

## INTERNATIONAL

## US races to build migrant tent camps

Says WSJ after \$45bn funding boost

REUTERS

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement is racing to build migrant tent camps nationwide after receiving \$45 billion in new funding, aiming to expand detention capacity from 40,000 to 100,000 beds by year-end, The Wall Street Journal reported on Saturday.

The agency is prioritising large-scale tent facilities at military bases and ICE jails, including a 5,000-bed site at Fort Bliss in Texas and others in Colorado, Indiana, and New Jersey, the report added, citing documents seen by WSJ.

"ICE is pursuing all available options to expand bedspace capacity," a senior ICE official told Reuters, adding that the "process does include housing detainees at certain military bases."



The mother of Yahya Fadi al-Najjar, an infant who died of malnourishment, mourns as she holds his body during the funeral at Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Iran replaces air defence systems

AFP, Tehran

Iran has replaced the air defence systems damaged during its 12-day war with Israel last month, a senior army general said yesterday according to state media.

Israel launched an unprecedented surprise bombing campaign against Iran in mid-June, prompting Tehran to respond with drone and missile attacks.

Israel's strikes dealt a significant blow to the Islamic republic's air defences, which were repeatedly activated in the capital Tehran and across the country.

"The Zionist enemy sought to destroy Iran's defense capabilities, and some of our defense systems were damaged in that war," army operations chief Mahmoud Mousavi was quoted as saying.

"The damaged defence systems have now been replaced," he added. Iran's air defence network includes systems like the domestically built Bavar-373 and Khordad-15, designed to counter missiles and aircraft.

## Israeli strikes kill 88 Palestinians in Gaza

67 of them aid seekers; IDF issues new evacuation orders before ops in Deir al-Balah

AGENCIES

Gaza's health ministry said yesterday that the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli strikes across the enclave had risen to 88, while the death toll from Israeli fire on civilians waiting for UN aid trucks in northern Gaza climbed to 67.

Two more Palestinians, including a 35-year-old infant, have died of malnutrition at Gaza City's al-Shifa Hospital.

The Israeli military issued evacuation orders in areas of central Gaza packed with displaced Palestinians where it hasn't operated so far in its offensive.

The military evacuation demand, which could signal an imminent attack on neighbourhoods in Deir al-Balah, alarmed the families of Israeli hostages, who fear their relatives are being held there.

Much of Gaza has been reduced to a wasteland during more than 21 months of offensive and there are fears of accelerating starvation.

Palestinian health officials said hundreds of people could soon die as hospitals were inundated with patients suffering from dizziness and exhaustion due to the scarcity of food and a collapse in aid deliveries, reports Reuters.

"We warn that hundreds of people whose bodies have wasted away are at risk of imminent death due to hunger," the health ministry, which is controlled by Hamas, said.

The United Nations also said yesterday that civilians were starving and needed an urgent influx of aid, reports Reuters.

The Israeli military dropped leaflets from the sky ordering people in several districts in southwest Deir al-Balah, where hundreds of thousands of displaced Gazans have been sheltering, to leave their homes and head further south.

- **Two more Palestinians, including an infant, died of malnutrition**
- **Hundreds could soon die due to scarcity of food: health officials**
- **Civilians need an urgent influx of aid: UN**

"The (Israeli) Defense Forces continues to operate with great force to destroy the enemy's capabilities and terrorist infrastructure in the area," the military said, adding that it had not entered these districts during the current conflict.

Israeli sources have said the reason the army has so far stayed out is because they suspect Hamas might be holding hostages there. At least 20 of the remaining 50 hostages in captivity in Gaza are believed to still be alive.

Hostage families demanded an explanation from the army.

## 'Tense calm' in Syria's Sweida

Govt clears Bedouin fighters from Druze city; death toll tops 1,000

REUTERS, Damascus

Residents reported calm in the Syrian city of Sweida yesterday after the Islamist-led government declared that Bedouin fighters had withdrawn from the predominantly Druze city and the United States stepped up calls for an end to fighting.

There was no sound of gunfire yesterday morning, according to a resident speaking from the city outskirts, while a Druze source in the region said there was calm in most areas. Kenan Azzam, a dentist, described the situation on yesterday morning as "a tense calm" but told Reuters residents were still struggling with a lack of water and electricity.

"The hospitals are a disaster and out of service, and there are still so many dead and wounded," he said by phone.

The fighting began a week ago with clashes between Bedouin and Druze fighters.

Damascus then sent troops to quell the fighting, but they were accused of carrying out widespread violations against the Druze and were hit by Israeli strikes before withdrawing under a truce agreed on Wednesday.

A Syria monitor said yesterday that the death toll from violence in south involving Druze fighters and their Bedouin rivals, as well as government forces, armed tribes and Israel, had topped 1,000.

## Russia downs 142 Ukrainian drones

27 of them intercepted over Moscow region

REUTERS, Moscow

Russia's defence ministry and the mayor of Moscow said it had downed 142 drones early yesterday, including 27 over the Moscow region.

The drones were reportedly shot down over a number of regions in the European part of Russia, as well as over the Black Sea.

The latest attacks included four drones headed toward the Russian capital, which were downed yesterday morning, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyannin said on Telegram.

According to Russia's aviation watchdog Rosaviatsia, four major airports serving Moscow - Sheremetyevo, Vnukovo, Domodedovo and Zhukovskiy - were affected, resulting in 134 flights being redirected. By 1000 Moscow time, only two airports remained closed to air traffic - Vnukovo in the Moscow region and Grabtsevo in the Kaluga.

Meanwhile, Russian forces have taken control of the village of Bila Hora in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, state-run RIA news agency reported, citing the Russian defence ministry.

Ukraine's President Zelensky said on Saturday evening that Kyiv has sent Moscow an offer to hold another round of peace talks next week, and that he wanted to speed up negotiations for a ceasefire.

## Afghan capital on the verge of running dry

Experts say population growth, climate crisis depleted groundwater levels

CNN ONLINE



As the sun rises over Kabul's parched mountains, a family's daily struggle to find water - and to make it last - is about to begin.

The sound of water tankers rumbling through Raheela's neighborhood in the Afghan capital prompts the 42-year-old mother of

four to rush out to the street to fill her family's battered buckets and jerrycans. The family's supply is always running low, she says, and every liter is expensive, stretching nerves and their budgets to breaking point.

"We don't have access to (drinking) water at all," Raheela, who goes by one name, told CNN. "Water shortage is a huge problem affecting our daily life."

Kabul is inching toward catastrophe. It could soon become the first modern capital in the world to run completely dry according to a recent report by Mercy Corps. Population growth, the climate crisis, and relentless over-extraction have depleted groundwater levels, experts say, and nearly half the city's boreholes have already gone dry.

## From a broken past to a bright future

FROM PAGE 12

Netrokona in 2012 when she was just three. Her father was a drug user; her mother remarried. "She doesn't tell her new family about me. She visits every few years."

Mitu now dreams of being a tour guide. "I used to think girls like us don't get to dream. But now I know - we can."

Seventeen-year-old Zidne came from a cycle of abuse by both her father and stepfather. "I never really had a 'home'. But now, I want to build my own, brick by brick." She scored GPA 3.22.

Kajol, 17, raised amid poverty and abuse in Barishal, came to Happy Home as a toddler. She scored GPA 4.50. "My mother now lives alone and is unwell. I want to earn enough to stay with her. She's all I have."

Sumaiya, 17, topped the group with GPA 4.93. "My mother remarried and barely cared for me. It was my

grandmother who fed me, even when she went hungry. Now, I want to be a nurse and take care of her."

Seventeen-year-old Bonna grew up watching her father gamble away everything. "He sold it all. He beat my mother. Left us with nothing." Though she came to the shelter unwilling at the age of six, it's now her home. "I want to be a photographer - to tell stories of girls like us." She scored GPA 4.79.

Hasina Parven, education in-charge at Happy Home, treats each child as her own. "I fill their forms, chase attendance, visit classrooms. I wait outside exam halls like a mother."

"This isn't a job for me; it's a moral duty. When I place a pen in a girl's hand, I'm helping her fight for a future where she won't have to beg, bow down, or break."

But there's a deadline looming. Happy Home provides support only

until the girls turn 18.

"We call this home," Mitu said. "But we also know one day, we'll be on our own."

Without a structured transition plan, most girls hope to continue studying, but money remains a worry. Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, said, "When I took this project on, I knew it wasn't a three-year gig. For 18 years, I've fought to give these girls the safety and dignity every child deserves."

"But Happy Home was never meant to replace society. At 18, they must move on - and we prepare them to thrive."

Some return as volunteers, some enter work, and some lose touch.

But for now, the girls of Happy Home have reason to celebrate. In a country where child marriage, domestic violence and abandonment run rampant, their success is a rare, remarkable win.

## Hasina can never be forgiven

FROM PAGE 12

gave them the respect they deserve, and take all necessary steps to establish a truly democratic state in Bangladesh, which was the cause they fought for."

The BNP leader said they fought the war of 1971 for an independent country.

"The police and administration of this country, who are supposed to protect the people, whose salaries are being paid from taxpayers' money, burnt and killed our children. What could be more cruel and inhuman than this?"

"Our first task is to bring them to justice. Our second job will be to rehabilitate the families of those

killed in the uprising and ensure proper support for the injured. If we fail, the future generations will not forgive us."

He also announced that the BNP would set up a fund for the families of those killed and injured in the movement.

"I said it yesterday [Saturday], and I say it again today - there will be an election. Whether we win or not is another matter. We will raise a fund on behalf of our party, and with this fund, we will help these families as much as we can."

Fakhrul said family members present at the event expressed disappointment, as they had hoped for political stability following the

uprising and had expected a new Bangladesh.

"But politics is not such an easy path... it's not a bed of roses. But there is no reason to be disheartened."

At another programme in Munshiganj, BNP Standing Committee member Gayeshwar Chandra Roy said Jamaat-e-Islami would never come to power in Bangladesh.

"Everything Jamaat is saying now is intended to sabotage the election. The Awami League is absent, and Jamaat cannot accept the BNP coming to power. But I know this for sure, Jamaat will never come to state power... Other parties may come, but they won't."

## US helping Bangladesh develop UAS

FROM PAGE 12

the US military will help make the two countries stronger, and the region safer, it added.

For the fourth year in a row, the Bangladesh Army and US Army Pacific will conduct "Exercise Tiger Lightning".

"Through realistic training, our soldiers will develop readiness for counterterrorism, peacekeeping, jungle operations, medical evacuations, and countering improvised explosive devices (IEDs)," it said.

They will also conduct "Exercise Tiger Shark 2025", a joint training exercise where two countries' Special Forces practice combat tasks.

The exercise, ongoing since 2009, will feature patrol boat handling and small arms marksmanship that will strengthen Bangladesh's Special Warfare Diving and Salvage and the Para Commando Brigade ability to respond to crises, the statement added.

"One of the highlights of this combined exercise is the use of US equipment by both countries," it said.

"Exercise Pacific Angel", the fourth iteration with Bangladesh, will highlight one of the hallmarks of the US-Bangladesh defence relationship, the C-130 fleets, which are critical in disaster response airdrops and air mobility operations, the US Embassy said.

The exercise also focuses on Search and Rescue (SAR) and aeromedical operations, further developing Bangladesh's ability to respond to humanitarian disasters, it added.

## NCP facing heat after lifting lid in Cox's Bazar

FROM PAGE 12

Tawseef Imroz, SAD's chief coordinator in Chattogram city, alleged that he was attacked by a group of Jatiya Juboshakti.

He told The Daily Star, "After the rally, a woman wanted to speak to Nahid. Her husband was detained in the United Arab Emirates for supporting protests against the Awami League government last year. She wished to discuss the matter with Nahid. But several individuals identifying them as Jatiya Juboshakti leaders obstructed her and misbehaved with me. Later, they attacked me, leading to a scuffle."

Mohammad Solaiman, officer-in-charge of Panchlaish Police Station, said, "A scuffle broke out beside the stage after the central leaders of NCP left. Police promptly intervened and brought the situation under control."

This newspaper could not contact any of Jatiya Juboshakti leaders for comments.

Earlier at a rally in Rangamati town, NCP Convener Nahid said the party envisions an inclusive, democratic Bangladesh, one in which all communities can live together with dignity as equal citizens.

"Over the past 50 years, Bangladesh has been subjected to divisions, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts have been the worst victim of that. These divisions and tensions in the hills have long been used by external forces for their own gain,"

he said while speaking at the party's "July March to Build the Nation" rally yesterday noon.

"We will not allow any third party to benefit from our internal issues. If we have disagreements among ourselves or within our communities, we will resolve them through dialogue. But we will not allow others to take advantage of our situation. We must all unite."

Nahid noted that the people of the hills, including Chakma, Marma, Tanchangya, and Bawm, have long been fighting for their rights to language, religion, and ancestral land.

At the same time, many from the Bangalee community in the hill tracts also remain deprived of essential opportunities.

"All communities here are suffering and are denied their rights. This struggle must be collective. No one can be silenced. We are here to speak of unity, harmony, and empathy," he added.

At another event, Nahid alleged that allies of autocracy still exist within various parts of the administration, and they are getting complaints that July martyr families are not receiving the respect they deserve.

He was speaking to the families of the martyrs at Hotel Saikat on Station Road in Chattogram around 10:30am.

[Our correspondents in Chattogram and Rangamati contributed to this report.]