

Russia’s actions in Ukraine ‘disgusting’

Says Trump; Putin signals no change in Russia’s stance

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump threatened fresh sanctions Thursday while slamming Russia's military actions in Ukraine as “disgusting,” as strikes on Kyiv killed at least 16 people.

“Russia -- I think it's disgusting what they're doing. I think it's disgusting,” Trump told reporters. Trump also said he would send his special envoy Steve Witkoff, currently in Israel, to visit Russia next.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has already met Witkoff multiple times in Moscow, before Trump's efforts to mend ties with the Kremlin came to a grinding halt.

Washington has given Moscow until the end of next week to cease hostilities in Ukraine, under threat of severe economic sanctions.

Trump reiterated the deadline on Thursday. “We're going to put sanctions. I don't know that sanctions bother



Rescuers carry the body of a victim recovered from the debris of an apartment building struck by a Russian missile in Kyiv, Ukraine, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

him,” the US president said, referring to Putin.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that Moscow hoped for more peace talks with Ukraine but that the momentum of the war was in its favour, signalling no shift in his stance despite a looming sanctions deadline from Washington.

Meanwhile, Germany said yesterday it will soon start delivering two more US-made Patriot air defence systems to Ukraine, as Kyiv faces a growing number of Russian drone and missile attacks.

After reaching an agreement with the US, the German military will deliver additional Patriot launchers in the coming days, and will supply further components in the next two to three months, the defence ministry said.

98 DNCC spots

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green spaces should cover at least 35-40 percent of the total area. In Dhaka, those have been reduced to around 10 percent,” he said.

In 1995, waterbodies covered 20.57 percent of the city's central area, which dropped to just 2.9 percent by 2023. Similarly, green space shrank to only 9 percent from 22 percent during the same period, according to BIP data.

Adil explained that while artificial drainage systems can reduce the duration of flooding, they cannot eliminate it if natural drainage channels are destroyed.

Though DNCC managed to restore water flow in several canals, including those in Baunia and Ibrahimpur, many others remain choked with solid waste, he said.

“For example, Kalyanpur branch canal at Agargaon, Baishteki canal in Mirpur, and Rupnagar canal near Arambag residential area are clogged with waste. The canal adjacent to Pongu Hospital is dying, while Ramchandrapur canal near Mohammadia Housing is overrun with weeds and bushes,” he said.

Adil suggested that DNCC should consider community involvement to make its cleaning efforts sustainable.

“Within a month of a cleaning drive, canals are filled again with garbage. It's essential to engage local communities in such efforts for lasting results,” he said.

Former BIP president Mohammad Fazle Reza Sumon said that though DNCC cleaned several canals in areas including Khilkhet and Baunia, the primary drains linked to those have not been upgraded.

He also stressed the need to revise Wasa-2015 Drainage Master Plan, which is no longer suited to shifting rainfall patterns caused by climate change.

1,373 Gaza aid

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“US-backed Israeli forces and private contractors have put in place a flawed, militarised aid distribution system that has turned aid distributions into regular bloodbaths,” said Belkis Wille, associate crisis and conflict director at Human Rights Watch.

After nearly 22 months of Israeli offensive in Gaza, the Palestinian territory is slipping into famine and civilians are starving to death, according to a UN-mandated expert report.

In the ground, Gaza's civil defence agency said 22 people were killed by Israeli gunfire and air strikes yesterday, including two who were waiting near an aid distribution site.

Expelled Gonotantik Chhatra Sangsad leader arrested

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“We are investigating the true nature of the incident and whether anyone else was involved. We are also thoroughly examining if there are any other aspects of the case,” he said.

Apu is the sixth suspect arrested in the case. Riyadh and four others were arrested from Shammi's house on July 26 and a case was filed in this regard.

Riyad and three of his associates -- Ibrahim Hossain Munna, convener of SAD's Dhaka city unit; and members Sakadoun Siam and Sadab -- were remanded in police custody for seven days. The other arrestee, a minor, was sent to a juvenile correction centre.

In the case statement, the ex-lawmaker's husband Siddique Abu Zafar stated that on July 17, several individuals identifying themselves as SAD members arrived at their Gulshan residence and demanded the money. Shammi was not at home at that time.

“When I refused to pay, they labelled me an Awami League

We'll be free from fascism

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night, dummy polls, making MPs as she wishes, smuggling thousands of crores of taka abroad, and looting banks -- these things will never happen again.”

This interim government has many mistakes because it lacks experience, he said.

“We hoped that within one year, they would prepare a complete list of martyrs and arrange support for their families. Unfortunately, they couldn't fully do it. But they tried.”

Fakhrul thanked the government for successful negotiations with the US administration to have tariffs on Bangladeshi products reduced from 35 percent to 20 percent, saying the foreign ministry and advisers have played a key role in this regard.

“This is a big achievement.”

The party's Dhaka Metropolitan (north) unit organised the event in memory of those killed during the mass uprising.

Urging BNP supporters to stay alert, Fakhrul said, “Look around carefully, pay attention to what people are saying. Try to understand what the people want. Don't try to do anything else ... people are not foolish.”

At another rally in Jatrabari, BNP

associate and continued to pressure me. Eventually, I paid Tk 10 lakh to Riyadh,” Zafar said in his statement.

He further alleged that the group returned on July 19 and banged on the door but left after he informed the police.

“On July 26, Riyadh and others came again. I wasn't at home, but the security guard called me. They demanded the remaining Tk 40 lakh and threatened to hand me over to the police if I didn't pay. I called the police again, and five of them were arrested on the spot,” Zafar added.

Apu reportedly managed to flee during that raid.

Earlier, police carried out drives on two separate houses used by Riyadh in Dhaka and recovered around Tk 3 lakh in cash and four cheques worth around Tk 2.25 crore.

Police officials said the same group targeted another former AL lawmaker, Abul Kalam Azad, and took cheques of Tk 5 crore, including the seized ones, from Azad's Green Road office on June 26.

Standing Committee member Mirza Abbas called upon the government not to delay the announcement of an election date.

“I strongly suspect that there is a big conspiracy even behind announcing the election date. I still believe they [government] will try everything to make sure that the election is not fair or doesn't take place at all. They will try to mislead the people against the BNP.”

In another development, Standing Committee members Nazrul Islam Khan and Salahuddin Ahmed visited Hathazari Al Jamiatul Ahlia Darul Uloom Moinul Islam Madrasa in Chattogram yesterday, reports UNB.

Talking to reporters, Salahuddin said except for 51 points, his party has no disagreement with the National Consensus Commission on the remaining reform proposals. “We are hopeful that the July Charter will be signed soon.”

He reiterated their commitment to the implementation of the July Charter if voted to power.

The other BNP leader, Nazrul, said, “We don't see any impediment in holding the election in February. Since we don't see any obstruction, that is why there is no reason to worry about the possibility that the election will not be held.”



PHOTO: REUTERS

Baraa Al-Fara, a wounded Palestinian child, bids farewell to family members killed in an Israeli airstrike that struck their tent, according to medics at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

OVERSEAS PLOTS TO KILL DISSIDENTS

Iran rejects Western accusations as ‘baseless’

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday rejected accusations by the US and more than a dozen of its allies that Tehran had attempted to kill or kidnap dissidents, journalists and officials in Western countries.

In a statement, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei described the claims as “baseless”, calling them “an attempt to divert public attention from the most pressing issue of the day, the genocide in occupied Palestine”.

Western governments including the United States, Britain, France

and Germany condemned in a joint statement on Thursday “the growing number of state threats from Iranian intelligence services in our respective territories”.

“We are united in our opposition to the attempts of Iranian intelligence services to kill, kidnap, and harass people in Europe and North America in clear violation of our sovereignty,” they said.

“These services are increasingly collaborating with international criminal organisations to target journalists, dissidents, Jewish citizens, and current and former officials in Europe and North

America.”

Baqaei said the accusations were “blatant fabrications... designed as part of a malicious Iranophobia campaign aimed at exerting pressure on the great Iranian nation”.

Since early 2022, Britain says it has disrupted more than 20 Iran-linked plots to kidnap or kill individuals in the United Kingdom, including British nationals and others Tehran views as threats.

In October, Reuters reported that Iran was behind a wave of attempted assassinations and abductions across Europe and the United States.

TACKLING MILITANCY

Pakistan issues fresh call for Afghans to leave

AFP, Quetta

Pakistan yesterday issued a new call for Afghans living in the southwest to leave the country, triggering thousands to rush to the border, officials said.

Millions of Afghans have poured into Pakistan over the past several decades, fleeing successive wars, as well as hundreds of thousands who arrived after the return of the Taliban government in 2021.

A deportation drive first launched in 2023 was renewed in April when Pakistan's government rescinded hundreds of thousands of residence permits for Afghans, threatening to arrest anyone who did not leave.

“We have received directives from the home department to launch a fresh drive to repatriate all Afghans... in a respectful and orderly manner,” Mehar Ullah, a senior government official in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province, told AFP.

The province borders Afghanistan and there are significant ties between the regions.

Yesterday, there were “around 4,000 to 5,000 people at Chaman border” waiting to return, said Habib Bingalzai, a senior government official.

S Korea’s Yoon resists questioning by lying down on floor



REUTERS, Seoul

South Korea's ousted President Yoon Suk Yeol, who is in detention while on trial and facing various criminal probes, lay on the floor of his cell yesterday and refused to leave it for questioning, a spokesperson for a special prosecutor said.

Yoon was removed from office in April by the Constitutional Court over his botched attempt last year to declare martial law and is now being investigated by a special prosecution team formed under new President Lee Jae Myung.



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