

Ship attacked by Houthi rebels in Red Sea sinks

Five crew members rescued

REUTERS, Athens

A mission was under way yesterday to rescue crew from the Eternity C cargo ship which sank in the Red Sea following an attack that killed at least four crew members.

Security firms involved in the operation said four crew members and one armed guard from the vessel have been pulled from the water, where they had been for more than 24 hours.

They said they had not yet made visual contact with the rest of the 22-member crew nor two more guards who were aboard.

"We will continue to search for the remaining crew until the last light," said an official at Greece-based maritime risk management firm Diaplous.

AIR INDIA CRASH

Probe focuses on engine fuel control switches

REUTERS

A preliminary report into the deadly crash of an Air India jetliner in June is expected to be released by tomorrow, three sources with knowledge of the matter said, with one adding the probe had narrowed its focus to the movement of the plane's fuel control switches.

The London-bound Boeing 787 Dreamliner, which started losing height after reaching an altitude of 650 feet, crashed moments after takeoff from Ahmedabad, killing 241 of 242 people on board and the rest on the ground.

The investigation into the Air India crash is focusing on the movement of the engine fuel control switches following an analysis of the 787's flight and voice data recorders, along with a simulation by Boeing of the aircraft's final moments, one of the sources said.

The investigation has not raised any immediate concerns over mechanical failure, and there has been no bulletin to airlines recommending changes to 787 operations. Boeing declined to comment. The Air Current first reported the focus on the fuel switches that help power the plane's two engines.

Poorer countries granted access to HIV prevention drug

AFP, Geneva

Lower-income countries will gain access to a "game-changing" HIV prevention drug with a new deal signed between with US pharmaceutical giant Gilead and the Global Fund, the health financing group said yesterday.

The group set up to battle AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, described the deal to procure lenacapavir for low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) as "a significant milestone for global health equity".

"This marks the first time in history that an HIV prevention product will be introduced in LMICs at the same time as in high-income countries," the Global Fund said in a statement.

The group said it hoped the agreement with Gilead would make it possible to reach two million people with the revolutionary drug, which was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration last month.

Drugs to prevent HIV transmission, known as pre-exposure prophylaxis or PrEP, have existed for more than a decade. But because they typically require taking a daily pill, they have yet to make a significant dent in global infections.

By contrast, lenacapavir, marketed under the brand name Yeztugo, requires only two injections per year and has been shown to reduce the risk of HIV transmission by more than 99.9 percent in adults and adolescents -- making it functionally akin to a powerful vaccine.

"This is not just a scientific breakthrough -- it's a turning point for HIV/AIDS," Global Fund chief Peter Sands said. "For the first time, we have a tool that can fundamentally change the trajectory of the HIV epidemic -- but only if we get it to the people who need it most."



Large boards displaying portraits of children from Gaza are seen during a protest installation titled 'Looking Gaza's Children in the Eyes,' organised by the human rights movement Avaaz, in front of the Reichstag building, which houses the Bundestag (Germany's lower house of Parliament), in Berlin yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Russia strikes Ukraine with 728 drones

Nato member Poland, allies scramble jets to ensure air safety; Trump vows to send more weapons to Kyiv

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russia targeted Ukraine with a record 728 drones overnight, shortlyafter US President Donald Trump pledged to send more defensive weapons to Kyiv and aimed unusually direct criticism at Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Ukrainian air defence units destroyed almost all the drones, including through electronic jamming systems, Ukraine's air force said on the Telegram messaging app.



- ➔ Zelensky wants secondary sanctions on Russia's war income
- ➔ Trump aims unusually direct criticism at Putin
- ➔ Europe working on a new sanctions package against Moscow

Part of Russia's strike was aimed at a western region close to Nato-member Poland. The northwestern city of Lutsk, some 200 km from Poland, was the main target, Ukraine's President Zelensky said, listing 10 other provinces across the country where damage was also reported.

Polish and allied aircraft were activated to ensure air safety, Poland's Operational Command of

the Polish armed forces said.

Buildings were damaged but no deaths or injuries reported in what amounted to the biggest air strike of the war on Lutsk, a city of 200,000 people, regional authorities said.

A storage facility of a local enterprise and some parking structures were ablaze, the mayor of Lutsk, Ihor Polishchuk said.

Ivan Rudnytskyi, governor of the Volyn region that includes Lutsk, said 50 Russian drones and five missiles were in the region's airspace overnight.

The attack, which follows a series of escalating air assaults on Ukraine in recent weeks, showed the need for "biting" sanctions on the sources of income Russia uses to finance the war, including on those who buy Russian oil, Zelensky said on Telegram.

Trump said on Tuesday he was considering supporting a bill in the

Senate that would impose steep sanctions on Russia, including 500 percent tariffs on nations that buy Russian oil, gas, uranium and other exports.

"We get a lot of bullshit thrown at us by Putin ... He's very nice all the time, but it turns out to be meaningless," Trump said at a cabinet meeting.

When asked by a reporter what action he would take against Putin, Trump said: "I wouldn't tell you. We want to have a little surprise."

Separately, Europe is working on a new sanctions package against Moscow.

Trump has shifted US rhetoric away from staunch support for Kyiv towards accepting some of Moscow's justifications for the full-scale invasion it launched in 2022.

But initial rounds of talks between Russia and Ukraine have so far borne little fruit.

POTENTIAL WAR

EU unveils 'stockpiling strategy'

AFP, Strasbourg

The EU yesterday announced its first ever plan to help stockpile essential goods such as food, water, fuel and medicines in case of crises, amid fears over potential war with Russia.

The "stockpiling strategy" from Brussels comes as Nato warns that Russia -- currently waging war on EU neighbour Ukraine -- could be ready to attack the alliance within five years.

The 27-nation bloc has launched a broad readiness push to bolster its militaries and try to ensure it can defend itself by 2030.

"The goal is very simple to make sure that essential supplies that keep our societies running, especially the ones that save lives, are always available," EU crisis management commissioner Hadja Lahbib said.

"The more we prepare, the less we panic."

The EU says the new stockpiling plan is aimed at securing the continuity of key goods during a raft of crises "such as major energy blackouts, natural disasters, conflicts or pandemics."

It involves establishing a network between countries to better coordinate stocks, identifying gaps and bolstering "EU-level stockpiles".

Over two dozen critics of Pak govt face YouTube ban

REUTERS, Islamabad

YouTube has told more than two dozen critics of the Pakistani government that it is considering blocking their channels after a local court sought to ban them for being "anti-state".

The channels that could be blocked in Pakistan include that of the main opposition party and also its leader, jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, as well as journalists critical of the government, according to the June 24 court order seen by Reuters.

The judicial magistrate court in Islamabad said it was seeking the ban after the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) criticised the channels in a June 2 report for "sharing highly intimidating, provocative and derogatory contents against state institutions and officials of the state of Pakistan".

Digital rights campaigners say that any ban would further undermine free speech in Pakistan, where the authorities are accused of stifling newspapers and television and social media is seen as one of the few outlets for dissent.

YouTube told the 27 content creators that their channels could be taken down if they did not comply with the court orders.

"If you fail to do so, as per our local law obligations, we may comply with the request without further notice," the popular video sharing platform said in emails this week to the channel owners, according to a notice seen by Reuters.

Israeli blockade in Gaza hits 'critical point': UN

AGENCIES

The United Nations humanitarian office, OCHA, has warned that the fuel crisis in Gaza due to the Israeli blockade has reached a "critical point" and will cause further deaths and suffering in the besieged Palestinian territory.

OCHA said the fuel powering vital functions in Gaza, including water desalination stations and hospitals' intensive care units, is running out quickly, with "virtually no additional accessible stocks left".

"Hospitals are rationing. Ambulances are stalling. Water systems are on the brink," the office said in a statement.

"The deaths this is likely causing could soon increase sharply unless the Israeli authorities allow new fuel in -- urgently, regularly and in sufficient quantities."

Israel has imposed a suffocating siege on Gaza since early March.

Over the past weeks, it has allowed some food into Gaza to be distributed through a United States-backed group at sites where hundreds of aid seekers have been shot dead by Israeli fire.

But fuel has not entered the territory in months. Senior World Food Programme official Carl Skau also decried the lack of fuel in Gaza.

"The needs are greater than ever, and our capacity to respond has never been more constrained. Famine is spreading, and people are dying trying to find food," Skau said in a social media post.

"Our teams in Gaza are doing their best to deliver aid and are often caught in the crossfire. We are suffering from shortages of fuel, spare parts and essential communications equipment," Skau added.



Bosnian women pray beside a truck carrying caskets containing the remains of victims of the Srebrenica massacre, as it pauses in Sarajevo yesterday en route to the Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial Cemetery in Potocari, where they will be buried during tomorrow's commemoration of the massacre's 30th anniversary.

PHOTO: AFP

Iran holds talks with KSA after truce with Israel

AFP, Riyadh

Iran's foreign minister has held talks with Saudi Arabia's de facto leader, the Saudi foreign ministry said, two weeks after a ceasefire between regional rivals Iran and Israel began.

Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman said his country hoped the truce would contribute to regional stability, and emphasised Riyadh's position "in supporting dialogue through diplomatic means as a path to resolving disputes," the ministry said in a post on X early yesterday.

According to the Saudi ministry, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi "expressed his gratitude" to Riyadh for its condemnation of Israel's attacks on Iran last month.

Israel launched its u bombing campaign on Iran on June 13, targeting military and nuclear facilities.