RUSSIAN ATTACKS

Nine killed across Ukraine

Historic monastery ablaze; 30 hurt; power cut in several areas of Kyiv

REUTERS

Four people were killed while the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra monastery, a symbol of Ukrainian spiritual and cultural history, caught fire, in the heaviest Russian air attack on the Ukrainian capital in two weeks, authorities said yesterday.

The fresh strikes came after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday he had spoken to US President Donald Trump and discussed efforts to achieve an end to the more than four-year conflict, ahead of a G7 meeting in France this week.

The central Kyiv Pechersk Lavra monastery, a Unesco World Heritage site founded in 1051, was seriously damaged in a direct attack, Tymur

Tkachenko, the head of the capital's military administration, said in a Telegram post.

"A Russian strike on the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra set the Dormition Cathedral on fire – a church whose history dates back to the 11th century. And this is one of Russia's most serious crimes against Christian culture to date," Zelensky said on X.

As towering flames rose over the monastery, residents took shelter underground in the worst Russian attack on Ukraine since early June when drones and missiles killed more than 20 people and left over 100 wounded.

Drones and missiles struck several high-rise apartment buildings and damaged electricity lines, leaving some 140,000 residents without power, according to Kyiv authorities. Authorities later said power had been restored to most residents.

Ukraine's military yesterday morning said Russia had launched 70 missiles and 611 drones on Ukraine overnight and its air defense shot down 50 missiles and 582 drones of various types.

A man holds an Iranian flag in Tehran yesterday, after US and Iranian officials announced a deal to end their war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Trump edges toward Iran war exit, risks remain

Unresolved issues in 'memorandum of understanding' threaten broader talks within 60 days

REUTERS, *Washington*

With a framework agreement for peace with Iran, US President Donald Trump may have found a way to exit an unpopular war while easing global energy prices. Yet the deal falls short of many of his original goals, exposing him to criticism from party hawks and leaving the US strategically weaker than before the conflict.

Three months after launching attacks on Iran, Trump approved a "memorandum of understanding" marking the most significant breakthrough in talks. Iran agreed to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, potentially lowering US gasoline prices. The Pakistani-mediated deal, however, requires US concessions, including deferring talks on Iran's nuclear program — Trump's stated war objective.

Pressure to end the war has mounted as casualties rise, economic costs grow, and Trump's approval ratings drop ahead of midterm elections. The deal faces resistance from Washington hawks who warn of excessive concessions. Trump hailed the accord on social media, while Iran confirmed it, though both sides offered conflicting interpretations. The framework extends the ceasefire for 60 days to allow detailed negotiations.

Analysts warn the US may appear weakened, while Iran, though battered, retains leverage by controlling vital energy supplies. Despite heavy strikes, Iran's government remains intact and more hardline, with its missile program and regional proxies still active. The MOU also leaves unresolved the fate of Iran's uranium stockpile, with vague commitments to dilute or destroy it.

Critics argue diplomacy could have achieved similar results without war. The deal's durability

- **US may exit war weaker, more precarious than before**
- **Despite losses, Iran retains leverage over vital oil waterway**

compared to the 2015 Obama accord remains uncertain. US officials insist sanctions relief will be gradual, while Iran expects upfront concessions, raising fears Trump may face accusations of funding Iran's ambitions.

The war has killed thousands, drained US resources, and strained alliances. Israel, Trump's wartime partner, refuses to join the MOU, while Gulf allies remain wary of Iran's arsenal. Though Trump touts Iran's pledge never to build a nuclear weapon, Tehran had long maintained such a stance under religious decree.

Ultimately, the preliminary deal may avert further conflict but leaves unresolved issues, persistent threats, and questions about whether the US gained more than it lost.

Several Republicans took to social media to hail Trump as the "deal-maker in chief". Congressman Robert Aderholt echoed Trump's claims that a pending deal with Iran would place more limits on Tehran's nuclear programme than the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

That deal, from which Trump withdrew in 2018, was reached under the administration of US President Barack Obama. It saw Tehran curtail its nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief. Tehran has for years maintained that it does not seek a nuclear weapon.

"Unlike the agreement reached under the Obama administration, this deal will not allow Iran to continue enriching uranium and build up the components necessary to build a nuclear weapon," Aderholt said.

US Vice President JD Vance pointed to falling oil prices in the immediate aftermath of the announcement as he touted what a "new era" for the Middle East.

Ghalibaf seen as public face of post-Khamenei Iran

AFP, *Paris*

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf has stepped into the spotlight as a central figure in the Islamic Republic's leadership following the death of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei during the US-Israeli war. A veteran of Iran's establishment for three decades, the 64-year-old former Revolutionary Guards commander and Tehran mayor has become the public face of both Iran's war effort and its diplomacy.

Ghalibaf led high-stakes negotiations that produced yesterday's agreement to halt hostilities, after surviving weeks of attacks that killed Khamenei, senior official Ali Larijani, and others. His first major public appearance came in April, when he headed Iran's delegation in Islamabad for talks with US Vice President JD Vance — the highest-level contact between the two nations since 1979. Images circulated by Iranian embassies showed him animated at the table, overshadowing Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

Analysts say Ghalibaf's prominence reflects both his ambition and Iran's uncertain leadership transition.

Dhaka summons

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Office said he has not spoken to media since his return and might address the issue at the government's regular press briefing today.

Zahed returned to Bangladesh yesterday, a day after the incident at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, where he was kept waiting for over two hours by Indian immigration authorities after landing around 3:30pm.

He returned via Colombo as there were no direct flights to Dhaka at the time, sources said.

Speaking to reporters at the ministry, Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman described the incident as "unexpected and regrettable".

"The foreign ministry is taking appropriate measures in this regard," he said, without elaborating.

Zahed had travelled to India to attend the 28th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), scheduled for June 15-16 in New Delhi. It is being organised by India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

The CSO is the second-highest decision-making body of IORA and serves as the organisation's principal coordinating mechanism.

The Bangladesh foreign ministry had informed India's MEA of his visit through a note verbale.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Riaz Hamidullah also informed MEA officials of the adviser's visit. On Sunday, he had gone to the airport to receive Zahed.

Responding to a question, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam said they do not expect such incidents and this one was "certainly unwelcoming".

"Our ministry is looking into the matter and communicating with India. We will certainly take action, if required, once the full details are known."

She added that the ministry was first trying to determine exactly what had happened at the airport and would then take whatever steps were necessary.

The developments come at a time when Bangladesh and India have been trying to improve ties that soured after the fall of the Awami League government in August 2024.

Both countries had imposed trade restrictions that affected businesses, while Indian missions in Bangladesh reduced the issuance of visas.

After the February 2026 election, top Indian officials attended the swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected BNP government. Bangladesh subsequently resumed issuing all categories of visas to Indian nationals.

However, recent attempts by Indian authorities to push people into Bangladesh since the Bharatiya Janata Party assumed power in West Bengal and Assam have emerged as a new irritant in the bilateral relations.

Border Guard Bangladesh has so far thwarted about 40 push-in attempts since early June this year.

Foreign policy analysts say the attempts to push people into Bangladesh could undermine efforts to improve relations between the two countries.

Contacted by The Daily Star, a former Bangladeshi diplomat, requesting anonymity, said the push-in attempts and the reported treatment of the prime minister's adviser at immigration "are not helpful".

"During the interim government's tenure, some top officials made odd comments about India, but the current government seems measured in this regard. However, the relationship is still not improving.

"Dr Zahed was travelling for an official event, and the Bangladesh government sent a diplomatic note. Such an incident should not have occurred. I guess India is trying to keep Bangladesh under pressure."

Foreign policy analyst Shahed Akhtar, also former Bangladeshi ambassador to Spain, Thailand and Cambodia, said it was important to focus on the broader objectives of the bilateral relationship and that both countries should proceed accordingly in their national interests.

"There may be some irritants in relations between neighbouring countries. We should address those issues case by case so that they do not affect the overall relationship."

BSF takes back

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away. I cannot say what the outcome of their investigation was," he added.

Local sources said the 12 people were pushed towards Bangladesh through the Pragpur border in the early hours of Friday and later reached Hasib Market inside Bangladeshi territory. After being informed, BGB personnel and locals sent them back to no-man's-land.

In Chuadanga, the BSF yesterday took back 11 people who had been stranded in no-man's-land along the Darshana border for a day, said Lieutenant Colonel Nazmul Hasan, commanding officer of BGB-6 Battalion.

The BSF had gathered the group on the Indian side near Main Pillar No. 77, adjacent to the Darshana International Check Post, early Sunday in an attempt to send them into Bangladesh.

After receiving information, BGB personnel, accompanied by locals, took position in the area, foiling the attempt.

In Joypurhat, the BSF on Sunday night took back an elderly man who had been stranded in no-man's-land along the Hatkhola border in Pachbibi upazila throughout the day, reports Prothom Alo.

Earlier that morning, BSF members attempted to push the man, aged between 70 and 75, into Bangladesh through the border, but the attempt was thwarted by BGB personnel and locals, leaving him stranded there.

Around 9:00pm on Sunday, BSF members took the man back from no-man's-land, Prothom Alo reported, quoting locals and BGB sources.

[Our Correspondents from Kushtia and Benapole contributed to the report]

Budget unlikely to yield real benefits: CPD

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a progressive policy framework paired with such a weak fiscal foundation," said Debapriya Bhattacharya, convenor of the platform and Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

He questioned the realism of the macroeconomic assumptions underpinning the budget. "It appears weak, inattentive and lacking professionalism."

The analysis highlighted persistent structural pressures in the economy, noting that growth remains insufficiently inclusive. It pointed to the combined impact of slowing output, elevated inflation, and stagnant real incomes, all of which continue to erode household welfare.

Bangladesh's economic growth has slowed to just above 4 percent in the current fiscal year, while inflation remains close to double digits, it said, adding the wage growth has lagged behind price hikes, resulting in continued loss of purchasing power for workers.

Food inflation remains particularly high, disproportionately affecting lower-income households that spend most of their income on essential goods. The Citizens' Platform noted that this imbalance is deepening inequality pressures even during periods of moderate growth.

Domestic savings have also declined significantly over recent years, reducing the economy's capacity for investment-led expansion. The report warned that weaker savings combined with subdued investment will ultimately constrain job creation.

"The poor are squeezed twice -- first through falling real wages and then through reduced future employment opportunities," the analysis observed.

The platform also raised concerns over weakening performance in labour-intensive sectors. Manufacturing growth has slowed sharply, while export earnings from the ready-made garments sector have declined in recent months.

Given the sector's dominant role in export earnings and female employment, any prolonged slowdown could have significant social and labour market implications, it added.

Agriculture, micro, small and medium enterprises, and informal services continue to absorb large portions of the workforce, it said, adding that these sectors are not generating sufficient productivity gains or quality employment opportunities to drive sustained upward mobility.

On the fiscal side, the analysis said, the budget sets ambitious targets for revenue mobilisation, expenditure expansion and deficit management. It aims to raise the tax-to-GDP ratio to just above 10 percent while increasing public spending to nearly 14 percent of GDP, keeping the deficit at a manageable level.

However, the Citizens' Platform questioned the feasibility of these targets, particularly given past shortfalls in revenue collection. It noted that achieving the projected revenue growth would require a sharp improvement in tax performance from an already weakened base.

A key concern raised was the heavy reliance on indirect taxation. Value-added tax (VAT), customs duties and supplementary duties constitute a major share of expected revenue growth. "Since indirect taxes are not income-sensitive, this structure risks placing a disproportionate burden on lower- and middle-income households."

Although the tax-free income threshold has been slightly raised, the platform noted that certain income groups face higher marginal tax rates, potentially offsetting some of the intended relief.

The analysis also warned that higher import-stage taxes on fuel, construction materials and consumer goods could gradually raise living costs across multiple sectors.

The budget increases social protection allocations and expands digital payment systems covering millions of beneficiaries, it said. However, the Citizens' Platform said more than half of total social protection spending remains allocated to non-targeted categories, including public service pensions.

"As a result, the effectiveness of social assistance in reaching the most vulnerable groups remains limited."

The analysis further argued that the overall allocation still falls short of the adequacy standards outlined in national social security strategies.

Significant gaps persist, particularly for informal workers, urban poor populations and groups such as climate-affected communities and marginalised social minorities. The absence of unemployment protection and a dedicated urban safety net remains a key policy gap.

Several development experts and civil society representatives echoed concerns about implementation challenges across key sectors.

Faiyazuddin Ahmed of WaterAid Bangladesh said the budget does not provide a clear roadmap for ensuring universal access to safe drinking water, despite its legal recognition as a basic right.

He noted the absence of a comprehensive investment strategy to support equitable water provision.

From the education sector, Zarin Mahmud Hossain of CholPori questioned whether digital learning initiatives can succeed without adequate teacher training and infrastructure.

"Many schools already possess equipment that remains underutilised due to connectivity and capacity gaps."

Tajin Hossain of Educo Bangladesh highlighted the continued invisibility of children in the budget framework. With millions of working-age children outside formal schooling systems, she said the lack of targeted interventions remains a serious concern.

Energy expert Ijaz Hossain, former professor at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), criticised the continued reliance on large project-based approaches in the power sector and questioned the efficiency of existing subsidy structures.

Farah Kabir of ActionAid Bangladesh called for stronger gender-responsive budgeting, particularly for women in informal employment.

Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director at Ganashakkorota Ovijan welcomed the move to increase the allocation in education spending but stressed the need for stronger implementation and support services for disadvantaged students.

Besides, she said, the washing and hygiene facilities for the students should get priority. "The government should initiate a PPP model to provide hygiene products to schools in villages for free of cost."

Debapriya Bhattacharya said the broader economic strategy outlined in the budget -- centered on stabilisation, reform and recovery -- must ultimately be assessed from the perspective of vulnerable citizens.

He said that stabilisation efforts depend heavily on inflation control, fiscal balancing, debt management and food security. However, sustainable recovery, he argued, will require deeper structural reforms that go beyond short-term fiscal adjustments.

Ad-din refutes

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has formed an expert committee to take corrective measures in the hospital's infrastructure and some measures have already been implemented.

Replying to a question, he said that they did not get any assurance that their licence would be reinstated once they complete the necessary corrections.

"We hope the government will reinstate our licence soon once we fill the gaps."

When a correspondent asked whether the corrective measures is enough when the DGHS probe committee found the entire hospital not usable, he said their expert committee will verify it and will inform the government.

Replying to another question, he said they were not involved with a petition filed with the High Court challenging the DGHS licence cancellation.

Advocate Md Eunus Ali Akond yesterday filed a petition with the HC as a public interest litigation seeking a stay on the government's decision to cancel the licence of Ad-din Medical College Hospital.

He challenged the legality of the Medical Practice and Private Clinics and Laboratories (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982, under which the government revoked the hospital's licence.

Citing the petition, Akond told The Daily Star that the ordinance is illegal because it was promulgated during martial law, the legal basis of which was later struck down by the Supreme Court.

The ordinance contains no provision allowing the cancellation of a hospital's licence.

The HC is scheduled to hear the petition on Sunday, Akond said.

Meanwhile, in a press statement yesterday, the Bangladesh Hospital, Clinic and Diagnostic Association said revoking the licence of a hospital that has been providing services for a long time "is not the best solution".

The association called for allowing Ad-din to resume services on condition that it takes the necessary corrective measures.

Meanwhile, talking to journalists earlier yesterday, Sardar said they have taken the tough decision to close the hospital "due to inhumane service".

However, the medical college attached to the hospital has not been closed and students will be able to practice in other hospitals, he added.