

Ship targeted by 'missile' attack off Yemen

AFP, Dubai

A missile attack targeted a commercial vessel transiting southwest of Yemen's port city of Hodeidah without causing any damage or casualties, maritime security firms said yesterday.

The vessel was "suspiciously approached" 68 nautical miles (125 kilometres) off Hodeidah, Ambrey said, without identifying the ship or the flag that it was flying.

"The vessel had undergone what she described as a 'missile attack' at the location," it added, noting that "no injuries or damages were reported".

The UK Maritime Trade Operations also reported an incident at the same location, with "a missile impacting the water in close proximity" to the ship.



Tens of thousands of mourners attend a burial ceremony of the late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi in Mashhad, Iran yesterday. Raisi was laid to rest at the gold-domed Imam Reza shrine, the holiest Islamic site in Iran and revered by Shia Muslims as the resting place of the 9th century Imam Ali al-Reza.

PHOTO: REUTERS

CAMPUS TENSIONS Univ heads to testify before US House committee

REUTERS, Washington

The heads of three universities and an academic honor society were due to testify yesterday to the US House Committee on Education and the Workforce about universities' handling of pro-Palestinian protests.

The hearing is the sixth event the committee and its subcommittees have held on schools' responses to tensions that have flared since Israeli offensive in Gaza began on October 7.

On dozens of campuses throughout the country, students set up tents and held rallies to call on President Joe Biden to do more to end the fighting in Gaza and to demand that their universities divest from companies that back the government of Israel.

China holds war games around Taiwan

Vows blood of 'independence forces'; Taipei condemns drills, pledges to 'defend freedom'

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday encircled Taiwan with naval vessels and military aircraft in war games, as it vowed the blood of "independence forces" on the self-ruled island would flow.

The two days of drills are part of an escalating campaign of intimidation by China that has seen it carry out a series of large-scale military exercises around Taiwan in recent years.

The drills come after Lai Ching-te was sworn in as Taiwan's new president this week and made an inauguration speech that China denounced as a "confession of independence".

As the drills got underway, China's military said they would serve as "strong punishment for the separatist acts of 'Taiwan independence' forces".

Foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin then delivered a



warning that included language more commonly used by China's propaganda outlets.

"Taiwan independence forces will be left with their heads broken and blood flowing after colliding against the great... trend of China achieving complete unification," Wang told reporters.

China -- governed by the Communist Party since 1949 -- claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has vowed to bring the democratic island under its rule, by force if necessary.

Yesterday and today's drills --

codenamed "Joint Sword-2024A" -- involve aircraft and ships surrounding the island to test their combat capabilities, China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) said.

Taiwan responded by deploying air, ground and sea forces, with the island's defence ministry vowing to "defend freedom".

President Lai said he would "stand on the front line" to defend Taiwan, without directly referring to the ongoing drills.

"Faced with external challenges and threats, we will continue to defend the values of freedom and democracy, and safeguard peace and stability in the region," he said.

China has repeatedly branded Lai a "dangerous separatist". Beijing was further incensed with his inauguration speech on Monday in which he hailed a "glorious" era for Taiwan's democracy.

Heatwave in Pakistan disrupts education

AFP, Lahore

Half of Pakistan's pupils will be shut out of schools for a week as the nation takes crisis measures to lessen the effect of a series of heatwaves, officials said yesterday.

Some 26 million students will be out of lessons from tomorrow in Punjab, which has ordered schools to close for the summer break one week early because of the soaring temperatures.

The early closure was confirmed by a spokesperson for Punjab's Education Department.

Pakistan's meteorological office has forecast three heatwaves, one already underway and two more set to hit in June.

Temperatures in Punjab are currently six to eight degrees Celsius above normal.

UK parties hit campaign trail as polls battle starts

AFP, London

UK political leaders kicked off six weeks of campaigning yesterday, firing the first angry shots in their electoral battle before the country votes for a new government on July 4.

Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunak ended prolonged speculation about the general election in a rain-soaked speech Wednesday outside Downing Street, which some took as an omen for his Conservatives' chances at the ballot box.

Sunak hit the airwaves for a round of radio and television interviews yesterday, before a whistlestop tour of Britain to insist he was right to call the vote.

But UK commentators were virtually unanimous in describing his decision to hold a vote six months before he has to as a "gamble".

"I can't for the life of me imagine why he has done this," former Tory MP Matthew Parris wrote in The Times newspaper.

The Conservatives have been in power since 2010, first with David Cameron as prime minister, then Theresa May, Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, and increasingly beset by scandal and ideological infighting with hardliners.

The right-wingers' tumultuous time in power has been dominated by Brexit and its chaotic aftermath, as well as Covid and a cost-of-living crisis, all of which has eaten into public support.

'Stop harassing my old and ailing parents'

Kejriwal tells PM Modi

TNN, New Delhi



Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal yesterday questioned the rationale behind what he perceives as targeting his elderly and ailing parents in the connection with Swati Maliwal assault case.

Kejriwal voiced his concerns during a press briefing in the capital and claimed that his old and ailing

parents were being targeted to "break" him. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi by doing this has "crossed all limits".

Expressing deep anguish, Kejriwal said that his mother is battling multiple ailments, while his father is grappling with hearing issues. "I have a message and appeal for PM Modi. You arrested my MLAs but I did not break. You arrested my minister but you could not make me bow. You arrested me and I was harassed in jail," he said.

"But today you crossed all limits. To break me you targeted my old and ailing parents... God will not forgive you," Kejriwal, who was arrested in the Delhi excise policy-linked money laundering case, said.

Nigeria troops rescue 64 kidnap victims, says official

AFP, Kano

Nigeria troops have rescued 64 women and children kidnapped by criminal gangs weeks ago in Zamfara state, a government spokesman said yesterday.

Mass kidnappings for ransom are common in Nigeria's northwest and central states, where heavily armed gangs known locally as bandits often target remote villages to loot and abduct residents.

Early last month gunmen raided the remote Gidan Danzara village in the Zurmi district of Zamfara, taking 64 women and children captive and demanded ransom for

their release.

Zamfara State governor's spokesman Suleiman Bala Idris said the captives were released on Tuesday following a "military onslaught" on bandit camps in the area.

Idris denied any ransom was paid, but residents claimed they had to pay the bandits to secure their release.

Ransom payments to kidnappers is illegal in Nigeria, but families often say they end up selling properties and taking loans to raise cash to free abducted relatives.

Details about Nigerian kidnap rescues are also often unclear with contradictory statements

emerging from relatives of victims and authorities over ransom or negotiations with captors.

The criminal gangs, who maintain hidden camps in a vast forest straddling Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina and Niger states, are notorious for mass abductions, even targeting schools and colleges.

"All the 64 women and children kidnapped from the village were released by their captors due to the military operations conducted by troops in the area," Idris said.

He said a massive deployment of troops to Zamfara in the past week had "changed trend" with troops taking the battle to bandit camps.

Russia passes decree to allow seizure of US assets

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday signed a decree allowing the confiscation of assets inside Russia belonging to the United States, its citizens and companies, to compensate those hit by Western sanctions against Moscow.

The West froze around \$300 billion of Russian financial assets, mostly its central bank reserves, after Moscow ordered troops into Ukraine in February 2022.

Plot afoot for new state carved out of Bangladesh, Myanmar

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She said, "Like East Timor... they will carve out a Christian country taking parts of Bangladesh [Chattogram] and Myanmar with a base in the Bay of Bengal."

Hasina mentioned that business activities have been going through the Bay and the Indian Ocean from ancient times. "Many have their eyes on this place. There is no controversy here, no conflict. I won't let that happen. This is also one of my crimes [in their eyes]," she said.

About the proposal for airbase, the premier said, "The offer came from a white man."

"It may appear that it is aimed at only one country, but it is not. I know where else they intend to go," she said and stated that this is why the Awami League government is always in trouble.

"There will be more trouble. But don't worry

about it."

"If I allowed a certain country to build an airbase in Bangladesh, then I would have had no problem."

She alleged that the BNP had conspired to prevent the election.

Hasina also mentioned that she made the same reply as she did in 2001 when the US offered to sell the country's gas to India.

She also said, "If inflation can be reduced now, people would be relieved. Production is sufficient. There is no shortage."

Hasina said foreign exchange reserves of many countries are decreasing, including Bangladesh. "There is no need to worry about the reserves if there is food stock in times of emergency."

CLOSED-DOOR MEETING
After delivering her introductory speech, Hasina held a closed door meeting with the partners of the 14-party alliance where

she said conspiracies were being hatched to topple the government and she might have to face the same consequence her father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman faced, sources said.

However, she said conspiracies did not bother her and she would never bow down to pressure.

The premier told the meeting that Bangladesh will not purchase anything from countries that impose sanctions on it, a top leader of the 14-party quoted Hasina as saying.

As leaders of the AL's partner parties asked whether the alliance was relevant, Hasina replied in the affirmative.

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon observed that extremism and Salafism were rising alarmingly while Samyabadi Dal leader Dilip Barua said Bangladesh was on course to become an Islamic republic,

said insiders.

Dilip further said a section of AL leaders questioned whether the partner parties were popular, even though the 14-party alliance was formed amid political necessity, not on the consideration that the parties would attract more votes.

He pointed out that Bangladesh Kalyan Party was not very popular and its chairman Major General (Retd) Syed Mohammad Ibrahim was still a lawmaker, said sources.

"Why couldn't some top leaders of the 14-party alliance win and not get Awami League support during the January 7 election?" he asked.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu said 14-party partners supported the AL through thick and thin, even during the political changeover of January 11 in 2007, when

many AL leaders betrayed Hasina, Inu said.

Tarikat Federation Chairman Syed Nazibul Bashar Maizvandari said he filed cases against Jamaat-e-Islami and the AL benefited from it, but he and his party were "nowhere near power", said sources.

He blamed a section of AL leaders for forming several "king's parties" ahead of the January 7 election to compete against his party.

Communist Kendra leader Asit Baran Roy told the meeting that Bangabandhu dreamt of economic freedom for the people, but the country is not free from corruption and fundamentalism.

Rather, economic and social disparity widened, he said, expressing concerns over the rising price of essentials and demanded the government's step to bring the prices down, said the sources.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার	
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজর কার্যালয়	
সড়ক বিভাগ, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া	
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স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.১২১৩.৪০৬.৯৯.৩৩৫.২০.৮৪২	তারিখঃ ২১/৫/২৪
সেতুর ইজারা কোটেশন আহ্বান বিজ্ঞপ্তি	
১	ইজারা কোটেশন নং : ০২ (দুই)/২০২৩-২০২৪/ নিঃপ্রঃ, সওজ, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া (১০ম আহ্বান)।
২	ইজারার বিবরণ : ২০২৪-২০২৫, ২০২৫-২০২৬ এবং ২০২৬-২০২৭ইং ০৩ (তিন) অর্থ বৎসরের জন্য ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া সড়ক সরাইদ-নাসিরনগর-লাখাই-হবিগঞ্জ (আর-২২০) সড়কের ২৫তম কিলোমিটার এ বলভদ্র নদীর উপর নির্মিত বলভদ্র সেতুর উপর দিয়ে চলাচলকারী সকল প্রকার যানবাহন হতে টোল আদায়ের ইজারা কোটেশন।
৩	ইজারা চুক্তির মেয়াদ : ০৩ (তিন) অর্থ বৎসর (১০৯৫) দিন।
৪	ইজারা কোটেশনের সিডিউল মূল্য : টাঃ ৫০০০.০০ (পাঁচ হাজার টাকা মাত্র)।
৫	বায়নার টাকার পরিমাণ : উদ্ধৃত মূল্যের ১০% (শতকরা দশ ভাগ) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার আকারে।
৬	ইজারা কোটেশন বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময় : ০২/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ তারিখ বিকাল ৪:০০ পর্যন্ত।
৭	মুখবন্ধ অবস্থায় ইজারা কোটেশন গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময় : ০৩/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ তারিখ দুপুর ১২:০০ পর্যন্ত।
৮	ইজারা ডাকে অংশগ্রহণের যোগ্যতা : ডাট্টা ও আয়কর সনদধারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/নাগরিক, সরকারী/বেসরকারী/ব্যাপ্তিশাসিত সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানের ঠিকাদার।
৯	যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন ক্রয়ের জন্য পাওয়া যাবে : তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক সার্কেল, কুমিল্লা জেলা প্রশাসক ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া/নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া/উপঃনিঃপ্রঃ সড়ক উপ-বিভাগ, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া, বাঞ্ছারামপুর/যান্ত্রিক উপ-বিভাগ, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া।
১০	যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন মুখবন্ধ অবস্থায় গ্রহণ করা হবে : তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক সার্কেল, কুমিল্লা/নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া/জেলা প্রশাসক, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া।
১১	ইজারা কোটেশন খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময় : স্থানঃ নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তর, সড়ক বিভাগ, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া। তারিখঃ ০৩/০৬/২০২৪ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ, সময়ঃ ১:০০ ঘটিকা।
১২	ইজারা আহ্বানকারী যে কোন সময় যে কোন কোটেশন/সকল কোটেশন বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

মীর নিজাম উদ্দিন আহমেদ
পরিচিতি নং-৬০২১৫৬
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া

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