



US trade deal limiting Bangladesh's energy options

Says Debapriya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The reciprocal trade agreement signed with the US may severely limit Bangladesh's energy options, Debapriya Bhattacharya, convener of Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, said yesterday.

The agreement, inked in February, includes clauses that curb Bangladesh's scope to trade with countries sanctioned by the US.

It also mentions "non-market" economies, referring to countries that do not follow free-market principles.

"These legal ambiguities make a formal US waiver a prerequisite for cheaper Russian oil, directly constraining multilateral trade



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As fuel is no longer sold in jerrycans, people are bringing generators and irrigation machines to collect diesel from the pumps in Rajshahi. Most pumps remain closed, while queues stretch 1.5km to 2km long at four to five that are open. Some people complained that they did not get fuel even after lining up from 3:00am. This photo was taken at Gul Gafur Petrol Pump in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Govt weighs online classes in city schools

Decides to introduce music lessons at pry, secondary levels

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is discussing a proposal to introduce a mix of online and in-person classes for schools, especially in metropolitan areas, as part of efforts to tackle the ongoing global energy crisis.

Besides the international crisis over the US-Israel war on Iran, traffic congestion during the opening and closing hours of the schools in Dhaka is another factor that made the government think about the option.

The ministry would place the proposal before the cabinet for a decision after the end of the discussion, Education Minister ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon told reporters at the Secretariat after a meeting with Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday.

"We are discussing promoting online education," Ehsanul said, adding that the discussions covered both Bangla medium and English-medium institutions.

He stressed that the government was not considering a fully online system.

A survey had already been conducted and around 55 percent of users wanted some form of online education, according to the minister.

He also linked the proposal to lost class hours because

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ICT may probe 1/11 crimes, 'crossfires'

Says its chief prosecutor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Prosecutor Md Aminul Islam yesterday said the prosecution may bring alleged crimes against humanity committed during the 2007-08, as well as "crossfire" killings, under the jurisdiction of the International Crimes Tribunal if they fall within its legal mandate.

Speaking to reporters at his office, he said incidents linked to the military-backed caretaker government period, widely known as 1/11, and the July uprising could be scrutinised.

"Crossfire incidents from 2007, and crimes against humanity during the 1/11 period, if they fall within our tribunal's jurisdiction, we will bring them before the tribunal," he said.

Aminul made it clear that the prosecution's actions would not depend on whether suspects have already been arrested. "...if we find their involvement in crimes against humanity, the tribunal will investigate those matters," he said, adding that proceedings would be driven strictly by evidence.

"If sufficient evidence is found to bring charges and proceed to trial, those responsible will be made to face justice before the tribunal," he added, noting that the ICT could also initiate investigations suo motu.

Responding to a question on whether hundreds of alleged crossfire incidents could be probed, the chief prosecutor said the pattern of such killings suggests a coordinated policy.

He alleged that many incidents followed a "common design" across the country and could qualify as widespread or systematic attacks under laws governing crimes against humanity. According to him, victims were often targeted due to dissenting views or disputes with local political leaders.



Md Aminul Islam

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'Iran will be at World Cup' and play in US

Says FIFA chief

AFP, Antalya

FIFA president Gianni Infantino told AFP on Tuesday that Iran "will be at the World Cup" and will play their group matches in the United States as scheduled, despite the Middle East war.

"Iran will be at the World Cup," Infantino said at half-time of Iran's friendly against Costa Rica in Turkey.

"That's why we're here. We're delighted because they're a very, very strong team, I'm very happy."

"I've seen the team, I've spoken to the players and the coach, so everything is fine," added

Infantino, whose attendance at Tuesday's game was unannounced.

Infantino went on to stress that Iran's "matches will be played where they are supposed to be, according to the draw".

The World Cup, being hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada, starts on June 11.

Iran are set to play their first Group G game against



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Israel passes by default death penalty law for Palestinians

US says it respects Israel's 'right' to legislate

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israel's parliament passed a law on Monday evening making death by hanging a default sentence for Palestinians convicted in military courts of deadly attacks, fulfilling a pledge by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right allies.

The law would only apply to Israelis convicted of murder whose attacks aimed at "ending Israel's existence", meaning it would mete out the death penalty for Palestinians but not for Jewish Israelis who committed similar crimes, critics say.

"The United States respects Israel's sovereign right to determine its own laws and penalties for individuals convicted of terrorism," a US State Department spokesperson said.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas condemned the legislation as a breach of international law and a doomed bid meant to intimidate Palestinians.

"Such laws and measures will not break the will of the Palestinian people or undermine their steadfastness," Abbas' office said in a statement.

Palestinian groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad called on Palestinians to launch attacks in revenge for the law.

The legislation has drawn international criticism of Israel,

which is already under scrutiny for increasing violence by Jewish settlers against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and its war in Gaza.

The measure includes provisions requiring an execution by hanging within 90 days of sentencing, with

Critics say it targets Palestinians tried in military courts

Hamas, Islamic Jihad call for revenge attacks

Palestinian President Abbas condemns the legislation

some allowance for a delay but no right to clemency. It provides the option of imposing a life imprisonment sentence instead of capital punishment, but only in unspecified "special circumstances".

Military courts in the West Bank can already sentence Palestinian convicts to death but have not done so.

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Four more children die from measles

Death toll now 44 this year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least four more children have died from suspected measles and related complications in the last 24 hours, bringing the death toll to 44 so far this year.

Two children died in suspected measles cases at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) in the last 24 hours, taking the hospital's tally of fatalities from the highly contagious infection so far this year to three, said its spokesman Shankar K Biswas.

As of yesterday, 98 suspected measles patients are admitted to the hospital, he added.

However, several media outlets, including Prothom Alo, reported that 12 measles patients died at RMCH until Sunday. At that time, RMCH admitted one death only.

If this number is taken into consideration, the total number of deaths from measles would be 55.

One child died at Infectious Diseases Hospital (IDH) in the capital's Mohakhali in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll from suspected measles cases at this medical facility to 25, said its superintendent Tanzina Jahan.

A total of 617 suspected measles patients have been treated at the hospital since January.

A five-and-a-half-month-old infant, admitted with symptoms of measles, died while undergoing treatment at Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) yesterday.

The victim, identified as Aisha Siddika from Jhilong in Cox's Bazar, was brought to the CMCH late Monday night. Due to her critical condition, she was shifted to the intensive care unit, where she passed away yesterday morning.

Chattogram Civil Surgeon Mohammed Jahangir Alam confirmed the death, stating that although the child exhibited classic symptoms of measles, the cause of death is yet to be "officially confirmed".

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Bangladesh to join Eurovision

AGENCIES

Bangladesh will take the stage alongside other nations in this year's Eurovision Song Contest as the world-famous TV pop spectacle makes its debut in Asia.



The grand finale of the regional edition will be hosted in Bangkok, Thailand, on November 14.

South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam are confirmed alongside Malaysia, Cambodia and Laos, as well as Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, with more countries expected to join as the competition expands.

The contest aims to showcase Asia's diversity and creativity while building on Eurovision's 70-year legacy of uniting audiences through music.

Eurovision, which started in 1956, is a famously eccentric festival in which artists from dozens of countries battle for the annual musical crown. It has long been centred in Europe, although in recent years it has begun to welcome participants outside the continent.



After potatoes were destroyed by stagnant rainwater, farmers of Shibganj upazila in Bogura and neighbouring Kalai upazila in Joypurhat faced a double whammy. They planted paddy over the unharvested potatoes, but the new crop has also failed. This photo was taken in Shibganj yesterday.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

Bangladesh trapped in energy dependency

Says economist Anu Muhammad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The power and energy ministry has long been dominated by multinational firms, and as a result, Bangladesh has spent a huge amount of resources and is constantly trapped in a cycle of dependency, said economist Anu Muhammad yesterday.

He criticised the country's import-reliant power structure at a roundtable styled 'Energy Sector Reform and CAB's 13-point demand' organised by the Consumers Association of Bangladesh at the CIRDAP auditorium.

Anu Muhammad backed

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