

World faces new nuclear arms race

Warn researchers

AFP, Stockholm

Most of the world's nuclear-armed states continued to modernise their arsenals last year, setting the stage for a new nuclear arms race, researchers warned yesterday.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said nuclear powers including the United States and Russia -- which account for around 90 percent of the world's stockpile -- had spent time last year "upgrading existing weapons and adding newer versions".

Since the end of the Cold War, old warheads have generally been dismantled quicker than new ones have been deployed, resulting in a decrease in the overall number of warheads.



A Palestinian woman mourns at the grave of a relative in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

The real reason Israel attacked Iran

AGENCIES

As the Israeli-Iranian confrontation enters its fourth day, casualties on both sides are mounting. At least 220 people have been killed in Iran and at least 24 in Israel. Despite the deadly response from Iran, Israeli officials have continued to insist that attacks on various Iranian nuclear and military facilities were necessary.

A number of justifications have been broadcast to the Israeli public, but none explains the true reasons why the Israeli government decided to carry out the unilateral, unprovoked assault.

The nature of campaign as it unfolds seems to indicate that Israel never meant to wipe out Iranian nuclear activities

The Israeli government claims that the strike was a "preventive" one, meant to address an immediate, inevitable threat on Iran's part to construct a nuclear bomb. There appears to be no evidence for this claim.

Additionally, Israel has suggested that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report released on June 12 that condemned Iran for material violations of its Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) commitments until the early 2000s constitutes such an emergency. But even the IAEA seems to reject that claim.

The nature of the campaign as it

unfolds also seems to indicate that Israel never meant to wipe out Iranian nuclear activities, reports Al Jazeera online.

A third suggestion is that Israel has its heart set on jumpstarting "regime change" in Tehran. Even if that were the case, presuming that all the Iranians are waiting for is an Israeli strike to move against the regime demonstrates a profound lack of understanding with regard to the forces driving Iranian politics.

While many Iranians undoubtedly oppose the Islamic Republic, Iranians of all political persuasions are consistently "patriotic", committed to supporting Iranian sovereignty and independence from any attempts by external elements to impose their agendas on their country.

The "security" is what has motivated Israel's actions from Gaza to Yemen to Lebanon and Syria, and now in Iran. Such a "security regime" must expand continuously, of course. It can never stop. By striking Iran, Netanyahu has gone for broke, staking a claim for complete and absolute impunity for Israel as well as for himself, in The Hague as well as in domestic courts.

Will this be Netanyahu's salvation? Will the Israeli public forgive him for his abject failures at home and horrid transgressions in Gaza? When observing the current sense of jubilation in public Israeli discourse, this may very well be the case.

The long lines stretching from every open store, hardware to food, demonstrate that Israelis have entered blank survival mode. A docile citizenry may be good for Netanyahu, but it portends ill for any attempt to build and defend a robust Israeli society.

US senator moves to limit Trump's war powers on Iran

REUTERS, Washington

A Democratic senator introduced legislation yesterday to prevent US President Donald Trump from using military force against Iran without Congress's authorisation, as an escalating battle between Israel and Iran raised fears of broader conflict.

Tim Kaine of Virginia has tried for years to wrest back Congress's authority to declare war from the White House.

During Trump's first term, in 2020, Kaine introduced a similar resolution to rein in Trump's ability to wage war against Iran. That measure passed both the Senate and House of Representatives, winning some Republican support, but did not garner enough votes to survive the Republican president's veto.

Kaine said his latest war powers resolution underscores that the US Constitution gives Congress, not the president, the sole power to declare war and requires that any hostility with Iran be explicitly authorised by a declaration of war or specific authorization for the use of military force.

"It is not in our national security interest to get into a war with Iran unless that war is absolutely necessary to defend the United States. I am deeply concerned that the recent escalation of hostilities between Israel and Iran could quickly pull the United States into another endless conflict," Kaine said in a statement. Under US law, war powers resolutions are privileged, meaning that the Senate will be required to promptly consider and vote on the matter.

Iran hangs man convicted of spying for Israel

AFP, Tehran

Iran's judiciary said yesterday it hanged a man arrested in 2023 and convicted of being a spy for Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, as fighting raged between the two foes.

"Esmail Fekri, a Mossad agent convicted of the capital offences of 'corruption on Earth' and 'moharebeh' (waging war against God) was hanged after going through the full process of criminal procedure," the judiciary's Mizan Online news website said.

Mizan said the execution was carried out after all legal procedures were completed and the verdict was upheld by the supreme court.

Yesterday, Iran's chief justice Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei vowed swift trials for people arrested on suspicion of collaborating with Israel.

UN scales back

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consequences are heartbreaking".

"Too many people will not get the support they need, but we will save as many lives as we can with the resources we are given," he said.

Aid will now be directed so that it can "reach the people and places facing the most urgent needs", with those in "extreme or catastrophic conditions" as the starting

point, said Fletcher.

"This will ensure that limited resources are directed where they can do the most good -- as quickly as possible," the statement said.

Fletcher's call came as the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) issued a joint early warning report identifying worsening hunger in 13 hotspots.

4 children raped

FROM PAGE 12

two separate cases, said Md Salah Uddin, OC of Pangsha Police Station.

Shihab was arrested around 1:30am yesterday. During preliminary interrogation, he confessed to the crime, while forensic evidence was also recovered from his clothes, the OC said. He was sent to jail later in the day, while efforts are on to arrest Hasmat.

In Habiganj's Nabiganj upazila, a 21-year-old garment worker was raped on a moving bus while travelling home from Dhaka on Sunday.

The woman, a resident of Baniachong upazila, first took a bus to Sylhet and then boarded another headed for Baniachong. When the bus neared Sherpur area, she was the only passenger left. Taking advantage, the driver Sabbir Mia and his helper Liton Mia raped her, said Sheikh Md Kamruzzaman, OC of Nabiganj Police Station.

Her screams alerted locals, police and army

personnel, who stopped the bus and detained Sabbir, but Liton managed to flee. A case was filed that night.

Sabbir was later sent to jail, while police are trying to arrest Liton.

In Gazipur's Sreepur upazila, a teenage girl was raped inside an ATM booth by a security guard who had promised her father to help her get a job.

The father, who knew the man, Md Liton Mia, 45, trusted him and accompanied his daughter to the booth in Mulaid area yesterday.

Liton led the girl into a small room inside, told her and the father an employer would arrive shortly, and then sent the father home. He then raped the girl, said Mohammad Abdul Barik, OC of Sreepur Police Station.

"The accused is currently on the run. We are trying to arrest him," he said.

(Our correspondents from Munshiganj, Faridpur, Moulvibazar and Gazipur contributed to this report.)

Britain appoints

FROM PAGE 12

Britain's spy agencies have accused Russia of waging a campaign of sabotage across Europe to scare other countries off from backing Ukraine in its fight against a Russian invasion.

Moore in 2021 said China was the single greatest priority for his spy agency, while MI5 said last year that Iran had been behind 20 plots to kill, kidnap or target dissidents or political opponents in Britain since 2022.

MI6, depicted by novelists as the employer of some of the most memorable fictional spies, from John le Carré's George Smiley to Ian Fleming's James Bond, operates


overseas and is tasked with defending Britain and its interests.

Metreweli previously held a director-level role in MI5, and studied anthropology at the University of Cambridge, the government said.

MI5 has had two female bosses, starting with Stella Rimington in 1992. Eliza Manningham-Buller ran MI5 between 2002 and 2007.

In 2023, Britain named its first female director of GCHQ.

Metreweli's appointment comes three decades after the actress Judi Dench first played a female boss of MI6 in the James Bond film "GoldenEye".



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