

Standard Chartered and BRAC University celebrate the first graduation of the co-developed FCC Certification Program



Standard Chartered Bangladesh and BRAC University recently celebrated the graduation of the first batch of financial crime and compliance experts from the "FCC Certification Program". The programme has been co-developed by Standard Chartered and BRAC University. It bridges academic rigour with the practical requirements of the private sector to tackle the complexities of financial crimes. Launched in early 2024, this initiative was the first of its kind in the country.

The FCC Certification Program highlights the growing importance of raising compliance standards and fighting financial crime to protect the industry and the society. Course topics included identification and prevention of money laundering, terrorist financing, and other illicit financial activities. The importance of ethics, necessary controls, and compliance measures were also covered. Throughout the course, students were mentored by banking professionals and other experts from Standard Chartered Bangladesh, Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), BRAC Business School, and BRAC University.

During the certificate distribution ceremony, Naser Ezaz Bijoy, Chief Executive Officer, Standard Chartered Bangladesh, emphasised the critical relevance of FCC in today's rapidly evolving landscape of information and technology. He said, "Fraudulent financial transactions are draining billions of Bangladeshi Taka from the country each year, resulting in significant harm to the government, banks, and the public. By applying the knowledge acquired in this course, we have the opportunity to prevent such illicit activities, providing substantial benefits for governmental bodies, financial institutions, and the community at large."

Professor Mahboob Rahman, Treasurer, BRAC University, stated that the FCC certificate course will serve as a pivotal milestone in fostering a stronger bridge between industry and academia. He said, "Ethics are essential building blocks for developing a sustainable financial sector. The function of the University is to inculcate ethics and sympathy in the students along with knowledge." He underscored the importance of collaboration among all stakeholders, including the government, to eradicate irregularities in the financial sector. He expressed optimism that this certificate programme would significantly enhance academia-industry relations and foster mutual development.

Professor Mujibul Haque, Acting Dean, BRAC Business School, BRAC University, commented that acquiring knowledge in financial crime and compliance will provide students with a distinct advantage in their professional endeavours, setting them apart from their peers. He said, "This course has been effective in enhancing knowledge and refining skills to the participants, enabling them to better identify and prevent financial crimes."

The event was led by Prof. Mohammad Mahboob Rahman alongside Naser Ezaz Bijoy and Dr Mohammad Mujibul Haque. The ceremony celebrated the dedication and achievements of the programme's participants. During the event, students shared their experiences, highlighting its significance as a cornerstone in their academic journey. They highlighted the practical utility of the course, affirming that the skills and knowledge gained will prove invaluable in their professional lives.

SOURCE: **The daily Nstar** on 21/03/2024
[online]



GENOCIDE IN PALESTINE

Israel-Hamas war threatens famine

Blinken heads to Mideast

**Agence France-Presse -
Palestinian Territories**

US TOP diplomat Antony Blinken was set to return to the Middle East on Wednesday in a new bid to secure a truce in the Israel-Hamas war as the threat of famine looms in besieged Gaza.

Global concern has mounted over the military conflict now in its sixth month, in which Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to destroy Hamas in response to its October 7 attack.

Battles have raged at Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital complex, which is crowded with thousands of patients and displaced people, and where Israel said Palestinian militants have been holed up.

Overnight bombing and battles killed another 90 people, said the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza, which put the territory's overall Palestinian death toll at close to 32,000.

When a thunderstorm hit Gaza on Tuesday, Oum Abdullah Alwan said her children 'screamed in fear' because 'we can't tell the difference between the sound of rain and the sound of shelling'.

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Israel-Hamas war

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Amid the fighting, talks have resumed in Qatar this week with the aim of halting the war and siege and freeing the remaining hostages held in the Gaza Strip.

United Nations agencies have warned that Gaza's 2.4 million people are on the brink of famine, and UN rights chief Volker Turk charged Israel may be using 'starvation as a method of war'.

US secretary of state Blinken, who was expected in regional powerhouse Saudi Arabia Wednesday, has warned that Gaza's 'entire population' is suffering 'severe levels of acute food insecurity'.

Long Israel's top ally, the United States has voiced increasing concern over the humanitarian crisis and Israel's plans to launch a ground assault on Gaza's far-southern city of Rafah.

The city is the last area still untouched by Israeli ground troops and is now home to some 1.5 million Palestinians, many of them displaced from other parts of Gaza and sheltering in tents along the Egyptian border with nowhere else to flee.

Blinken is due to make a Thursday visit to Egypt, the main entry point for aid deliveries to Gaza and a key mediator in truce efforts.

Israeli defence minister Yoav Gallant will visit Washington in the coming week for talks with Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin, Israel said, as pressure builds to call off the planned offensive in Rafah.

The men are due to discuss 'efforts to secure the release of all hostages held by Hamas, the need for more humanitarian aid to reach Palestinian civilians

and plans to ensure the safety of the more than one million people sheltering in Rafah,' a US defence official said.

Netanyahu's office also said a delegation would visit Washington at 'the request of US president Joe Biden' to discuss the planned assault.

The bloodiest ever Gaza war broke out after Hamas's unprecedented attack on October 7 resulted in about 1,160 deaths in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

Militants also seized about 250 hostages, of whom Israel believes 130 remain in Gaza, including 33 who are presumed dead.

Relatives and friends of the captives rallied for their release on Wednesday, blocking the Ayalon Highway in Tel Aviv.

Israel's military has waged a relentless offensive against Hamas that has killed at least 31,923 people, most of them women and children, according to Gaza's health ministry.

Mediators have met in Qatar, where Hamas's political leadership is based, to revive a failed attempt to secure a ceasefire by the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan last week.

Israel's spy chief David Barnea kicked off the talks with Egyptian and Qatari mediators on Monday, but there was little indication of an imminent agreement.

A source with knowledge of the negotiations, speaking on condition of anonymity because of their sensitivity, said that 'technical teams are still in Doha' and the 'talks are ongoing'.

The proposal be-

ing discussed would temporarily halt the fighting as hostages are exchanged for Palestinian prisoners and the delivery of relief supplies is stepped up.

The war has meanwhile ground on unabated, and Israeli troops were pressing their assault on Al-Shifa, Gaza's biggest hospital, which they allege Hamas has used for military purposes.

The army said that 'over the past day, the troops have eliminated terrorists and located weapons in the hospital area, while preventing harm to civilians, patients, medical teams and medical equipment.'

'Thus far, the troops have killed approximately 90 terrorists in the area', it said, adding that '160 suspects have been transferred to Israeli territory for further questioning'.

Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh accused Israel of seeking to 'sabotage on-going negotiations in Doha'.

As the war has drawn greater global scrutiny, Canada will halt all arms shipments to Israel, a government official said on Tuesday, a decision that angered Israel.

Canada, which exported \$15.5 million of military materiel to Israel in 2022, had already reduced its shipments to non-lethal equipment such as radios following the October 7 attack.

'The situation on the ground makes it so that we can't export any kind of military equipment, a Canadian official said.

Israel slammed the decision, with foreign minister Israel Katz saying on social media platform X that it 'undermines Israel's right to self-defence against Hamas terrorists'.

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