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Rohingya influx hits 1.5 lakh in 18 months

Says UN refugee agency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has received nearly 150,000 Rohingyas over the past 18 months, marking the largest influx since 2017, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The arrivals, driven by targeted violence and persecution in Myanmar's Rakhine state, have placed further strain on the already overcrowded camps in Cox's Bazar, where nearly 1.1 million Rohingyas are being sheltered in just 24 square kilometres -- making it one of the world's most densely populated refugee settlements, the UN Refugee Agency posted on its website yesterday.

UNHCR spokesperson Babar Baloch, at a press briefing in Geneva, said 121,000 of the new arrivals have been biometrically registered, while many others remain undocumented

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No polls alliance with Jamaat

Says Salahuddin, hints at scope for talks with NCP

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed has ruled out any possibility of an electoral coalition with long time ally Jamaat-e-Islami but hinted that scope for talks with the National Citizen Party would remain open.

In an interview with UNB, Salahuddin expressed confidence that the interim government will hold the next national election by mid-February next year as he thinks various parties are demanding the polls as part of their broader political strategies.

He also urged the National Consensus Commission to conclude discussions on reform proposals within a reasonable timeframe, warning against unnecessary delays that could hinder the election process.

"We had an alliance with them [Jamaat] in the past as part of our political strategy, but we don't feel the need of it this time."

Salahuddin said the BNP is rather focused on forming an electoral alliance and a national government with those who joined their simultaneous movement and democratic struggle.

Asked about a possible alliance with the NCP, Salahuddin said, "Discussions on political alliances will continue until the election schedule is announced."

He said all democratic parties will adopt different strategies ahead of the election. "So, let's wait and see what strategy the BNP ultimately chooses for the election and alliances."

The BNP leader said there seem to be some



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798 killed near Gaza aid hubs in six weeks

Says UN; UNRWA chief accuses Israel of turning Gaza into 'graveyard of children'

AGENCIES

The UN rights office yesterday said it had recorded at least 798 killings within the past six weeks at aid points in Gaza run by the US- and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation and near convoys run by other relief groups.

The GHF uses private US security and logistics companies to get supplies into Gaza, largely bypassing a UN-led system that Israel alleges has let Hamas-led militants loot aid shipments intended for civilians. Hamas denies the allegation.

After the deaths of hundreds of Palestinian civilians trying to reach the GHF's aid hubs in zones where Israeli forces operate, the United Nations has called its aid model "inherently unsafe" and a violation of humanitarian impartiality standards.

"From May 27 up until the seventh of July, we've recorded 798 killings, including 615 in the vicinity of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation sites, and 183 presumably on the route of aid convoys," a GHF spokesperson told a media briefing in Geneva.

The GHF, which began distributing food packages in Gaza at the end of May after Israel lifted an 11-week-old aid blockade, told Reuters the UN figures were "false and misleading". It has repeatedly denied that deadly



No way out. Their choice is between 2 deaths: starvation or being [shot] at. The most cruel & machiavellian scheme to kill, in total impunity.

PHILIPPE LAZZARINI
UNRWA chief

incidents have occurred at its sites. "The fact is the most deadly attacks on aid sites have been linked to UN convoys," a GHF spokesperson said.

The Israeli army said it was reviewing recent mass casualties and that it had sought to minimise friction between Palestinians and the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) by installing fences and signs and opening additional routes.

The OHCHR said it based its figures on a range of sources such as information from hospitals in Gaza,

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Ex-Jubo Dal leader shot dead in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Khulna

Unidentified assailants shot dead a former Jubo Dal leader in front of his house in Khulna city yesterday afternoon.

The victim, Molla Mahbubur Rahman, 42, was the vice president of the Daulatpur unit of the BNP's youth wing.

Quoting witnesses, Mir Atahar Ali, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station, said the attackers first shot Mahbub and then severed the tendons in both of his legs to ensure his death.

Mahbub had been expelled after a photo of him wielding a machete went viral during a clash between students and outsiders at Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet) on February 18.

Witnesses said three men on a motorcycle approached and opened fire while Mahbub was cleaning his car near his house in the Maheshwarapasha West Para area around 1:30pm.

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Consensus talks set to enter crucial stage

Key issues like CA appointment, PM tenure, upper house to be revisited

MD ABBAS

Talks between the National Consensus Commission and political parties are set to enter a crucial stage this week, with key unresolved issues set to dominate the agenda, sources said.

According to commission members, talks will likely focus on key contentious issues such as the prime minister's term limit, the appointment process of the chief adviser to the caretaker government, adopting basic constitutional principles, forming an upper house of parliament, rules for declaring a state of emergency, and other related matters..

These issues have come up repeatedly since the dialogue began on June 2, but no agreement has been reached yet.

"The talks are entering a crucial phase. We have discussed many matters, but decisions on some vital points remain pending," said Badil Alam Majumdar, a member of the commission, speaking to The Daily Star yesterday.

Prof Ali Riaz, vice president of the commission, said discussions on these pending issues will gain further prominence in the coming days.

"We are hopeful that we will be able to finalise the July Charter within this month," he said.

The next round of dialogue is scheduled to resume tomorrow (Sunday).

We hope that the issues regarding the process of appointing the chief justice and the declaration of emergency will be resolved on that day, Ali Riaz said.

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Trump slaps 35% tariff on Canada

REUTERS, Washington/Ottawa

US President Donald Trump has ramped up his tariff assault on Canada, saying the US would impose a 35 percent tariff on imports next month and planned to impose blanket tariffs of 15 percent or 20 percent on most other trading partners.

In a letter released on his social media platform, Trump told Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney the new rate would go into effect on August 1 and would go up if Canada retaliated.

In a post on X late on Thursday, Carney said his government will continue to defend Canadian workers and businesses in their negotiations with the US as they work towards that deadline.

The 35 percent tariff is an increase from the current 25 percent rate that Trump had assigned to Canada and is a blow to Carney, who was seeking to agree a trade pact with Washington.

An exclusion for goods covered by the United States Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) on trade was expected to stay in place, and 10 percent tariffs on energy and fertilizer were also not set to change, though

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Loading up on green vegetables from adjacent districts, a boat transports fresh produce to Dhaka via the Turag river. The photo was taken in the capital's Mohammadpur area.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

US TARIFF THREAT

Walmart puts on hold some orders from Bangladesh

REUTERS, London/New York

Suppliers to Walmart WMT.N have delayed or put on hold some orders from garment manufacturers in Bangladesh, according to three factory owners and correspondence from a supplier seen by Reuters, as US President Donald Trump's threat of a 35 percent tariff on the textile hub disrupts business.

Bangladesh is the third-largest exporter of apparel to the United States, and it relies on the garment sector for 80 percent of its export earnings and 10 percent of its GDP. The factory owners all said they expected orders to fall if the August 1 tariffs go into effect, as they are unable to absorb that 35 percent rate.

Iqbal Hossain, managing director of garment manufacturer Patriot Eco Apparel Ltd, told Reuters an order for nearly 1 million swim shorts for Walmart was put on hold on Thursday due to the tariff threat.

"As we discussed, please hold all below Spring season orders we are discussing here due to heavy Tariff % imposed for USA imports," Faruk Saikat, assistant merchandising manager at Classic Fashion, wrote in an email to Hossain and others seen by Reuters. Classic Fashion is a supplier and buying agent that places orders for retailers.

"As per our management instruction, we are holding Bangladesh production for the time being and in case the Tariff issues settled, then we will continue as we planned here."

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