shortly before the Israeli strikes began in response, the military issued

evacuation orders to residents in the area of Jabalia and nearby Beit Lahiya.

The Israeli escalation came against Palestinian hopes that the Trump visit might provide pressure for a de-escalation of violence. Hamas on Monday released Edan Alexander, the last known living American hostage, ahead of Trump's trip.

Speaking in Riyadh on Tuesday, Trump said more hostages would follow Alexander and added that the people of Gaza deserved a better future.

Efforts to agree a ceasefire have faltered in recent weeks, with Hamas and Israel exchanging blame. Hamas talked to the United States and Egyptian and Qatari mediators to arrange the release of Alexander, and Israel has sent a team to Doha to begin a new round of talks.

On Tuesday, Trump's special envoys Steve Witkoff and Adam Boehler met hostage families in Tel Aviv and said they could now see a better chance of an agreement for their release following the deal over Alexander.

The US has also presented a plan to reopen humanitarian aid deliveries in Gaza using private contractors. Israel, which imposed a total blockade of supplies going into Gaza from March 2, has endorsed the plan. But it has been rejected by the United Nations and international aid agencies and key details, including funding and donors, remain unclear.

- Islamic Jihad fighters fire rockets towards Israel
- Israel issues evacuation orders to residents in Jabalia
- People of Gaza deserve a better future: Trump

Iran diplomacy will 'work out', hopes Trump

AFP, Doha

US President Donald Trump voiced hope on Wednesday that diplomatic efforts would succeed on Iran's nuclear programme, even as he vowed rigorous enforcement of sanctions.

Trump, on his first visit to the Middle East since returning to the White House, said he spoke about Iran with the leader of Qatar, which maintains relations with both longtime adversaries.

"It's been really an interesting situation. I have a feeling it's going to work out," Trump said of Iran after talks with the emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

The Trump administration has held four rounds of talks with Tehran, as the president seeks to avert a threatened Israeli military strike on the Iranian nuclear programme.

"I want to make a deal with Iran. I want to do something, if it's possible," Trump told a summit of Gulf Arab leaders in Riyadh earlier Wednesday.

"But for that to happen, it must stop sponsoring terror, halt its bloody proxy wars, and permanently and verifiably cease its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

"I'm strongly urging all nations to join us in fully and totally enforcing the sanctions" imposed on Iran by the United States, he said.

The Trump administration in recent weeks has imposed sanctions on a series of entities and individuals linked to Iran's oil industry and nuclear programme.

ESPIONAGE ROW India, Pak expel diplomats in tit-for-tat move

Swap prisoners

AGENCIES

India and Pakistan each announced on Tuesday evening the expulsion of one diplomat from the other country, with both sides accusing the respective officials of engaging in espionage activities.

Pakistan declared a staff member of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad as persona non grata. The official has been ordered to leave the country within 24 hours, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Indian Charge d'Affaires was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where a formal demarche was issued conveying the decision, the foreign office said, adding that it called on the Indian mission to ensure that its personnel refrain from actions inconsistent with their diplomatic responsibilities.

According to Indian media, the Indian government announced earlier it had expelled an official working at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi and asked him to leave the country within 24 hours.

The Pakistani diplomat, who was declared "persona non grata" by the Indian authorities, was "indulging in activities not in keeping with his official status in India", according to India's foreign ministry in a statement.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's PTI founder Imran Khan,
SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Children swing from the mooring line of a ship on the Bhairab river in Khulna, seeking a bit of fun and relief from the scorching heat after school.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

EU demands accountability for Myanmar school strike

AFP, Brussels

The EU yesterday voiced shock at a deadly air strike on a school in central Myanmar, warning the "perpetrators must be held accountable for this atrocity".

A Myanmar junta air strike on Monday killed 20 students and two teachers in the village of Oe Htein Kwin in the country's Sagaing region, according to a school staff member, a local administrator, and other witnesses.

"We are horrified over reports of a massacre in a village school in Sagaing," EU foreign affairs spokeswoman, Anitta Hipper, said on X.

"Our deepest condolences to the families of the victims, most of them children."

The strike took place during a purported truce -- to ease aid after March's devastating magnitude-7.7 quake -- between the junta, which seized power in 2021, and guerrilla fighters.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since its military ousted a civilian government in 2021.