

## YEMEN COAST Explosions reported in shipping lane

REUTERS, Dubai

Explosions in the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen were reported yesterday after sightings of unmanned aircraft and missiles in two separate incidents, a British maritime authority said.

Two unmanned aircraft were observed before two explosions occurred 5 nautical miles from a vessel located 50 nautical miles west of Hodeidah on Yemen's west coast, United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations authority said in an advisory.

In an apparent separate incident, explosions were heard and missiles were seen 4 nautical miles from a vessel 60 nautical miles from Hodeidah, the authority said.

It was not immediately clear if the incidents involved the same vessel, which the authority did not identify. Cargo details or an indication where the vessel or vessels were sailing to or had sailed from were also not disclosed.

In both incidents the vessel and crew were reported to be safe.



Smoke billows over Khan Yunis in Rafah in the southern Gaza strip during Israeli bombardment yesterday. Israeli shellfire slammed into central Gaza after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged no respite in attacks on Hamas. PHOTO: AFP

## Pakistan court restores ex-PM Khan's party polls symbol

AFP, Islamabad



A Pakistan court yesterday ruled that ex-prime minister Imran Khan's party can contest elections using its cricket bat logo, lawyers said, winning the jailed opposition leader a rare reprieve before polls due in February.

In a nation where the adult literacy rate is just 58 percent, election symbols are vital campaign tools for differentiating candidates on ballot papers.

But last week, the election commission stripped former cricket star Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party of the right to use its icon.

"The election commission's ruling against PTI, in which its election symbol, the cricket bat, was unjustly revoked through an illegal order, has been suspended," said PTI lawyer Syed Ali Zafar.

"It has been further directed that our symbol be reinstated," Zafar told reporters outside a High Court in the city of Peshawar, where PTI lodged an appeal.

Pakistan's election commission revoked PTI's right to use the symbol in polls set for February 8 over the party's failure to hold internal elections in accordance with its constitution.

But PTI said the decision was the latest legal hurdle erected in a campaign to prevent its 71-year-old figurehead from contesting re-election.

Hugely popular Khan was ousted last year after falling out with Pakistan's powerful military leaders, then waging an unprecedented campaign of defiance against them.

He is currently jailed and facing numerous graft cases and allegations he leaked classified state documents, a crime carrying a prison term of up to 14 years or even the death penalty.

After his arrest this year sparked unrest, PTI has been the subject of a widespread crackdown. PTI turned in nomination papers for Khan on Friday, but they may be challenged on the basis of the electoral commission having disqualified him from office over a graft conviction earlier this year.

## Little space left for displaced Gazans to go

REUTERS

Many Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have followed Israeli army evacuation orders and sought safety in designated areas only to find there is little space left in the densely populated enclave, a UN humanitarian team leader said.

Gemma Connell, deployed in Gaza for several weeks now, described what she called a "human chess board" in which thousands of people, displaced many times already, are on the run again and there is no guarantee a destination will be safe.

The United States, Israel's staunchest ally in its war against Hamas, has for weeks pressured Israel to take further steps to minimise civilian harm by identifying safe areas and clearing humanitarian routes for people to escape.

"People were heading up south with mattresses and all of their belongings in vans and in trucks and in cars in order to try and find somewhere safe," said Connell, who on Monday visited the Deir al-Balah neighborhood in central Gaza.

"I've spoken to many people. There's so little space left here in Rafah that people just don't know where they will go and it really feels like people being moved around a human chessboard because there's an evacuation order somewhere.

"People flee that area into another area. But they're not safe there," said Connell, team leader for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Asked for the army's response, a spokesperson said the military has sought to evacuate civilians from areas of fighting but Hamas systematically attempts to prevent that effort. The army spokesperson said the Palestinian group uses civilians as human shields, an accusation the group denies.

Connell described the death of a 9-year old boy named Ahmed in al-Aqsa hospital in Deir

al-Balah, where many of the wounded in Israeli airstrikes overnight were brought and where she spent around 11-1/2 hours.

"He was not in an area under an evacuation order, he was in an area that was supposed to be safe. There is no safe place in Gaza," she said, adding that new airstrikes took place when she was at the hospital and she witnessed wounded being brought in.

She shared the text of a notification from the Israeli military urging residents of at least half-a-dozen central Gazan neighbourhoods to evacuate on Friday.

It says the Israel Defence Forces will soon be operating in their neighbourhood and urges them to evacuate "temporarily and move to shelters" in Deir al-Balah.

The army spokesperson told Reuters: "The IDF will act against Hamas wherever it operates, with full commitment to international law, while distinguishing between terrorists and civilians, and taking all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians."

US officials repeatedly said they expect Israel to scale down its operations to a more low-intensity phase of more targeted operations.

However, Israeli operations have intensified. Christmas Eve proved to be one of the deadliest nights in the 11-week-old war between Israel and Hamas, as Palestinian health officials in Gaza said Israeli airstrikes in central and southern Gaza killed more than 100 Palestinians, bringing the death toll to nearly 20,700.

As Palestinians mourned their losses, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to keep up the fight against Hamas.

Meanwhile, the UN Human Rights Office said yesterday it was "gravely concerned" by Israel's continued bombardment of the central Gaza Strip and urged Israeli forces to take all available measures to protect civilians.

It said all attacks had to adhere to international humanitarian law.

## '11 bombs across Mumbai'

TNN, New Delhi

The Reserve Bank of India yesterday received a threatening email claiming that bombs would be planted in RBI office, HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank.

The email, demanding resignation of RBI governor Shaktikanta Das and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, claimed bombs at 11 locations in Mumbai. The Police said that they visited all these places and did not find any explosives.

"RBI received a threatening email, in the email, it was said that bombs would be planted in RBI office, HDFC bank and ICICI bank and demanded the resignation of RBI governor Shaktikanta Das and Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman," Mumbai Police said.

"Police went to all these places and investigated but did not find anything... the probe is underway," it added.

The threats came from the sender claiming to be from 'Khilafat India'.

## Blast near Israeli embassy in New Delhi

REUTERS, New Delhi

A blast occurred near the Israeli embassy in New Delhi yesterday evening and all staff were unharmed following the explosion, government authorities said. "We can confirm that around 5:20 there was a blast at close proximity to the embassy," Israeli Embassy spokesperson Guy Nir told Reuters. Israel's foreign ministry said all staff were unharmed following the blast and Israeli authorities were cooperating with their Indian counterparts to investigate the cause of the explosion. A team of the Delhi Police rushed to the spot but left after they searched the perimeter and found nothing suspicious. An eyewitness told the media that the blast sounded like a fire-burst. According to him, the incident took place at around 5:00 pm. "This happened around 5 pm, I was on my duty and heard a huge sound. When I came out, I saw smoke coming from the top of a tree, that's all I saw...The police have taken my statement," he said. This comes amid a war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza in which thousands of Palestinians have been killed. In 2021, a low intensity blast outside the Israeli embassy in Delhi sent shockwaves across the world.

## 'I am your new Father Frost'

REUTERS, Moscow

Jailed Putin foe Alexei Navalny yesterday confirmed his arrival at what he described as a snow-swept prison above the Arctic Circle and said he was in excellent spirits despite a tiring 20-day journey to get there. The Russian opposition politician posted an update on X via his lawyers after his allies lost touch with him for more than two weeks while he was in transit with no information about where he was being taken, prompting expressions of concern from Western politicians.

His spokeswoman said on Monday that Navalny, 47, had been tracked down to the IK-3 penal colony north of the Arctic Circle located in Kharp in the Yamal-Nenets region about 1,900 km (1,200 miles) northeast of Moscow. "I am your new Father Frost," Navalny wrote jokingly in his first post from his new prison, a reference to the harsh weather conditions there.

"Well, I now have a sheepskin coat, an ushanka hat (a fur hat with ear covering flaps), and soon I will get valenki (traditional Russian winter footwear)." The 20 days of the transfer were quite tiring, but I'm still in an excellent mood, as Father Frost should be." Navalny's new home, known as "the Polar Wolf" colony, is considered to be one of the toughest prisons in Russia. Most prisoners there have been convicted of grave crimes. Winters are harsh - and temperatures are due to drop to around minus 28 Celsius there over the next week. About 60 km north of the Arctic Circle, the prison was founded in the 1960s as part of what was once the GULAG system of forced Soviet labour camps, according to the Moskovsky Komsomlets newspaper.



"WHO's team heard harrowing accounts shared by health workers and victims of the suffering caused by the explosions. One child had lost their whole family in the strike on the camp. A nurse at the hospital suffered the same loss."

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus decries deadly strike on Gaza refugee camp



## RUSSIA STRIKES Children among five killed in Syria

AFP, Armanaz

Russian air strikes on the last major rebel stronghold in Syria killed five civilians from the same family, including three children, rescuers and a war monitor said yesterday.

Moscow is one of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's key backers, providing him with military, political and economic support in the country's 12-year civil war.

"On December 25 at 10:00 pm (0700 GMT) Russian warplanes targeted civilian houses" on the outskirts of the town of Armanaz, in Idlib province, said Abdel Halim Shehab of the White Helmets voluntary search-and-rescue group.

Members of the White Helmets pulled the victims from under the rubble of their house, he said.

**BANGLADESH-INDIA FRIENDSHIP POWER COMPANY (PVT.) LIMITED**  
(A JOINT VENTURE COMPANY OF BPDB AND NTPC LTD.)  
REGISTERED OFFICE: UNIQUE HEIGHTS (BORAKI), LEVEL-17, 117, KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM AVENUE, ESKATON GARDEN, DHAKA-1000  
Ref: BIFPCL/HRD/Engagement/2023/569 Date: 26/12/2023

**CAREER OPPORTUNITY**

Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company (Pvt.) Limited (BIFPCL), a Joint Venture Company of Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), Bangladesh and NTPC Limited, India, is looking for an energetic and experienced person for immediate engagement on Adhoc & Fixed Contract basis and inviting applications through online system from Bangladeshi nationals:

Sl. No.	Name of Post and Age Limit	No. of Post	Job Location	Qualifications & Experience	Compensation Package
1	Security Head Maximum Age: 52 years	01 (One)	MSTPP Rampal, Bagerhat	i) Retired defense personnel from Bangladesh Army not below the rank of Major with no disciplinary records all over the service period. ii) More than 02(two) years security related experience in in any large-scale Factory/ Industry/Port/Utility iii) No other benefits will be applicable.	i) A consolidated pay of BDT. 1,65,000.00 (BDT. One Lac Sixty-Five Thousand only) per month. ii) A rent-free semi-furnished Bachelor Accommodation will be provided at Maitree Super Thermal Power Project (MSTPP), Rampal, Bagerhat for the duration of the contract.

Interested candidates may apply for the post by visiting <https://www.bifpcl.com/hrCareer.aspx>. The application process will commence from 27th December, 2023. Instructions are available on the page for eligibility criterion, age, terms and conditions, job description. Last date of receipt of application is 15th January, 2024.

**(Md. Ziaur Rahman)**  
Chief Human Resources Officer (I/C), BIFPCL

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Health Services Division Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD) Invitation for Tenders (Goods)					
1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare			
2	Agency	Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS)			
3	Procuring Entity Name	Director, CMSD and Line Director, Procurement, Storage & Supplies Management of Health Services (PSSM-HS)			
4	Invitation for	Anti Retro Viral Drug (Group-1)			
5	Invitation Ref No. and Date	CMSD/GD-2312/ICT/2023-24/Proc-D-5/14, Date: 26/12/2023			
6	Procurement Method	OTM(ICT)			
7	Budget and Source of Funds	GOB (Dev.)			
8	Project Name	4th Health, Population & Nutrition Sector Program (4th HPNSP)			
9	Tender Package No.	GD-2312			
10	Tender Package Name	Anti Retro Viral Drug (Group-1)			
11	Tender Publication Date	28/12/2023			
12	Tender Last Selling Date	11/02/2024	Up to 4:00 pm		
13	Tender Closing Date and Time	12/02/2024	11:00 A.M		
14	Tender Opening Date and Time	12/02/2024 11:30 A.M			
15	Selling Tender Document (Principal)	Central Medical Stores Depot, 30, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed, Sharani, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208			
16	Place/Date/Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	Central Medical Stores Depot, 30, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sharani, Tejgaon, Dhaka (Conference Room, Room No.-115) Date 11-01-2024, Time: 11:00 A.M			
17	Receiving and Opening Tender Document	Central Medical Stores Depot, Conference Room -115.30, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed, Sharani, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208			
18	Eligibility of Tenderer	As per tender document.			
19	Brief Description of goods	Mentioned in schedule of requirement.			
20	Price of Tender Document (Tk.)	BDT 4,000-(Bangladesh Taka Four thousand) or US\$ 50 (fifty) only. The method of payment will be in pay order from any scheduled Bank in Bangladesh.			
21	Package No.	Identification of Package	Location	Tender security Amount (Tk)	Completion Time in Weeks /Months
22	GD-2312	Anti Retro Viral Drug (Group-1)	Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD), Tejgaon, Dhaka	BDT 31,00,000.00 or USD 28,000.00	To be delivered on or within 14 weeks after opening of the letter of credit for delivery from abroad and after signing of the contract for delivery from within Bangladesh.
23	Name of Official Inviting Tender				
24	Designation of Official Inviting Tender				
25	Address of Official Inviting Tender				
26	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender				
The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all the Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings					
-SD- Mohammad Hasan Arif Director, CMSD and Line Director, Procurement, Storage & Supplies Management of Health Services (PSSM-HS)					

GD- 2015