

'Get this war ended'

Trump tells Putin and Zelensky

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump said on Friday he would like Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to "get this war ended" in Ukraine as he pushes for a 30-day ceasefire.

Trump, who departs on Monday on a trip to Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar, was asked what his message to Putin is in the wake of a warning from the US embassy in Kyiv about a "potentially significant" air attack in the coming days.

"I have a message for both parties: Get this war ended," Trump says of Ukraine and Russia. "Get this stupid war finished. That's my message for both of them," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

The embassy said on its website that it had received information about an air attack that may occur at any time over the next several days.

"The Embassy, as always, recommends US citizens be prepared to immediately shelter in the event an air alert is announced," it said.

The White House said Trump had a "very good and productive" call with Zelensky on Thursday and that Trump hopes both Ukraine and Russia will agree next week to a proposed 30-day ceasefire.

White House spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt, speaking to reporters at a briefing on Friday, also reiterated that a Trump meeting with Putin next week in the Middle East was not going to happen.

In Kyiv, Zelensky's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, said he spoke by telephone on Friday with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and other officials about the proposed ceasefire as part of moves towards a peace agreement.

"The main focus was the question of the ceasefire and prospects for a peace settlement," Yermak wrote on Telegram, adding that US envoys Steve Witkoff and Keith Kellogg had also taken part. Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov was also present.

"Also discussed was the importance of implementing the points on which our presidents agreed," Yermak wrote.



Pigeons fly at the Lal Chowk during early morning in Srinagar yesterday. After days of intense clashes, India and Pakistan yesterday said they agreed to a ceasefire.

PHOTO: AFP

Israel kills 13 more in Gaza

AGENCIES

At least 13 people, including three children, have been killed in Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip amid a months-long Israeli blockade that has deepened the humanitarian crisis in the war-torn coastal enclave.

Palestinian news agency Wafa said Israeli warplanes bombed a tent in the Sabra neighbourhood of Gaza City on Saturday morning, killing five members of the a family.

"Three children, their mother and her husband were sleeping inside a tent and were bombed by an [Israeli] occupation aircraft," family member Omar Abu al-Kass told the AFP news agency.

The strikes came "without warning and without having done anything wrong," added Abu al-Kass, who said he was the children's maternal grandfather.

In parallel, a drone attack on Gaza

City's Tuffah neighbourhood left six people dead and one more in the Sheikh Radwan area of the city where Israel bombed an apartment belonging to the Zaout family.

Further south, Wafa said Israeli gunboats opened "heavy fire" on the shores of Rafah, killing a man identified as Mohammed Saeed al-Bardawil. Two more civilians were injured in an attack on the al-Mawasi humanitarian zone, west of Rafah.

The attacks came amid Israel's continuing refusal to allow vital supplies into Gaza since March 2, leaving the enclave's 2.3 million residents dependent on a dwindling number of charity kitchens, which have been shutting down in recent days as food runs out.

The United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs appealed for the blockade to be lifted.

"Children are starving and dying.

Community kitchens are shutting down. Clean water is running out," it said on Friday in a post on X.

The blockade is also having a devastating effect on people with chronic illnesses, depriving Palestinians who suffer from diabetes, cancer and rare conditions, of life-saving medication.

On Friday, the United States said it was establishing the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation to coordinate aid deliveries into Gaza, with Israel providing military security for operations. The United Nations rejected the move, saying it would weaponise aid, violate principles of neutrality and cause mass displacement.

Since October 7, 2023, the Israeli offensive on Gaza has killed at least 52,787 people, mostly civilians, according to figures from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry, which the United Nations considers reliable.

Judge temporarily blocks Trump plans for mass layoffs

AFP, Washington

A US judge has temporarily blocked several federal agencies from proceeding with the mass layoffs of government workers ordered by President Donald Trump in February.

US District Court Judge Susan Illston of California ordered a two-week pause on Friday, writing that the Trump administration's moves to slash the federal workforce likely required approval from Congress.

"The Court holds the President likely must request Congressional cooperation to order the changes he seeks, and thus issues a temporary restraining order to pause large-scale reductions in force in the meantime," Illston wrote in the order.

Since returning to the White House in January, Trump has directed federal agencies to prepare sweeping workforce reduction plans as part of wider efforts by the Elon Musk-headed Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to downsize the federal government.

In a February 11 executive order, Trump called for a "critical transformation of the Federal bureaucracy" and directed agencies to cull workers who are not designated essential.

A coalition of labor unions, non-profit groups and six city and county governments last week sued Trump, DOGE and federal agencies including the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), arguing that they had exceeded their authority by implementing the mass layoffs without congressional go-ahead.

"The Trump administration's unlawful attempt to reorganize the federal government has thrown agencies into chaos, disrupting critical services provided across our nation," the plaintiffs, led by the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), said in a joint statement, hailing the judge's temporary freeze.

"Each of us represents communities deeply invested in the efficiency of the federal government -- laying off federal employees and reorganizing government functions haphazardly does not achieve that," it added.

Trump has rapidly moved to fire thousands of government employees this year and slash programs -- targeting the US humanitarian aid agency USAID, diversity initiatives across the government and various other offices.

But in several cases, judges have thwarted or held up his administration's signature policy initiatives, including on immigration and pending government spending.



Displaced Palestinians walk amid the rubble of an UNRWA aid supply depot and shelter, heavily damaged in an overnight Israeli strike in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Taliban arrest 14 for playing music, singing

AFP, Kabul

Taliban authorities have arrested 14 people in northern Afghanistan for playing musical instruments and singing, activities they restricted since taking power, provincial police said on Saturday.

The Taliban government has steadily imposed laws and regulations that reflect their austere vision of Islamic law since seizing power in 2021.

This includes cracking down on music in public, from live performances to playing at gatherings, in restaurants, in cars or on radio and TV.

The police said in a statement that on Thursday night in the capital of northern Takhar province "fourteen individuals... took advantage of the nighttime to gather in a residential house where they were playing musical instruments and singing songs, which caused disturbance to the public".

Those detained were under investigation, it added.

After their takeover, Taliban



authorities shuttered music schools and smashed or burned musical instruments and sound systems, saying music caused "moral corruption" and public disturbance. Wedding halls are no longer allowed to play music, though segregated women's sections often do so secretly. Many Afghan musicians fled the Taliban takeover out of fear or in need of work after losing their livelihoods in one of the world's poorest countries. The Taliban authorities have encouraged former musicians to turn their talents to Islamic poetry and unaccompanied vocal chants -- the only forms of music allowed under their previous rule from 1996-2001.

Xi pledges to help rebuild Myanmar

REUTERS

China's President Xi Jinping pledged on Friday to support Myanmar in its rebuilding efforts following the Southeast Asian nation's deadliest earthquake in recent years, according to state media Xinhua.

Xi met with Myanmar's junta chief, Min Aung Hlaing, in Moscow and discussed several initiatives.

The natural disaster has bolstered the position of junta chief, who has been isolated diplomatically for four years after his junta ousted an elected government, sparking a brutal civil war. The earthquake has enabled the junta leader to re-establish ties with regional powers, with offers of millions in aid, relief supplies, and rescue workers from countries including China, India and Russia.



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- ১০০ টি প্রতিবন্ধী সেবা ও সাহায্য কেন্দ্রের মাধ্যমে বিনামূল্যে বেরোপি সেবা প্রদান;
- ৭৪টি প্রতিবন্ধী বিদ্যালয় পরিচালনা;
- অটোমবিল স্টার্টার ও এনভিডি কর্ণার পরিচালনা;
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- ৪৫টি ভ্রাম্যমাণ ওয়ান স্টপ বেরোপি ভ্যান সার্ভিস কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা;
- অটোমবিল শিশুর পিতা-মাতা/অভিভাবক ও কেয়ার পিতারদের প্রশিক্ষণ;
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- শিশু-মাতৃহীন প্রতিবন্ধী শিশু নিরাস পরিচালনা;
- বাংলা ইনারা ভাষা দিবস উদযাপন;
- বিশ্ব সাধাছড়ি নিরাস দিবস উদযাপন;
- জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিক প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস উদযাপন ও সেলার আয়োজন;
- জাতীয় সংসদের দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিম পার্শ্ব প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষার্থী ও জীভাবিদদের জন্য খেলার মাঠ পরিচালনা;
- বিশেষ চাহিদা সম্পন্ন ব্যক্তিদের জন্য জীভা কর্মক্রেতা নির্মাণ;



চিত্রঃ প্রতিবন্ধী সেবা ও সাহায্য কেন্দ্রের মাধ্যমে প্রতিবন্ধী পিতৃ ও প্রতিবন্ধী ব্যক্তিকে বিনামূল্যে বেরোপি সেবা প্রদান



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