

"The United States is also now saying that it wants to take over the Nord Stream pipelines."  
Russian FM Sergei Lavrov



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## 'Steer clear of US forces'

Tehran warns civilians across ME as Trump extends pause on striking Iranian energy plants

AGENCIES

Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned civilians across the Middle East yesterday to stay away from areas near US forces, in a mark of defiance after President Donald Trump claimed talks to end the month-long war were "going well".

Accusing US Israeli forces of resorting to "human shields", Iran's Guards told civilians to "urgently leave locations where American forces are stationed so that no harm comes to you" — as Iran's military threatened to target hotels housing US soldiers across the region.

"When all the Americans (forces) go into a hotel, then from our perspective that hotel becomes American," armed forces spokesman Abolfazl Shekarchi told Iran's state television.

The warning came after Trump again extended a deadline for Tehran to open the Strait of Hormuz or face the destruction of its energy assets, pushing it from yesterday to April 6.

In announcing a new reprieve over the Hormuz blockade, which threatens lasting damage on the global economy, Trump insisted the Islamic republic wanted to "make a deal".

But the Iranian side, which has made it clear it wants to end fighting on its own terms, said it has not requested the 10-day pause on strikes on



Markets, roads, and homes are being built by cutting the hills of Jungle Salimpur at Alinagar in Sitakunda, Chattogram. The razed hills of the area lay bare the environmental impact of encroachment. This photo was taken recently. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

**US-Israeli airstrikes hit two steel plants, two nuclear sites in Iran**  
**US weighs sending up to 10,000 troops to Middle East**  
**Over 370,000 children displaced in Lebanon, 121 killed: UN**  
**Kuwait's Mubarak al-Kabeer Port, Shuwaikh Port hit by drones**

its energy plants and indicated no let-up in reprisal attacks against Israel and targets across the Gulf.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon is looking to send up to 10,000 additional ground troops to the Middle East to give Trump more military options even as he weighs peace talks with Tehran. The Wall Street Journal reported, citing Department of Defense officials with knowledge of the planning.

If attacked with ground troops, Iran has signalled it would use its Houthi allies in Yemen to target shipping in the Red Sea, which would open up a new front in a war of spiralling economic, political and military repercussions.

US-Israeli airstrikes yesterday damaged two major steel plants and two nuclear-related facilities in Iran, but there has been no release of radioactive material, Iranian state media says.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said yesterday that Tehran would exact a "HEAVY price for Israeli crimes" after attacks on two of the country's largest steel factories and nuclear sites.

"Israel has hit 2 of Iran's largest steel factories, a power plant, and civilian nuclear sites, among other infrastructure. Israel claims it acted in coordination with the US," said Araghchi in a social media post.

The US military has fired over 850 Tomahawk cruise missiles in four weeks of war on Iran, burning through the precision weapons at a rate that has alarmed some Pentagon officials and prompted internal discussions about how to make more available, the Washington Post reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

A month of US and Israeli attacks have damaged at least 120 museums and cultural and historic sites nationwide, a top Tehran official said,

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## Bangladesh eyes \$1.6b ADB financing

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and WASIM HABIB

An opportunity has emerged for Bangladesh to tap as much as \$1.6 billion in Asian Development Bank (ADB) financing through a mix of new and ongoing support programmes.

The development comes as the government looks to shield the economy from the global shocks triggered by the US-Israel war on Iran.

Of the total, \$1 billion is expected to come from the Manila-based lender's special package, while \$600 million is likely to be extended as budget support under its economic management and governance programme.

**The special package was unveiled on March 23 for ADB's developing member countries in Asia and the Pacific to help them cope with immediate economic pressures from the US-Israel war on Iran.**

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Following the announcement, the Economic Relations Division (ERD) held informal discussions with ADB officials

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## Five killed by train in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Five people were killed after being run over by a train in Tangail's Kalihati upazila last night. The deceased include three women and a child.

They have been identified as Sultan Mahmud, 28; Dola, 45; Nargis, 30; Ripa, 20; and Nirob, 12, from Sadullapur upazila in Gaibandha district, according to Mizanur Rahman, sub-inspector of Tangail Railway Station police outpost.

The accident happened around 7:45pm on the Tangail-Jamuna Bridge East rail line in the Jogar Char area.

How the victims got on the rail lines and how they failed to notice the train could not be ascertained immediately.

Citing witnesses, police said the deceased were passengers of a

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## Unite to build inclusive Bangladesh

PM urges all

**"The attempts made in the past to undermine Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman and deny his contributions only prove that he was an indispensable character in the Liberation War."**

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday urged all to work together to build an inclusive and self-reliant Bangladesh.

"Let the pledge of this Independence Day be that not just one section of society, but all of us will live together well... and we will do so, Insha'Allah," he said while addressing a discussion marking Independence and National Day.

The programme was organised by BNP at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh auditorium in the capital, where the premier attended as the chief guest.

Tarique said the current democratic government has

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A filling station at Paribagh in Dhaka puts up a notice yesterday afternoon, apologising to customers for inability to sell fuel due to what it says is no supply from Padma Oil Company depot. An official at the pump said it gets oil every other day amid the crisis triggered by the US-Israel war on Iran but there has been no supply since Wednesday, and fresh supply is unlikely until Sunday. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Price shock threatens BPC's profit streak

ASIFUR RAHMAN and MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) may slip back into losses if fuel prices are not adjusted in the upcoming cycle, as global oil prices surge.

Officials and sector insiders warn that the state-run fuel importer is under mounting financial pressure due to the fallout of the US-Israel war on Iran.

Audit data show that over the last decade, BPC incurred losses in just one fiscal year — Tk 2,705 crore in FY22 — when domestic prices were kept below import costs as the Russia-Ukraine war drove up global oil prices.

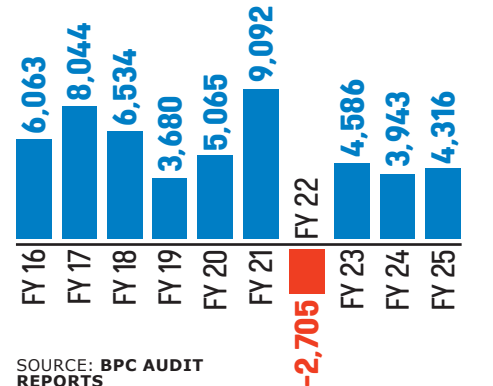
In March 2024, the government introduced an automated fuel pricing mechanism to align domestic rates with global markets. Adjustments are typically made in the last week of each month and take effect from the first day of the following month.

The last adjustment on February 28 — coinciding with the US-Israel attack on Iran — left prices unchanged.

Since then, global fuel prices have risen sharply, raising questions about whether the government will follow the formula or absorb the impact through subsidies.

After the losses in FY22, the corporation recorded profits consecutively — Tk 4,586

**BPC PROFIT/LOSS IN TAKA CRORE**



SOURCE: BPC AUDIT REPORTS

crore in FY23, Tk 3,943 crore in FY24, and Tk 4,316 crore in FY25.

The current situation suggests a reversal may be imminent if global price pressures persist.

Anindya Islam Amit, state minister for power, energy and mineral resources, reiterated yesterday that there are no plans to raise fuel prices for now despite multifaceted economic pressures.

Speaking at a programme in Jashore, he explained that higher fuel prices would

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