

allovertheworld



France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot (L) being received by Algeria's President Abdelmajid Tebboune in Algiers

Spanish police recover 1000 kg of cocaine in gang bust

BARCELONA: Spanish police on Saturday said they had busted a Hell's Angels-linked gang smuggling cocaine through the eastern port of Valencia and seized 1,000 kilograms (2,200 pounds) of the drug. Spain is one of the main entry points for cocaine into Europe from Latin America. An operation led by the European Union's law enforcement agency Europol led to the arrests of 20 people, half of whom were remanded in custody, a police statement said. The majority of the arrests were in Spain. Two were held in Belgium and one in France, the statement added. Some of those arrested were linked to a faction of the Hells Angels gang in Belgium and were primarily involved "in controlling and recovering drug shipments", the statement said.

Zelensky hails progress in talks with French, UK military chiefs

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Saturday hailed "tangible progress" after meeting British and French military chiefs in Kyiv to discuss strengthening the Ukrainian army and ways to support the war-torn country after any end to hostilities with Russia. British Chief of the Defence Staff Tony Radakin and his French counterpart Thierry Burkhard on Friday held talks with Zelensky, Ukrainian commander-in-chief Oleksandr Syrsky and Defence Minister Rustem Umerov. Zelensky wrote on social media on Saturday: "There is tangible progress and the first details on how the security contingent of partners can be deployed," without giving details.

UK governing party suspends MP after rape arrest

LONDON: The UK's ruling Labour Party on Saturday said that it had suspended MP Dan Norris after he was arrested on suspicion of sexual offences against a girl and rape. Police said that a man in his 60s was arrested on Friday on suspicion of sexual offences against a girl, child abduction and misconduct in a public office. "Most of the offences are alleged to have occurred in the 2000s but we're also investigating an alleged offence of rape from the 2020s," added the force. Labour confirmed on Saturday night that they had suspended the MP for North East Somerset and Hanham in south west England. "Dan Norris MP was immediately suspended by the Labour Party upon being informed of his arrest. We cannot comment further while the police investigation is ongoing," said a party spokesperson.

Artificial glaciers boost water supply in northern Pakistan

HUSSAINABAD: At the foot of Pakistan's impossibly high mountains whitened by frost all year round, farmers grappling with a lack of water have created their own ice towers. Warmer winters as a result of climate change has reduced the snow fall and subsequent seasonal snowmelt that feeds the valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan, a remote region home to K2, the world's second-highest peak. Farmers in the Skardu valley, at an altitude of up to 2,600 metres (8,200 feet) in the shadow of the Karakoram mountain range, searched online for help in how to irrigate their apple and apricot orchards.

Israeli strikes on Gaza kill 24, mostly women, children

AP, DEIR AL-BALAH: Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip killed at least 24 people, including over a dozen women and children, local health officials said Sunday, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu headed to the United States to meet with President Donald Trump about the war.

Israel last month ended its ceasefire with Hamas and renewed its air and ground offensive, carrying out waves of strikes and seizing territory to pressure the militant group to accept a new deal for a truce and release of remaining hostages.

It has also blocked the import of food, fuel and humanitarian aid for over a month to the coastal territory heavily reliant on outside assistance.

"Stocks are getting low and the situation is becoming desperate," the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees said on so-



Children walk by the destroyed house of journalist Islam Meqdad, where she was killed along with her son and five other family members in an Israeli army strike in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip

cial media.

The latest Israeli strikes overnight into Sunday hit a tent and a house in the southern city of Khan Younis, killing five men, five women and five children, according to Nasser Hospital, which received the bodies.

A female journalist was among those killed. "My

daughter is innocent. She had no involvement, she loved journalism and adored it," said her mother, Amal Kaskeen.

The body of one child, 1 1/2-year old, took up just one end of an emergency stretcher.

"Trump wants to end the Gaza issue. He is in a hurry, and that is clear from this morning," asserted Mohammad Abdel-Hadi, cousin of a woman killed.

Israeli shelling killed at least four people in the Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. And the bodies of five people, including a child and three women, arrived at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza, according to an Associated Press journalist there.

Dozens of Palestinians took to the streets in Jabaliya for a new round of anti-war protests. Footage circulating on social media showed people marching and chanting against Hamas. Such protests, while rare, have occurred in recent weeks.

WINNING STRIDE



Jockey Patrick Mullins, riding Nick Rockett (C), clears a fence on the way to win the Randox Grand National Handicap Steeple Chase race on the third day of the Grand National Horse Racing meeting at Aintree racecourse, near Liverpool, England

Iran rejects Trump call for direct nuclear talks

AFP, TEHRAN: Iran's top diplomat has dismissed direct negotiations with the United States as pointless, his office said Sunday, after US President Donald Trump said he preferred face-to-face talks over its nuclear programme.

Trump sent a letter to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei last month calling for negotiations but warning of military action if diplomacy failed.

On Thursday, the US president said he favoured "direct talks", arguing they were "faster" and offered a better understanding than going through intermediaries.

But Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said direct talks made no sense with a country "that

constantly threatens to resort to force in violation of the UN Charter and that expresses contradictory positions from its various officials".

"We remain committed to diplomacy and are ready to try the path of indirect negotiations," he was quoted as saying in a statement issued by his ministry.

"Iran keeps itself prepared for all possible or probable events, and just as it is serious in diplomacy and negotiations, it will also be decisive and serious in defending its national interests and sovereignty."

On Saturday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said his country was willing to engage in dialogue with the United States on an "equal footing".

Keir Starmer vows to 'shelter' UK businesses from Trump's tariff storm

PTI, LONDON: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Sunday vowed to "shelter" the UK's businesses from the storm unleashed in the wake of President Donald Trump's flurry of global trade tariffs, even as he reiterated plans to pursue a trade deal with the US.

Writing in The Sunday Telegraph, Starmer said that nobody wins from a trade war and called for calm as the UK fights for the best trade deal. He reiterated that all options remain on the table as he indicated the possibility of state intervention to protect businesses.

The economic consequences, here and across the globe, could be profound. We already have a balanced trading relationship with our American allies and work continues on a new economic prosperity deal, writes Starmer.

I will only strike a deal if

it is right for British business and the security of working people. And I will continue to make the case for free and open trade, because turning our back on that now would be a grave mistake, he said.

We stand ready to use industrial policy to help shelter British business from the storm. Some people may feel uncomfortable about this idea the state should intervene directly to shape the market has often been derided. But we simply cannot cling on to old sentiments when the world is turning this fast, he added.

His intervention comes following days of turmoil in the stock markets, with the UK among the nations hit with a 10 per cent "baseline" import duty by Trump. Additionally, a 25 per cent tariff has been imposed on UK car exports, as well as steel and

SL releases 14 Indian fishermen

PTI, COLOMBO: Sri Lanka on Sunday released 14 Indian fishermen as a special gesture, a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi pitched for resolving the vexed issue with a "humane approach".

The fishermen issue figured prominently during talks between Prime Minister Modi and Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Saturday. Fourteen Indian fishermen were released as a special gesture, people familiar with the matter said. The fishermen issue is a contentious matter in India-Sri Lanka ties.

There have been several alleged incidents in the past of Sri Lankan Navy personnel using force against Indian fishermen in the Palk Strait which is a narrow strip of water separating Tamil Nadu from Sri Lanka.

Moroccans protest Israel's offensive in Gaza, blame Trump

AP, RABAT (MOROCCO): Tens of thousands of Moroccans on Sunday protested Israel's latest offensive in Gaza, putting anger toward US President Donald Trump near the centre of their grievances.

Demonstrators denounced Israel, the United States and their own government. Some stepped on Israeli flags, held banners showing slain Hamas leaders and waved posters juxtaposing Trump alongside displaced Palestinians fleeing their homes. Organisers condemned Israel's ongoing military operation in Gaza. Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed since Israel renewed its air and ground war last month, aimed at pressuring Hamas to release remaining hostages.

Such protests have erupted across the Middle East and North Africa, where leaders typically worry about demonstrations undermining domestic stability.

In countries that have

historically aligned with the US, anti-Trump backlash has emerged as a theme. Demonstrators in Rabat on Sunday condemned his proposal to displace millions of Palestinians to make way for the redevelopment of Gaza, as well as the US efforts to pursue pro-Palestinian activists.

Still, many Moroccans said they saw Trump's policies as mostly consistent with his predecessor, Joe Biden's.

"(Trump) has made the war worse," said Mohammed Toussi, who travelled from Casablanca with his family to protest. "Biden hid some things but Trump has shown it all". Protestors, Toussi added, remain angry about Morocco's 2020 decision to normalise ties with Israel.

Demonstrations have included a range of groups, including the Islamist association al Adl Wal Ihsan. Moroccan authorities tolerate most protests, but have arrested some activists who have rallied.

Second US child dies of measles, more than 600 ill: Officials

AFP, WASHINGTON: A measles outbreak has killed a second child in the southwestern United States, authorities there confirmed Sunday, with more than 600 people now infected as the highly contagious disease spreads.

"We are deeply saddened to report that a school-aged child who was recently diagnosed with measles has passed away," Aaron Davis, vice president of UMC Health System, a medical center in Texas, told AFP.

The child had been receiving treatment for the measles in hospital, he said, adding that they were "not vaccinated against measles and had no known underlying health conditions."

As the US grapples with its worst measles outbreak in years, President Donald

Trump's health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has alarmed health experts with his rhetoric downplaying the importance of vaccines.

Axios reported that Kennedy was planning a hastily arranged visit to Texas after learning of the second child's death.

Texas had reported its first measles death, also of a child, last month. An adult in New Mexico also died last month of what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) classified as a measles-related fatality.

The CDC said that as of April 3, "a total of 607 confirmed measles cases were reported by" 21 states stretching from Alaska to Florida, as well as New York City.

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Torrential rains kill 30 people in DR Congo capital

AFP, KINSHASA, (DR CONGO): Heavy downpours in the Democratic Republic of Congo's capital Kinshasa have killed around 30 people while wreaking havoc across the central African megacity, an official told AFP on Sunday.

After the rain poured down overnight from Friday to Saturday, rising waters devastated several outlying and impoverished suburbs of the metropolis of some 17 million people, with some residents forced to navigate the streets by canoe.

"There are many wounded who have been evacuated and for the moment we are in the 30s for the number of dead," Patricia Gongo Abakazi, Kinshasa's provincial minister of public health, told AFP.



Residents stand on a tree for safety as floodwaters cover a road following heavy rains in the Ndjili district of Kinshasa

The victims either drowned or were killed when the walls of their homes collapsed, the doctor added.

The rising waters have paralysed much of the haphazardly urbanised capital,

cutting off traffic on National Road 1, Kinshasa's main thoroughfare, which leads from the city centre to the airport.

"At around 2 pm, we suddenly noticed that the water was rising in the plot, and it



Young men assist two women as residents wade through murky floodwaters in the Ndjili district of Kinshasa

just kept getting higher. As a precaution, we took the children to flee, as it was difficult to get through", said Online, a resident of the Masina commune in the east.

In the eastern Debonhomme district, waters

swallowed up dozens of cars, forcing some residents to swim or paddle in dug-out canoes, AFP journalists saw.

Some victims were trapped in the upper levels of their homes after water invaded their ground floors.

"The water has reached 1.5 metres (five feet) high. We have just managed to save ourselves, the rest is trapped in our homes," said Christophe Bola, a resident of the Ndanu quarter in Li-mete commune.

Flooding caused huge traffic jams in a city where chronic congestion is the norm.

Several residents told AFP journalists they were angry at what they saw as a tardy and inadequate reaction by the authorities.

Neighbouring Kongo-Central province was also hit by the deluge.

Flooding frequently proves deadly in Kinshasa, which sits on the banks of the Congo River, Africa's second-largest, after the Nile.