

## 13 students die in China school fire

AFP, Yanshanpu

Thirteen schoolchildren died in a dormitory fire in central China's Henan province, the official Xinhua news agency reported yesterday.

The blaze at the Yingcai School in Henan's Yanshanpu village was reported to the local fire department at 11:00 pm (1500 GMT) Friday night, Xinhua said.

Thirteen students were confirmed dead and one injured.

A teacher at the school told state-run Hebei Daily that all the victims were from the same third-grade class of nine and 10-year-olds.

Xinhua reported the flames had been extinguished by 11:40 pm on Friday night.

The injured survivor "is currently receiving treatment at the hospital and is in stable condition", according to the country's official news agency.



Displaced Palestinians using eSIM cards attempt to get a signal on Friday in order to contact their relatives on a hill in Rafah, on the southern Gaza Strip on the border with Egypt.

PHOTO: AFP

## JOB CUT THREATS

### LA Times staff walk out 1st time in 142 yrs

AFP, Los Angeles

Unionised journalists at the Los Angeles Times walked off the job Friday for the first time in the paper's 142-year history, after management said it planned significant job cuts to help plug a gaping financial hole.

"The changes to our contract that management is trying to pressure us into accepting are obscene and unsustainable," said Brian Contreras of the Los Angeles Times Guild.

"If management thinks our financial situation is untenable, they need to come to the bargaining table in good faith and work out a buyout plan with us."

Contreras told AFP at least 90 percent of guild members were participating in the walkout.

## 'OCEAN' OF NEED IN GAZA

# Aid workers can make little impact

Says MSF

AGENCIES

Medical aid workers are only able to help with a tiny fraction of Gaza's humanitarian needs as conditions there deteriorate following nearly 15 weeks of war, staff from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said on Friday.

Shortages of medical personnel and supplies, denials of access by Israel, damage and risks from military activity all made it hugely challenging to treat injuries, provide routine care, prevent the spread of disease and tackle increasing malnutrition, they said.

"Our impact is very, very low because there are almost 2 million of people in need of health care," said Enrico Vallaperta, an intensive care nurse who returned from an MSF mission in Gaza on Thursday, reports Reuters.

"If you compare with the needs that there are, what we are doing is really a drop in the ocean," he told a press conference in Cairo.

It's "a context that no one saw before", said the war medic, according to AFP.

"If you compare to Ukraine, after a short time, women and kids were sent to safer areas. In Gaza, they can't," said Vallaperta, describing having to treat many children.

"Gaza now is a place that is destroyed. And what is not destroyed is full of people," he said.

"We use the minimum medication so that we can manage our supplies," Enrico Vallaperta said.

The doctor said he had to make the difficult decision to evacuate his team from the Al-Aqsa hospital in central Gaza, because "they bombed 150 meters away from the hospital".

Three days after they left, "a nearby building was bombed and partially collapsed on the hospital," he said, AFP adds.

Israel's offensive in Gaza has displaced about 75 percent of Gaza's 2.3 million people and triggered a major humanitarian crisis.

More than one million people are crammed into the Rafah area near the border with Egypt, where many have just plastic sheeting

for shelter in the rain and cold.

Food, medicine, power and fuel have been in short supply, with deliveries of aid from outside Gaza delayed by onerous inspection regimes and complications distributing relief within the enclave.

MSF had not been able to make deliveries of aid to the north of Gaza since November, and requests to access areas throughout the strip were often denied or left unanswered by Israel, said Helen Ottens-Patterson, an MSF emergency coordinator.

"We're able to support our own activities in a very hard to mouth way, but beyond that I think the situation is catastrophic and we need unhindered humanitarian access as soon as possible, and we need a ceasefire to allow us to work properly," she said, reports Reuters.

The United Nations has also complained about Israel's "systematic" refusal to grant access to north Gaza, a problem it says became more acute this month.

## ETHNIC KILLINGS

# 15,000 killed in Sudan city

Says UNSC report

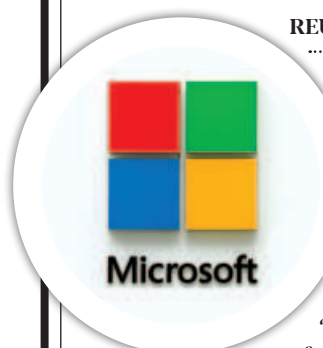
REUTERS, United Nations/Cairo

Between 10,000 and 15,000 people were killed in one city in Sudan's West Darfur region last year in ethnic violence by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and allied Arab militia, according to a United Nations report seen by Reuters on Friday. In the report to the UN Security Council, independent UN sanctions monitors attributed the toll in El Geneina to intelligence sources and contrasted it with the UN estimate that about 12,000 people have been killed across Sudan since war erupted on April 15, 2023, between the Sudanese army and the RSF. The monitors also described as "credible" accusations that the United Arab Emirates had provided military support to the RSF "several times per week" via Amdjarass in northern Chad. A top Sudanese general accused the UAE in November of backing the RSF war effort. In a letter to the monitors, the UAE said 122 flights had delivered humanitarian aid to Amdjarass to help Sudanese fleeing the war. The UN says about 500,000 people have fled Sudan into eastern Chad, several hundred kilometres south of Amdjarass. Between April and June last year El Geneina experienced "intense violence," the monitors wrote, accusing the RSF and allies of targeting the ethnic African Masalit tribe in attacks that "may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity." The RSF has previously denied the accusations and said any of its soldiers found to be involved would face justice.

## Russia's hackers spied on Microsoft executives

Company says

REUTERS



Microsoft MSFT.O said on Friday that a Russian state-sponsored group hacked into its corporate systems on January 12 and stole some emails and documents from staff accounts. The Russian group was able to access "a very small percentage" of Microsoft corporate email accounts, including members of its senior leadership team and employees in its cybersecurity, legal, and other functions, the company said. Microsoft's threat research team routinely investigates nation-state hackers such as Russia's "Midnight Blizzard," who they say is responsible. The company said its probe into the breach indicated the hackers were initially targeting Microsoft to learn what the technology giant knew about their operations. The Russian Embassy in Washington and Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



People hold bags with tulips in a picking garden with over 200,000 tulips that have been created on the Museumplein for National Tulip Day where everyone can pick one bunch for free, in Amsterdam, Netherlands yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## SEVERE WINTER STORMS

# Over 50 reported dead in US

AFP, Washington

Unrelenting storms have pummelled the United States over the past week, leading to at least 50 weather-related deaths, officials and US media reported Friday, as large swathes of the country brace for new winter wallops.

Frigid temperatures, snow gales and thick ice have caused fatal accidents on treacherous roadways, snarled air travel, closed schools and cut power to thousands, with millions of Americans under fresh weather warnings.

In Tennessee, 14 weather-related fatalities were confirmed by the southeastern state's health department, while five women who were returning home after making a pilgrimage to Mecca died on a Pennsylvania highway Tuesday in

an accident with a tractor-trailer, according to police.

Five weather-related deaths occurred in Kentucky, Governor Andy Beshear said in a statement Friday, while in Oregon, three people were electrocuted when a live power line fell on their parked car during an ice storm Wednesday, the Portland fire department said.

The storm had left 75,000 Oregon customers without power as of Friday evening, according to Poweroutage.us, a tracking website, and the state's governor has declared a state of emergency.

Deaths were also reported in Illinois, Kansas, New Hampshire, New York, Wisconsin and Washington state, where five people are believed to have succumbed to exposure, local media reported, citing Seattle officials.

Blizzard conditions hammered several parts of the country including the Pacific Northwest, the Rocky Mountains and parts of New England -- notably western New York, where meteorologists said about 75 inches (1.9 metres) of snow fell near Buffalo in a five-day span this week.

Frigid temperatures have also extended deep into the US South, a region not used to contending with such winter weather.

Parts of the country are bracing for more brutal conditions this weekend. "Another Arctic blast will bring cold temperatures and dangerous wind chills to the Plains and the Mississippi Valley to the eastern US," the National Weather Service said Friday in its latest alert.

Air travel suffered significant setbacks Friday too.

## UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION FALL 2023



### Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology



#### OFFERED PROGRAMS

- Faculty of Architecture and Planning**  
Bachelor of Architecture (ARCH)
- Faculty of Engineering (ENGG.)**  
B. Sc. in Civil Engineering (CE)  
B. Sc. in Computer Science and Engineering (CSE)  
B. Sc. in Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE)  
B. Sc. in Textile Engineering (TE)  
B. Sc. in Industrial and Production Engineering (IPE)  
B. Sc. in Mechanical Engineering (ME)
- Faculty of Business and Social Sciences**  
Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)

#### ADMISSION SCHEDULE

- Application Date: Up to 27.01.2024 (Saturday)
- Date of Verification of FF, RA and O and A-Level Application: 31.01.2024 (Wednesday) (from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm)
- Publication of the Shortlisted Candidates: 05.02.2024 (Monday)
- Date of Admission Test: 10.02.2024 (Saturday)
- Publication of Merit List: 18.02.2024 (Sunday)
- Modification of Program Choice: 19.02.2024 (Monday) & 20.02.2024 (Tuesday)
- Publication of Merit List with Selected Program: 25.02.2024 (Sunday)

#### QUALIFICATION

- Category 1: ENGG. Program(s), ENGG.+ARCH. Program(s) and, Category 2: ARCH. Program**
  - HSC (Science) with Math, Physics, Chemistry
  - GPA in HSC: Minimum 3.5 (with additional subject)
  - Minimum total of SSC and HSC GPAs: 8.0 including additional subject
  - For O-Level and A-Level/ Equivalent**
  - O-level or equivalent (with at least five subjects including Math, Physics, Chemistry & English)
  - A-level or equivalent with Math, Physics & Chemistry with minimum equivalent GPA of 3.5
  - Minimum equivalent total of O and A-level GPAs: 8.0
  - Grade equivalence: A\*/A=5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, and E = 1
- Category 3: BBA Program**
  - SSC and HSC or equivalent from any discipline
  - Minimum total of SSC and HSC GPAs: 7.0 including additional subject with at least 2.0 at any level
  - For O-Level and A-Level/ Equivalent**
  - The candidate completed a minimum of five subjects in O-level and two subjects in A-level
  - Minimum equivalent total of O and A-level GPAs: 7.0 with at least 3.0 at any level
  - Grade equivalence: A\*/A=5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, and E = 1

#### NOTE

- Applicants from **Category 1** with an option for ENGG. (only) have to sit for a Common Admission Test (Mathematics + Physics + Chemistry + English) for 1 hour and 45 Minutes.
- Applicants from **Category 1** with an option for ENGG.+ARCH. and **Category 2: ARCH.** have to sit for an additional 1 Hour and 30 Minutes 'Drawing Test' after appearing in the Common Admission Test (Mathematics + Physics + Chemistry + English)
- Applicants from **Category 3: BBA Program** have to sit for Admission Test (English + General Mathematics + Information and Communication Technology) for 1 hour and 45 Minutes, starting at the same time as Engineering Common Test.
- As per Private University Act 2010, 3% of the total seats are reserved for sons/daughters of Freedom Fighters (FF), while another 3% for poor and meritorious candidates of Remote and Undeveloped Areas (RA).
- Candidates have to apply through the website (<https://iums.aust.edu/admission/>) by paying the necessary application processing fees through bKash.
- Candidates who have passed SSC or O-level or equivalent examinations in 2019 and onwards, and HSC or A-level or equivalent examinations in 2021 and onwards can apply.
- Detailed application procedures and other information are available on the University Website (<http://admission.aust.edu>).