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Iran FM back in Pakistan to set out 'talks terms'

Uncertainty deepens over negotiations after Trump scraps envoys' visit, withdraws security gear

AGENCIES

Iran's foreign minister returned to Islamabad for more consultations yesterday, as international mediators tried to keep peace talks on track despite US President Donald Trump calling off his envoys' planned trip.

According to the Iranian news agency ISNA, Abbas Araghchi was to sit down with Pakistani officials to convey "Iran's positions and views on the framework of any understanding to completely end the war" in the Middle East.

The minister had already been in Islamabad only the day before, after which he travelled to Oman, while other Iranian envoys went to Tehran "to consult and obtain the necessary instructions on issues related to ending the war", according to the agency.

Before Saturday's Iran-Pakistan meetings in Islamabad, the White House had announced that Trump's peace envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner were planning to leave for Pakistan to engage in further negotiations.

But Trump later told Fox News he had scrapped the trip, saying there was no point "sitting around talking about nothing". He dismissed Tehran's negotiating position, but added that it had revised its proposal within minutes of his decision.

"They gave us a paper that should have been better and -- interestingly -- immediately when I cancelled it, within 10 minutes, we got a new paper that was much better," he told reporters, without elaborating.

Asked separately whether halting the trip meant a return to open hostilities, Trump said: "No, it doesn't mean that. We haven't thought about it yet."

Later, after a gunman was arrested at the White House Correspondents' SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

- ▶ Iran demands lifting of Hormuz blockade before any negotiations begin
- ▶ Trump said Iran's new peace offer better but still inadequate
- ▶ Israel PM says Hezbollah 'dismantling' ceasefire with Lebanon



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Lightning branches across a brooding sky, casting a bluish-white glow over the storm clouds just moments before they burst, drenching the capital with a heavy downpour for around an hour yesterday evening.

DU student found dead at home

Her teacher arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested a Dhaka University teacher after one of his students was found dead at her home in the capital's Utar Badda area early yesterday.

Munira Mahzabin MIMO, a master's student in theatre and performance studies who is suspected to have died by suicide, left a note that mentioned the SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

At least 12 killed in lightning strikes

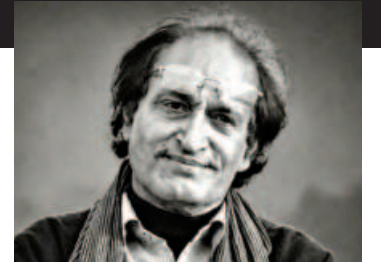
Flash floods forecast in Sylhet haors, farmers asked to harvest fast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 12 people, including a child, died and eight others were injured in lightning strikes during thunderstorms yesterday across seven districts -- Gaibandha, Bogura, Natore, Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Jamalpur, and Sirajganj.

The rainfall that accompanied the storms ended a week-long heatwave, bringing relief to many, though hailstorms damaged crops in some areas.

Meteorologists said rains may continue for about a week, lowering temperatures. "However, the heatwave could return in the second week of May," said Bazlur Rashid, senior meteorologist of Bangladesh Meteorological SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Raghu Rai (1942-2026)

Liberation War lensman passes away

STAR REPORT

Internationally acclaimed Indian photographer Raghu Rai, who photographed the Bangladesh Liberation War, died of cancer in New Delhi yesterday.

He was 83. An Instagram post from the verified account "raghurai.official" announced his death. He was born in 1942.

In 2013, Rai was conferred the "Friends of Liberation War Honour" by the Bangladesh government for his contributions to the Liberation War.

According to a report published by The Statesman in 2021, Rai was only five years into his career when the war erupted in March 1971. He was dispatched by the newspaper to document the exodus of refugees, who would eventually number around 10 million, as they streamed into West Bengal and neighbouring states to escape atrocities committed by the Pakistan Army.

He could immediately empathise with the refugees, SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



On a suspended bamboo scaffold six floors above the ground, two construction workers plaster the side of a high-rise government building. Without any safety harnesses or protective gear, the risk of a fall is serious. The photo was taken yesterday near the capital's Tejgaon Truck Stand area. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

DEVELOPMENT WORK BNP MPs irked at ministers over poor response

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

A section of ruling BNP lawmakers yesterday expressed anger at several ministers, saying they were not receiving satisfactory responses regarding development work in their constituencies.

They also said the local administration was not meeting their demands related to public interest, making it difficult for them to respond to constituents.

Lawmakers argued that the lack of response and adequate support could create frustration among MPs and the public, as constituents rely on their elected representatives for solutions.

The issue came up at a meeting of ruling party lawmakers at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday, chaired by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.

The overall power and energy situation was also discussed, including how electricity would be managed amid fuel and gas shortages.

Tarique asked lawmakers what problems they were facing in their constituencies SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

16-yr-old at centre of militant alert

Court filings show the boy had regular contact with 2 dismissed army personnel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thursday's nationwide alert for potential militant attacks on key installations came after police detected communications between several alleged Neo-JMB members, according to intelligence findings.

The intel showed that a 16-year-old boy from Habiganj Sadar upazila had been in regular contact with two dismissed army personnel.

Acting on a tip off, police raided Zia Uddin in the capital and arrested a militant suspect named Ahsan Zahir Khan on February 1. Police later detained several others, including Mohammad Daniel Islam and Md Russel alias Palash Abu Baser Al Faruk.

After arresting the teen boy in Habiganj on April 2, the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit seized his phone, uncovering "evidence" of his ties with Neo-JMB, and his presence at the clandestine meeting in Zia Uddin, court documents show.

The documents describe the boy as "an IS-ideology follower/Neo-JMB member".

According to a forwarding letter submitted before a Dhaka court on April 3, preliminary analysis of the device indicated the boy's links to a banned extremist organisation.

In his statement to investigators, the boy said he, along with other accused, gathered at the Zia Uddin to plan acts of sabotage aimed at damaging state property, inspired by Neo-JMB ideology. SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

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