

UN chief urges aid surge in world of ‘conflicts’

AFP, Seville

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged the world to “rev up the engine of development” at an aid conference in Spain yesterday at a time when US-led cuts are jeopardising the fight against poverty and climate change.

Dozens of world leaders and over 4,000 representatives from businesses, civil society and financial institutions are gathering in the city of Seville for the June 30-July 3 conference to seek fresh impetus for the aid sector.

But the US is snubbing the biggest such talks in a decade, underlining the erosion of international cooperation on combating hunger and climate change.

Guterres said that two-thirds of UN’s sustainable development goals set for 2030 were “lagging” and over \$4.0 trillion of annual investment would be needed to achieve them.



Migrants attempt to board a smuggler's boat in an effort to cross the English Channel off the beach of Equihen, northern France, yesterday. Almost 37,000 people crossed the Channel in small boats in 2024 but the highest figures were for 2022, when 45,755 people arrived.

PHOTO: AFP

58 killed in Israeli strikes across Gaza  
Four schools sheltering displaced Palestinians bombed

AGENCIES

Israeli strikes killed at least 58 people across Gaza yesterday as residents in the enclave's north reported one of the heaviest bombardments in weeks, while Israeli officials were due in Washington for a new ceasefire push by the Trump administration.

A day after US President Donald Trump urged an end to the 20-month-old war, a confidant of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected at the White House for talks on a Gaza ceasefire, Iran, and possible wider regional diplomatic deals.

But on the ground in the Palestinian enclave, there was no sign of fighting letting up. The Israeli military yesterday issued evacuation orders to residents in large districts in the northern Gaza Strip, forcing a new wave of displacement, reports Reuters.

“Explosions never stopped; they bombed schools and homes. It felt like earthquakes,” said Salah, 60, a father of five children, from Gaza City. “In the news we hear a ceasefire is near, on the ground we see death and we hear explosions.”

US not offering Iran ‘anything’: Trump  
Tehran says US must rule out more strikes before new talks

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US President Donald Trump said yesterday he was not speaking to Iran and was not offering the country “anything”, and he reiterated his assertion that the United States had “totally OBLITERATED” Tehran’s nuclear facilities.

Trump’s comments, posted to Truth Social, followed reports that his administration had discussed possibly helping Iran access as much as \$30bn to build a civilian-energy-producing nuclear programme.

The statement comes as Iran’s deputy foreign minister told the BBC that talks between Washington and Tehran cannot resume unless the US rules out further strikes on Iran.

Majid Takht-Ravanchi told the British broadcaster that the US had signalled it wants to return to the negotiating table, a week after it struck three Iranian nuclear facilities.

- Iran slams Trump’s shifting stance on lifting sanctions
- France, Germany, UK condemn ‘threats’ against IAEA head
- Iran’s nuke enrichment ‘will never stop’, says its UN envoy
- Over 900 killed in Iran during 12-day war: report

“We have not agreed to any date, we have not agreed to the modality,” said Takht-Ravanchi. “Right now we are seeking an answer to this question. Are we going to see a repetition of an act of aggression while we are engaging in dialogue?”

The US needs to be “quite clear on this very important question”, he said.

Iran also criticised Trump’s shifting stance on whether to lift economic sanctions against Tehran as “games” that were not aimed at solving the problems between the two countries.

“These [statements by Trump] should be viewed more in the context of psychological and media games than as a serious expression in favour of dialogue or problem-solving,” Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei told a press conference yesterday.

Baghaei also said Iran could not be expected to guarantee the safety of IAEA inspectors. “How can they expect us to ensure the safety and security of the agency’s inspectors when Iran’s peaceful nuclear facilities were attacked a few days ago?” he said.

Fifth death anniv of Latifur Rahman today

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Poignantly, his passing coincided with the death anniversary of his beloved grandson, Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain. Faraaz, a student at Emory University in Atlanta, US, was brutally killed during the terrorist attack on the Holey Artisan Bakery in Gulshan on July 1, 2016 – an attack that deeply shook the nation.

Latifur was also a pioneering figure in Bangladesh’s media landscape. He was the founding director of Mediaworld, the company that owns The Daily Star, and the chairman of Mediastar, the owning company of Prothom Alo. The newspapers are the leading English and Bangla dailies in Bangladesh.

A respected name in the global business community, Latifur built one of the largest and most admired business empires in the country through sheer hard work, perseverance, entrepreneurial skills, and unwavering principles.

Born in Jalpaiguri on August 28, 1945, he began his education at St Francis School and then went to St Edmund’s School, Shillong, in 1956. He also studied at St Xavier’s College in Calcutta (now Kolkata).

After coming to Dhaka, he started as a trainee at his family-owned jute mill – W Rahman Jute Mills in Chandpur – in 1966. The jute mill was the first to be owned by a Bangalee in the erstwhile East Pakistan.

He became an executive and worked there until 1971. But the government nationalised industries in 1972 and Latifur found himself in a very difficult situation. The family also owned some tea estates in north-eastern Bangladesh, but after independence the price of produce was less than production cost.

Yet he did not give up hope. The same year, Latifur came across a Swiss company and started a trading business. There was no looking back after that.

In 1981, he established the Transcom Group. It is now one of the country’s largest conglomerates, with operations in the areas of manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, electronics, beverages, media, food, and insurance.

Latifur was a member of executive board of ICC Paris, VP of ICC Bangladesh and member of BRAC’s governing body. He was a member of the Bangladesh Better Business Forum and Advisory Committee on World Trade Organisation.

He was also the president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Dhaka, for seven terms and of Bangladesh Employers’ Federation.

Latifur was also the chairman of the Bangladesh government’s Trade Body Reforms Committee and a member of Bangladesh Bank’s executive board.

The business icon was an honouree of “Oslo Business for Peace Award 2012” and was awarded Business Executive of the Year 2001 by the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh. He was also honoured with the “Saarc Outstanding Leader” award and Lifetime Achievement Award.

Latifur got married to Shahnaz Rahman, who is the current chairperson of Transcom Group. They have three daughters – Simeen Rahman, CEO of Transcom Group, Shahzreh Huq, (late) Shazneen Rahman, and a son (late) Arshad Waliur Rahman.

Faraaz’s message of embracing humanity

FROM PAGE 12

his friends? Would he have got married and begun one of the most significant stages of his life?

All these questions, no doubt, agonise his loved ones as they grapple with the reality that those will never be answered.

But there was a lot more to Faraaz than just the predictable aspirations of a young person. He wanted to bring change to the world and work for people, especially those who were vulnerable and disempowered. In his brief life of 20 years, he truly lived up to the attributes surrounding his name – “someone full of love” and one who “creates balance and harmony for anyone lucky enough to be called his friend”, according to a website. In Persian Faraaz means “exalted” and “elevating”. Could his parents even imagine how much his name would reflect his legacy or determine his destiny?

Throughout his precious life, Faraaz was known for going out of his way to help a friend. He was a natural leader among his peers and popular for his inherent kindness to others. He lived a life of privilege but was full of humility. A class valedictorian from high school, he was an all-rounder, excelling in athletics and volleyball while being a straight A student.

Even at Emory University, Atlanta, where he studied, he was an ace student. His brother Zaraif Ayaat Hossain was his best friend. He wanted to be like his Nana Bhai, Latifur Rahman, the founder and chairman of Transcom Group, who left the world, by strange coincidence, also on July 1, four years later, heartbroken to have lost his beloved grandson, Chotoo. His grandmother Shahnaz Rahman (current chairman of Transcom Group) doted on him. His mother, who was his hero, told me shortly after his death that it was difficult to find a flaw in such a good-natured child.

Thus, it was no surprise to anyone who knew him that he would refuse to leave his two friends, both women, one of a different faith than his, in the face of certain death.

Faraaz was brutally murdered along with 22 other hostages in the terror attack in Holy Artisan Bakery on July 1, 2016. The murderous group that descended upon innocents that day had apparently decided to spare those who could prove they were Muslims. Among the slain foreigners were seven Japanese, nine Italians, and one Indian, all of them deeply connected to Bangladesh. But they didn’t spare Faraaz, a practicing Muslim who was well-versed in the holy Quran. It was because he did not leave his two school friends Abinta Kabir and Tarishi Jain, also promising young university students with dreams to bring about change in the world. When his mother got the news that “the terrorists were letting the Bangladeshis go” her heart went cold. According to her, she knew he would not be coming back to her. Because she knew her son. He would never abandon his friends, no matter what. Faraaz had shown the world what loyalty, friendship, and integrity could look like in the face of terror. Ishrat Akhond, a young Bangladeshi woman who had reportedly defied the terrorists, was also murdered.

Faraaz, a devoted believer of Islam, who prayed and fasted and had performed Umrah many times, who celebrated cultural diversity, and believed in equality regardless of faith, race or gender and embraced humanity with open arms, just did not fit the stereotype of the violent, inflexible, backward face of Islam that dominates the mainstream Western narrative. Instead, he represented a progressive, accepting, and peaceful face of Islam. As the news of Faraaz’s act of courage spread, people around the world applauded him with the loftiest tributes – the Mother Teresa International Award (2016), recognition by the Garden of the Righteous Worldwide, and the Faraaz Courage Award 2016 to recognise exceptional acts of courage to encourage empathy and the spirit of bravery among young Bangladeshis.

We are living in a world that is gravely wounded by misogyny, bigotry and a frenzy of “othering”. It is a world where empathy is disappearing fast and divisiveness rules. In this era of unbridled and well-documented brutality, Faraaz’s love for humanity that took precedence over everything else offers a profound message of hope, harmony and sanity.

**Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh**  
Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
Satkhira  
[www.lged.gov.bd](http://www.lged.gov.bd)  
Tel. No. 0471-63413, Fax: 0471-62818

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Date: 30-06-2025

**e-Tender Notice No. 56/2024-25 [OTM]**

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1	1129165	KBS-RIDP/SAT/VR-100.9/24-25 Part-A Improvement of Bolrampura Registered Primary School Bagmara Bazar Via Sahapara Road by BC from Ch. 00-1000m. (Road ID No. 287905189). Salvage amount: 809237.00 BDT. Part-B Improvement of Nehalpur Chara Bot-Tola - Tanapur House Road by BC from Ch. 594-1239m. (Road ID No. 287905072). Salvage amount: 591862.00 BDT. Part-C Improvement of Omorpur-Manikhar Road by BC From Ch. 2000-3160m. (Road ID No. 287904065). Salvage amount: 221325.00 BDT under Tala Upazila, District-Satkhira.	24-Jul-2025 12:30

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The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank’s branches up to **17.00pm, Date: 23-July-2025.**

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Executive Engineer  
LGED, Satkhira  
E-mail: [xen.satkhira@lged.gov.bd](mailto:xen.satkhira@lged.gov.bd)

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