

'All I think about is Gaza' War weighs heavy on hajj pilgrims

AFP, Makkah

Away from home in Gaza, Palestinian pilgrim Mohammed Shehade said the rare chance he was given to perform hajj is overshadowed by fears for his family trapped in the war-battered territory.

The 38-year-old engineer had been granted a permit to leave as he sought life-saving cancer treatment in Egypt, but Israeli authorities barred his family from accompanying him.

He said his departure from the Gaza Strip in February presented him with "the opportunity of a lifetime" to apply for the annual Muslim pilgrimage, which begins on Wednesday.

But even as he visited the holy sites in the Saudi city of Makkah, his heart was heavy with thoughts of his wife and four children stuck in Gaza under relentless bombardment.

"This is life's greatest suffering, to be far away from your family," Shehade told AFP on a roadside leading to Makkah's Grand Mosque.

He is among hundreds of Gazans set to perform Islam's holiest rites alongside more than a million worshippers from across the globe.



As pilgrims robed in white filed by, Shehade said he had been praying day and night for the Gaza war to end and to be reunited with his family.

"You could be in the best place in the world but if you are away from your family, you will never be happy," he said.

Leaving Gaza has become practically impossible for most inhabitants, but some like Shehade have been evacuated on medical grounds.

"Here I am preparing to perform hajj but there are things I can't speak about. If I do I will cry," he said as tears began to form in his eyes.

Shehade left Gaza during a truce, but Israel has since renewed its intense bombing campaign and blocked aid deliveries, with the United Nations warning of widespread famine.

"When I left I was caught between two fires," Shehade said of the choice to travel for an essential surgery and leave his family behind.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 4,149 people have been killed in the territory since Israel resumed its offensive on March 18, taking the war's overall deaths toll to 54,418, mostly civilians.

India's Covid cases rise over 1,200pc in a week

4 deaths reported

NDTV ONLINE

The number of active Covid-19 cases in India has crossed 3,000, with Kerala, Maharashtra and Delhi being the worst-hit states in the latest wave.

According to the data available on the official website of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, there are 3,395 active Coronavirus cases in the country as of Saturday morning, a rise of about 1,200 percent from last week.

India had 257 active cases on May 22 and 1,010 by May 26. The country reported 685 new coronavirus cases between Friday and Saturday, along with four deaths, the data showed.

Kerala, the worst hit state in India, reported 189 new Covid cases on Friday, and has 1,336 active infections, according to the data.

It is followed by Maharashtra (467), Delhi (375), Gujarat (265), Karnataka (234), West Bengal (205), Tamil Nadu (185) and Uttar Pradesh (117).

Rajasthan (60), Puducherry (41), Haryana (26), Andhra Pradesh (17) and Madhya Pradesh (16) are other states that are seeing an uptick in Covid cases. The data also showed that India has reported 26 deaths this year.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has said the genome sequencing of samples in the west and south has shown that the new variants are sub-variants of Omicron, a strain that was behind the big Covid wave in India in 2022.

2 bridges in Russia collapse in 'blasts'

7 dead; Moscow treats the incidents near Ukraine border as 'acts of terrorism'; Ukraine attacks Russian nuke-capable bombers in Siberia



AFP, Moscow

The overnight collapse of two bridges in Russian regions bordering Ukraine that killed seven people were caused by explosions, Russian officials said yesterday, treating them as "acts of terrorism".

In Russia's Bryansk region bordering Ukraine, a blast caused a road bridge to collapse onto a railway line late Saturday, derailing a passenger train heading to Moscow and killing seven people, authorities said.

A separate rail bridge in the neighbouring Kursk region was blown up hours later in the early hours yesterday, derailing a freight train and injuring the driver.

Authorities did not say who was behind the explosions, but investigators said a criminal inquiry was underway. Russian President Vladimir Putin was briefed on the incidents throughout the night, the Kremlin said.

Meanwhile, a Russian missile strike on a Ukrainian army training area killed at least 12 soldiers and wounded dozens more yesterday, Kyiv said, in a rare admission of its military losses.

Videos posted on social media from the Bryansk region showed rescuers clambering

over the mangled chassis of a train belonging to national operator Russian Railways, while screams could be heard in another video.

"There are seven dead as a result of the collapse of a bridge onto railway tracks," Alexander Bogomaz, the Bryansk region's governor, wrote on Telegram.

At least 71 people were injured, 44 of whom were in hospital, he told reporters.

In the incident in the Kursk region, a rail bridge collapsed onto a road, derailing a freight train.

"Last night... in the Zheleznogorsk district, a bridge collapsed while a freight locomotive was passing. Part of the train fell onto the road below the bridge," Kursk region governor Alexander Khinshten said on Telegram.

Meanwhile, Ukraine attacked Russian nuclear-capable long-range bombers at a military base in Siberia yesterday, the first such attack so far from the front lines more than 4,300 km away, according to pro-Russian bloggers.

Unverified video and pictures posted on social media showed Russian strategic bombers - whose purpose is to drop nuclear bombs on distance targets - on fire at the Belya air base north of Irkutsk.

Iran warns of retaliation if Europe misuses UN nuke report

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday warned it would retaliate if European powers that have threatened to reimpose nuclear sanctions "exploit" a UN report showing Tehran has stepped up production of highly enriched uranium.

The report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said Iran had sharply increased its stockpile of uranium enriched to up to 60 percent, close to the roughly 90 percent level needed for atomic weapons.

Iran's total amount of enriched uranium now exceeds 45 times the limit authorised by a landmark 2015 agreement with world powers, and is estimated at 9,247.6 kilograms, according to the confidential IAEA report seen by AFP.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a statement he had told IAEA chief Rafael Grossi in a phone call that "Iran will respond to any inappropriate action by the European parties" to the 2015 agreement, referring to Britain, France and Germany.

The European trio have warned they could reimpose sanctions if they deemed

The report was leaked as Iran and the US have been engaged in talks towards a new deal

Iran's nuclear programme a threat to the continent's security.

Araghchi urged Grossi in their Saturday call to stop "parties from exploiting" the nuclear watchdog report "to advance their political objectives", according to the statement. The IAEA Board of Governors is set to review Iran's nuclear activities in its upcoming quarterly meeting in Vienna starting June 9.

Iran rejected the IAEA report, the latest move in years-long efforts to restrict its nuclear activities over fears that it is seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

The Islamic republic has denied seeking nuclear arms and says it needs the uranium for civilian power production. The report was leaked as Iran and the United States have been engaged in negotiations towards a new nuclear deal.

EU MIGRANT CRISIS
Over 1,100 crossed Channel on Saturday: UK data

AFP, London

Some 1,194 migrants arrived in the UK after crossing the Channel in small boats on Saturday, a record for this year according to AFP counting from government data.

It brings the overall number of migrant crossings this year to 14,808, an unprecedented figure despite several measures in place by the French and UK governments to curb the crossings.

French coastal authorities said they also rescued nearly 200 migrants between late Friday and late Saturday. The latest crossings, which UK Defence Secretary John Healey described as "shocking", fall short of the all-time record of 1,300 migrants arriving on small boats in a day in September 2022.

But they will still prove a headache for UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who has been at pains to toughen his rhetoric on irregular immigration amid pressure from the far right to slash migrant numbers.

Trump pulls Musk ally's Nasa nomination

REUTERS, Washington

The White House withdrew on Saturday its nominee for Nasa administrator, Jared Isaacman, abruptly yanking a close ally of Elon Musk from consideration to lead the space agency.

President Donald Trump said he would announce a new candidate soon. "After a thorough review of prior associations, I am hereby withdrawing the nomination of Jared Isaacman to head Nasa," Trump wrote on his Truth Social site.

Isaacman, a billionaire private astronaut who had been Musk's pick to lead Nasa, was due next week for a much-delayed confirmation vote before the US Senate. His removal from consideration caught many in the space industry by surprise.



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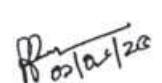
e-Tender Notice

e-Tender are invited in e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by the component Director of smallholder Agriculture Competitiveness Project (SACP), BADC part, Ministry of Agriculture, Sech Bhaban, 22, Manik mia Avenue, Shere-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka.

SL. No.	Description of the Tender	Tender ID No.	Tender Proposal Document last selling Date	Tender Proposal Closing & Opening Date	Last Date for Tender Proposal Security Submission
01.	Procurement of office Furniture for BADC Local & regional office in SACP.	1014984	15-Jun-2025 15:00 pm	16-Jun-2025 15:00 pm	15-Jun-2025 15:30 pm.
02.	Construction of On Farm Water Cattle Crossing/foot bridge/small Regulator etc. at any upazila in Project Area.	1117982	15-Jun-2025 15:00 pm	16-Jun-2025 15:00 pm	15-Jun-2025 15:30 pm.

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(Md. Rezaur Rahman)
Component Director
SACP, BADC P, Sech Bhaban, Dhaka



Demonstrators lie on the ground covered with white sheets as they take part in a protest performance in support of the Palestinian people of Gaza, under the slogan "Stop genocide, Break with Israel now!" in the Spanish Basque city of San Sebastian, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

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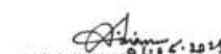
Date: 01-06-2025

e-GP Re-Tender Notice

e-Tender are invited in the national e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works details are given below :

SI No.	Tender ID	Tender Closing (date & time)	Tender Opening (date & time)
1	I122554	15-Jun-2025 12:00	15-Jun-2025 12:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The Fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any Schedule Bank up to mentioned above. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


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GD-1338

STRICKEN WARSHIP
N Korea deploys mystery balloon-like objects

CNN ONLINE

New satellite images show North Korea has deployed what appear to be balloons alongside its damaged 5,000-tonne warship that has been laying on its side and partially submerged since a botched launch last week.

While the purpose of the objects is unclear, experts told CNN they could be used to help get the ship back upright, or protect it from the prying eyes of drones.

The stricken destroyer was the country's newest warship and was meant to be a triumph of North Korea's ambitious naval modernization effort. Instead, a malfunction in the launch mechanism on May 21 caused the stern to slide prematurely into the water, crushing parts of the hull and leaving the bow stranded on the shipway, state media KCNA reported, in a rare admission of bad news.