

## SWEIDA CLASHES

### US declares Syria-Israel ceasefire

AFP, Sweida

Syrian interior ministry forces began deploying in Sweida yesterday under a US-brokered deal intended to avert further Israeli military intervention in the Druze majority province.

Israel had bombed defence ministry forces in both Sweida and Damascus earlier this week to force their withdrawal after they were accused of summary executions and other abuses against Druze civilians during their brief deployment in the southern province.

More than 700 people have been killed in Sweida since Sunday as sectarian clashes between the Druze and Sunni Bedouin drew in the Islamist-led government, Israel and armed tribes from other parts of Syria.

The office of interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa announced an "immediate ceasefire" in Sweida, which it called on "all parties to fully respect".

But AFP correspondents in and around the city reported gunfire and sporadic rocket fire and explosions as Druze fighters battled armed Bedouin who had seized some neighbourhoods on Friday.

The Observatory, a Britain-based war monitor, said the armed volunteers had been deployed with the support of the Islamist-led government although an AFP journalist said security personnel were manning checkpoints yesterday to prevent further reinforcements getting through.

The deal between the Islamist government and Israel was announced by Washington early yesterday.

The International Committee for the Red Cross warned that health facilities were overwhelmed, with power cuts impeding the preservation of bodies in overflowing morgues.

The International Organization for Migration said 79,339 civilians had fled the fighting.



This aerial view shows smoke rising in the city of Sweida in southern Syria's Druze majority province.

PHOTO: AFP

## BOMBSHELL REPORT ON EPSTEIN FILES Trump sues Murdoch, WSJ

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump sued media magnate Rupert Murdoch and The Wall Street Journal for at least \$10 billion Friday over publication of a bombshell article on his friendship with the infamous alleged sex trafficker of underage girls, Jeffrey Epstein.

The defamation lawsuit, filed in federal court in Miami, saw the 79-year-old Republican hitting back at a scandal threatening to cause serious political damage.

"We have just filed a POWERHOUSE Lawsuit against everyone involved in publishing the false, malicious, defamatory, FAKE NEWS 'article' in the useless 'rag' that is, The Wall Street Journal," Trump posted on Truth Social late Friday.

The Journal reported Thursday that in 2003, the then-real estate magnate wrote a suggestive birthday letter to Epstein, illustrated with a naked woman and alluding to a shared "secret."

The lawsuit, which also names two reporters, the Dow Jones corporation, and Murdoch's parent

company News Corp. as defendants, claims that no such letter exists and that the paper intended to malign Trump with a story that has now been viewed by hundreds of millions of people.



"And given the timing of the Defendants' article, which shows their malicious intent behind it, the overwhelming financial and reputational harm suffered by President Trump will continue to multiply," it said.

Trump, the Journal's longtime publisher, responded to Trump's libel suit Friday saying it is standing by the story.

"We have full confidence in the rigor and accuracy of our reporting,

and will vigorously defend against any lawsuit," a Dow Jones spokesperson said in a statement.

In another bid to dampen outrage among his own supporters about an alleged government cover-up of Epstein's activities and 2019 death, Trump ordered US Attorney General Pam Bondi to seek the unsealing of grand jury testimony from the prosecution against the disgraced financier.

In a filing in New York, Bondi cited "extensive public interest" for the unusual request to release what is typically secret testimony.

Epstein, a longtime friend of Trump and multiple high-profile men, was found hanging dead in a New York prison cell while awaiting trial on charges that he sexually exploited dozens of underage girls at his homes in New York and Florida.

The case sparked conspiracy theories, especially among Trump's far-right voters, about an alleged international cabal of wealthy pedophiles. Epstein's death -- declared a suicide -- before he could face trial supercharged the narrative.

## INDO-PAK 'WAR' Trump says 5 jets shot down

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump said on Friday up to five jets were shot down during recent India-Pakistan hostilities.

Trump, who made his remarks at a dinner with some Republican US lawmakers at the White House, did not specify which side's jets he was referring to.

"In fact, planes were being shot out of the air. Five, five, four or five, but I think five jets were shot down actually," Trump said without elaborating.

Trump has repeatedly claimed credit for the ceasefire between India and Pakistan that he announced on social media on May 10 after Washington held talks with both sides.

## China starts building dam on Brahmaputra

AFP, Beijing

China started building a mega dam yesterday on a river running through Tibet and India, with Premier Li Qiang attending the commencement ceremony, state media said.

Beijing approved the project in December on the river -- known as Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet and Brahmaputra in India -- linking it to the country's carbon neutrality targets and economic goals in the Tibet region.

"The electricity generated will be primarily transmitted to other regions for consumption, while also meeting local power needs in Tibet," state news agency Xinhua reported after the groundbreaking ceremony in southeastern Tibet's Nyinchi.

Once built, the dam could dwarf the record-breaking Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River in central China -- and have a potentially serious impact on millions of people downstream in India and Bangladesh.

The project will entail constructing five hydropower stations, with the total investment estimated to be around 1.2 trillion yuan (\$167.1 billion), Xinhua said.

India said in January it had raised concerns with China about the project in Tibet, saying it will "monitor and take necessary measures to protect our interests".

China "has been urged to ensure that the interests of the downstream states of the Brahmaputra are not harmed by activities in



upstream areas", India's foreign ministry said then.

In December, Beijing's foreign ministry said that the project would not have any "negative impact" downstream, adding that China "will also maintain communication with countries at the lower reaches" of the river.

Besides downstream concerns, environmentalists have also warned about the irreversible impact of such mega projects in the ecologically sensitive Tibetan plateau.

Both India and China, neighbours and rival Asian powers, share thousands of kilometres of disputed borders, where tens of thousands of soldiers are posted on either side.

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A child, injured in an Israeli air strike on an apartment at the Nuseirat refugee camp, receives care at a hospital in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Russian strikes kill 3 across Ukraine

AFP, Kyiv

Russian strikes killed three people across Ukraine yesterday, authorities said, while Moscow had to briefly suspend trains in its southern Rostov region after an overnight drone attack by Kyiv.

Russia has escalated long range aerial attacks on Ukrainian cities over recent months, defying US President Donald Trump's warning that Moscow could face massive new sanctions.

Two people died after a Russian missile hit Ukraine's central Dniproetrovsk region, an important industrial hub, which Russia's forces have recently advanced into.

According to the regional governor Sergiy Lysak, the strike destroyed "an outpatient clinic, a school and a cultural institution" in the Vasylykivska township, with some private houses and cars damaged as well.

Russia, meanwhile, had to suspend trains for about four hours overnight in the southern Rostov region when it came under a Ukrainian drone attack which injured one railway worker.

Separately, the Russian military said it had intercepted six aerial bombs and 349 drones yesterday.

An earlier Russian salvo of 20 drones on the Ukrainian port city of Odessa killed at least one person overnight, its mayor said.

Countries have until Saturday to lodge reservations about the amendments. Conservative activists and vaccine skeptics in Britain and Australia, which both have left-leaning governments, have waged public campaigns against the changes.

Rubio and Kennedy disassociated

## Trump pulls US from World Health pandemic reforms

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump's administration said Friday the United States was rejecting changes agreed last year for the World Health Organization on its pandemic response, saying they violated the country's sovereignty.

Trump on returning to office on January 20 immediately began his nation's withdrawal from the UN body, but the State Department said the language from last year would still have been binding on the United States.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr said the changes "risk unwarranted interference with our national sovereign right to make health policy."

"We will put Americans first in all our actions and we will not tolerate international policies that infringe on Americans' speech, privacy or personal liberties," they said in a joint statement.

Rubio and Kennedy disassociated

ট্রেডিং কর্পোরেশন অব বাংলাদেশ (টিসিৰি)	
আকাশিক কার্যালয়, মোল্ডোবাজার।	
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১ মুচ্যুলয়/বিভাগ	বাসিন্দা মন্ত্রালয়
২ এজেন্সি	ট্রেডিং কর্পোরেশন অব বাংলাদেশ (টিসিৰি)
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৬ দরপত্র আঞ্চনিক পথ	০১টি ০৭ সীটের (MPV) গাড়ী ভাড়াকরণ
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৮ তারিখ	১৯-০৮-২০২৪
৯ ক্রয় পত্রতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পত্রতি (অভিক্রীণ)
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- দরপত্র দলিল/সিডিউল প্রাপ্তির শর্ত	টিসিৰি'র অফিস কক্ষ, টিসিৰি আকাশিক কার্যালয়, মোল্ডোবাজার।
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