

Bangladesh says US buyers halting orders

DHAKA: (News Desk) US buyers have begun halting orders from Bangladesh, the world's second-biggest garment manufacturer, after punishing US tariffs, leaders of the South Asian nation's critical industry warned on Monday.

Textile and garment production accounts for about 80 percent of exports in Bangladesh and the industry has been rebuilding after it was hit hard in a student-led revolution that toppled the government last year. US President Donald Trump hit Bangladesh with punishing new tariffs of 37pc on Wednesday, hiking duties from the previous 16pc on cotton products. Mohammad Mushfiqur Rahman, managing director of Essensor Footwear and Leather Products, said he received a letter from one of his buyers requesting a shipment halt.

UN peacekeeping: Pakistan urges integration of advanced technologies to boost effectiveness

Washington(News Desk) As ceasefires grow more fragile and conflicts more unpredictable, Pakistan has called for making use of the rapidly expanding array of new technologies to make its peacekeeping missions "more effective."Advances in sensing technologies can dramatically enhance ceasefire monitoring at lower costs," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan of the United Nations, told the UN Security Council on Monday.Speaking at a Council's briefing on the Heads of Military Component (HOMC) of the UN Peacekeeping, he emphasised that advances in sensing technology including drones and satellite imagery can significantly enhance monitoring capabilities by providing real-time, comprehensive situational awareness.Noting that the core original function of peacekeeping — monitoring and observing ceasefires — has endured, Ambassador Asim said that the first two missions the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) and the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) were established with this purpose and continue to hold relevance till this day.

US, Iran to begin direct talks over nuclear plan on April 12

WASHINGTON: (News Desk) President Donald Trump said on Monday that the United States and Iran were beginning direct talks on Tehran's nuclear programme, a surprise announcement after Iranian officials had appeared to rebuff US calls for such negotiations.

Iran had pushed back against Trump's demands that it directly negotiate over its nuclear programme or be bombed, though it had initially left the door open to indirect discussions.

"We're having direct talks with Iran, and they've started. It'll go on Saturday (April 12). We have a very big meeting, and we'll see what can happen," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office during talks with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"And I think everybody agrees that doing a deal would be preferable," Trump said. He declined to say where the talks would take place.

Warnings by Trump of military action against Iran had jangled already tense nerves across the Middle East. Trump has said he would prefer a deal over Iran's nuclear programme to a military confrontation and he said on March 7 he had written to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to suggest talks. Iranian officials said at the time that Tehran would not be bullied into negotiations.

During his 2017-2021 term, Trump withdrew the US from a 2015 deal between Iran and world powers designed to curb Iran's sensitive nuclear work in exchange for sanctions relief. Trump also reimposed sweeping US sanctions. Although Iran has rejected US President Donald Trump's demand for direct talks, it wants to continue indirect negotiations through Oman, a long-time channel for messages between the rival states, said the official.

"Indirect talks offer a chance to evaluate Washington's seriousness about a political solution with Iran," said the official. Although that path could be "rocky", such talks could begin soon if US messaging supported it, the official said.Since then, Iran has far surpassed that deal's limits on uranium enrichment.

Western powers accuse Iran of having a clandestine agenda to develop nuclear weapons capability by enriching uranium to a high level of fissile purity, above what they say is justifiable for a civilian atomic energy programme.

Tehran says its nuclear programme is wholly for civilian energy purposes.Like US presidents before him, Trump has said that Iran cannot be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon.He told reporters that Saturday's talks with Iran would be at a very high level and he held out the possibility that a deal could be reached. "We have a very big meeting on Saturday and we're dealing with them directly," Trump said.The White House National Security Council did not immediately respond to a request for details.



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a house, in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip April 7, 2025

Israel's onslaught in Gaza killed 211 journalists: media office

Gaza(News Desk) Gaza's Government Media Office said that Israel's onslaught in Gaza has killed 211 journalists, urging global support for Palestinian journalists following Israel's deadly raid on a media tent, Al Jazeera reports. Ahmed Mansour, who died from severe burns sustained in the attack, is the 211th media worker killed during Israel's incursion

in Gaza, according to the office."We call on the International Federation of Journalists, the Federation of Arab Journalists, and all journalistic bodies in all countries of the world to condemn these systematic crimes against Palestinian journalists and media professionals in the Gaza Strip," the office said. 'It needs to be flat': Israeli soldiers recount orders to

raze parts of GazaBreaking the Silence, an Israeli veterans' organisation that opposes Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, has published a collection of testimonies from soldiers involved in creating a "buffer zone" in Gaza, Al Jazeera reports. The anonymous testimonies, compiled in a publication titled The Perimeter, describe how soldiers

were instructed to raze large areas of Gaza and fire upon Palestinians who approached."Residential buildings, greenhouses, sheds, factories; you name it — it needs to be flat. That's the order," said one sergeant major who fought near Khan Younis.Another sergeant stationed in northern Gaza, described how Israeli bulldozers destroyed agricultural fields.

China vows to fight back 'blackmail' in response to Trump's further tariffs hike threat

Hongkong(News Desk) China vowed on Tuesday to "fight to the end" against fresh tariffs of 50 per cent threatened by US President Donald Trump, further aggravating a trade war that has already wiped trillions off global markets. Trump has upended the world economy with sweeping tariffs that have raised the spectre of an international recession, but

has ruled out any pause in his aggressive trade policy despite a dramatic market sell-off. Beijing — Washington's major economic rival but also a key trading partner — responded by announcing its own 34pc duties on US goods to come into effect on Thursday, deepening a showdown between the world's two largest economies.

The swift retaliation from China sparked a fresh warning from Trump that he would impose additional levies if Beijing refused to stop pushing back against his barrage of tariffs — a move that would drive the overall levies on Chinese goods to 104 per cent. "I have great respect for China but they can not do this," Trump said in

the White House."We are going to have one shot at this... I'll tell you what, it is an honour to do it." China swiftly hit back, blasting what it called "blackmailing" by the US and saying it would "never accept" those tariffs."If the US insists on going its own way, China will fight it to the end," a spokesperson for Beijing's commerce ministry said on Tuesday.



US President Donald Trump speaks as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu waves following a meeting in the White House, in Washington, US on April 7, 2025.

Trump, Netanyahu say Israel working on fresh Gaza hostage deal

Washington(News Desk) US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday that new negotiations were in the works aimed at getting more hostages released from Hamas captivity in Gaza. "We're working now on another deal that we hope

will succeed, and we're committed to getting all the hostages out," Netanyahu told reporters in the Oval Office. Trump, for his part, said: "We are trying very hard to get the hostages out. We're looking at another ceasefire, we'll see what happens."Netanyahu added that "the hostages are

in agony, and we want to get them all out."The Israeli leader, seated next to Trump, highlighted an earlier hostage release agreement negotiated in part by Trump's regional envoy Steve Witkoff that "got 25 out".Netanyahu's visit follows the collapse of Israel's six-week truce with Palestinian group Hamas,

whose fighters launched an unprecedented attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 that triggered Israel's relentless bombardment of Gaza.The Israeli campaign in response has killed more than 50,000 Palestinians, and destroyed much of the housing and hospital infrastructure in the enclave.

Gas leak kills seven people in Iran

TEHRAN: (News Desk) At least seven people were killed in a gas leak at a coal mine in the northern Iranian province of Semnan, east of the capital Tehran, Iranian media reported on Monday.

The incident occurred in the province's city of Damghan but the reason behind the gas leak is unclear, Mehr news agency said.

The bodies of seven people have been retrieved from the mine, the news agency said, adding that the death toll could rise as reports indicated others were still trapped inside the mine.

Mineral-rich Iran has around 1.5 billion tonnes of proven coal reserves, and deadly incidents in coal mines are not unusual.Last September, more than 50 people were killed in a coal mine blast in Tabas, in the eastern province of South Khorasan, prompting the authorities to announce three days of public mourning.

France, Egypt, Jordan say Palestinian Authority must head Gaza after normalisation

CAIRO: (News Desk) The leaders of France, Egypt and Jordan on Monday said the Palestinian Authority must head post-war governance in Gaza.

The question of who will rule the Palestinian territory has been one of the main sticking points in efforts to prolong a ceasefire in Gaza that collapsed last month. On a visit to Cairo where he met his counterpart Abdel Fattah al-Sisi as well as Jordan's King Abdullah II, French President Emmanuel Macron said Hamas should have no role in governing the Gaza Strip once its war with Israel is over.

"Governance, law and order, and security in Gaza, as well as in all Palestinian territories, must be the sole responsibility of a strengthened Palestinian Authority," the three heads of state said in a joint statement. Macron supports Israeli stance of no Hamas role once 'war' is overMacron said he was strongly opposed to any displacement of Palestinians, throwing his weight behind a Gaza reconstruction plan endorsed by the Arab League to counter a US proposal to send the war-ravaged territory's inhabitants elsewhere.

Microplastic pollution in Europe's great rivers alarms scientists

PARIS: (News Desk) "Alarming" levels of microplastic have been found in major rivers across Europe according to scientists in 14 studies published simultaneously on Monday."The pollution is present in all European rivers" studied, said French scientist Jean-Francois Ghiglione, who coordinated the large-scale operation across nine major rivers from the Thames to the Tiber."Alarming" pollution of on average "three microplastics per cubic metre of water" was observed in all of them, according to the results published in the journal of Environmental Science and Pollution Research.This is far from the 40 microplastics per cubic metre recorded in the world's 10 most polluted rivers — the Yellow River, Yangtze, Mekong, Ganges, Nile, Niger, Indus, Amur, Pearl and Hai — which irrigate countries where most plastic is produced or plastic waste is processed. But this does not take into account the volume of water flowing,3,000 particles per secondOn the Rhone in Valence, France, the fast flow means there are "3,000 plastic particles every second", said Ghiglione. The Seine in Paris has around 900 per second."The mass of microplastics invisible to the naked eye is more significant than that of the visible ones," said Ghiglione — a result that "surprised" researchers. This wasconfirmed by analytical advances made during the studies, which began in 2019."Large microplastics float and are collected at the surface, while invisible ones are distributed throughout the water column and are ingested by many animals and organisms," said Ghiglione, head of research in marine microbial ecotoxicology at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS).

Israeli forces continue aggression in West Bank's Tulkarem for 72nd consecutive day

Westbank(News Desk) Israeli occupation forces continued the aggression against the city of Tulkarem and its camp for the 72nd consecutive day, and for the 59th day against the Nur Shams camp, amid raids and attacks targeting several areas inside and around the city, Wafa reports.

The occupation forces dispatched military reinforcements to the city and its two camps, Tulkarem and Nur Shams, and deployed infantry units within their neighborhoods.

They raided and vandalised homes, converting several into military outposts. This was accompanied by the use of live ammunition, and occasional explosions were heard in the Tulkarem camp, especially after midnight. 19 killed in Israeli strikes overnight, say Gaza rescuers

Gaza's civil defence agency has said that Israeli strikes overnight killed at least 19 people and wounded dozens more across the Palestinian territory, AFP reports.

Civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP that "19 civilians including several children were martyred" in Israeli raids during the night and earlier today. Five killed in Israeli attack on Gaza City: report Israeli forces have bombed a house in northern Gaza City, killing at least five people, according to Al Jazeera Arabic.

The attack comes as medics announced that Israeli forces have killed at least 60 Palestinians in Gaza yesterday alone. Hamas and rescuers have said an Israeli strike on southern Gaza killed one journalist and wounded nine others, while the Israeli military reported it targeted a fighter posing as a reporter, AFP reports.

An air strike hit a tent used by journalists in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, killing two people, said civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal. Nine journalists were wounded in the strike, Bassal added.The Hamas government media office said journalist Hilmi al-Faqawi, who worked for a local news agency, was killed in the attack.The Israeli military meanwhile said its forces had "struck the Hamas terrorist Hassan Abdel Fattah Mohammed Aslih in the Khan Younis area" overnight, without specifying whether he had been killed.

Israeli troops shot Gaza crew 'with intent to kill', Red Crescent says

RAMALLAH/GAZA CITY: (News Desk) The Palestine Red Crescent Society said on Monday that 15 medics and rescuers killed by Israeli forces last month in Gaza were shot in the upper body with "intent to kill". Israeli army chief Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir meanwhile ordered a more in-depth investigation into the attack after an initial probe was completed by

the military. The killings occurred in the southern Gaza Strip on March 23, days into a renewed Israeli offensive in the territory. They have since sparked international condemnation, with Israel insisting there were militants in the ambulances. The PRCS announcement came as Hamas and rescuers said an Israeli strike on southern Gaza killed one journalist and wounded nine

others, while the Israeli military reported it targeted a militant posing as a reporter. The journalist is one of at least 12 people killed in Israeli strikes across the Palestinian territory on Monday, according to Gaza's civil defence agency, as the conflict entered its 19th month. Younis Al-Khatib, president of the Red Crescent in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, told journalists in Ramallah that an

autopsy of the humanitarian personnel slain in March revealed that "all the martyrs were shot in the upper part of their bodies, with the intent to kill". He called for an international probe into the killings. "We call on the world to form an independent and impartial international commission of inquiry into the circumstances of the deliberate killing of the ambulance crews in the Gaza Strip," Khatib said.

Eight staff members from the Red Crescent, six from the Gaza civil defence agency and one employee of the UN agency for Palestinian refugee were killed in the incident, according to the UN humanitarian office OCHA and Palestinian rescuers. The Palestine Red Crescent Society has said that 15 medics and rescuers killed by Israeli forces last month in Gaza were shot in the upper body

with "intent to kill", AFP reports. Younis Al-Khatib, president of the Red Crescent in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, told journalists in Ramallah: "There has been an autopsy of the martyrs from the Red Crescent and civil defence teams. We cannot disclose everything we know, but I will say that all the martyrs were shot in the upper part of their bodies, with the intent to kill."