

Israel strikes Hodeida port

Threatens naval, air blockade

REUTERS, Dubai

Israel's navy said it struck Houthi targets in Yemen's Red Sea port of Hodeidah yesterday, and Defence Minister Israel Katz threatened the Iran-aligned movement with a naval and air blockade if attacks on Israel continue.

Houthi-run Al Masirah TV said Israel targeted the docks of Al Hodeidah port with two strikes. The Israeli army said in a statement that the navy struck Houthi targets, adding the port is used by the group to transfer weapons.

There were no immediate reports of casualties. Israel has been hitting Houthi targets with air strikes in a military campaign launched after the country severely weakened Iran's other Middle East partners.

The Israeli military on Monday urged the evacuation of the Houthi-controlled ports of Ras Isa, Hodeidah and Salif.

10 killed in Austrian school shooting
Shooter among dead; 30 injured

REUTERS, Graz

A gunman killed at least nine people at a secondary school in the southern Austrian city of Graz yesterday, in the worst school shooting in the country's modern history.

Police said the attacker also died and that they were working on the assumption that he had operated alone. National broadcaster ORF said about 30 people were wounded. Austrian media reported that most of the dead were pupils at the school.

Police did not publicly identify the killer, but Austrian media cited unconfirmed reports saying he was a former pupil who had entered the school and opened fire on pupils.

"The rampage at a school in Graz is a national tragedy that has deeply shaken our entire country," Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker said in a statement.

"There are no words for the pain and grief that we all - all of Austria - are feeling right now."

At the scene, police had set up a perimeter a few hundred meters away from the school, barring access routes with police cars.

Iran MPs accuse US, Israel of planning nuclear talks trap

REUTERS, Dubai

The United States and Israel are seeking to turn nuclear talks into a "strategic trap" for Iran, Iranian lawmakers said in a statement yesterday, days before a planned sixth round of Iran-US nuclear talks.

"The US is not serious in negotiations at all. It has set the goal of talks as imposing its demands and has adopted offensive positions that are diametrically opposed to Iranians' inalienable rights," the statement from parliamentarians said.

US President Donald Trump highlighted on Monday that the two sides remained at odds on the issue of uranium enrichment in Iran, which Iranian lawmakers say is a non-negotiable part of the country's nuclear programme. While Trump said the next round of talks would take place tomorrow, Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson said it was planned to take place on Sunday in Oman.

Iran is to share a counterproposal to a US offer for a nuclear deal, which it says is not acceptable considering its position on enrichment and lack of detail on the lifting of sanctions. "The only acceptable deal is one that permanently lifts all sanctions with the aim of achieving economic benefits for Iran," lawmakers added. Trump said that the next round of talks could make it clear if a nuclear deal is possible to avoid military action.

In a key sticking point, Tehran has defended its right to enrich uranium as "non-negotiable", while Washington called any Iranian enrichment a "red line". Iran currently enriches uranium to 60 percent, far above the 3.67 percent limit set in 2015 deal and close though still short of 90 percent needed for a nuclear warhead.



Fireworks explode around police officers in riot gear during a protest in response to federal immigration operations in the Little Tokyo neighbourhood of downtown Los Angeles, US on Monday night. President Donald Trump's administration said that it was sending 700 US Marines and thousands more National Guard troops to Los Angeles, sparking a furious response from California's governor over the "deranged" deployment.

PHOTO: AFP

Russian drone attacks hit Ukraine's Kyiv, Odesa

Three killed; European Commission unveils 18th package of Russia sanctions aimed at energy, military

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russia launched one of its largest air strikes on Kyiv in over three years of war and struck a maternity ward in the southern city of Odesa in attacks that killed at least three people, officials said yesterday.

The overnight strikes followed Russia's biggest drone assault of the war on Ukraine on Monday night and were part of intensified bombardments that Moscow says is retaliation for attacks by Ukrainian forces on Russia.

Loud explosions shook Kyiv and blasts and fires lit up the sky in the early hours of yesterday morning, leaving plumes of heavy smoke over the city, Reuters witnesses said.

At least four people were treated in hospital after seven of the capital's 10 districts were hit, city officials said. "Today was one of the largest attacks on Kyiv," President Volodymyr Zelensky said. "Russian missile and Shahed (drone) strikes down the efforts of the United States and others around the world to force Russia into peace."

Meanwhile, the European Commission has proposed an 18th package of sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, aimed at Moscow's energy revenues and military industry, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said yesterday.

Zelensky urged Ukraine's allies to take steps to force Russia into peace, and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha called for



immediate new sanctions and air defence systems.

Although Moscow and Kyiv have held two rounds of direct peace talks in recent weeks, the only tangible progress has been an agreement on exchanges of prisoners of war, and Russia has continued to advance along the front line in eastern Ukraine.

Moscow and Kyiv blame each other for the lack of progress towards ending the war, which has raged since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, and US President Donald Trump has expressed frustration with both sides.

Russia temporarily halted flights overnight at four airports serving Moscow, at St Petersburg's Pulkovo Airport and at airports in nine other cities after the

Defence Ministry said Ukraine had launched more drones at Russia, officials said.

Flights in Moscow and some other cities were later restored but restrictions were still in place in St Petersburg at 0430 GMT. No damage was reported.

Ukraine's air force said Russia had fired 315 drones across the country, of which 277 were downed. All seven missiles launched by Russia were also brought down, it said.

Air raid alerts in Kyiv and most Ukrainian regions lasted five hours until around 5:00 am (0200 GMT), according to information released by the military.

"A difficult night for all of us," Timur Tkachenko, head of Kyiv's city military administration, said on Telegram.

CONVICT'S RELEASE

Lanka prison chief kept in custody

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's prison chief was remanded in custody yesterday in connection with the illegal release of a convicted financial fraudster under the guise of an amnesty for minor offenders.

Commissioner-General of Prisons Thushara Upuldeniya was arrested late Monday by the Criminal Investigations Department, over the release of fraud convict Athula Thilakaratne.

The government suspended Upuldeniya following reports the convict's name was smuggled into a list of nearly 400 minor offenders who were granted a presidential amnesty last month.

Colombo Additional Magistrate Manjula Rathnayake ordered Upuldeniya be held in custody until today, pending a criminal investigation.

"It was decided to suspend the Commissioner-General until the investigations are concluded," the Justice Ministry said in a statement.

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's office ordered the police investigation last week after the release of Thilakaratne.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

State Dept resumes processing student visas after judge's ruling

REUTERS, Washington

The US State Department directed all US missions abroad and consular sections to resume processing Harvard University student and exchange visitor visas after a federal judge in Boston last week temporarily blocked President Trump's ban on foreign students at the Ivy League institution.

In a diplomatic cable sent on June 6 and signed by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the State Department cited parts of the judge's decision, saying the fresh directive was "in accordance with" the temporary restraining order.

Under that order granted to Harvard late on Thursday, US District Judge Allison Burroughs blocked Trump's proclamation from taking effect pending further litigation of the matter.

Trump had cited national security concerns as justification for barring international students from entering the US to pursue studies at Harvard.

Trump administration has launched a multi-pronged attack on the nation's oldest university, freezing billions of dollars in grants and other funding. Harvard argues the administration is retaliating against it for refusing to accede to demands to control school's governance, curriculum and ideology of its faculty and students.

MYANMAR CONFLICT

Guerrillas claim rare downing of junta jet

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar anti-coup guerrillas claimed to shoot down a junta jet yesterday, declaring a rare victory over the air force which has kept them at bay in a grinding civil war.

The military swiftly denied their claim, saying the plane crashed near the central village of Min Taing Pin around midday because of "sudden engine failure" while on a "practice flight".

Myanmar has been consumed by civil war since the military ousted a democratic government in 2021, but analysts say its air force backed by Russia and China has allowed it to fend off a myriad of lesser-equipped opposition groups.

The military and some of its adversaries have pledged a truce this month as the country continues to recover from March's devastating magnitude 7.7 earthquake which killed nearly 3,800 people.

But the People's Liberation Army (PLA) -- the armed wing of a Myanmar communist group -- said its fighters downed the plane after four days of fierce conflict in central Sagaing region, one of the areas worst-hit by the quake.

"Our fighters were able to shoot down an attack jet today. This is a first in the history of the PLA," said a spokeswoman.

Zaw Tun, a member of the local anti-coup People's Defence Force, said they were fighting alongside the PLA when "our joint forces used machine guns and shot it down".

A local administrator from the rebel-held area, Zaw Htet, said two planes were returning from a bombing run when one was hit as both "flew very low on the way back".

FRENCH SCHOOL

Pupil stabs to death teaching assistant

AFP, Nogent

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday condemned "senseless violence" after a 14-year-old pupil fatally stabbed a teaching assistant, the latest deadly incident at a school in the country.

The secondary school student was arrested after attacking the 31-year-old assistant with a knife during a bag search in Nogent in eastern France.

France has in recent years seen several attacks on teachers and pupils. In March, police started random searches for knives and other weapons concealed in school bags.

The assistant at the Francoise Dolto school in Nogent was stabbed several times shortly before 8:00 am, "as pupils were arriving for a visual inspection of their bags in the presence of the police", education officials said.



A Palestinian youth flees as protesters throw rocks at Israeli military vehicles during a raid in the old town of Nablus, in the occupied West Bank, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP