



Israel never talked me into the war with Iran.

DONALD TRUMP
US president



A woman stands amid the debris of a destroyed building in the Haret Hreik area of Beirut's southern suburbs yesterday.

Aim is to take full control of borders

Says Lebanon president ahead of talks with Israel

AGENCIES

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun yesterday said that planned talks with Israel aim to end hostilities and the occupation in the south, despite the rejection of negotiations by Hezbollah and its supporters.

"The choice to negotiate aims to stop hostilities, end the Israeli occupation of southern regions and deploy the (Lebanese) army all the way to the internationally recognised southern borders" with Israel, Aoun said in a statement.

A 10-day ceasefire, pausing more than six weeks of war between Hezbollah and Israel, started on Friday after being announced by US President Donald Trump.

The truce in Lebanon was also one of Iran's conditions for resuming talks with Washington to extend their separate ceasefire.

Aoun's moves yesterday came after a forceful address to the nation Friday night in which he said



"we negotiate for ourselves... we are no longer a pawn in anyone's game, nor an arena for anyone's wars, and we never will be again".

Hezbollah is not part of the talks, and its supporters strongly oppose Lebanon-Israel talks. Lebanon is officially at war with Israel and has no diplomatic ties with it.

Israeli attacks killed nearly 2,300 people and forced over a million to flee their homes, Lebanese authorities said, since Hezbollah dragged the country into the Middle East war last month.

The talks came after Israel

yesterday told residents of south Lebanon to stay out of a belt of territory running the length of the border and not to approach the area of the Litani River, entrenching its grip over southern Lebanon despite a ceasefire in the war with Hezbollah.

The Israeli military posted a map on social media with a red line through 21 villages across the south, and said residents should not move into the area between it and the border, saying Israeli troops were maintaining positions in the south "in the face of ongoing terrorist activities" by the Iran-backed group.

The map named more than 50 other villages in the south to which residents should not return. The Israeli military also said it was not permitted to approach the area of the Litani River, which mostly flows to the north of the area the Israeli military said residents should stay out of.



Children wade through floodwaters following heavy rainfall in Assam's Guwahati yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh, EU eyeing FTA after partnership deal

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translated into 24 European languages before it is signed.

Officials said Bangladesh's relationship with the EU, the country's largest export destination, has been that of development cooperation under the Cooperation Agreement signed in 2001.

Since then, Bangladesh's exports to the EU have risen to around \$26 billion, while the EU is placing more importance on Bangladesh, a rapidly growing country.

The EU's duty-free market access for Bangladeshi goods will end by 2029, and Bangladesh will be required to meet certain conditions, including on labour rights, environment, and human rights.

"The PCA is a foundational agreement. We will have different joint

committees on various sectors, including trade, investment, environment, labour, etc.," said a foreign ministry official, preferring anonymity.

Against this backdrop, Bangladesh is seeking political, economic, and preferential market access and the launch of negotiations on an FTA and IPA. "We would like our exports to the EU to be protected and also ensure the protection of European investments in Bangladesh," he told The Daily Star.

Bangladesh has been part of the EU's Global Gateway Initiative, under which the country can get funding for renewable energy projects. The EU also included Bangladesh in its Talent Partnership, under which a skilled workforce can migrate to EU countries.

Altogether, the

relationship with the EU is set to be elevated, and the two sides discussed all areas of cooperation, ministry sources said.

Khalilur Rahman and Kaja Kallas yesterday discussed political, economic, and development cooperation, focusing on trade and investment, Indo-Pacific cooperation, migration, skills development, labour standards, and the Rohingya crisis.

They also said the agreement will help strengthen cooperation on regional and global issues of shared interest.

He briefed her on Bangladesh's recent democratic developments and ongoing reform and development efforts, while thanking Kallas for sending a strong election observation mission during the recent parliamentary elections.

Kallas highly appreciated Bangladesh for its very successful and credible elections.

Separately, Khalilur also met Ekaterina Zaharieva, commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation of the European Commission, in Brussels and discussed expanding Bangladesh-EU cooperation in research, science, technology, and innovation.

They highlighted the importance of artificial intelligence, digital innovation, climate resilience, green transition, health, and sustainable development.

The meeting reaffirmed a shared commitment to building a forward-looking and innovation-driven partnership.

The Bangladesh foreign minister also held a bilateral meeting with Maxime Prévot, deputy

Fuel price hike

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a question from independent MP Rumeen Farhana, saying it is important to understand why inflation is unlikely to rise significantly.

He said that compared to the global surge in fuel prices, Bangladesh's increase has been relatively moderate.

"For example, diesel has gone from Tk 100 to Tk 115 per litre. In an industrial plant, fuel accounts for about 7-8 percent of production costs. If the price of diesel rises by 15 percent, the impact on overall costs remains minimal," he explained.

He added that in the transport sector, a bus covering 200 kilometres consumes around 25-30 litres of diesel. "The extra cost of about Tk 450 for those 30 litres, when spread across 10,000 kilograms of goods in a truck, adds only a negligible burden per unit," he said.

"This means that while fuel prices have risen, the effect on inflation is not as dramatic as it may seem. The economy's fundamental balance remains intact. Like other countries, Bangladesh has adopted a moderate policy, keeping the increase modest," he added.

The minister also noted that in the United States, fuel prices vary from state to state due to local taxes. Before the war in the Middle East, many US states had fuel prices around \$2.70-\$2.80 per gallon, which later rose to over \$5.

He further said that, compared with neighbouring countries and similar economies, petroleum prices have risen more sharply elsewhere, adding that in many countries fuel prices are adjusted automatically without requiring direct government intervention.

NIRCH deputy

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police investigating, he said.

Asked whether the assault was linked to tender-related issues, he said that Ahmed is the key person for such work at the hospital and those involved in tender matters often receive threatening phone calls.

Whether yesterday's attack is connected to that will be known after the investigation, he added.

Faridul Islam, the officer-in-charge of Banani Police Station, said they have collected CCTV footage from the spot and nearby areas. Police could not yet ascertain the reason behind the attack as they have not been able to talk to the injured.

Israel kills 2 more in Gaza

UN-EU assessment says over \$71b needed over next decade to rebuild Gaza

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli strikes killed at least two Palestinians in separate incidents in the Gaza Strip yesterday, health officials said, and fighters from Hamas clashed with gunmen from an Israeli-backed militia, witnesses said.

Medics said one man was killed in an Israeli airstrike in the Bureij camp in the central area of the enclave, while another strike killed one person and wounded others in Gaza City.

The two deaths were the latest violence to overshadow the US-brokered ceasefire deal signed in October after two years of full-blown war between Israel and Hamas.

The ceasefire left Israeli troops in control of a depopulated zone that makes up well over half of Gaza, with Hamas controlling the narrow coastal strip that remains.

More than 750 Palestinians have been

killed since the ceasefire deal took effect.

Israel says it aims to thwart attacks by Hamas and other militant factions.

Also on Monday, residents and sources close to Hamas said members of an Israeli-backed militia operating in an area under Israeli control clashed with Palestinian fighters after crossing into a Hamas-run area east of Khan Younis.

More than \$71 billion will be needed over the next decade for recovery and reconstruction in war-ravaged Gaza, according to an EU-UN assessment published yesterday.

After more than two years of Israel's war in the Palestinian territory, "recovery and reconstruction needs are estimated at around \$71.4 billion", said the final Gaza Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment developed by the United Nations and the European Union, in coordination with the World Bank.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Planning

Planning Division

Improvement of Public Investment Management System (IPIMS) Project
Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

Ref No.20.00.0000.404.014.01.25(part 1).85

Date: 20 April 2026

Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI)

For Project Executive Coordinator (Public Investment Management) under
Improvement of Public Investment Management System (IPIMS) project
[Contract Package No.: IPIMS/S-3]

- The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (GOB) has received financing from the World Bank for implementing "Improvement of Public Investment Management System (IPIMS)" project under IDA credit of Strengthening Institutions for Transparency and Accountability (SITA). Planning Division of Ministry of Planning has been implementing the project and it intends to apply a part of the proceeds of this credit for the services of an Individual Consultant (National Assignment) as Project Executive Coordinator (Public Investment Management).
- The broad scope of consulting services includes providing integrated project coordination, management and technical advisory support to the IPIMS project and executing/implementing agencies to enhance planning processes and institutionalize public investment management system. S/he will also support strengthening staff and managerial capacity in the Planning Commission and across Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDA) through adequate training in various planning, appraisal, and forecast tools. S/he will compile the project progress data, identify the issues related to implementation delays and suggest recommendations. The consultant will extend support to Project Implementation Units (PIUs) and Project Coordination and Monitoring Team to monitor the overall implementation of the "Strengthening Institutions for Transparency and Accountability (SITA) Project". Additional tasks may be assigned related to the core functions and agreed by the PIU and the consultant.
- The expected date for commencement of the services is 15 May 2026 and the tentative duration of the entire assignment is about 24 (Twenty-four) man-months. Detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) and other information will be available upon request from the address provided below either through email or in person.
- Planning Division now invites eligible individuals to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested individual should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. In support of qualifications and experiences, the applicant must submit documentary evidences.
- The consultant have a Master's degree in Project Management/ M. Com/ MBA in Accounting/ Finance or in any other relevant discipline. The consultant should be familiar with GOB and World Bank's Policies/Guidelines/Directions/Regulations on project processing and implementations including recent updates. S/he will have more than 20 years' work experience in public sector development planning and managing resources (internal and development partners) for implementing development projects and programs in Bangladesh. The consultant have more than 10 years of experience in development budgeting processes (ADP/RADP) of the GOB. The consultant is preferred to have experience in the digitization of Public Investment Management system including hands on experience in using project management system such as ADP/RADP Management System (AMS), Project Processing System (/PPS), public investment management tools, preparing planning guidelines, etc. The experience in managing project in development partner-financed project(s), particularly World Bank will be considered as added advantage. The detail requirement for qualification and experience is delineated in TOR.
- During the term of the contract the consultant shall not be associated with any other Government agency, consulting firm or private business entities. Individuals who are currently working as consultants on another World Bank-financed project may also compete in this selection process, but if they are selected they will be required before signing the proposed contract to provide documentary evidence of having satisfactorily complied with their existing contract's requirements with respect to early termination of the contract by the consultant, including advance notice period, to avoid disruption in implementation of that project.
- The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to the Section III, Para 3.14.3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, February 2025 (6th edition) setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.
- A consultant will be selected following the Open Competitive Selection of Individual Consultant method set out in the World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, February 2025 (6th edition).
- Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours (09:00 AM to 04:00 PM Bangladesh Standard Time).
- REOI (e-GP ID No. 1261219) is invited in the National e-GP system Portal (eprocure.gov.bd) for the position of Project Executive Coordinator (Public Investment Management). This is an online EOI, only electronic submission of EOI will be accepted in the e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. The interested applicant may visit the website to get the details of the assignment. To submit EOI, registration in the National e-GP system Portal (eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). Interested consultants are invited to submit their EOI along with updated Curriculum Vitae (CV) demonstrating their qualifications and experience relevant to the assignment through e-GP portal (eprocure.gov.bd) by 05:00 PM (Bangladesh Standard Time), 5th May 2026.

Project Director

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