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# Hope for peace in Gaza

## Joy, celebrations as Israel, Hamas sign first phase of Trump's peace plan; doubts remain over key issues

AGENCIES

Israel and Hamas yesterday signed an agreement to cease fire and free Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners, in the first phase of US President Donald Trump's initiative to end the war in Gaza.

Israelis and Palestinians alike rejoiced after the deal was announced, the biggest step yet to end two years of war in which over 67,000 Palestinians have been killed, and return the last hostages seized by Hamas in the deadly attacks that started it.

The agreement in Egypt follows a 20-point peace plan for Gaza announced last month by US President Donald Trump. Officials on both sides



Palestinian children celebrate at a camp for displaced people in Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip yesterday, following news of a new Gaza ceasefire deal.

PHOTO: AFP

confirmed they had signed the deal following indirect talks in the Egyptian beach resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

Under the deal, fighting will cease, Israel will partially withdraw from Gaza, and Hamas will free all remaining hostages it captured in the attack that precipitated the war, in exchange for hundreds of prisoners held by Israel.

Fleets of trucks carrying food and medical aid would be allowed to surge into Gaza to relieve civilians, hundreds of thousands of whom have been sheltering in tents after Israeli forces destroyed their homes and razed entire cities to dust.

Much could still go wrong. Even after the deal was signed, a Palestinian source said the list of Palestinians to be freed had yet to be finalised. The group

is seeking freedom for some of the most prominent Palestinian convicts held in Israeli jails, as well as hundreds of people detained during Israel's assault.

Further steps in Trump's 20-point plan have yet to be discussed by the sides, including how the shattered Gaza Strip is to be ruled when the fighting ends, and the ultimate fate of Hamas, which has so far rejected Israel's demands that it disarm.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the ceasefire would take effect once the agreement is ratified by his government, which would convene in full after a meeting of his smaller security cabinet later yesterday.

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Israel says ceasefire to take effect only after cabinet approval

Trump eyes ME trip, says hostages to be freed by Tuesday

Disarmament of Hamas to be part of the second phase of talks

Hamas rejects Trump's 'Board of Peace' for Gaza

Israel refuses to release key Palestinian prisoner

# SHIELDING PERSONAL DATA Govt brings big tech under local courts' purview

MAHMUDUL HASAN and BAHARAM KHAN

The Advisory Council yesterday approved the Personal Data Protection Ordinance, 2025, making social media platforms and foreign and local tech companies answerable to the courts of Bangladesh regarding the handling of restricted personal data and confidential personal data of Bangladeshi citizens.

"In an attempt to resolve complaints related to a host of issues from unauthorised data processing to data breaches, we have brought all platforms, software or hardware companies, and data fiduciaries -- who process and are responsible for managing and safeguarding user data -- under the jurisdiction of Bangladesh's courts," said Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser for telecom and ICT, at a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy in Dhaka.

"In other words, this law has established a legal... SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

# All DSA cases, convictions to be thrown out Govt okays changes to ordinance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is introducing an amendment to the Cyber Security Ordinance 2025 that will grant immediate reprieve to those accused or convicted under certain sections of the now defunct Digital Security Act (DSA).

The Cyber Security Ordinance was drafted to replace the Awami League-era draconian Cyber Security Act and DSA, both of which have been scrapped.

The proposal to amend the ordinance was approved at the advisory council meeting yesterday.

The amendment states that all cases or investigations related to offences under sections 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29,

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## SIGNING JULY CHARTER

# Parties to decide only after seeing implementation plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Major political parties yesterday said they would decide whether to sign the July Charter only after reviewing the National Consensus Commission's recommendations for the government on how to implement the charter.

Their reactions came hours after the commission announced that the signing ceremony for the charter will be held on October 15 at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad in the presence of Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, who also heads the commission.

The announcement followed a series of dialogues that ended without agreement on the implementation process.

While the commission said consensus was

reached on holding a referendum to ensure public endorsement of the charter, the parties remained divided over its timing.

The BNP said the referendum should be held on the same day as the next national election in February 2026, arguing that holding it earlier would be "impractical, costly, and could delay the polls".

The Jamaat-e-Islami and the National Citizen Party insisted the referendum must take place before the election, with Jamaat saying this would give the charter "strong legitimacy", and NCP warning that holding it on polling day would "make it lose importance".

A commission press release said the date for signing was finalised at a meeting yesterday.

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# Shahidul Alam, others taken to Israeli prison

STAR REPORT

Acclaimed Bangladeshi photographer Shahidul Alam, along with more than 140



journalists, medics, and human rights activists, was taken to Ketzot Prison yesterday following their detention by Israeli forces.

The group was aboard an aid flotilla that was intercepted on Wednesday in international waters approximately 120 nautical miles off the coast of Gaza.

Drik, the independent media organisation founded by Shahidul in Dhaka, confirmed the development in a statement posted on its verified Facebook page yesterday afternoon.

Informed by the Freedom Flotilla Coalition (FFC) and Adalah (The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel), Drik learnt that Shahidul, along with all journalists, health workers,

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# 'Anti-terror law being abused for repression'

## HRW urges govt to focus on polls instead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human Rights Watch has said Bangladesh's interim government is "increasingly using the recently amended counterterrorism law to arrest alleged supporters of the deposed Awami League government".

The United Nations human rights team in Bangladesh should immediately seek the release of those arbitrarily detained and encourage the authorities to uphold rights and prosecute all those who use unlawful political violence, said the global rights body.

The interim government took office in August 2024 after former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government was toppled following weeks of protests in which 1,400 people were killed, the rights body said in a statement on Wednesday.

On May 12, 2025, the interim government ordered a ban on the Awami League's political activities, using new authority under amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Act, it said. The ban includes prohibitions on meetings, publications, and online speech supporting the party and is being used to "arrest Awami League members and peaceful activists".

"The interim government should not be engaging in the same... SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

237 LIVES LOST TO MOB ATTACKS, POLITICAL VIOLENCE: HRSS - PAGE 3

# Shapla or no registration

## NCP threatens to decline EC listing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party will reject registration if the Election Commission (EC) does not allocate the Shapla as its electoral symbol, said its Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary yesterday.

"If we are to be registered, it must be with the Shapla symbol. NCP will not be registered without Shapla, and we will not accept any registration without it," he told reporters after a two-hour meeting with Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin.

The NCP will wait until the end of this month for the EC's final decision.

"The EC now faces... SEE PAGE 2 COL 1