



“We call on all parties to protect health facilities, health personnel and patients at all times.”  
WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Israel-Iran conflict



Mangoes, memories and the magic of Rajshahi  
WR1



Myanmar junta battles guerrillas for control of jade hub  
P5



We're witnessing the barbaric face of a global (dis)order  
P6



Leather legacy fades  
WR4

## Negotiations start amid raging war

Europe urges Iran to keep up diplomacy with US; IAEA says Iran not seeking nukes

AGENCIES

European powers hoped to offer a “diplomatic solution” to the Iran-Israel crisis as they met with the top diplomat of Iran in Geneva yesterday, as arch foes continue to exchange missile attacks for the eighth day.

The meeting, which was focused on Iran’s nuclear programme, comes as US President Donald Trump mulls the prospect of entering the war between the two foes.

Israel, saying Iran was on the verge of developing nuclear weapons, a claim denied by most UN observers and other signatories of the landmark nuclear deal in 2015.

Amid the push for a diplomatic solution to the crisis, Israel’s military chief Eyal Zamir warned that his country should be “ready for a prolonged campaign” against Iran.

“We have embarked on the most complex campaign in our history to remove a threat of such magnitude, against such an enemy. We must be ready for a prolonged campaign,” Zamir said in a video statement to Israelis.



Israel launched attacks against Iran last Friday, which have combined targeted assassinations of key military personnel with strikes on Iran’s nuclear and missile facilities.

Zamir said the Israeli military had prepared for “years” for the campaign against Iran, even while Israeli troops continue their devastating campaign against the Palestinian militant group Hamas in Gaza.

Analysts say Iran was severely weakened by Israeli strikes on allied militant groups Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon since 2023, while Israel damaged Tehran’s air defences in tit-for-tat exchanges between the countries last year.

On the ground, Israel’s military said it struck dozens of targets in Tehran overnight, including what it called a centre for the “research and development of Iran’s nuclear weapons project”.

In Israel, sirens sounded in the afternoon after missiles were launched from Iran for the second time yesterday, and rescuers reported two injured, including a 16-year-old in serious condition.

A military official said that “approximately 20 missiles were launched towards Israel” in the latest salvo.

Later, Israel said at least 19 people were injured in the northern Israeli port city of Haifa after a barrage of missiles was fired in the afternoon.

Trump has said he would decide “within the next two weeks” whether to involve the United States in the fighting.

In the meeting in Geneva, European powers urged Iran to revive diplomatic efforts with the United States to find a solution in the standoff over its nuclear programme, but Tehran warned it could only consider diplomacy once Israel halted its bombardment of the Islamic republic.

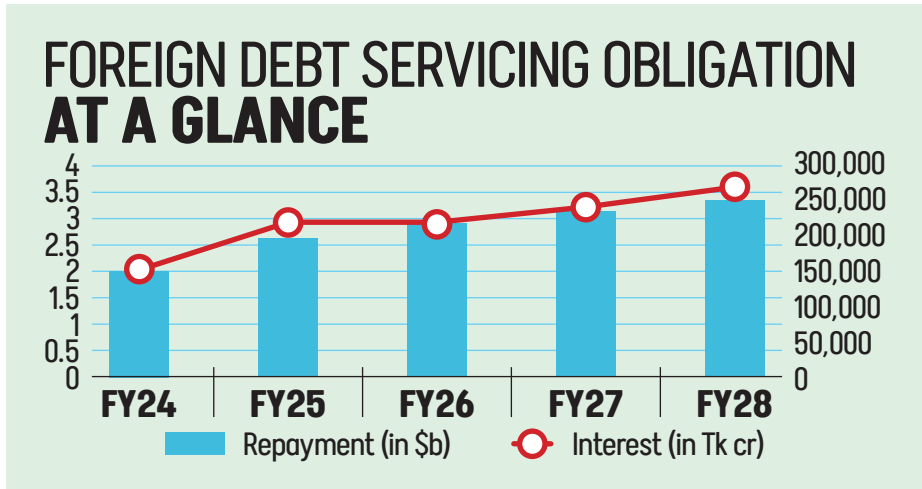
SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Emergency personnel work next to burnt cars and damaged residential buildings after missile strikes by Iran on Israel’s Be’er Sheva yesterday. *Inset:* Iranians attend an anti-Israel protest following Friday prayers in Tehran.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Govt to scale back foreign loan reliance



REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government plans to scale back its dependence on foreign loans as it seeks to mitigate threats to external debt sustainability.

At present, the external debt to export is 140 percent, according to the latest Debt Sustainability Analysis (DSA).

“The rising external debt stock, principal and interest payment of Bangladesh

against export may create vulnerability in the external debt position and may affect external debt sustainability in the coming years,” said the report titled Medium-Term Macroeconomic Policy Statement FY26-FY28.

By the end of the fiscal year, the government’s outstanding foreign debt would stand at Tk 914,200 crore, which is equivalent to \$76.18 billion at the current exchange rate.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## Fear grows over dengue spiralling out of control

Experts say pre-monsoon efforts fell short, warn of impending crisis

HELEMUL ALAM

The risk of a rapid dengue outbreak looms large across the country, with entomologists warning that unusually high densities of Aedes mosquito larvae have been detected in multiple districts since January.

Without immediate and coordinated action, experts fear the situation could spiral into a full-blown health crisis during the monsoon.

Despite early signs, authorities have failed to take adequate pre-monsoon measures, leaving both urban and rural areas vulnerable to fast-spreading transmission.

Health officials and researchers alike are urging urgent intervention to curb the mosquito population before it’s too late.

“We are detecting high densities of Aedes larvae nationwide, which signals a high risk of a severe outbreak this year,” said Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist at Jahangirnagar University.

He said alarmingly high larval densities were recorded as early as January in Barishal, Barguna, Mymensingh, Chattogram, and Manikganj, indicating the potential for widespread transmission during the monsoon.



SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## Rice, chicken, fish prices rise post-Eid

Traders blame high demand, cartel of millers

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Prices of different rice varieties have increased by Tk 3-Tk 5 per kg in the capital over the last two weeks even though the country is in the middle of the harvesting season.

Rice Agency at Mirpur-11, yesterday said he sold different varieties of miniket rice at Tk 75 to Tk 85 a kg, up from Tk 70 to Tk 82 a week earlier.

BR-28 rice variety was sold for Tk 60 to Tk 65 a kg, compared to Tk 56-62 last week, he said.

ITEM (PER KG)	CURRENT PRICE	PREVIOUS PRICE
Miniket rice	75-85	70-82
BR-28 rice	60-65	56-62
Guti/Shorna rice (coarse)	55-58	52-56
Shonali chicken	320-330	260-270

Besides, a variety of chicken, popularly known as Shonali, now costs Tk 50 to Tk 60 per kg more, compared to last week.

The price of broiler chicken, however, has not changed.

Traders at kitchen markets in Karwan Bazar, Shewrapara, Kazipara, Ibrahimpur, Mirpur-11 and Mohammadpur Krishi Market said rice prices increased at wholesale markets first and then at the retail shops.

Kamal Hossain, proprietor of Mugbul

The Gutti and Shorna varieties of coarse rice were sold at Tk 55 to Tk 58, compared to last week’s Tk 52-56, he added.

Alamgir Hossain, manager of Krishi Bhandar at Mohammadpur Krishi Market, one of the capital’s biggest wholesale rice markets, said the price hike was unusual in the middle of a harvesting season.

The price of a 50kg sack of rice has increased by Tk 150-Tk 200 after Eid, he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Nine-year-old Sabrina gets her hair brushed by her mother at Mugda Medical College and Hospital yesterday. Following a week of dengue treatment, she appears fatigued but is recovering well. As her fever is subsiding, doctors say she could be discharged soon.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS