

'No surrender'

Says Tehran as Trump vows to hit Iran 'very hard'; Iran apologises to Gulf states for attacks, strikes US bases in the region; war enters second week

AGENCIES

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian yesterday rebuffed US President Donald Trump's surrender demand as warring parties stepped up attacks and the war entered its second week.

Trump, hours after Pezeshkian's remarks, said Iran would be "hit very hard" in the coming hours and that he was considering widening the areas and groups of people being targeted, without providing details.

"Today, Iran will be hit very hard! Under serious consideration for complete destruction and certain death, because of Iran's bad behavior, are areas and groups of people that were not considered for targeting up until this moment in time," Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic made an unusual apology to neighbouring states, some of which host major US military bases, for its "actions", apparently seeking to calm regional anger at Iranian strikes on Gulf civilian targets.

"I personally apologise to neighbouring countries that were affected by Iran's actions," Pezeshkian said. He said Iran's temporary leadership council had agreed to suspend attacks on nearby states unless strikes on Iran originated from their territory.

Yesterday, Israel announced a fresh blitz led by 80

fighter jets on Iran, which set one of Tehran's main airports on fire. The wave of pre-dawn Israeli raids was one of the biggest since the bombing campaign began on February 28, with a military academy, an underground command centre and a missile storage facility named as targets.

AFP photos showed fire and smoke billowing from Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport, one of two that serve the capital. Later, Israel's military said it launched another wave of air strikes on Tehran and Isfahan.

Pezeshkian struck a defiant tone in a speech broadcast on state TV in which he appeared to address Trump, who said Friday that only Iran's "unconditional surrender" could end the war.

Iran's enemies "must take their wish for the unconditional surrender of the Iranian people to their graves," he said.

Iran also hit back, with air raid alerts and explosions heard above Jerusalem as well as Gulf cities Dubai, Manama and near Riyadh -- where Saudi Arabia intercepted a ballistic missile fired at an air base housing US military personnel.

It said the targets included the UAE's Al-Minhad base and another in Kuwait, as well as a "strategic facility" in Israel.

Later, the Revolutionary Guards said their forces also targeted Al-Dhafra air base in the UAE.



PHOTO: REUTERS
A damaged compound housing offices and warehouses used by a US firm, in Iraq.



PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN
Women make up the majority of the workforce in the apparel industry, a sector that keeps the wheels of the national economy turning. Yet labour rights groups argue that women's working conditions, wages, and benefits remain well below standard across many workplaces.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

They leave with hope, return with scars

Abuse haunts Bangladeshi women migrants who returned home

MD ABBAS

When Liza Akter left for Saudi Arabia two years ago, she hoped the job would help secure a better future for her two children.

The woman from Patuakhali already had a difficult life. She lost her parents at a young age, and later her husband abandoned her. Working abroad seemed like her only option.

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Men, money and muscle still guard the gates of politics

Women candidates say at Star discussion

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **DOMESTIC LABOUR REDISTRIBUTION:** Redistribute care work to provide women the "time-wealth" necessary for political participation.
- **MARGINALISED INCLUSION:** Ensure genuine representation by integrating Dalit and working-class women into mainstream political planning.
- **INSTITUTIONAL NEUTRALITY:** Constitutionally protect the Election Commission and administration from being used as partisan agents.
- **SUBSTANTIVE DECISION-MAKING:** Integrate women into party "backrooms" where finance and alliances are decided, moving beyond symbolic quotas.

NILIMA JAHAN

The vision of an inclusive democracy, forged on the streets during the July uprising, has collided with a formidable structural wall.

While the movement promised to remove discrimination from society, including those enforced by patriarchy, the February 12 election this year has instead exposed a pattern of systemic exclusion.

Initial ambitions for gender parity were incrementally diluted, with demands for 100 direct seats eventually shrinking to just 84 female candidates contesting the election, of whom only seven secured seats -- a disparity that reflects a failure to penetrate the country's true epicentre of political influence.

Ahead of International Women's Day today, The Daily Star sat with five female candidates, a professor of women and gender studies at Dhaka University, and a senior leader from Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.

Their collective experiences surrounding the recent national polls reveal that the structures of power remain guarded by deeply entrenched patriarchy, which manifests through immense capital,

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MAKE SURE YOU COLLECT THE SPECIAL 8-PAGE SUPPLEMENT: **RIGHTS. JUSTICE. ACTION. FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS.**



PHOTO: AFP
A man cries as he holds aloft the body of a two-year-old child killed in a strike in Tehran yesterday.



Iran's enemies must take their wish for the unconditional surrender of the Iranian people to their graves.

Masoud Pezeshkian, Iran President

- 'Massive' drone attacks target Israel, US bases in UAE, Kuwait**
- Wave of strikes pounds key Iranian sites, including airport**
- Another oil tanker hit near Strait of Hormuz**
- US firms to 'quadruple' weapons production**
- Iran Guards hit Kurdish groups, vow to crush them**
- Drones, missile target Iraq airport; arms depot, oil field**



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN
A long queue of motorcycles and cars formed outside a filling station in Dhaka's Asad Gate area on Mirpur Road yesterday. Fears of a possible fuel shortage, amid ongoing tensions in the Middle East, are driving more and more people to filling stations across the capital. Story on page 16.

Do not dip into forex reserves

Economists suggest at meeting with BB governor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Top economists have urged the Bangladesh Bank to remain cautious about spending from the country's foreign exchange reserves as tensions in the Middle East threaten to create fresh economic shocks.

The recommendation came during a meeting convened yesterday at the Bangladesh Bank headquarters in Dhaka with eight leading economists amid growing uncertainty in the global energy market.

Newly-appointed Governor Md Mostaqur Rahman, the deputy governors, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) and the central bank's chief economist attended the meeting.

The economists warned that the rising global fuel prices due to the Middle East crisis could increase the country's import bills and eventually put pressure on the foreign exchange reserves. The Daily Star has learnt from three of the economists present at the meeting.

Global oil price has surged 24 percent

ECONOMISTS' PRESCRIPTION

- Find alternative funding sources
- Seek loans from ADB, IsDB
- Negotiate deferred payment with oil exporters
- Seek alternative fuel source
- Do not pass on higher energy bills to consumers
- Do not cut policy rate

this week to more than \$90 a barrel and is on course for its steepest weekly gains since the coronavirus pandemic, driving up fuel prices for consumers worldwide, reports Reuters.

The economists advised the central bank to explore alternative funding

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