

US Senate vote on arms sale to Israel shows huge 'cracks'

AGENCIES

A vote in the United States Senate to block military equipment for Israel this week ended in defeat. But rights advocates are hailing the result as an "inflection point" that shows growing frustration with Israeli policies.

Democratic senators overwhelmingly supported the measure on Wednesday, which aimed to stop the sale of military bulldozers to Israel. Only seven crossed party lines to join the Republican majority in sinking the bill in a 40-59 vote.

Activists are calling the tally a sign of "historic" progress, reports Al Jazeera online. Beth Miller, the political director at the advocacy group Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) Action, said it was "shameful" that US lawmakers continue to vote to arm Israel.

In her view, the 40 votes in favour of Wednesday's resolution "shows massive cracks in the political pillar that upholds the US-Israel alliance".

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"While the measure didn't pass, the vote makes clear that a majority of Senate Democrats now oppose unconditional aid to Israel, aligning with the views of most Americans," said Hassan el-Tayyab, legislative director for Middle East policy at the Friends Committee on National Legislation, a peace advocacy group.

"This was not only a vote about arms sales, but a vote against further escalation, including a wider war with Iran."

The bill, introduced by progressive Senator Bernie Sanders, came amid growing anger over conflict with Iran, which President Trump launched jointly with Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu without congressional authorisation.



Smoke rises on the Lebanese side of the Israel-Lebanon border after an explosion, a day after a 10-day ceasefire took effect, as seen from Israel, yesterday. Lebanon's National News Agency reported the first violation after an ambulance was hit in Kounine near the border, causing casualties among medical workers. PHOTO: REUTERS

China intensifies Iran diplomacy

Analysts say Xi Jinping's upcoming Trump summit shapes Beijing's Middle East stance as energy security concerns loom

REUTERS, Beijing

China is accelerating its efforts to end the Iran war, walking a diplomatic tightrope as it prepares for a summit next month with US President Donald Trump while trying not to alienate Tehran.

President Xi Jinping's mid-May meeting with Trump is shaping Beijing's approach to the Middle East conflict even as the world's top crude oil importer, reliant on the Middle East for half its fuel, seeks to safeguard its energy supplies, analysts say.

China's modulated approach to the war has protected its back-channel leverage enough that Trump credited Beijing with helping to get Iran to last weekend's peace talks in Pakistan.

"You've heard President Trump repeatedly mention how the Chinese talked to the Iranians," said Eric Olander, editor-in-chief of the China-Globesouth Project, an independent organisation that analyses China's engagement in the developing world. "That puts them in the room with negotiators, even if it's not a seat at the table."

Considering Trump transactional and susceptible to flattery, China is seeking to advance its goals on trade and its claims on



Chinese FM Wang Yi has held nearly 30 calls, meetings with counterparts seeking ceasefire

Taiwan at the summit, people familiar with China's thinking told Reuters. The dominant view in Beijing is to "butter him up, give him a red-carpet welcome and preserve strategic stability", one person said.

China's foreign ministry did not respond to questions about its diplomacy ahead of the summit, the first visit by a US president in eight years. Trump says it will take place May

14 and 15.

With the US naval blockade of Iranian ports as a direct and growing threat, China has engaged in a flurry of diplomatic activity and refrained from strong criticism of Trump's conduct of the war so that the summit, postponed once by the conflict, can go smoothly, analysts say.

Xi broke his silence on the crisis on Tuesday with a four-point peace plan that calls for upholding peaceful coexistence, national sovereignty, the international rule of law and balancing development and security.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi has held nearly 30 calls and meetings with counterparts seeking a ceasefire, according to a Reuters count, while special envoy Zhai Jun has toured five Gulf and Arab capitals.

Travelling at one point by road to avoid contested airspace, Zhai could hear air raid sirens, he told reporters. Xi announced his peace plan in a meeting with Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince, Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, as he sought to deepen ties with a rival to Iran while pressing Tehran towards dialogue. Still, some analysts say, Iran needs China more than China needs Iran, allowing Beijing to press for a ceasefire while protecting the summit with Trump.

WEST BENGAL ELECTION Delimitation seen as conspiracy to delete voters' names: Mamata

Shashi Tharoor also slams govt over the move

AGENCIES

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday alleged that linking Bills related to women's reservation and the proposed delimitation commission was a "conspiracy" to delete voters' names from electoral rolls and implement the National Register of Citizens.

Addressing an election rally at Mathabhanga in Cooch Behar district, Banerjee said attempts were being made to "divide India" by linking the two issues, reports The Hindu online.

"Attempts are being made to divide India by linking women's reservation and delimitation Bills. Connecting these two Bills is a conspiracy to delete voters' names and implement NRC," she said.

Union Ministers Arjun Ram Meghwal and Amit Shah moved to introduce three bills in Lok Sabha on Thursday to amend the women's quota law and set up a delimitation commission, amid protests by the opposition, which termed the proposed legislations as "anti-constitutional".

Meanwhile, senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor yesterday termed the proposed delimitation exercise "political demonetisation" and criticised the Centre for linking implementation of women's reservation to the expansion of Parliament and constituency redrawing based on the Census.

Participating in a Lok Sabha debate on the three bills, Tharoor said the government had unnecessarily tied a widely supported reform to a highly contentious political process, reports TNN.

"Delimitation will turn out to be political demonetisation. Don't do it," Tharoor said.

He said there was near-unanimous political support across parties for women's reservation and argued that the measure should be implemented immediately without being made dependent on delimitation.

Tharoor referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks supporting women's representation, but said the proposal had been burdened with unnecessary conditions.



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A medical worker carries a child at the site of a Russian drone strike on an apartment building in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Int'l law 'matters more than ever' in chaotic world

Says UN chief Antonio Guterres

AFP, The Hague

International law is more important than ever at a time when even core countries in the global system are calling it into question, the United Nations secretary general said yesterday.

Marking the 80th anniversary of the International Court of Justice, the UN's top court, Antonio Guterres said: "Today, violations of international law are unfolding before our eyes."

"It is precisely because the international system is under such strain that adherence to international law matters more than ever — especially in this era of changing power relations," he said.

"The force of law must always prevail over the law of force."

Guterres was speaking at a special

sitting of the world court at the sumptuous Peace Palace in the Hague also attended by Dutch King Willem-Alexander.

He noted that as the court — which settles disputes between states — turned 80, it was busier than ever.

The ICJ has been in the headlines, notably for a case brought by South Africa against Israel, alleging that its campaign in Gaza is in breach of the UN Genocide Convention.

It also last year issued a landmark environment ruling, obliging states to tackle climate change and paving the way for reparations if they failed to do so.

But institutions such as the ICJ that uphold international law are increasingly "questioned and challenged," said the UN leader.

MANDELSON ROW British PM again under pressure to resign

REUTERS, London

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer came under renewed pressure to resign yesterday despite sacking a senior official following news that Britain's former ambassador to the United States had failed security vetting but was still handed the job.

Starmer, who won the largest majority in modern



history for Labour at a national election in 2024, faces fresh questions both over his judgment and his ability to govern, just three weeks before his party is expected to be punished in local elections in England, and regional votes in Scotland and Wales.

Following the resignation of Labour veteran Peter Mandelson as US ambassador over his ties to the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, Starmer had managed to win a brief reprieve from his critics after limiting Britain's role in US President Donald Trump's and Israel's war in Iran. However, on Thursday it emerged that Mandelson had failed the security vetting conducted before his appointment as envoy.

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দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১। চিটাগাং ড্রাই ডক লিমিটেড (সিডিডিএল) কর্তৃক ডকের অভ্যন্তরে অথবা বাহিরে উপঠিকাদার হিসেবে কাজ করার নিমিত্তে নিম্নবর্ণিত প্রতিটি ক্যাটাগরিতে ০২ বছরের জন্য নতুন তালিকাভুক্তি/তালিকাভুক্তি নবায়নের জন্য অভিজ্ঞ প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে:

শিডিউল/ ক্যাটাগরি নং	কাজের বিবরণ
১।	জাহাজের হাল, ট্যাংক, কার্গোহোল্ড, একোমোডেশন, ইঞ্জিন রুম ইত্যাদি পরিষ্কার ও রংকরণ সংক্রান্ত কাজ।
২।	জাহাজের প্রেট, পাইপ লাইন ও বিভিন্ন স্টিল স্ট্রাকচার নবায়ন কাজ; জাহাজের বিভিন্ন মেকানিক্যাল মেরামত কাজ যেমন রাডার, প্রপেলার, ভাস্ক, কুলার, পাম্প, ইঞ্জিন, ফ্রেন, ডেরিক ইত্যাদি মেরামত এবং এ সংক্রান্ত কাজ।
৩।	জাহাজের গায়ে (ভিতরে/বাহিরে) স্যান্ড ব্লাস্টিং, গ্রিট ব্লাস্টিং ও শট ব্লাস্টিং এবং সিডিডিএল এলাকায় বিভিন্ন স্টিল ম্যাটেরিয়েল যেমন প্রেট, এ্যাংগেল, চ্যানেল, পাইপ, আই-বীম ইত্যাদির স্যান্ড ব্লাস্টিং, গ্রিট ব্লাস্টিং ও শট ব্লাস্টিং সংক্রান্ত কাজ।
৪।	জাহাজের ইলেকট্রিক্যাল ও ইলেকট্রনিক্স ইকুইপমেন্ট, নেভিগেশনাল ও কমিউনিকেশন ইকুইপমেন্ট ইত্যাদির মেরামত/নবায়ন/সার্ভিসিং/টেস্টিং কাজ এবং জাহাজের ইঞ্জিন, কন্ট্রোল সিস্টেম, জেনারেটর, টার্বোচার্জার, বয়লার, বিভিন্ন মোটর ইত্যাদির মেরামত/সার্ভিসিং/ওভারহোলিং সংক্রান্ত কাজ।
৫।	জাহাজের বিভিন্ন স্ট্রাকচারের Non Destructive Test সংক্রান্ত কাজ।
৬।	স্টিল স্ট্রাকচার নির্মাণ ও এতদসংক্রান্ত পূর্ত কাজ।

২। দরপত্র শিডিউল আগামী ২০ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ হতে ১৪ মে ২০২৬ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন (সকাল ০৮:০০ থেকে বিকাল ০৩:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত) সিডিডিএল-এর অর্থ ও হিসাব বিভাগ হতে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।

৩। দরপত্র আগামী ১৭ মে ২০২৬ তারিখ রবিবার দুপুর ১১:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত মহাব্যবস্থাপক (পরিকল্পনা ও প্রাক্কলন) এর দপ্তরে রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বাজে জমা দিতে হবে। একই দিনে দুপুর ১২:১৫ ঘটিকার সময় টেন্ডার উন্মুক্ত করা হবে।

৪। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যেকোনো দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

মোহাম্মদ মাহাবুবুল আলম
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