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US-ISRAEL WAR ON IRAN

Bangladeshi dies in KSA; death toll now five

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and RASHIDUL HASAIN

Another Bangladeshi migrant worker has died from injuries sustained in an Iranian missile strike in Saudi Arabia, raising the death toll of Bangladeshis from the Middle East war to five.

Migrant worker Mohammad Abdullah Al Mamun, 35, from Rasulpur village in Gafargaon upazila of Mymensingh succumbed to his burn injuries at 11:00am on Tuesday while undergoing treatment in Riyadh, said a statement from the expatriates' welfare ministry.

About 90 percent of Mamun's body was burned when a missile fired from Iran struck Saudi Arabia's

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Mamun



Fuel supply holds steady despite import concerns

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government will not be increasing the fuel supply beyond the existing amount, as it needs this month's stock to finish while it explores alternative options for next month's consignments.

Meanwhile, coal power generation is being increased amid uncertainty over fuel oil imports.

Since March 15 this year, the state-owned Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) has increased the daily diesel supply by 10 percent and petrol and octane by 15 percent, compared to the average daily supplies of March 2025.

As per the BPC's instruction, from today to March 22, depots will disburse fuel at a minimum scale. On Eid day and the following day, fuel depots will be closed.

The supply will be the same as the March 2025 amount between March 23 and 25 this year. Last year, the average diesel supply was 12,777 tonnes, while petrol supply was 1,496 tonnes and octane supply was 1,193 tonnes.

Since Monday till yesterday, following the withdrawal of the fuel purchase cap, diesel supply from distributor companies was 14,055 tonnes, petrol was 1,720 tonnes, and octane was 1,372 tonnes a day.

The BPC, meanwhile, has secured around 2.75 lakh tonnes of fuel for April, against the monthly demand of 5.5 lakh tonnes, officials said.

Though supply was increased, refuelling stations in Dhaka and its outskirts have seen huge crowds over the

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Rohingya food aid to be slashed from next month



- Monthly rations to be tiered: \$12 (highly vulnerable), \$10 (moderately), \$7 (vulnerable)
- New ration system to take effect from April 1
- Funding decline worsened after US cuts; no new US commitment this year
- 2025 funding reached only 53% of \$934m requirement (down from 64% in 2024)

PORIMOL PALMA

The World Food Programme (WFP) is set to slash food aid for the Rohingya in Bangladesh due to a significant funding shortfall amid crises in various parts of the world.

At present, each refugee in the camps gets monthly food aid of \$12. However, now the entire Rohingya population will be categorised into three segments – highly vulnerable group, vulnerable and moderately vulnerable groups – for the food ration.

The highly vulnerable segment of the Rohingya will get \$12, the moderately vulnerable segment will get \$10 and the vulnerable segment will get \$7 a month, Mohammed Mizanur Rahman, the Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), told The Daily Star.

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Drive against extortionists after Eid

TOUSIF KAIUM and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Police are preparing fresh lists of extortionists, armed criminals and other notorious offenders, with a drive expected to begin just after Eid amid growing allegations.

On March 2, police units nationwide were instructed to compile a list of extortionists within the next three days. However, the final list has yet to materialise due to the breadth of information stipulated by the home ministry.

So far, a preliminary list of extortionists by sector has been prepared by multiple intelligence agencies, including the police's special branch and detective branch, said Ali Hossain Fakir, the inspector general of police (IGP).

From the multiple lists, officials are now separating the common names to start a special drive, he said, adding that the operation will begin soon.

The drive will begin after Eid, said officials at the Police Headquarters (PHQ).

The lists include suspects involved in extortion from the transport sector, markets and footpaths, as well as those active at autorickshaw, rickshaw and leguna stands, they said.

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KARWAN BAZAR Extortion, weak sales double blow for footpath vendors



TOUSIF KAIUM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

While rows of colourful clothes in makeshift stalls along the busy footpath beside the BMTC building remain untouched despite Eid approaching, vendors in the capital's Karwan Bazar are grappling with low profits and the continued burden of extortion payments.

They allege they are still being forced to pay, even as the expected

brisk business in the latter half of Ramadan has failed to materialise.

Speaking to The Daily Star on the night of March 13, Riaz (not his real name), a 55-year-old vendor who sells children's clothes at the market, said, "Usually from the 15th of Ramadan, the market becomes lively and sales pick up. But this year, it still hasn't taken off."

"On top of that, we have to pay Tk 100 in extortion every night. With only about a week left before Eid, I

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Trump issues threat again, Cuban leader vows 'resistance'

AFP, Havana

Cuba's leader on Tuesday said the US would face "unbreakable resistance" if it tries to take over the impoverished island nation, as communist authorities scrambled to fix a nationwide electricity blackout.

Cuba's government is under increasingly crushing pressure, with Washington enforcing an oil blockade and openly stating it wants to end the nearly seven-decade-old US standoff with the one-party communist state.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Cuba's decision announced this week to let exiles invest and own businesses did not go far enough to allow free market reforms that the Trump administration demands.

"What they announced yesterday is not dramatic enough. It's not going to fix it. So they've got some big decisions to make," Rubio, a Cuban-American and vociferous critic of the country's ruling party, told reporters at the White House.

President Donald Trump, who has heaped pressure on Cuba's communist government, said Monday he would "take" Cuba, adding: "We'll be doing something with Cuba very soon."

But his Cuban counterpart Miguel Diaz-Canel was defiant in the face of Washington's threats.

"Faced with the worst-case scenario, Cuba has one guarantee: any external aggressor will encounter an unbreakable

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PAKISTAN STRIKES Afghans search for loved ones at rehab centre

UN agency puts death toll at 143; Taliban claims 408

REUTERS, Kabul

Families and friends of people undergoing treatment at a rehab centre in the Afghan capital Kabul searched for their loved ones yesterday, two days after it was bombed by Pakistan in the deadliest incident in the months-long conflict between the neighbours.

The Afghan Taliban government has said that more than 400 people were killed and 265 wounded in the air strike that took place on Monday night, just as people and staff at the centre were praying, days before the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

But the casualty numbers shared by authorities have not been independently verified. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan told Reuters yesterday that 143 people were killed and 119 wounded in the attack.

Pakistan rejected the Taliban's claims about the strike, saying it had "precisely targeted military installations and terrorist support infrastructure".

The strikes mark a new low point in the relationship between the Islamic neighbours at a time of heightened instability for the region due to the US-Israeli attacks on Iran.

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People search for the names of missing relatives on a list at the site of a drug rehabilitation centre destroyed in what the Taliban said was a Pakistani airstrike in Kabul, Afghanistan, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Life insurers face mounting unpaid claims, now at 12 lakh

B1

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PRAYER TIMING

MARCH 19

AZAN	Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
JAMAAT	4:50	12:45	4:30	6:11	7:45
	5:00	1:15	4:45	6:21	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MAR	SEHRI	IFTAR
29	19		6:11
30	20	4:47	6:11