

LEBANON STRIKES
Trump
‘vents anger’
in call with
Netanyahu

AGENCIES

Donald Trump's telephone call Monday with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu became quite heated as the US president pressed the Israeli leader to scale back plans for military operations in Lebanon, according to two people familiar with the conversation.

Trump at points used “expletives” to convey his disapproval of the planned offensive, which threatened to upend his efforts to broker a preliminary agreement with Iran.

At one point, the president reminded Netanyahu of how he'd supported him in the past and warned him that bombing Lebanon could isolate Israel further, the sources said.

The White House didn't comment on the acrimonious tone of the call, which was reported by Axios.



President warned Netanyahu Lebanon strikes risk isolating Israel

Trump wrote on Truth Social after speaking with Netanyahu that it was a “productive” call, and he claimed Israel and Hezbollah would stop attacking each other. He said Israeli troops would not move on Beirut.

Netanyahu said in his own statement that the Israeli military would keep striking southern Lebanon “as planned.”

Lebanon has become front and centre because Iran threatened to halt peace negotiations if Israel were to press into Beirut.

That was the impetus for the US president personally getting involved.

What he saw was a threat to what he is trying to accomplish, and that is a ceasefire and peace deal, an agreement to limit Iran's nuclear programme and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. That is the primary goal of the US president.

So, as a result, with Iran making threats to halt negotiations – that Donald Trump, by the way, says are moving along rapidly – this was something that was of grave concern.



Smoke rises from southern Lebanon after Israeli strikes, seen from Nabatieh, yesterday. Israel warned it may hit Hezbollah strongholds in Beirut if attacks on northern towns continue.

PHOTO: REUTERS

22 killed as Russian strikes rock Ukraine
Dozens injured in drone, missile barrage; Kyiv apartment buildings damaged

AGENCIES

Russia pummelled Ukraine with hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles early yesterday, killing at least 22 people, after having threatened a large-scale attack and warning foreign citizens to leave Kyiv.

Authorities in the Ukrainian capital had been sounding the alarm that Russia was preparing another massive barrage, the latest in a string of deadly strikes that have escalated the four-year war and dented already slim hopes for peace.

AFP journalists in the capital heard air raid sirens wailing over the city before a series of loud explosions that lasted throughout the night sent residents with bags and blankets rushing to shelter in crowded metro stations.

Ukraine's foreign minister said the latest Russian attack was a sign of Russian desperation, that

» **Ukraine warned of major attack; thousands take shelter**

» **Overnight strike was a response to Kyiv's 'terrorist acts': Russia**



President Vladimir Putin was bombing civilians since his forces were struggling on the battlefield.

“Putin is a war criminal and loser who has no cards except terror. Moscow is losing on the battlefield. No number of missiles can change this,” Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga said in a statement on social media.

The Russian Defence Ministry said yesterday that its massive overnight strike on Ukraine was a response to what it called “terrorist acts” against targets inside Russia and said it had struck a range of Ukrainian military targets, reports Reuters.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said the latest attack showed Europe needed to develop its own air defence systems and that support from the United States

remained crucial.

“Europe needs its own anti-ballistic defence so that this war can finally be brought to an end. And assistance from the United States in supplying missiles for Patriot systems is absolutely necessary,” Zelensky wrote on social media.

His Prime Minister, Yulia Svyrydenko, meanwhile said that “every delay” in supporting Ukraine's air defence system “costs lives”. The Ukrainian air force said Russia had launched 73 missiles and 656 drones, adding it had downed 602 of the drones and 40 of the missiles.

Moscow has bombarded Ukraine almost daily since launching its invasion in February 2022.

Nepal ruling party chief, not new PM, visits India

AFP, New Delhi

Nepal's ruling party chief called for closer economic and strategic cooperation with India yesterday, on the first high-level visit since deadly 2025 anti-corruption youth protests toppled the previous government.

But this trip to a key ally was not by Nepal's new prime minister – 36-year-old rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah.

Shah has shunned meetings with several foreign envoys to Nepal and, according to his aides, has said he will not travel abroad for his first year in power to focus on the many domestic challenges, not least the ailing economy.

The first visit to key ally India instead was made by Rabi Lamichhane, a former deputy prime minister and interior minister, who is president of the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP).

It won a landslide victory in March parliamentary elections, led by Shah. Former television host Lamichhane retains a pivotal role in power, and the lawmaker is expected to meet Indian PM Narendra Modi, RSP spokesman Manish Jha told AFP.

Nepal must ensure a delicate diplomatic balance between its two neighbours, India and China.

US ARREARS
UN agency blocks Trump official's appointment

AFP, Geneva

The International Labour Organization, the UN's labour agency, has scrapped the appointment of Trump administration official Sheng Li as its deputy director-general over Washington's failure to pay its dues.

The agency's director-general Gilbert Hounghbo “has decided to rescind the appointment of the deputy director general, considering continued delays in the payment of arrears”, the ILO said in a statement.

“Mr Sheng Li (United States of America) will therefore not assume the position of deputy director-general in July as previously foreseen.”

Li is a high-level official at the US Department of Labor. His appointment to the Geneva-based ILO was announced in April.

As of June 1, the United States had accumulated arrears of more than 173 million Swiss francs (\$220 million) in ILO membership contributions for the past two years, according to data on the agency's website. Washington must also pay its 2026 dues, amounting to nearly 84 million Swiss francs.

The United States is not the only country behind on its payments to the ILO.

The decision to drop Li “is without prejudice to the possibility of the United States settling its arrears and thereby regaining its position as the largest contributor in assessed contributions.

EU reaches deal on ‘return hubs’ migration reform
Rights groups criticise new measures

AFP, Brussels

The EU reached a deal Monday on a new tightening of migration rules allowing for so-called “return hubs” to be set up outside the bloc, as countries seek to boost deportations.

European lawmakers and countries struck a provisional compromise on the reform, which was launched in response to political pressure to curb migration – paving the way for its final approval.

“Today's agreement shows that we are bringing our European house in order,” said Magnus Brunner, the European Union's commissioner for migration. “With the new rules, we have more control over who can come to the EU, who can stay and who needs to leave.”

Criticised by rights groups, the new measures will notably allow nations to open centres outside the EU's borders to which migrants whose asylum applications have been rejected could be sent.

They also establish a strict obligation for migrants subject to expulsion to leave and cooperate with authorities, envisaging harsher penalties, including detention, for those who refuse to do so.

“This deal will give governments much broader powers to detain and deport people,” said Marta Welerder of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), an NGO. “It looks set to normalise immigration raids, expand the use of detention in prison-like facilities outside EU territory ... where they could face persecution, torture or worse.”



‘Don’t let it out’

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party's drubbing in the West Bengal assembly election.

Speaking at a protest programme in Kolkata's Dharmatala area, Mamata said West Bengal Police's Special Task Force had arrested suspects who had entered the state through the Meghalaya border after a murder in Bangladesh that had triggered widespread protests.

Without naming the case, she said, “A major killer from Bangladesh was arrested by our STF. There were massive protests in Bangladesh over the incident. I have no right to comment on another country's internal affairs, but I can say that the accused entered West Bengal through the Meghalaya border and were arrested by our STF. It was a credit to the police.”

According to a video posted by BBC, Mamata claimed that after the

arrests, Amit Shah personally called her and requested that the matter not be made public.

“He told me to instruct the state police not to let it go outside because it concerned the country.”

Addressing Shah, Mamata asked, “Who had the murder carried out? Whose names came up? Even though the government has changed, I know everything. My heart is a repository of information.

“I have kept mum for so long. But now the oppression has crossed all limits, forcing me to speak out. I don't want to reveal the names because Bangladesh would be thrown into turmoil. I love Bangladesh. For the sake of the country, I will not name them.”

The Daily Star has emailed the office of Indian Home Minister Amit Shah and Indian High Commission in Dhaka last night and awaits response.

‘Wife’s default loan is no bar to Khurshid’s appointment’

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is a director of Agrocrop Limited and holds a 16 percent stake in the company – which has loans totalling Tk 3.56 crore from First Security Islami Bank and Meghna Bank, of which Tk 2.79 crore is classified.

Under the Bank Company Act (Amendment) 2023, a loan defaulter from serving as a bank director. BB regulations also bar wilful defaulters from serving as directors for five years even after they are removed from the default list.

However, central bank officials said, if an individual is a guarantor to a spouse's classified loan, that person would not be eligible to serve as a director.

The Daily Star could not know whether Alam is a guarantor to his wife's loans.

On May 24, BB appointed Alam, a former deputy governor, as chairman of Islami Bank, hours after the previous chairman resigned and a day before the country entered a nearly week-long

Eid holiday.

The appointment sparked debate in the banking sector. Many alleged that Alam's role was controversial during the tenure of the Awami League government, when S Alam, a Chattogram-based businessman, took control of several Shariah-based banks and was involved in loan irregularities.

However, Supreme Court lawyer Ashraful Hadi said a person seeking to become a bank director must declare that no loans taken by the person or their allied concerns from any bank or financial institution have become classified.

“The question is how Bangladesh Bank can approve the appointment of a person as an independent director and board chairman when his wife is a loan defaulter. If this is allowed, spouses or family members of loan defaulters can become directors of banks and financial institutions.

“Even from a moral standpoint, family members of loan defaulters should not be allowed to sit

on the board of a financial institution.”

As the regulator, Bangladesh Bank has a legal and moral responsibility to oversee such matters, he said.

“Moreover, if the independent director is a former employee of Bangladesh Bank, one should examine whether there is any potential conflict of interest, directly or indirectly. The ethical responsibility of Bangladesh Bank is very high.”

PROTESTS CONTINUE

Members of the Islami Bank Conscious Customers' Forum continued their sit-in programme for a second consecutive day yesterday in Dilkusha, Motijheel, demanding the resignation of the newly appointed Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC chairman and the implementation of their seven-point demands.

At a press conference held in front of the bank's headquarters at noon, forum leaders formally announced the demands, which were presented by the forum's convener, Nur-un-Nabi.

The demands include the resignation of Khurshid; the reinstatement of Omar Faruk Khan as managing director of Islami Bank; and the removal of all individuals allegedly involved in financial irregularities from the bank's board.

They also include the repeal of Section 18A of the Bank Resolution Act; the recovery of funds allegedly siphoned off through the sale of assets and ownership stakes held by S Alam Group within the country; measures to ensure that S Alam Group cannot regain influence over Islami Bank or any other bank; and bringing those responsible for looting banks, including Islami Bank, to justice and ensuring exemplary punishment.

At the press conference, forum leaders also strongly criticised comments made by Bangladesh Bank spokesperson Arief.

Speaking to journalists on Monday, he said members of a certain political party were attempting to create

instability surrounding Islami Bank and that Bangladesh Bank's decisions would not be changed through street protests.

Yesterday morning, protesters launched a demonstration, a day after the Shariah-based bank witnessed protests, police action, and internal disorder.

Under the banner of the Islami Bank Conscious Customers' Forum, they began demonstrating at around 9:30am in front of the bank's headquarters in Dhaka.

They opposed a virtual board meeting held on Monday night, during which the board accepted the resignation of former Managing Director Omar Faruk Khan.

They also criticised the board's recent decisions and demanded sweeping changes to its leadership.

The protesters also demanded the resignation of all board members of Islami Bank, the country's largest Shariah-based lender.

Earlier on Monday, Islami Bank witnessed

chaos throughout the day as a section of customers protested against recent changes in the bank's top leadership.

Police used sound grenades and water cannons in Motijheel to disperse hundreds of protesters under the banner of the Conscious Customers' Forum, who demanded that Bangladesh Bank cancel the appointment of Islami Bank's new chairman and reinstate the recently resigned managing director. The clashes left many injured.

On August 6, 2024, Alam was among the top central bank officials forced out by protesters following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government.

The appointment has since sparked controversy in the banking sector and triggered protests by a section of customers.

The protests disrupted Monday's scheduled board meeting, but the bank later obtained approval from the central bank and held the meeting virtually at night, with Alam presiding.