

Explosion heard near ship off Yemen coast: UK US downs Houthi drones

REUTERS, Dubai

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) organisation said that an explosion was reported at a distance off a vessel's starboard side west of Yemen's Hodeidah. UKMTO said that the vessel and crew are safe.

Residents said the Houthis fired a missile from a camp in the Houthi-controlled lbb city in central Yemen towards the sea.

The Iran-aligned Houthi militants, who control the most populous parts of Yemen, have launched a wave of exploding drones and missiles at commercial vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden in recent weeks, calling it a response to Israel's military operations in Gaza and a show of solidarity with Palestinians.

Late on Wednesday, the United States struck up to 10 unmanned drones in Yemen that were preparing to launch, a US official said. A US Navy ship also shot down three Iranian drones and a Houthi anti-ship ballistic missile in the Gulf of Aden, the US military's Central Command said in a statement.



Emergency workers bring a Palestinian man, who was released after being detained with other civilians for questioning by Israeli forces, to Al-Najjar Hospital in Rafah yesterday. The Palestinians said they were subject to ill-treatment, including beatings and acts of torture.

PHOTO: AFP

130 Rohingyas arrive in Indonesia's Aceh Says UN; UK sanctions Myanmar military-linked enterprises

REUTERS, Jakarta

Over 130 Rohingyas landed on the shores of Indonesia's Aceh province yesterday, an official at the UN refugee agency said, the latest in a series of such arrivals that have drawn controversy in the Southeast Asian country.

The Rohingyas, a persecuted religious minority in Myanmar, have faced rejection and hostility from locals in Aceh when they land ashore. Nearly 2,000 of them have arrived since October last year, UNHCR data showed.

Faisal Rahman, protection associate at the UNHCR in Indonesia, said over 130 Rohingya arrived in the East Aceh area yesterday morning.

For years Rohingyas have been leaving Myanmar, where they are generally regarded as foreign interlopers from South Asia, denied citizenship and subjected to abuse.

They often travel by rickety boats to escape poor conditions there or in camps in neighbouring Bangladesh. Some travel to Indonesia and Malaysia between November and April, when the seas are calmer. In Indonesia, they have faced hostility.

Meanwhile, Britain yesterday imposed sanctions on military units and enterprises involved in what it said were "serious human rights violations" and the repression of civilians in Myanmar.



UNRWA 'backbone' of Gaza aid response

Says UN chief, appeals to all countries to 'guarantee continuity of its lifesaving work'

AGENCIES

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called his organization's Palestinian refugee agency the "backbone" of Gaza aid after several countries suspended funding over Israeli claims 12 UNRWA staffers participated in Hamas' October 7 attacks.

He also appealed to all countries to "guarantee the continuity of UNRWA's lifesaving work."

"Yesterday, I met with donors to listen to their concerns and to outline the steps we are taking to address them... UNRWA is the backbone of all humanitarian response in Gaza," Guterres told a UN committee on Palestinian rights on Wednesday.

Withholding UNRWA funding was "perilous and would result in the collapse of the humanitarian system in Gaza," the heads of the UN agencies said in a joint statement Tuesday.

The dispute intensified earlier Tuesday after Israel accused UNRWA of allowing Hamas to use agency infrastructure in Gaza for military activity.

UNRWA said it has acted promptly over allegations by Israel that 12 of its staff were involved in the Hamas attacks. Washington, Britain, Germany and Japan are among countries to have suspended payments in light of those disclosures.

The UN's humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths said the entire humanitarian system -- with UNRWA at its center -- was committed to delivering aid to

Gaza, reports AFP.

"The breadth of the humanitarian community -- including UN agencies, NGOs, the Red Cross and the Red Crescent -- is collaborating to ensure that aid reaches people in need to the greatest extent possible," he told the UN Security Council. "You will not be surprised to hear that at the beating heart of this is UNRWA."

substitute (the) tremendous capacity... of UNRWA."

The World Health Organization's emergencies director Michael Ryan said on Wednesday that population of Gaza is starving to death due to constraints imposed on humanitarian aid.

The WHO said the risk of famine in the Palestinian territory was already high and on the rise, with the space

"Our humanitarian response for the occupied Palestinian territories is dependent on UNRWA being adequately funded and operational."

UN's humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths



"Our humanitarian response for the occupied Palestinian territories is dependent on UNRWA being adequately funded and operational. Of course we would like to see decisions to withhold funds from UNRWA revoked," he said.

UN Gaza aid coordinator Sigrid Kaag said earlier Tuesday "there is no way that any organization can replace or

for humanitarian intervention being increasingly squeezed.

"This is a population that is starving to death, this is a population that is being pushed to the brink," Ryan told a press conference. "The civilians of Gaza are not parties to this conflict and they should be protected, as should be their health facilities," he added.

ARREST OF JHARKHAND CM India opposition accuses govt of crackdown

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's opposition parties yesterday accused the government of targeting their leaders in the build-up to elections after the financial crime agency arrested a state chief minister on corruption charges, the latest in a series of investigations. Hemant Soren, chief minister of the eastern state of Jharkhand, denied any wrongdoing in a video message posted online hours before his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday evening. Soren is a senior leader of the opposition "INDIA" alliance, made up of more than two dozen parties campaigning to unseat Prime Minister Narendra Modi in general elections due by May. "I will continue my struggle and win against this political conspiracy... Our rivals are succeeding in their unholy intentions for now but we will keep fighting," Soren said. The ED has said it is investigating several other opposition leaders including ministers from the national capital territory of Delhi. Officials at the ED did not respond to questions about Soren and other cases. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) did not comment on the individual cases, but denied any political interference and said investigations were justified.

P&G PLANT IN TURKEY Armed attacker takes hostages

AFP, Istanbul

An armed assailant yesterday raided a plant owned by the US consumer goods giant Procter & Gamble near Istanbul and took an undisclosed number of people hostage, Turkish media reported. The assailant appeared to be acting in protest at US support for Israel's military assault in Gaza, the private DHA news agency reported. Turkish officials and police issued no immediate comment. It was not clear how many people were being held at the plant, which lies on the eastern outskirts of Istanbul. Images from the scenes showed police setting up a cordon around the sprawling plant, which primarily manufactures cosmetics. Special operation forces and medical personnel were dispatched to the scene, DHA reported. The health ministry in Gaza said yesterday at least 27,019 people have been killed in nearly four-month-long Israeli offensive in Gaza.

IRAQ, SYRIA US approves plan to strike Iranian targets

REUTERS, Washington

The United States has approved plans for multi-day strikes in Iraq and Syria against multiple targets, including Iranian personnel and facilities, CBS News reported yesterday, citing US officials. President Joe Biden said on Tuesday he had made up his mind on how to respond to a drone attack in northeastern Jordan near Syrian border this week that killed three US service members and wounded more than 40. The US blamed the drone attack on Iran-backed militants. Biden's top diplomat, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, said on Monday the US response "could be multi-leveled, come in stages, and be sustained over time." In its report, CBS did not provide details on what a US approval meant in terms of a timeline for the strikes. The drone attack was the first deadly strike against US forces since Israel's offensive in Gaza erupted in October, and marked an escalation in tensions that have engulfed the Middle East.

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Natore PWD Division, Natore
Phone: 0258-8871273, Fax: 0258-8871026
E-mail: ee_nator@pwd.gov.bd

Memo No: 555 Date: 01/02/2024Eng.

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works mentioned below:

Tender ID No	Description of Goods/Works	Last selling date and time	Opening date and time
942699	Construction of Armory at Natore District Commandant under the project "Construction of Armory for Ansar and VDP (40 Nos at 1st Phase) (1st Revised)".	14-Feb-2024 16:00	15-Feb-2024 15:00

- This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no office/hard copies will be accepted.
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- The fees for downloading the e-Tender Document from the National e-GP system Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branch.
- Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

Amit Kumar Dev
Executive Engineer
Natore PWD Division, Natore.

GD-180

"I'm sorry for everything you have all been through."
Meta CEO Zuckerberg apologises to families in US Senate hearing over the dangers that children face on social media platforms

Humans reached icy Europe in time of Neanderthals

AFP, Paris

Pioneering groups of humans braved icy conditions to settle in northern Europe more than 45,000 years ago, a "huge surprise" that means they could have lived there alongside Neanderthals, scientists said Wednesday.

The international team of researchers found human bones and tools hiding behind a huge rock in a German cave, oldest traces of Homo sapiens ever discovered so far north.

The discovery could rewrite the story of how the species populated Europe -- and how it came to replace the Neanderthals, who mysteriously went extinct just a few thousand years after humans arrived. When the two co-existed in Europe, there was a "replacement phenomenon" between the Middle Paleolithic and the Upper Paleolithic periods, French paleoanthropologist Jean-Jacques Hublin, who led the research, said.

Evidence such as stone tools from both species has been discovered dating from this period -- but determining exactly who created what has proved difficult because of a lack of bones.

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