



"The general trend of compatriots on both sides of the Strait getting closer, edging nearer and becoming united will not change."
Xi tells Taiwan opposition leader



US-Iran talks 'on track' amid truce violations

Pakistan says delegations on their way amid setbacks over Lebanon, Hormuz

AGENCIES

Pakistan's capital was all set for historic negotiations between Iran and the US to end the war, as ceasefire violations threatened to derail hopes of peace in the Middle East and beyond.

Even as the US-Iran ceasefire looked increasingly precarious, amid Israel's continued bombardment of Lebanon and disputes over the terms of the talks, Pakistani officials insisted that the make-or-break peace negotiations would go ahead over the weekend as planned.

The conflict, which began when Israel and the US attacked Iran on February 28, has left thousands dead and caused global economic

Vance leaves for Pakistan, hopes for 'positive' outcome

Khamenei says Iran doesn't seek war, but ready for it

Trump says Iran will be hit harder if talks fail to achieve goals

devastation. Iran's retaliatory blockade of the critical shipping route, the Strait of Hormuz, has led to a global shortage of oil and gas and triggered the worst energy crisis in history.

Ahead of the talks, Iran yesterday set a ceasefire in Lebanon and the "release of Iran's blocked assets" as pre-conditions for any negotiations with the US.

"Two of the measures mutually agreed upon between the parties have yet to be implemented: a ceasefire in Lebanon and the release of Iran's blocked assets prior to the commencement of negotiations," Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf wrote in a post on X in English.

"These two matters must be fulfilled before negotiations begin."

President Donald Trump yesterday, said that Iran has "no cards" in upcoming talks with the United States -- apart from Tehran's effective stranglehold on the crucial strait.

Vice President JD Vance, who will lead the US delegation, yesterday set off for the talks in Pakistan, saying he expected a positive outcome, but "if they're going to try to play us, then they're going to find the negotiating team is not that receptive".

The two-day-old ceasefire has halted the campaign of US and Israeli air strikes on Iran. But it has so far done nothing to end the blockade of the strait.

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First responders search under the rubble at the site of an Israeli airstrike in the village of Habbouch, southern Lebanon, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

ME war to cost Tk 36,000cr in extra subsidies

Finance minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday told parliament that the US-Israel war on Iran will force the government to provide nearly Tk 36,000 crore in additional subsidies for electricity, energy, and LNG during the March-June period of the current fiscal year.

"Prices of crude oil and LNG have more than doubled in the international market," he said under Rule 300 of the Rules of Procedure while addressing the House on the fragile state of the economy inherited from the previous government.

The Middle East war has created new uncertainties in the global energy

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20 ordinances lose validity

Opposition alleges breach of consensus, stages walkout from House

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Twenty of the 133 ordinances issued by the interim government -- including major reforms on judicial independence, human rights, and anti-corruption -- are set to lose validity from today.

Of those, seven were repealed through four bills, while 13 automatically expired as parliament failed to ratify them within the constitutionally mandated 30-day period since its first sitting on March 12.

The expired ordinances include those on preventing enforced disappearances, strengthening the Anti-Corruption Commission, and establishing the Reference and

FATE OF ORDINANCES

Total ordinances: 133

Ratified in JS: 113

Last validity: 20 (7 repealed, 13 lapsed)

Police Commissions.

Alleging a breach of consensus and trust over the government's failure to ratify all 133 ordinances, the Jamaat-led opposition alliance staged a walkout towards the end of yesterday's sitting.

Referring to the lapsing of certain

ordinances, opposition leader Shafiqur Rahman said it would "bring about a rebirth of fascism", adding that the opposition would take no responsibility for it.

Citing Article 93 of the constitution, Law Minister Md Asaduzzman told the House that there are three options regarding ordinances. "Within 30 days, the ordinances must be placed before you [Speaker of the House] -- and we have done so. If any ordinance is not presented, it stands repealed. Those that are presented must then be approved in the form of bills or rejected."

The repealed ordinances included the National Parliament Secretariat

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JULY MUSEUM BILL Changes trigger fiery exchange

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament yesterday passed the July Uprising Memorial Museum Bill, 2026, incorporating provisions that place the state minister for cultural affairs as head of the museum and empower the government to dismiss council members.

The move triggered heated debate and a walkout by the Jamaat-e-Islami-led opposition alliance.

The bill, placed by Cultural Affairs Minister Nitai Roy Chowdhury during a session presided over by Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad, adopted three amendments to section 8 proposed by treasury bench lawmaker Anisur Rahman.

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ADB flags growing debt risks

Lowers growth forecast to 4%

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh has so far avoided a public debt default, but clear warning signs demand immediate and strategic action to safeguard the country's fiscal sustainability, according to the latest outlook by the Asian Development Bank.

In its Asian Development Outlook released yesterday, the lender said public debt, the total amount the government owes, both at home and abroad, is rising steadily and is projected to reach 42.4 percent of GDP by the end of the current fiscal year from an estimated 42.1 percent in FY2025.

The report said that Bangladesh's debt has grown not only in size but

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44 of 94 ICU beds lie unused across Rajshahi division

Shortage of trained personnel to run the specialised units to blame

SHOHANUR RAHMAN RAFI, Rajshahi

Since the measles outbreak began in late March, Rajshahi division has faced a severe health crisis, worsened by non-functional intensive care facilities.

Health officials said 44 of 94 ICU beds across the division remain idle due to staff shortages. As a result, critically ill patients from neighbouring districts are mostly referred to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH), which is struggling under mounting pressure.

RMCH sources reported 48 suspected measles deaths so far this year, with 508 patients with measles symptoms currently under treatment. The shortage of ICU facilities has had even wider consequences: in March alone, 229 patients -- including 91 children -- died at RMCH while waiting for ICU beds.

Pressure mounts at RMCH

229 patients, including 91 children, died in March while waiting for ICU beds

508 patients with measles symptoms currently under treatment

Dr Md Habibur Rahman, Rajshahi divisional health director, said the high admission and mortality rates reflect the lack of functional ICUs at district hospitals.

"When measles patients develop serious complications, they are referred to RMCH because district hospitals cannot manage critical cases. Even

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Little Anas, who had been receiving treatment for measles at the DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital in the capital's Mohakhali, smiles with his mother as he was getting discharged yesterday. After six days of treatment, news of his improvement comes as a sigh of relief for the family, as the number of measles-related deaths continues to climb. Four more children died from suspected measles in the 24 hours till yesterday morning, according to DGHS.

The Daily Star Prime Bank

7 DAYS TO GO

Time to celebrate the remarkable achievements of our young nation builders

25th

The Daily Star Prime Bank

O&A LEVEL AWARDS

Saluting the Nation Builders of Tomorrow

Date: Saturday, April 18, 2026
Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Center
Dhaka Bypass Expressway, Sector 4, Purbachal.

*Participation is by invitation only.