

Iran to meet Europeans to avoid snapback sanctions

AFP, Tehran

Iran will meet next week with Britain, France and Germany on its nuclear programme, the parties said yesterday, as the European powers warned Tehran to engage swiftly to avoid snapback sanctions.

The Islamic republic suspended cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency in July in the wake of its 12-day war with Israel, citing the UN nuclear watchdog's failure to condemn Israeli and US strikes on its nuclear facilities.

The European trio – parties to the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear deal – have threatened to trigger a “snapback mechanism” by the end of August.

The move would reimpose sweeping UN sanctions lifted under the 2015 agreement unless Iran agrees to curb its uranium



Palestinians flee the Abu Iskandar neighbourhood of northern Gaza City yesterday. Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz yesterday vowed to destroy Gaza City if Hamas did not agree to disarm, release all remaining hostages in the territory and end the war on Israel's terms.

PHOTO: AFP



enrichment and restore cooperation with IAEA inspectors.

“It was agreed that Iran's talks with the three European countries and the European Union would continue next Tuesday at the level of deputy foreign ministers,” Iran's foreign ministry said after a phone call between Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and senior European diplomats.

France confirmed the talks and cautioned that Iran faced a narrowing window of time.

The 2015 nuclear deal was aimed preventing Iran from developing an atomic bomb – an ambition it has consistently denied. The deal was torpedoed in 2018 when Donald Trump, during his first term as US president, unilaterally withdrew the United States from the agreement and slapped crippling sanctions on its economy.

Iran has ever since criticized Europe over failing to meet its commitments under the deal.

Russia rejects Zelensky meeting

Trump says getting Zelensky, Putin together like mixing ‘oil and vinegar’

AFP, Moscow

Russia yesterday ruled out an immediate meeting with Volodymyr Zelensky, as diplomatic tension escalated with the Ukrainian president and US mediation efforts appeared to stumble.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said “no meeting” between Vladimir Putin and Zelensky was planned, as Nato chief Mark Rutte visited Kyiv, largely to discuss security guarantees for Ukraine.

US President Donald Trump raised expectations for a swift summit between the Russian and Ukrainian presidents by saying they had both agreed to meet after Zelensky, Rutte and Kyiv's European allies visited the White House on Monday.

Lavrov yesterday dashed hopes for direct Putin-Zelensky talks to resolve the conflict, now in its fourth year, by questioning the Ukrainian president's



legitimacy and repeating the Kremlin's maximalist claims.

“There is no meeting planned,” Lavrov said in an interview with NBC's “Meet the Press with Kristen Welker”.

Lavrov told the US broadcaster Putin was “ready to meet Zelensky” as soon as an agenda was prepared, adding that the agenda was “not ready at all”.

Speaking alongside Rutte in Kyiv, Zelensky said Ukraine had “no agreements with the Russians”, saying Ukraine had agreed only with Trump

on how the diplomatic direction could proceed.

The question of eventual security guarantees for Ukraine has been front and centre during the latest US-led diplomatic push to broker a peace deal to end the conflict.

Trump earlier said Russia had agreed to some Western security guarantees for Kyiv.

But Moscow later cast doubt on any such arrangement, by saying discussing them without Russia was “a utopia, a road to nowhere”.

Trump yesterday said setting up a meeting between Zelensky and Putin is as hard as mixing “oil and vinegar”.

“We're going to see if Putin and Zelensky will be working together. You know, it's like oil and vinegar, a little bit. They don't get along too well, for obvious reasons,” he told reporters in Washington.

China tightens grip over rare earth supply quotas

REUTERS, BEIJING

China, the world's dominant rare earth supplier, issued on Friday measures to regulate the mining, smelting and separation of the critical minerals key to energy transition, further tightening its grip over supply.

Beijing already regulates and manages rare earth mining, smelting and separation via a quota system. The new rules will include imported raw materials in that quota system, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said in a statement, following a public consultation process that began in February.

4 of family killed

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a U-turn near the Palli Bidyut office at Paduar Bazar.

Abul Kashem was driving the car.

Abul Hashem was head of a private bank's Rupnagar branch (first vice president), while Kashem was employed in the private sector.

Locals described the spot as a “risky turn” where accidents often occur.

Jahir, a security guard in the area, said the car was making a U-turn from the Chattogram lane towards the Dhaka lane after crossing a railway overpass. At that moment, a speeding lorry overturned onto it, also hitting a CNG-run auto.

During a visit, this correspondent found an under-construction flyover beside the Dhaka-bound lane, narrowing the road and making it more accident-prone for vehicles unable to control speed.

SI Anisur Rahman said the lorry driver and his helper fled after the accident.

The bodies were later handed over to family members.

Sri Lanka's former president

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was politically motivated.

“Ranil Wickremesinghe has never misused public funds or state funds,” UNP member Nishantha Sri Wernasinghe told reporters gathered outside the court complex where the former president appeared in Colombo.

“He was the person who stepped up and accepted the challenge to save this country when the economy collapsed,” Wernasinghe said. “That is the person who is being treated like this today by this government.”

Sri Lanka's cabinet spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Wickremesinghe, a lawyer who also served as Sri Lanka's prime minister a record six times, became president in 2022 at the height of the Indian Ocean island nation's debilitating financial crisis.

Wickremesinghe, who leads the UNP, took over after widespread protests caused by an economic meltdown forced his predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa to flee the country and later resign.

He finished third in last year's presidential election – the first since the economic crisis – behind Marxist-leaning Anura Kumara Disanayake, who won the vote, and opposition leader

Sajith Premadasa.

The election was largely seen as a referendum on Wickremesinghe, who led a successful but fragile economic recovery that included painful austerity measures.

Born into a prominent family of politicians and businessmen with large media interests, in 1978 Wickremesinghe was, at 29, made the country's youngest cabinet minister by his uncle, President Junius Jayewardene.

In 1994, following the assassinations of several of his senior colleagues, Wickremesinghe became leader of the UNP.

A life in print ends in tragedy

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and people, often publishing under pseudonyms to avoid repression during the Ershad regime and other turbulent times. He never sought personal gain and refused to exploit the Liberation War for benefit.

He recalled his journey from his school days, writing for Dainik Azad to his later work in Sangbad, Rupali, Janakantha, and Ajker Patrika, as well as many weeklies and online outlets.

Though once “praised by intellectuals, politicians, and even Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus”, Bibhurjan lamented that in recent years his writings no longer drew attention.

Despite thousands of articles, he received little payment and often worked without honorarium.

The letter detailed his hardships: chronic illnesses including arthritis, liver cirrhosis, diabetes, and heart disease; soaring medical bills; debts; and the added burden of his son's illness and unemployment.

His son, a BUET graduate, has struggled to find a stable job despite his qualifications, while his daughter, a medical officer, recently failed her MD thesis exam, which he alleged was due to political bias.

Bibhurjan also expressed frustration that

many journalists had received land, financial benefits, or career advancements under Sheikh Hasina's government.

He felt sidelined at his current workplace as well, “having been denied promotion, underpaid, and struggling with rising living costs”. Writing critical but factual articles, he added, often risked backlash, as seen in the pressure exerted on his newspaper.

The letter regretted over missed opportunities, and a sorrowful acceptance that he had “no success story to tell”.

“Sorrow will remain my last companion,” he said, wishing happiness for all beings.

Yesterday afternoon, Inspector Saleh Ahmed Pathan, in-charge of the Kalgachhia river police outpost in Narayanganj, said a body of a man was spotted floating in the river.

After recovery, Bibhurjan's brother Chiroranjana Sarker and son Wreet Sarker identified the body.

Masud Alam, deputy commissioner of Ramna Division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said police were investigating the cause of the death.

Inspector Pathan said the body would be taken to Dhaka today after an autopsy at Munshiganj

General Hospital.

After confirming the identity of his brother, Chiroranjana said, “We really don't know how this could have happened. He was living a fairly normal life.”

“We don't know if this was suicide, murder, or something planned,” he said.

Wreet said, “Before leaving the house, my father bathed, and had breakfast. We knew nothing about any open letter. We only learned about it today. We also do not know if my father had any problems with anyone,” he said.

Earlier in the afternoon, Golam Faruk, officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station, told The Daily Star that they were trying to find Bibhurjan after Wreet filed a general diary with the police station around 1:00am.

Sometime after the filing of the GD, Chiroranjana wrote on Facebook that Bibhurjan left his Siddheshwari home at 10:00am on Thursday to go to his office but left his mobile phone behind. Later, the family found out that he did not go to work. Nobody saw him the whole day and he did not return home.

They decided to file the GD after failing to find him in hospitals, parks, and other places.

Gendaria fire

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arrived at the scene.

“Preliminary investigation suggests the fire originated from the kitchen stove,” he said.

Family sources said the victims were asleep when the blaze erupted.

Abu Shahed, officer-in-charge of Gendaria Police Station, also confirmed the incident to The Daily Star.

Crimes against Rohingyas

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None of them have returned to their homeland.

The rebel group Arakan Army, meanwhile, took control of more than 80 percent of the Rakhine state, adding new dimension to the Rakhine crisis.

Volker Türk said, “As we near the passing of another year with no justice for the violence which started on 25 August 2017 in Myanmar, we are left to ask the question of when the enduring misery for these and ongoing crimes will end, particularly for the long-suffering Rohingya community.”

Ending impunity and ensuring the Rohingyas' rights to security, citizenship and equality are essential for breaking the cycle of violence, he said.

Since November 2023, the human rights and humanitarian situation in Rakhine have sharply deteriorated, further deepening the already life-threatening conditions faced by the Rohingyas, the UN rights chief said.

“Amidst a global funding crisis, Rohingya in both Myanmar and Bangladesh are enduring dire conditions compounded by drastic cuts to food assistance,” he said.

Türk implored the international community to step up support for the Rohingyas by increasing humanitarian funding to secure access to basic needs and essential services, and to resolutely support international accountability processes.

Candidates start reaching out

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Muhammad Shahidullah Hall, Amar Ekushey, and Sir AF Rahman halls.

Meanwhile, three Ducus panels yesterday raised concern about the breach of electoral code of conduct.

At a press briefing, Abdul Qader, the vice-president candidate from Boishommo Birodhi Shikharthi Sangsad, said they had noticed bias on the part of the DU administration and the DUCSU election commission.

“We are still concerned about the administration's neutrality,” he said.

Qader, also convener of Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad's DU chapter, promised that he would include in his manifesto the demands to hold the Ducus election according to the academic calendar, extend the deadline for entry to female dormitories to 11:00pm from 10:00pm, and ensure one seat per student in dormitories.

He urged the authorities to shift the polling centre from Dhaka University Club to the Institute of Social Welfare and Research for the students of Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib and Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree halls.

In a separate briefing, Swatantra Shikharthi Oikya

panel VP contender Umama Fatema made the same demand.

Umama, also former spokesperson for Students Against Discrimination, said they noticed that the university administration confined itself to paperwork and issuing statements.

“They should act now about the breaching of conduct before any of us complained to them.”

According to the election schedule, formal campaigning would start after August 26, when the final candidacies would be announced.

“We can now see posters and banners hanging in the halls. But the administration remains silent,” she added.

O i k k o b o d d h o Shikharthi Jote's VP candidate, Abu Shadik Kayem, said they would eliminate red tape at the Registrar Building.

“We will renovate the DU Medical Centre and address the accommodation problem in the residential halls. We will ensure that every student gets their own study table,” he said while speaking at a press briefing.

Shadik, also ex-president of Islami Chhatra Shibir's DU unit, made promises for modernising the central library, constructing cultural lounges at every hall, and upgrading the

central mosque that would also include a library.

A total of 462 candidates are vying against 28 posts in Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducus) polls while 1,108 are for 18 hall unions.

This correspondent visited five halls yesterday and found that many candidates offered Juma prayers with the resident students. After their prayers, they sought votes, and many had lunch at canteens with students.

Talking to The Daily Star, Shahriar Mithun, a GS candidate for Shahid Sergeant Zahurul Huq Hall union, said, “We have found that leaflets of a hall union general secretary candidate were distributed among students. The leaflets have the candidate's photo and the post he is vying for. We request proper supervision by the university authorities to oversee the irregularities.”

Ahmed Hosen Jony, a VP candidate for Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall union, alleged that candidates were going door-to-door to woo voters, which is a direct violation of the code of conduct.

In another development, Chief Returning Officer Mohammad Zashim Uddin, in a notice, yesterday asked the candidates to remove posters and banners immediately.

Trump says he'll fire Fed's Cook if she doesn't resign

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday said he would fire Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook if she doesn't resign, intensifying his effort to gain influence over the US central bank.

“I'll fire her if she doesn't resign,” Trump told reporters during a visit to a Washington museum focused on the White House.

Cook, the first Black woman to serve on the Fed board, said she had “no intention of being bullied to step down” after Trump on Wednesday called for her resignation on the basis of allegations about mortgages she holds in Michigan and Georgia.

Cook on Wednesday said she took any questions about her financial history seriously as a member of the Federal Reserve and was gathering accurate information to answer any legitimate questions.

Cook is among three Fed governors appointed by Joe Biden.

Trump has repeatedly criticized Fed Chair Jerome Powell, whose term as chair ends in May 2026, first over his failure to reduce benchmark interest rates and more recently over cost overruns on a renovation of the Federal Reserve building.

Xi to host Putin, Guterres at SCO summit in China

REUTERS, BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping will host Russia's Vladimir Putin, UN chief Antonio Guterres and more than 20 heads of government later this month, Beijing said yesterday, for a political and security meet aimed at cementing China's regional influence.

Leaders from a bloc spanning roughly a quarter of the globe will unveil new plans to deepen their ties when they gather for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Tianjin from August 31 to September 1, Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Bin told a news conference on the summit's preparations.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi are among the invitees, Bin said. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim is also scheduled to attend the summit, ahead of hosting Trump and other leaders from Asean Nations in October.

Onion and veggie prices dip

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in larger quantities, so I get them at a bit lower price. I urge the government to ensure a proper supply of daily essentials in the market. If this is monitored properly, prices will remain stable,” she said.

Meanwhile, after remaining high for the past two to three weeks, vegetable prices eased slightly yesterday. Bitter gourd, eggplant, pointed gourd, okra, ridge gourd, teal gourd, and yardlong beans, which were selling at Tk 80 to 120 per kilo last week, were available yesterday in different Dhaka markets for Tk 60 to

100 per kilogramme.

Faruk Hossain, who has been selling vegetables at Karwan Bazar for nearly 30 years, said from his experience that prices usually remain somewhat high during this season towards the end of the monsoon due to lower supply, and this year is no exception. However, compared to the past two weeks, the supply of vegetables has increased this week, bringing down prices by Tk 10 to 20 per kilo.

On the other hand, beef is being sold as usual at Tk 750-800 per kg, Sonali chicken at Tk 320-330,

Sonali cross chicken at Tk 280-300 per kg, and eggs at Tk 130-150 per dozen.

As always during the monsoon season, fish prices remain high. Farmed rui and katla fish weighing between one and one-and-a-half kilogrammes are selling for Tk 330-400 per kg. Various types of small indigenous fish are selling for Tk 800-1,200 per kg.

Meanwhile, the price of hilsa remains steep. Even in peak season, hilsa weighing one kilogramme is not available below Tk 2,200-2,400 per kg depending on the market.