

37 Chinese warplanes cross into Taiwan’s ADIZ

Taipei activates air defence systems

REUTERS, Taipei

Taiwan yesterday activated its defence systems after reporting 37 Chinese military aircraft flying into the island’s air defence zone, some of which then flew into the western Pacific, in Beijing’s latest mass air incursion.

China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, has over the past three years regularly flown its air force into the skies near the island, though not into Taiwan’s territorial air space.

Taiwan’s defence ministry said that from 5:00 am it had detected 37 Chinese air force planes, including J-11 and J-16 fighters as well as nuclear-capable H-6 bombers, flying into the southwestern corner of its air defence identification zone, or ADIZ.

The ADIZ is a broader area Taiwan monitors and patrols to give its forces more time to respond to threats.

Some of the Chinese aircraft flew to Taiwan’s southeast and crossed into the western Pacific to perform “air surveillance and long distance navigation training”, the ministry said in a statement.



Taiwan sent its aircraft and ships to keep watch and activated land-based missile systems, it added, using its standard wording for how it responds to such Chinese activity.

China’s defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

China completed a second phase of joint air patrols with Russia over the Western Pacific on Wednesday, following flights on the previous day over the Sea of Japan and East China Sea, prompting concern in Japan over its national security.

Laura Rosenberger, chair of the American Institute in Taiwan, which manages the unofficial relationship between Washington and Taipei, is visiting Taiwan this week.

On Monday, she told Taiwan media that the United States had an enduring interest in preserving stability in the Taiwan Strait and the United States would continue to arm the island, a source of constant friction in Sino-U.S. ties.

In April, China held war games around Taiwan following a trip to the United States by Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen.



An explosion is seen in Ramallah, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday as the Israeli troops demolish the home of a Palestinian accused of carrying out twin bombings in Jerusalem last November that killed two Israelis, including a teenager.

PHOTO: REUTERS

FRENCH ALPS

Four children hurt in knife attack

Suspect, a Syrian asylum seeker, arrested

AFP, Annecy

A man armed with a knife stabbed four preschool children and injured two adults by a lake in the French Alps yesterday in an attack that sent shock waves through the country.

A police spokesman said the attacker was a 31-year old Syrian asylum seeker who carried Swedish identity documents and a Swedish driving license. He entered France legally and was not known to security agencies.

Video of him taken by a bystander in Annecy, a town 30 kilometres (20 miles) south of the Swiss city of Geneva, shows him dressed in a black long-sleeved shirt and shorts while holding a small blade.

Witnesses described the knifeman running around a public park on the banks of Lake Annecy in a frenzy, apparently attacking people at random, before he was shot by police.

“He wanted to attack everyone. I moved away and he lunged at an old man and woman and stabbed the old man,” former footballer Anthony Le Tallec, who was running in the park, told the Dauphine Libere newspaper.

The suspect did not appear to have a “terrorist motive”, the local prosecutor said.

Line Bonnet-Mathis also said that of the four children injured in the assault, one was aged just 22 months, two were two-year-olds, and the eldest was three.

World warming at record 0.2C per decade

50 top scientists warn in a sweeping climate science update

AFP, Paris

Record-high greenhouse gas emissions and diminishing air pollution have caused an unparalleled acceleration in global warming, 50 top scientists warned yesterday in a sweeping climate science update.

From 2013 to 2022, “human-induced warming has been increasing at an unprecedented rate of over 0.2 degrees Celsius per decade,” they reported in a peer-reviewed study aimed at policymakers.

Average annual emissions over the same period hit an all-time high of 54 billion tonnes of CO2 or its equivalent in other gases -- about 1,700 tonnes every second.

World leaders will be confronted with the new data at the critical COP28 climate summit later this year in Dubai, where a “Global Stocktake” at the UN talks will assess progress toward the 2015 Paris Agreement’s temperature goals.

The findings would appear to close the door on capping global warming under the Paris treaty’s more ambitious 1.5C target, long identified as a guard rail for a relatively climate-safe world, albeit one still roiled by severe impacts.

“Even though we are not yet at 1.5C warming, the carbon budget” -- the amount of greenhouse gases humanity can emit without exceeding that limit -- “will likely be exhausted in only a few years,” said lead author Piers Forster, a physics professor at the University of Leeds.

That budget has shrunk by half since the UN’s climate science advisory body, the Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change (IPCC), gathered data for its most recent benchmark report in 2021, according to the Forster and colleagues, many of whom were core IPCC contributors.

To have even a coin-toss chance of staying under the 1.5C threshold, emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and other drivers of warming generated mostly by burning fossil fuels must not exceed 250 billion tonnes (Gt), they reported.



Bettering the odds to two-thirds or four-fifths would reduce that carbon allowance to only 150 Gt and 100 Gt, respectively -- a two- or three-year lifeline at the current rate of emissions.

Keeping the Paris temperature targets in play would require slashing CO2 pollution at least 40 percent by 2030, and eliminating it entirely by mid-century, the IPCC has calculated.

Ironically, one of the big climate success stories of the last decade has inadvertently hastened the pace of global warming, the new data reveal.

A gradual drop in the use of coal -- significantly more carbon intensive than oil or gas -- to produce power has slowed

the increase in carbon emissions.

But it has also reduced the air pollution that shields Earth from the full force of the Sun’s rays.

Particle pollution from all sources dampens warming by about half-a-degree Celsius, which means -- at least in the short term -- more of that heat will reach the planet’s surface as the air becomes cleaner.

Published in the peer-reviewed journal Earth System Science Data, the new study is the first in a series of periodic assessments that will help fill the gaps between IPCC reports, released on average every six years since 1988.

“An annual update of key indicators of global change is critical in helping the international community and countries to keep the urgency of addressing the climate change crisis at the top of the agenda,” said co-author and scientist Maisa Rojas Corradi, who is also the environment minister of Chile.

Co-author Valerie Masson-Delmotte, a co-chair of the 2021 IPCC report, said the new data should be a “wake-up call” ahead of the COP28 summit, even if there is evidence that the increase in greenhouse gases has slowed.

“The pace and scale of climate action is not sufficient to limit the escalation of climate related risks,” she said.

Researchers also reported a startling rise in temperature increases over land areas -- excluding oceans -- since 2000.

“Land average annual maximum temperatures have warmed by more than half a degree Celsius in the last ten years (1.72C above preindustrial conditions) compared to the first decade of the millennium (1.22C),” the study reported.

‘Not good for relationships’

India rebukes Canada over parade float showing Indira Gandhi assassination

REUTERS, New Delhi

India’s foreign minister yesterday hit out at Canada for allowing a float in a parade depicting the 1984 assassination of Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi by her bodyguards, perceived to be glorification of violence by Sikh separatists.

“I think there is a larger underlying issue about the space which is given to separatists, to extremists, to people who advocate violence,” S. Jaishankar told reporters in New Delhi while commenting about the tableau in a parade.

“I think it is not good for relationships, not good for Canada,” he said. Canada’s High Commissioner for India also condemned the incident at a parade by Sikh activists in the Canadian city of Brampton.

Video circulated in recent days on the internet showed a tableau from the parade featuring Gandhi wearing a blood-stained white saree with her hands up as turban-clad men pointed guns at her.

Ex-Pak PM gets bail on murder charges

REUTERS, Islamabad

Ousted Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan yesterday secured bail from the Islamabad High Court over new murder charges, blocking his arrest in that case for 14 days, his lawyer said. The ousted prime minister had been arrested on May 9 and held for three days, triggering violent protests by his followers. He is now free on bail in a range of other criminal cases. He had travelled to the capital from his Lahore home to seek bail in the murder case and extend his bail in over a dozen other cases, to avoid a new arrest, said Barrister Gohar Khan. The 70-year-old former cricket hero who became prime minister in 2018 has been embroiled in a confrontation with military since he was ousted in a no-confidence vote last year.

Rohingyas testify on Myanmar crackdown

AFP, Buenos Aires

Members of Myanmar’s Rohingya Muslim minority testified in person for the first time on Wednesday in Buenos Aires, as part of an Argentinian judicial investigation into alleged crimes by the Myanmar military, an activist told AFP. The hearing, behind closed doors, was “a historic day for everyone in Burma,” as Myanmar is also known, said Maung Tun Khin, president of the British-based Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK. Meanwhile, Myanmar lawyers defending political detainees in junta-run courts are being harassed and even jailed by military authorities, HRW said yesterday.

SUDAN CONFLICT

Fighting rages at military site facility

AFP, Khartoum

Sudanese army soldiers and paramilitaries yesterday fought for control of a military facility in Khartoum where a fire raged at an oil and gas facility, witnesses said. The battles came a day after the powerful paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) announced in a statement they had wrestled “full control” of the Yarmouk weapons manufacturing and arms depot complex. Witnesses speaking to AFP from southern Khartoum said they heard the “sound of gunfire and clashes” around the complex, the most important military industrial facility in the country. The RSF claimed that soldiers had fled the site, leaving behind large quantities of military equipment and vehicles.

Trump target of classified docs probe

AFP, Washington

US prosecutors have told Donald Trump’s lawyers that he is the target of a probe into his handling of classified documents after leaving the presidency, in a sign he might be indicted, US media reported Wednesday night. The notice came from the office of special counsel Jack Smith and gives clearest sign yet that prosecutors are moving closer to charging the former president, who has already been indicted in a separate case. The Times, citing “two people” said it was not clear when Trump’s team had been told he was a target.



This handout image provided by the BC Wildfire Service on Wednesday, shows smoke from the West Kiskatinaw River and Peavine Creek wildfires in the Dawson Creek Zone, British Columbia, Canada. Smoke from Canadian wildfires shrouded New York in a record-breaking apocalyptic smog as cities along the US East Coast issued air pollution warnings and thousands evacuated their homes in Canada.

PHOTO: AFP