



There is rightful alarm regarding China's historic military buildup and the expansion of its military activities in the region and beyond.

Pete Hegseth
US defence secretary

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The Daily Star

DHAKA SUNDAY MAY 31, 2026

REGD. No. DA 781

JAISHTHA 17, 1433 BS

www.thedailystar.net

ZILHAJJ 13, 1447 HJRI

Govt eyes \$51b reserves in FY27

Experts urge balancing job creation, investments, reserve build-up

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government expects the country's gross foreign currency reserves to hit a record \$51.4 billion by the end of next fiscal year, provided that remittance inflow is strong and interest rates high.

On September 1, 2021, strong remittance inflows and lower imports sent the country's gross foreign reserves to \$48.09 billion, which remains a record.

However, the figures are not as per the IMF's balance of payments and investment position manual (BPM6), which is followed faithfully by central banks around the world.

Gross reserves are reserve assets, which consist of gold, cash dollar, bonds, and treasury bills, reserve position in the IMF, special drawing rights holdings – which is a form of international money created by the IMF and defined as a weighted average of various convertible currencies.

The Bangladesh Bank's gross reserves computation factors in other components such as the Export Development Fund, sovereign guarantees for flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines, the below-investment-grade securities. Subsequently, the number ends up being markedly higher.

Even with that methodology, crossing the \$51 billion mark would be a tall order given the current economic situation, according to economists.

"For reserves to reach \$51 billion, remittance inflows must remain strong and ongoing discussions with development partners on budget support must progress positively. The loans need to be secured," said Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.



A near-empty Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover in the capital yesterday afternoon. With many residents leaving Dhaka to celebrate the Eid-ul-Azha holidays with their families in village homes, the city's usually congested roads, streets and alleyways have taken on a rare calm, offering an unusual glimpse of a quieter capital.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Mideast peace deal remains elusive

Iran accuses Trump of 'betraying diplomacy for the third time' as US warns it is 'more than capable' of resuming war

White House says conforming to Trump 'red lines' must for a deal

Tehran demands 'dignified framework' to end war

Israel expands ground offensive in Lebanon as fighting escalates

AGENCIES

Iran yesterday accused President Donald Trump of "betraying diplomacy for the third time" as United states warned it was "more than capable" of resuming war with Iran.

The White House had signalled Trump was close to a decision on an initial deal after weeks of mixed signals in tenuous negotiations, though Tehran denied there was a final agreement on ending the Middle East conflict that has jolted the global economy.

US sources had told AFP the deal was waiting on Trump's

sign-off, but the president had made no decision after a two-hour meeting in the White House Situation Room on Friday in Washington. He said any peace deal must adhere to his red lines, including Tehran never being able to develop nuclear weapons.

Mohsen Rezaei, an adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, yesterday said that Trump was "betraying diplomacy for the third time" by continuing a naval blockade imposed on Iran and making what he described as excessive demands in negotiations.

Meanwhile, Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth, while attending

a major Asia defence summit in Singapore, said that Washington could restart the war if it wanted.

"Our ability to recommence if necessary is (that) we are more than capable, our stockpiles are more than suited for that, both there and around the globe because of how we balance exquisite and more plentiful munitions," he said yesterday.

That echoed the US Central Command (CENTCOM), which posted on X that American forces "remain present and vigilant across the region."

The efforts to strike a deal

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Stand beside the helpless

Tarique urges BNP leaders, activists

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday urged the BNP leaders and activists to stand by the helpless people of the country.

"Today [yesterday] is the 45th martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman. Those of you who have been associated with the party for a long time know that since the martyrdom of Shaheed Zia, we have tried to stand by the helpless people on this day," he said.

"I appeal to you, not only on behalf of the party but also on your personal initiative, to stand by the helpless people as much as you can. This is the lesson of Shaheed Zia," said the prime minister.

He made these remarks at an event after distributing clothes and dry food items among the poor and destitute on the occasion of the martyrdom anniversary of BNP founder and former president Ziaur Rahman at the party's central office in Naya Paltan.

Tarique said, "Let us take this oath that we will try from our respective positions so that we can extend our helping hands to the helpless people according to our ability... Let this be our expectation on this day, let this be our success."

Earlier, while speaking at a function at Jod Pukur

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8 more die with measles-like symptoms

Death toll now 583

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight more children died of measles-like symptoms across the country in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, taking the total death toll to 583.

Of the deaths recorded since March 15, 90 were confirmed measles deaths while 493 died with measles-like symptoms, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the eight new deaths, three were recorded in Dhaka division, two each in Sylhet and Mymensingh divisions, and one in Chattogram division.

During the same period, 1,033 suspected measles cases were recorded, taking the total number of suspected cases to 69,612.

A total of 53 confirmed cases were recorded in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of confirmed cases to 8,996, DGHS data showed.

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A girl hugs her father at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka yesterday morning after he returned home on a Hajj flight. Families waited at the airport to receive pilgrims as the first batch arrived after performing Hajj in Saudi Arabia.

PHOTO: STAR

BGB-BSF TALKS Border killings, irregular migrants to top the agenda

PORIMOL PALMA

Border killings, push-ins, and repatriation of irregular migrants are expected to top the agenda at the director general-level meeting between the border forces of Bangladesh and India on June 8-11, according to diplomatic sources in Dhaka and New Delhi.

Border Guard Bangladesh Director General Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui will lead the Bangladesh delegation, while Border Security Force Director General Praveen Kumar will lead the Indian side at the meeting scheduled in New Delhi.

The DG-level meeting is held twice a year, alternately in Delhi and Dhaka. The last such meeting was held in Dhaka on August 25-28 last year.

"This meeting discusses all aspects of border management, but border killings and irregular migrants will top the agenda," a BGB official said.

This will be the first border talks after Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman's visit to India on April 7-9 following the formation of the new BNP-led government.

As the relationship between the two countries has begun warming up after the February 2026 election, Dhaka and Delhi are also scheduling meetings on commerce, shipping, consular affairs, the Joint River Commission, etc.

The so-called irregular Bangladeshi migrants became an issue in the run-up to elections in West Bengal and Assam.

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