



HUNGER IN GAZA

14,000 babies may die in 48 hours

Warns UN; 83 more killed as Israel eyes 'all of strip'

AGENCIES

At least 14,000 babies in Gaza could die within 48 hours if more aid does not reach the starving communities, the UN warned yesterday, as Israel stepped up its military offensive to take control of "all of the Strip".

Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli strikes killed at least 83 people yesterday across the war-ravaged Palestinian territory. At least 91 people were killed on Monday.

However, in a sign that Israel's friends' patience on the more than 20-month-long military carnage in Gaza is beginning to wear thin, the UK government yesterday paused free trade negotiations with Israel and slapped new sanctions on West Bank settlers.

Foreign Secretary David Lammy also announced his ministry was summoning the Israeli ambassador over Israel's expansion of its military operations in the occupied Palestinian territory.

"There are 14,000 babies that will die in the next 48 hours unless we can reach them," UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher said while speaking to the BBC's Radio 4 Today programme.

He said five aid trucks entered Gaza on Monday, a "drop in the ocean" after an 11-week blockade by Israel, and were yet to reach the communities in need.

The aid was allowed to enter Gaza following widespread condemnation of Israel's total blockade.

The World Health Organization said that Gaza's "two million people are starving".

The developments came after Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on Monday vowed to take control of "all areas of the Strip".

Netanyahu also said it was necessary for Israel to prevent a famine in Gaza for "diplomatic reasons", after his government announced it would allow limited food aid into the territory.

He said aid had resumed because "images of mass starvation" could harm the legitimacy of the war effort.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



UK pauses trade talks with Israel, summons envoy

WHO says two million in Gaza starving

UN says extended Israeli offensive may leave Gaza 'unlivable'

Netanyahu says 'images of mass starvation' can harm Israel's war



Mourners carry the bodies of Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes from Al-Ahli Arab Baptist hospital for their funeral in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

PUSH FOR MAKING ISHRAQUE MAYOR

DSCC workers threaten strike

Half of Dhaka faces disruption in garbage collection, mosquito control, street lamp services

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nearly half of Dhaka city is likely to see disruptions in garbage collection, mosquito control and even street lamps as five employee unions of Dhaka South City Corporation are set to go on strike unless BNP leader Ishraque Hossain is pronounced mayor by 10:00am today.

The unions, expressing solidarity with Ishraque supporters, issued the ultimatum at Nagar Bhaban yesterday.

"We tell the government: Make arrangements for Ishraque Hossain to assume the mayoral office immediately. Otherwise, we will bring Dhaka to a standstill. You can't even imagine what we are capable of doing," said Arif Chowdhury, president of the DSCC Workers-Employees Union, at a demonstration.

The other associations expressing solidarity with the strike are DSCC Employees' Union, Scavengers and Workers' Union, Transport Drivers and Workers' Union, Electricity Workers' Social Welfare Committee and 4th Class Workers' Social Welfare Committee.

"If our demand is not fulfilled, we will halt all civic services -- from waste collection and cleaning operations to electricity-related services," Arif said.

PHOTO ON PAGE 12

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Editor's Council concerned over a clause of anti-terror ordinance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors' Council has expressed concern over a newly added clause to the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Ordinance 2025, saying that it may significantly limit freedom of the press.

A gazette on the ordinance was issued by the interim government on May 11, and the ban on the Awami League's activities followed on May 12.

According to the gazette, a new clause has been introduced under subsection 1 of clause (kha) of section 20 of the 2009 Act.

The clause reads, "Any publication or printing of a press statement by the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BNP to press for polls without stirring chaos

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP is planning to ramp up efforts to push for a national election by December but will avoid a direct conflict with the interim government, party sources have said.

Although the BNP remains concerned about recent developments that "destabilised the political landscape", party leaders are treading softly to steer clear of a further escalation.

BNP leaders say they are alarmed by a series of recent events, including the abrupt ban on Awami League's activities, the student unrest at Jagannath University, and a flash procession by Awami League supporters in the capital's Gulistan.

According to them, these back-to-back incidents signal a "deepening crisis" that cannot be resolved without an immediate return to the electoral process.

Against this backdrop, BNP leaders are planning to bring their demand for timely elections to the forefront,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Govt looking to defuse trade tensions with India

Commerce ministry seeks meeting with neighbouring country

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Bangladesh does not want any further escalation in tension with India, as the recent retaliatory moves are affecting bilateral trade and both countries' businesses.

"We will not go for any retaliation," Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman told a group of journalists yesterday after an inter-ministerial meeting that was attended by representatives from prominent trade bodies.

The meeting was convened to seek the opinion of different ministries, departments, government agencies and

commerce secretary-level meeting.

The latest move by the Indian government is not only affecting Bangladeshi businesses but also their Indian counterparts.

"So, please let us sit together and let us try to find a solution," Rahman said.

A businessman who attended the meeting said he advised the government to immediately send a letter to the Indian government requesting deferment of the restriction on land port use for three months to clear the pending consignments.

"The use of land ports for importing goods from India is very important

NCP demands reconstitution of the EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Citing a lack of confidence in the Election Commission, the National Citizen Party yesterday demanded an immediate reconstitution of the commission.

As part of the process, the party also called for considering the proposed Electoral Reform Commission's recommendations.

Blaming the EC for creating a "complicated political situation centring the illegal election" of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) in 2020, the newly formed party urged the interim government to conduct local body polls without delay.

To realise its demand, the NCP's Dhaka city unit will hold a protest rally

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BUSINESS

Only 5 of 28 locally developed tea varieties are popular

Out of the 28 varieties of tea plants developed by state-run Bangladesh Tea Research Institute (BTRI), only five are widely cultivated in the country, based on their high yield, quality, and climate resilience.

STORY ON B1

the private sector on the matter.

The tension started with Bangladesh's decision to stop yarn imports from India through the four land ports on April 13. In retaliation, the Indian government decided to suspend the transshipment facility for Bangladeshi garment items.

Then, on May 17, India imposed restrictions on the import of garments, agro-processed foods, furniture and other goods from Bangladesh through land ports.

India is the second-largest import source for Bangladesh after China.

"Our efforts will continue so that no further escalation takes place -- we will not retaliate," he said, adding that Bangladesh has already sent a letter to the Indian commerce ministry through the foreign ministry requesting a

for Bangladesh," he said, adding that over the last 10 months, Bangladesh imported 3.5 lakh tonnes of goods through the route, as the use of sea routes is expensive for businesses.

Many businesses are doing trade with India either through letters of credit, the contract method or the advance payment method.

So, if the pending consignments are not delivered, the businesses will have to bear severe financial losses.

Moreover, the amount of trade is immaterial as over the years, an ecosystem of trade has developed between Bangladesh and India. "We want a solution to the problem immediately," he added.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

