

WEST BANK REFUGEE CAMP  
Israeli fire kills 3  
Palestinians  
Hamas transfers bodies of four  
Israeli hostages to Red Cross

REUTERS

Three Palestinians were killed on Wednesday evening by Israeli forces in the al-Faraa camp near Tubas in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian state news agency WAFA reported.

Security forces told WAFA the three people were killed after the Israeli military fired bullets and shells at their home.

The Israeli army said in a statement that the three people were “wanted terrorists who sold weapons for terror purposes”. They said two other individuals were detained.

Wednesday’s incident comes as Israel continues with a weeks-long offensive that has demolished houses and torn up vital infrastructure in refugee camps in the West Bank.

Meanwhile, Hamas yesterday handed over the bodies of four hostages taken into Gaza during their October 2023 attack, with the Palestinian group saying they include the Bibas family.

This is the first release of dead hostages under a fragile ceasefire under which living hostages have been exchanged for Palestinians held in Israeli prisons.



Rescuers work at the site of a residential building damaged during a Russian airstrike in Kherson, Ukraine, yesterday. The Ukrainian military said it shot down 80 drones and 78 were “lost,” likely due to electronic countermeasures.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Will work with  
Trump as ‘long as  
helpful’: Musk

AFP, Washington

Elon Musk has said he would work with US President Donald Trump for as long as he “can be helpful,” as the pair dismissed concerns over possible conflicts of interest due to the tech tycoon’s work with the White House.

“I’ll be as helpful as long as I can be helpful,” Musk said when asked in a Fox News interview alongside Trump if he expected to work with the administration for the president’s four-year term.

Trump has vowed to slash government spending since returning to office last month, with Musk and his so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) tasked with carrying out that effort.

Musk has deployed vast powers granted to him by the president to restructure and dismantle federal agencies.

However, the White House has said Musk is not an official employee of DOGE and has “no formal authority to make government decisions.”

The unprecedented cost-cutting drive has raised conflict-of-interest questions, given that many of the targeted agencies have regulatory oversight on elements of Musk’s businesses.



Britain, France eye  
‘reassurance force’ for Kyiv  
Say UK media reports as European powers fear Trump could  
end Ukraine war on terms favourable to Moscow

AFP, London

Britain and France are spearheading attempts to create a European “reassurance force” of fewer than 30,000 troops to protect Ukraine after any ceasefire deal with Russia, UK media reported yesterday.

The idea comes as European powers fear that US President Donald Trump could end the three-year war on terms favourable to Moscow, without providing security guarantees to Kyiv.

The UK-France proposal — attributed to unnamed western officials — would likely focus on air and maritime defence, with “minimal” forces on the ground and none near the eastern frontline, the Guardian newspaper said.

The Times reported that a so-called US backstop in the form of “air cover” would be essential to the plan, which would seek to deter Russia from violating any agreement.

“The area we have a significant advantage over Russia is in the air

Zelensky called for a deterrence force of more than 100,000 personnel to help secure a lasting peace

and in (our) ability to respond to flagrant abuses of a ceasefire,” the Financial Times quoted a western official as saying.

It is unclear whether the considerations would satisfy Kyiv or be acceptable to Moscow. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has previously called for a western deterrence force of more than 100,000 personnel to help secure a lasting peace.

Russia told the US in talks Tuesday that it opposed any Nato member sending troops to Ukraine as part of a ceasefire. France and the UK are two of the main players in the western military alliance.

Trump has sent shock waves around Europe by saying he is ready to resume diplomacy with Russian President Vladimir Putin to end the war, over the heads of European countries and Kyiv.

The new US administration has expressed sympathy for some of Moscow’s demands, including over territory captured from Ukraine since 2014 and Russia’s insistence that Ukraine does not join Nato.



University students march during an anti-government protest called ‘Indonesia Gelap’ (Dark Indonesia) against recent budget efficiency policies, near the presidential palace in Jakarta, Indonesia, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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