



Migrants wave to a smuggler's boat in an attempt to cross the English Channel, on the beach of Gravelines, near Dunkirk, northern France on Friday. Five migrants, including a seven-year-old girl, died on April 23, 2024 trying to cross the Channel from France to Britain, local authorities said, just hours after Britain passed a controversial bill to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda. PHOTO: AFP

20 Cambodian soldiers killed in ammunition base explosion

AFP, Phnom Penh

Twenty Cambodian soldiers have been killed in an ammunition explosion at an army base, Prime Minister Hun Manet said yesterday.

The blast at around 2.45pm (0745 GMT) at the army base in Kampong Speu province to the west of the capital also wounded several soldiers, according to the PM, with the army saying that an entire truck of munitions had exploded.

"I am deeply shocked to receive the news of the ammunition explosion incident," Hun Manet said in a statement on Facebook, expressing his "deepest condolences" to the families of those killed.

It was not immediately clear what had caused the explosion.

Cambodia's army said the incident was a "warehouse ammunition explosion" that had destroyed a truck fully loaded with weaponry.

An office building as well as nearby barracks were destroyed, with 25 nearby homes also battered by the resulting explosion.

In his statement, Hun Manet also said that the families of those killed would receive roughly \$20,000 each, while injured soldiers would get \$5,000.

Russia hits energy sites in Ukraine

Moscow claims shooting down 68 Ukrainian drones; US announces \$6b in security aid for Ukraine

AFP, Kyiv

Russia launched a "massive" missile strike at Ukraine overnight, damaging four power plants in the latest barrage targeting the country's energy supply, officials in Kyiv said yesterday.

Two people were killed and at least 10 more wounded in Russian shelling.

Moscow has launched some of its largest ever strikes on Ukraine's energy facilities in recent months, knocking out a significant chunk of production, and triggering blackouts and energy rationing across the country.

Ukraine also fired more than 60 drones at southern Russia overnight, Moscow said, in one of its largest overnight drone attacks. Kyiv claimed to have hit two oil refineries and a military air base.

"Russian armed forces staged another massive missile attack on Ukraine," the Ukrainian army said in its regular morning update.

"The enemy has once again attacked the country's energy infrastructure. In particular, facilities in Dnipropetrovsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Lviv regions were attacked. There is damage to equipment," Energy Minister German Galushchenko said in a Facebook post.

The Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk regions are in Ukraine's west, bordering the EU and hundreds of kilometres from the frontlines.



A family sleeps while taking shelter inside a metro station during a Russian missile strike, in Kyiv, Ukraine, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Ukraine's air force said Moscow had fired 34 missiles, of which 21 were shot down.

Kyiv says Moscow is escalating its attacks from the air and on land ahead of nationwide celebrations on May 9, when Russia marks victory in World War II, and while Ukraine awaits the arrival of crucial US weapons.

The DTEK power operator said equipment at four of its thermal power plants was "severely damaged" in the overnight strikes.

State electricity operator Ukrrenergoproekt said it had disconnected its main overhead power line in the west of the country as a preventative measure.

Officials asked energy users to limit their power usage.

Ukraine also launched its own massive drone attack on Russia's southern Krasnodar region overnight.

A Ukrainian defence source told AFP its drones had hit two oil refineries and a military airfield in the region, just east of the annexed Crimean peninsula.

The attack comes after US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Friday announced the United States will provide key air defense munitions and artillery rounds to Ukraine as part of a \$6 billion military aid package that is its largest ever for Kyiv.

10 killed in fire at Brazil homeless shelter

AFP, Porto Alegre

At least 10 people were killed Friday in a fire that broke out in a defunct hotel being used as a makeshift homeless shelter in the city of Porto Alegre in southern Brazil, officials said.

Health authorities said at least 13 others were injured in the fire and taken to local hospitals, several in critical condition.

The shelter did not have an operating permit or fire prevention plan, said the fire department for Rio Grande do Sul state, whose capital is Porto Alegre.

The fire broke out around 2:00 am (0500 GMT), officials said. It took firefighters around three hours to bring it under control.

"Forensic experts are at the scene to identify the victims and investigate the cause," the fire department said in a statement.

Images in Brazilian media from overnight showed the building engulfed in flames as firefighters battled to extinguish them.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva sent his condolences to the victims' families.

The building belongs to a network of budget youth hostel-style hotels in Porto Alegre.

Modi will be first PM who 'lies': Priyanka

NDTV ONLINE

Hitting back at PM Modi, who has attacked the Congress over the alleged "wealth redistribution" issue, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said she has seen several PMs, including her father who she "brought back in pieces", but not one who lies to the people.

Addressing a rally in Gujarat, Ms Gandhi said, "I can say with conviction that this will be the first Prime Minister of the country who lies to you like this."

In various rallies during the ongoing Lok Sabha election, PM Modi has alleged that the Congress would distribute people's hard-earned money to minorities if voted to power and would not spare even women's 'mangalsutras'.

The Congress, including its president Mallikarjun Kharge, has denied this charge and accused the PM of spreading misinformation.

Pasteurised milk 'safe' from bird flu

AFP, Washington

Milk sold in US stores is "safe" from the bird flu because pasteurisation effectively kills the disease, American health authorities said Friday, following spread of the infection among herds of cows.

An outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) has made its way through dairy cattle herds across the country and infected one human, who had mild symptoms.

On Thursday the FDA reported that initial results from a nationally representative commercial milk sampling showed about one in five retail milk samples tested positive for viral fragments, with a higher proportion in areas where herds are infected.

The FDA had announced earlier this week that thanks to the pasteurization process the virus was unlikely to present a health risk via milk. But it said additional tests were needed.

Preliminary results indicated "pasteurization is effective in inactivating HPAI," the FDA said in its press release Friday.

Bird flu was previously detected in raw milk, which health authorities have long advised against consuming. There is no evidence of human-to-human bird flu transmission at this time, but scientists fear a mutation in the virus could allow it to pass among people.

Mona Lisa could get a room of her own

AFP, Paris



The Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci, the world's most famous portrait, could get a room of its own in the Louvre, the museum's president said on Saturday.

Such a move would give visitors, many of whom visit the Louvre for the iconic painting alone, a better experience, Laurence des Cars told the France Inter broadcaster.

The Louvre, the world's most popular museum, welcomed close to nine million visitors in 2023.

Des Cars said 80 percent of them - 20,000 people per day - braved the crowd to catch a glimpse of the Mona Lisa's enigmatic smile, often taking selfies in front of the painting.

The Mona Lisa currently hangs in the Louvre's Salle des Etats (State Room), the museum's biggest, in a protective glass case, but Da Vinci's masterwork is not alone there. It is accompanied by works by 16th-century Venetian masters, and across the room hangs the Louvre's biggest painting, The Wedding at Cana by Paolo Veronese.

Putin likely didn't kill Alexei Navalny

Reports WSJ citing US intelligence

REUTERS, London

US intelligence agencies have determined that Russian President Vladimir Putin probably didn't order opposition politician Alexei Navalny killed at an Arctic prison camp in February, the Wall Street Journal reported yesterday.

Navalny, 47 when he died, was Putin's fiercest domestic critic. His allies, branded extremists by the authorities, accused Putin of having him murdered and have said they will provide proof to back their allegation.

The Kremlin has denied any state involvement. Last month, Putin called Navalny's demise "sad" and said he had been ready to hand the jailed politician over to the West in a prisoner exchange provided Navalny never returned to Russia. Navalny's allies said such talks had been underway.

The Journal, citing unnamed people familiar with the matter, yesterday said that US intelligence agencies had concluded that Putin probably didn't order Navalny to be killed in February.

It said Washington had not absolved the Russian leader of overall responsibility for

Navalny's death, however. The US assessment was based on a range of information, including some classified intelligence, and an analysis of public facts, including the timing of Navalny's death and how it overshadowed Putin's re-election in March, the paper cited some of its sources as saying.

Reuters could not independently verify the report, which cited sources as saying the finding had been "broadly accepted within the intelligence community and shared by several agencies, including the Central Intelligence Agency, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the State Department's intelligence unit."

Leonid Volkov, a senior Navalny aide, was cited as calling the US findings naive and ridiculous.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said on Saturday he had seen the Journal's report, which he said contained "empty speculation".

"I've seen the material, I wouldn't say it's high quality material that deserves attention," Peskov told reporters.



People protest in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza in London, Britain, yesterday. A student protest, which started in the US, is spreading worldwide in support of Gaza. PHOTO: REUTERS