



Italy's Prime Minister, Giorgia Meloni welcomes Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof at Palazzo Chigi prior to their meeting in Rome



Portuguese far-right party Chega leader Andre Ventura (C) arrives for a meeting with Portuguese President at Belem Palace in Lisbon



Philippines' former president Rodrigo Duterte's supporters gather for a peace rally at Kidapawan in province of Cotabato



King Frederik X (R) of Denmark reviews soldiers of the Royal Life Guards during a parade at the Royal Life Guards Barracks in Copenhagen, Denmark

Pak train attack: 21 passengers, 4 soldiers killed, says Army general

PTI, KARACHI/ISLAMABAD: Twenty-one passengers and four paramilitary soldiers were killed by militants holding hostages after seizing control of a train in Pakistan's Balochistan province, an army general said on Wednesday.

Army spokesman Lt Gen Ahmad Sharif told Dunya News TV that security forces killed all 33 militants present at the scene.

"The armed forces successfully concluded the operation in the (Wednesday) evening by killing all terrorists and rescuing all passengers safely," Lt Gen Sharif said.

He said that 21 passengers were killed by the terrorists when they attacked the train on Tuesday. He added that four paramilitary Frontier Corps soldiers were also killed in the incident.

The Jaffar Express, carrying 440 passengers in nine coaches, was going from Quetta to Peshawar when militants derailed it using explosives and hijacked it near the mountainous ter-



A paramilitary soldier takes position at a railway station near the attack site of a passenger train by insurgents, in Mushkaf in Bolan district of Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province

rain of Gudalar and Piru Kunri in a tunnel 160 kilometres from Quetta.

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for the attack on Tuesday when they said they killed six soldiers.

Lt Gen Sharif said that on March 11, around 1 PM, terrorists blew up a railway track in the Bolan Pass area of Osī Pur. He described the area as difficult terrain, where the terrorists initially used hostages, including

women and children, as human shields. "The rescue operation began immediately, with participation from the Army, Air Force, Frontier Corps, and Special Services Group commandos," he said. During the operation, the terrorists remained in contact with their facilitators and masterminds in Afghanistan via satellite phones, he said, adding that it showed their foreign nexus.

Sharif said that forces took time to complete the



Ambulances park outside a railway station where rescued and injured passenger of a train attacked by insurgents are brought in Much, Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province

operation because the terrorists were using the hostages as human shields.

By last evening, around 100 passengers had been safely rescued from the terrorists, he said, adding that a large number of hostages, including women and children, were freed on Wednesday.

"The rescue operation continued periodically, and in the final clearance operation in the evening, all remaining hostages were

secured. Since the terrorists were using passengers as human shields, the operation was conducted with extreme precision and caution," he told Dunya News.

Sharif said that first, snipers neutralized the suicide bombers, followed by a step-by-step clearance of each train compartment, eliminating all terrorists present. He said that no passengers were harmed during the clearance operation.

Cyclone kills six people in Mozambique

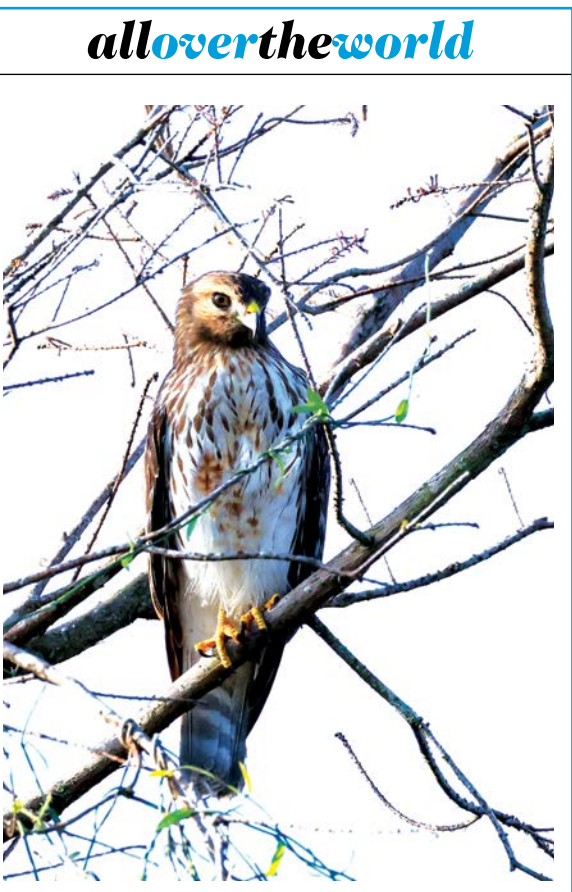
AFP, MAPUTO: The latest cyclone to hit northern Mozambique has claimed at least six lives and destroyed more than 900 homes, authorities said Wednesday, as the storm weakened.

Cyclone Jude hit the Indian Ocean country on Monday, bringing winds of up to 195 kilometres an hour and more than 250mm of rain over 24 hours, the National Institute of Meteorology said.

It is the third cyclone to strike impoverished Mozambique in four months.

At least six people were killed and 20 hurt in the storm, the National Institute for Risk and Disaster Management said in a statement. More than 900 houses were destroyed and 9,500 people affected, it said.

Jude weakened to a tropical storm but continued to bring intense rain, strong winds and thunderstorms, it said. Cyclone Chido struck the Portuguese-speaking country in December, causing the deaths of at least 120 people and destroying almost 120,000 homes, according to official data.



A Red-shouldered Hawk populates the Wakodahatchee Wetlands, in Delray Beach, Florida. The warmer climate in the southern part of Florida provides a welcome habitat for a host of wildlife

Morocco fights measles outbreak amid vaccine misinformation

RABAT: Authorities in Morocco have been scrambling to contain an outbreak of measles, a contagious and potentially fatal disease that had nearly been eradicated in the kingdom but has rebounded as vaccination rates have fallen. In Harhoura, a small coastal town near Rabat, 13-year-old Salma and her nine-year-old brother, Souhail, sit quietly in a public clinic, waiting for their second shot of measles vaccine. Their grandmother, Rabia Maknoui, said it was after a campaign at school that the family realised they had been missing doses of the vaccine. "We didn't know they hadn't completed their vaccination," she said. "Their parents panicked when they heard about the outbreak." Measles is highly contagious, spreading through respiratory droplets and lingering in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves an area.

Thailand sacks senior cop over illicit gambling, fraud

BANGKOK: Thailand has sacked one of its most high-profile police officers over his alleged involvement in illegal gambling and financial fraud. Surachate Hakparn, who served as the kingdom's deputy police chief, was formally dismissed on Tuesday, police said in a statement. Surachate, widely known by his nickname "Big Joke", was snared in a series of raids in 2023 targeting an illegal online gambling network dubbed "Betflix". He was charged with money laundering, which he has denied, and suspended from the force while an investigation was under way. Thai police said on Tuesday his dismissal was in line with "disciplinary procedures for officers under investigation".

Georgia court extends ex-president Saakashvili's jail term

TBILISI: A Georgia court on Wednesday sentenced pro-Western reformer ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili to nine years in prison for mispending public funds, adding three years to the jail term he is currently serving. Saakashvili, 57, was sentenced in absentia in 2018 to six years behind bars for abuse of office, a charge he and rights groups have denounced as politically motivated. He was jailed and began serving the term in 2021, when he returned to the country. The European Parliament has called for his immediate release, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has demanded that Saakashvili, a Ukrainian national since 2019, be transferred to Kyiv. On Wednesday, a Tbilisi city court "sentenced Saakashvili to nine years in prison" in a case involving the mispending public funds, his lawyer, Dito Sadzaglishvili, told AFP. Prosecutors have accused Saakashvili of mispending nine million lari (some \$3.2 million) in budgetary funds over the nine years of his presidency in 2004-2013.

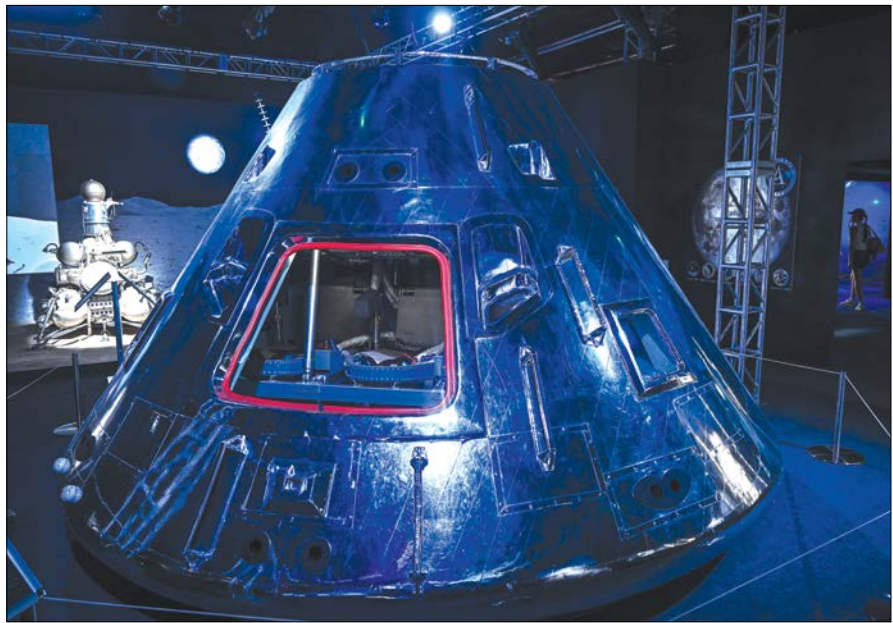
Bosnia police ordered to bring in Serb leader Dodik

SARAJEVO: Bosnia's prosecutors on Wednesday ordered federal police to bring in ethnic Serb leader Milorad Dodik for questioning as part of an investigation into his alleged flouting of the country's constitution. Tensions have soared in the Balkan country since Dodik was convicted last month for defying Christian Schmidt, the international envoy charged with overseeing the peace accords that ended Bosnia's 1990s war. Dodik, who leads Bosnia's Republika Srpska (RS) statelet, has remained unrepentant after the conviction and helped push through laws forbidding federal police and judiciary from entering Bosnia's Serb entity. Last week, he also ignored a summons from Bosnia's chief prosecutor who is investigating him for allegedly trying to undermine the constitution.

Portugal's president holds talks with parties after govt falls

LISBON: Portugal's president was on Wednesday holding talks with political leaders on whether to call fresh elections, after Prime Minister Luis Montenegro's government lost a vote of no confidence. Montenegro, who came to power last year but without a parliamentary majority, quit on Tuesday following the defeat, which was called over a possible conflict of interest row. Head of state Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa will discuss the way ahead in meetings Wednesday with Montenegro's Social Democratic Party (PSD), the main opposition Socialist Party, the far-right Chega party and others. Further consultations are expected on Thursday with the Council of State, a consultative body made up of high-ranking politicians, before giving his decision either Thursday evening or Friday.

SPACE JOURNEY



A model of a command module from NASA's Apollo spacecraft is exhibited at Space Journey Bangkok, a multimedia exhibition featuring original artefacts, replicas, models and documents from various space missions, in Bangkok

Russian missiles kill 5 in Ukraine as Kremlin mulls ceasefire prospects

AP, KYIV: Russian ballistic missiles killed at least five civilians in Ukraine, officials said Wednesday, a day after the Trump administration lifted its suspension of military aid for Kyiv's fight against Russia's invasion and Ukrainian officials signaled they were open to a 30-day ceasefire. The Kremlin didn't comment on the agreement announced Tuesday between the US and Ukraine on the provision of further military support, including intelligence sharing, and the possibility of a ceasefire that Washington backs. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Wednesday that it's important not to "get ahead" of the question of responding to the 30-day ceasefire proposal. He told reporters that Moscow is awaiting "detailed information" about it from the US and suggested Russia must get that before it can take a position.

The Russian missiles killed four Syrian men between the ages of 18 and 24 on a ship docked at the southern port of Odesa late Tuesday, where it was loading Ukrainian wheat for Algeria, Infrastructure Minister Olexsii Kuleba said.

Another missile killed a woman in Kryvii Rih, President Volodymyr Zelensky's hometown in central Ukraine, authorities said.

The American help is vital for Ukraine's shorthanded and weary army, which is having a tough time keeping Russia's bigger military force at bay. But for Moscow, more American aid spells potentially more difficulty in achieving its war aims and likely will be a tough sell in Moscow for Washington's peace efforts.

Arms deliveries to Ukraine have already resumed through a Polish logistics centre, the foreign ministers of Ukraine and Poland announced.

The deliveries go through a NATO and US hub in the eastern Polish city of Rzeszow that's been used to ferry Western weapons into neighbouring Ukraine about 70 kilometres away.

US President Donald Trump wants to end the three-year war and pressured Zelensky to enter talks. The suspension of US assistance came days after Zelensky and Trump argued about the conflict in a tense White House meeting.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who led the American delegation to Tuesday's talks in Saudi Arabia, said that Washington would present the ceasefire offer to the Kremlin.



Shows a destroyed building at the site of a strike in Kryvyi Rig, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine

TRUMP SAYS IT IS UP TO RUSSIA TO ACCEPT CEASEFIRE DEAL IN WAR WITH UKRAINE

PTI, NEW YORK/WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said he is hopeful that Russia will agree to a 30-day ceasefire with Ukraine even as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Wednesday termed it as a positive step and said it is up to the US to convince Russia to accept it. Senior officials from the US and Ukraine held talks in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday focussing on ending the over three year war between Moscow and Kyiv, which gave an indication to accept a 30-day ceasefire. "A while ago, Ukraine has agreed to the ceasefire. Now we go to Russia and hopefully President Putin will agree to it also," Trump said here soon after the Jeddah announcement. "If we get Russia to do it, that will be great. If we can't, we keep going on and on and people are going to get killed," he said in another video posted on his TruthSocial account. He also spoke about meetings with Russia soon, in an apparent reference to Steve Witkoff, his special envoy, who is likely to visit Moscow to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin. President Zelenskyy said the American side understands his country's arguments and considers their proposals and added that he is "grateful to President Trump for the constructive conversation between our teams."

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Peyrony, said.

The third group involved in the lawsuit, the Societe des Gens de Lettres, represents authors. They all demand the "complete removal" of data directories Meta created without authorisation to train its AI model.

Under the European Union's sweeping Artificial Intelligence Act, generative AI systems must comply with the 27-nation bloc's copyright law and be transparent about the material they used for training.

More arrests reported in Israeli West Bank raids

AFP, WEST BANK: Israeli forces reported fresh arrests as they kept up raids in the northern occupied West Bank on Wednesday, a day after troops shot dead three Palestinians as part of an ongoing military operation.

Overnight, Israeli troops conducted raids in the villages of Qabatiya and Arraba, arresting about a dozen Palestinians allegedly "involved in terrorist activity" and seizing around 100 kilograms of materials used to make explosives, the military said in a statement.

The detainees were handed over to the Israeli police and the Shin Bet security agency for further investigation, the military added.

French publishers, authors sue Meta over copyright works used in AI training

AP, PARIS: French publishers and authors said Wednesday they're taking Meta to court, accusing the social media company of using their works without permission to train its artificial intelligence model. Three trade groups said they were launching legal action against Meta in a Paris court over what they said was the company's "massive use of copyrighted works without authorisation" to train its generative AI model. The

National Publishing Union, which represents book publishers, has noted that "numerous works" from its members are turning up in Meta's data pool, the group's president, Vincent Montagne, said in a joint statement.

Meta didn't respond to a request for comment. The company has rolled out generative-AI powered chatbot assistants to users of its Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp platforms.

Montagne accused Meta

CLASSIFIED CONTINUATION

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