



A mother and her daughter walk holding a heart balloon on Valentine's Day at the Lychakiv Military Cemetery in Lviv, Ukraine, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## GAZA CEASEFIRE Abbas urges removal of all Israeli 'obstacles'

AFP, Addis Ababa

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas yesterday called for the removal of "all obstacles" he said Israel has imposed on implementing phase two of the Gaza ceasefire.

"We emphasise the need to lift all obstacles imposed by the Israeli occupation on the implementation of the provisions related to the second phase of the agreement," Abbas said, in a speech read by his prime minister Mohammed Mustafa at an African Union summit in Ethiopia.

This included the work of a technocratic committee established to oversee the daily governance of Gaza, he added.

## 'West's decline' not in US interest

Amid tensions, Rubio casts US as the 'child of Europe'

REUTERS, Munich

Secretary of State Marco Rubio cast the United States as the "child of Europe" in a message of unity yesterday, offering some reassurance as well as levelling more criticism at allies after a year of turmoil in transatlantic relations.

Rubio was addressing the annual Munich Security Conference, where Europe's leading powers have tried to project their own independence and strength while straining to keep an alliance with the US under President Donald Trump alive.

The speech delivered a degree of reassurance to European countries who fear being left in the lurch on anything from the war in Ukraine to international trade ructions in a rapidly shifting global order.

But it was short on concrete commitments and made no mention of Russia, raising questions on whether Rubio's more mollified tone than that of Vice President JD Vance



Munich security meet dominated by changing world order

Zelenskiy says US asks Ukraine too often for concessions

China's Wang Yi warns against decoupling

at the same event a year ago would change the underlying dynamics.

"In a time of headlines heralding

the end of the transatlantic era, let it be known and clear to all that this is neither our goal nor our wish, because for us Americans, our home may be in the Western Hemisphere, but we will always be a child of Europe," Rubio said.

"For the United States and Europe, we belong together," he said in a speech that drew a standing ovation at the end.

While European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said she was "very much reassured" by the speech and German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl called him a "true partner", others struck a more cautious tone.

"I am not sure that Europeans see the announced civilisational decline, supposedly caused mainly by migration and deindustrialisation, as a core uniting interest. For most Europeans, the common interest is security," said Gabrielius Landsbergis, former foreign minister of Nato member Lithuania.

## Son of Iran's last shah urges US action against regime

AFP, Munich

The exiled son of Iran's last shah called on US President Donald Trump on Saturday to help the Iranian people, a day after the American leader said a change of power would be the "best thing".

US-based Reza Pahlavi, who has not returned to Iran since before the 1979 Islamic revolution that ousted the monarchy, added it was "time to end the Islamic republic" while speaking to reporters at the Munich Security Conference.

Outside, around 200,000 of his supporters thronged the streets near the gathering of world leaders, calling on them to ramp up pressure against the Islamic republic after the deadly repression of nationwide protests in January.

"Javid shah" (long live the shah)," the crowd chanted as they waved green-white-and-red flags with a lion and a sun — the emblem of the toppled monarchy.

"The Iranian regime is a dead regime," a 62-year-old protester originally from Iran who gave his name only as Said told AFP.

"It must be game over."

Pahlavi has urged Iranians at home and abroad to continue demonstrations against the authorities, calling on them to chant slogans from their homes and rooftops at 8:00 pm Saturday and Sunday, to coincide with protests in Germany and elsewhere.



Trump had said on Friday that a change of government in Iran would be the "best thing that could happen", as he sent a second aircraft carrier to the Middle East to ratchet up military pressure on Tehran.

He had earlier threatened military intervention to support a wave of street protests in Iran that peaked in January.

"To President Trump... The Iranian people heard you say help is on the way, and they have faith in you. Help them," Pahlavi told reporters in Munich.

"It is time to end the Islamic republic. This is the demand echoing from the bloodshed of my compatriots who are not asking us to fix the regime but to help them bury it," he added.

## MPs, cabinet to take oath

FROM PAGE 1

AMM Nasir Uddin or Chief Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury will administer the oath to the MPs.

The Election Commission issued a gazette notification last night confirming winners in 297 of the 299 constituencies where polling was held.

BNP is set to form the government after its alliance secured 212 seats — more than a two-thirds majority in Thursday's election. The II-party alliance led by Jamaat-e-Islami, with 77 seats, will form the opposition.

Cabinet Division sources noted that since independence, every government has been sworn in at Bangabhaban. An official involved in the preparations, speaking

anonymously, said the MPs' oath involves minimal formality.

"A cabinet swearing-in requires inviting local and foreign guests, providing hospitality, and managing various stages for the prime minister, ministers, and state ministers," the official added.

Due to this last minute decision, officials are redesigning every phase of the ceremony. Another source involved in the process stated, "It is the tradition to work according to the wishes of those coming to power. However, organising such a large event in so little time is quite challenging. We are putting in our best efforts to ensure a quality ceremony."

Commenting on the matter, writer, researcher, and former Secretary Abdul Awal Mazumder noted that the July charter was signed at the parliament's South Plaza.

"The post-uprising government likely wants to take their oath in front of the people," Mazumder told The Daily Star.

"It is true that no government in the past has been sworn in outside of Bangabhaban, but there is no obstacle to starting a new tradition."

He added, "The US president addresses the people immediately after taking the oath under the open sky. I'm waiting to see if Bangladesh's next prime minister, Tarique Rahman, does the same."

## Navalny poisoned with dart frog toxin in Russian prison Say European states

AFP, Munich

Five European states, including Britain, France and Germany, said Saturday that Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was killed by a "rare toxin" from a dart frog and that the Russian state was the prime suspect in the death.

Navalny, a staunch critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin, died in an Arctic prison on February 16, 2024, while serving a 19-year prison sentence on charges widely seen as retribution for his opposition.

"The UK, Sweden, France, Germany and The Netherlands are confident that Alexei Navalny was poisoned with a lethal toxin," the countries said in a joint statement released at the Munich Security Conference. It said the results followed "analyses of samples" from his body.

According to the European states, a toxin found in the skin of South American dart frogs known as epibatidine was found on laboratory analyses of samples from his body.

"Russia claimed that Navalny died of natural causes. But given the toxicity of epibatidine and reported symptoms, poisoning was highly likely the cause of his death," said the statement.

"Navalny died while held in prison, meaning Russia had the means, motive and opportunity to administer this poison to him," the countries said.

Britain's foreign office said separately that "only the Russian state had the means, motive and opportunity to deploy this lethal toxin". It added: "We hold it (Russia) responsible for his death".

## World hails Bangladesh on polls success

FROM PAGE 2

"The people of Bangladesh have exercised their democratic rights in large numbers," it said, calling on stakeholders to work together to deliver constitutional, judicial, and other key reforms backed by the referendum, and noting the vital role of the new parliament.

It added that the EU looks forward to working with the new government to deepen relations and stands ready to support reforms grounded in democratic principles, human rights, and the rule of law.

In a statement, Canada's foreign ministry described Bangladesh as one of its longest-standing friends and partners and congratulated its people. "Canada remains committed to working with the newly elected government and all Bangladeshis to advance our shared priorities in a spirit of mutual prosperity and a better future for our peoples," it said.

The Australian High Commission in Bangladesh congratulated Tarique Rahman and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party on their victory in the 13th parliament election, as well as the people of Bangladesh. It reaffirmed Australia's commitment to strengthening its long-standing partnership built on deep ties between the two peoples.

Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Susan Ryle also congratulated the BNP on its success and pledged to work on enhancing bilateral ties.

The German Embassy in Dhaka said Berlin looks forward to working closely with the new government to strengthen political and economic ties. "We commend the people of Bangladesh for their participation in the electoral process — a meaningful expression of democratic engagement — and extend our congratulations to all newly elected Members

of Parliament," it said, adding that Germany would continue supporting Bangladesh's democratic reforms and development.

Congratulating the BNP and the people of Bangladesh, the Embassy of the Netherlands in Bangladesh praised the strong bilateral relationship and expressed commitment to deepening cooperation.

The High Commission of Singapore in Bangladesh also said it looks forward to working with the new government.

The Turkish foreign ministry said it welcomes the peaceful elections.

"We hope that the results of the elections and the referendum, which observers from Türkiye also monitored, will contribute to democracy, stability and prosperity in Bangladesh," it said.

Türkiye reaffirmed its commitment to further developing bilateral relations with Bangladesh.

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### নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

স্মারক- পাববি/সংস্থাপন/২৮২/২১০ তারিখ: ১৪ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৬ খ্রি.

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