

## Push for 'regime change' in Russia

Zelensky urges allies as Russian drone, missile attacks on Kyiv kill 8

AFP, Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday urged his allies to bring about "regime change" in Russia, hours after a Russian drone and missile attack on Kyiv killed eight people including a six-year-old boy.

The overnight strikes reduced part of a nine-storey apartment block in Kyiv's western suburbs to rubble and wounded dozens more in the capital, according to authorities.

The Russian army meanwhile claimed to have captured Chasiv Yar, a strategically important hillside town in eastern Ukraine where the two sides have been fiercely fighting for months.

Moscow has stepped up its deadly aerial assaults on Ukraine in recent months, resisting US pressure to end its nearly three-and-a-half year invasion as its forces grind forward on the battlefield.

Speaking virtually to a conference marking 50 years since the signing of the Cold War-era Helsinki Accords, Zelensky said he believed Russia could be



Ukrainian emergency workers operate amid the rubble of a residential building following an airstrike in Kyiv yesterday, part of the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

## War of words escalates between US, Russia

Medvedev reminds Trump of Russia's Doomsday nuclear strike capabilities

REUTERS, Moscow

Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev yesterday told US President Donald Trump to remember that Moscow possessed Soviet era nuclear strike capabilities of last resort after Trump told Medvedev to "watch his words".

Trump, in a post on his Truth social network in the early hours of yesterday, singled out Medvedev, who is deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, for sharp criticism after Medvedev said that Trump's threat of hitting Russia and buyers of its oil with punitive tariffs was "a game of ultimatums" and a step closer towards a war between Russia and the United States.

"Tell Medvedev, the failed former President of Russia, who thinks he's still President, to watch his words. He's entering very dangerous territory!" Trump wrote, in his second warning to the close ally of President Vladimir Putin in recent weeks.

Trump on July 29 said Russia had "10 days from today" to agree to a ceasefire in Ukraine or be hit, along with its oil buyers, with tariffs. Moscow, which has set out its own terms for peace, which Kyiv says amount to demanding its capitulation, has not so far indicated it will comply with Trump's deadline.

Trump in his post yesterday said he didn't care what India - one of Russia's biggest oil buyers along with China - did with Russia.

"They can take their dead economies down together, for all I care. We have done very little business with India, their tariffs are too high, among the highest in the World. Likewise, Russia and the USA do almost no business together. Let's keep it that way," he said.

Medvedev said that Trump's statement showed



that Russia should continue on its current policy course.

"If some words from the former president of Russia trigger such a nervous reaction from the high-and-mighty president of the United States, then Russia is doing everything right and will continue to proceed along its own path," Medvedev said in a post on Telegram.

Trump should remember, he said, "how dangerous the fabled 'Dead Hand' can be," a reference to a secretive semi-automated Russian command system designed to launch Moscow's nuclear missiles if its leadership had been taken out in a decapitating strike by a foe.

Medvedev has emerged as one of the Kremlin's most outspoken anti-Western hawks since Russia sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine in 2022. Kremlin critics deride him as an irresponsible loose canon, though some Western diplomats say his statements give a flavour of thinking in senior Kremlin policy-making circles.

Trump also rebuked Medvedev in July, accusing him of throwing around the "N (nuclear) word" after the Russian official criticised US strikes on Iran and said "a number of countries" were ready to supply Iran with nuclear warheads.

"I guess that's why Putin's 'THE BOSS'", Trump said at the time.

Meanwhile, the governor of Russia's Penza region said yesterday that Ukrainian drones had struck a local industrial facility.

Separately, Russia's state railway company said that drone debris had hit railway infrastructure and temporarily halted trains in the southern Volgograd region.

Russia's Defence Ministry said that it had downed 32 Ukrainian drones over several Russian regions.

Tehran dams may run dry within months

Warns Iran president

AFP, Tehran

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian warned yesterday that dams supplying the capital could run dry within months unless water consumption was curbed.

"If we in Tehran cannot manage the situation, and if people do not cooperate with us and we fail to control consumption, there will be no water left behind our dams," Pezeshkian said during a visit to Zanjan in the northwest.

The president said reserves may be depleted by October -- the first month of autumn in the Persian calendar, when schools reopen and demand typically rises before the start of the rainy season.

According to an infographic shared by state news agency IRNA, reservoirs serving Tehran are at just 20 percent capacity.

Nationally, the average reservoir level stands at just 44 percent.

According to the Tehran Provincial Water Supply Company, levels in the reservoirs supplying the city have fallen to "their lowest in a century".

Authorities have urged residents to install water tanks and pumps to cope with disruptions to supply.

EXTREME RAIN, FLOODS

## Death toll in north China rises to 60

REUTERS, Beijing

Extreme weather killed at least 60 people in northern China over the past week, with 31 deaths in an elderly care home in Beijing's hilly Miyun district in one of the deadliest floods to have hit the Chinese capital in years.

In Beijing, 44 people were killed and nine were missing as of midday yesterday, deputy mayor of Beijing, Xia Linmao, said at a press conference.

Heavy rains began a week ago and peaked around Beijing and surrounding provinces on Monday, with Miyun experiencing rainfall of up to 573.5 mm (22.6 inches) - levels local media described as "extremely destructive." The average annual rainfall in Beijing is around 600 mm.



In the nearby province of Hebei, 16 people died as a result of the intense rainfall, authorities said.

At least eight were killed in the city of Chengde just outside Beijing, with 18 unaccounted for.

The deaths occurred in villages within the Xinglong area of Chengde in Hebei province, state-run Xinhua reported late on Wednesday citing local authorities, without specifying when or how the people died.

The deaths in Chengde occurred in villages which border Beijing's Miyun about 25 km (16 miles) from the Miyun reservoir, the largest in China's north.

## Buddhist gem collection returns to India after 127 years

REUTERS, Hong Kong

A collection of hundreds of jewels linked to Buddha's remains has returned to India after 127 years following an auction planned for earlier this year that drew threats of legal action from the government in Delhi.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the return of the collection, known as the Piprahwa Gems of the Historical Buddha.

"A joyous day for our cultural heritage!" Modi wrote in a post on X on Wednesday. "It would make every Indian proud."

The collection of more than 300 gems including amethyst, topaz and pearls dates from the Mauryan Empire, Ashokan Era, around 240-200 BCE.

The collection, first unearthed by a Briton in northern India, was originally scheduled to be auctioned by Sotheby's in Hong Kong in May but the sale was postponed after India's government threatened legal action and demanded the jewels be returned.

Sotheby's subsequently identified Indian conglomerate Godrej Industries Group as the buyer and secured a sale that saw the permanent return of the gems to India, where they would be placed on public display. "Sotheby's is delighted to have facilitated the return of the Piprahwa Gems to India," the auction house said.

India's Ministry of Culture said it was an exemplary public-private partnership and the initiative aligned with Modi's broader mission to reclaim and celebrate India's ancient cultural and spiritual heritage from across the world.

## Fakhrul warns repeat of 1/11, urges timely election

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Rahman said the upcoming polls are extremely important for every citizen in establishing the kind of Bangladesh a mother would envision. He urged all, including women, to remain alert so that fascism and extremism can never rise again.

Fakhrul told another programme, "You know better than me, keep your eyes and ears open. You will see that many incidents are happening, and the signs of these incidents are not good. Everyone needs to pay attention."

He made the remarks at the "March for Justice" programme organised by the Bangladesh Nationalist Lawyers Forum in memory of the July martyrs, held at the Supreme Court Bar Association auditorium.

The 1/11 government in Bangladesh refers to the military-backed caretaker government that came to power on January 11, 2007.

Fakhrul said, "If you read newspapers and watch television, then things will become a bit clear to you. Everything can't be said openly everywhere. But I fear that if we are not united, if we are not alert, then an incident like 1/11 is not unlikely."

He said, "I think any further delay

will not be right for Professor Yunus's government. February should be the deadline. If the election takes place after February, the honour with which you [Yunus] came, the respect you have around the world ... there will be a possibility of it being damaged."

The BNP leader said issues like Proportional Representation (PR) system and other controversial topics are being brought forward on purpose to create debate and obstruct the democratic process.

"Why are these topics being created? Why are these debates being made? If you think they are just happening for no reason, that's not true. There is a special purpose behind this."

"That purpose goes back to 1/11. That purpose takes you back to the time when Ershad Saheb grabbed power. They don't want democracy to continue in this country."

Fakhrul said there is a group who repeatedly harms democracy, and even Sheikh Mujibur Rahman did that by introducing one-party rule.

Calling upon patriotic people and all political parties, he said, "Let's unite and complete the reforms, trials, and all these things, and move towards democracy."

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will not be right for Professor Yunus's government. February should be the deadline. If the election takes place after February, the honour with which you [Yunus] came, the respect you have around the world ... there will be a possibility of it being damaged."

At another programme held at the Jatiya Press Club, Fakhrul urged all political parties to build mutual understanding and stop the blame game, saying that continued mudslinging will only feed bitterness and make politics toxic.

He suggested that a national election held in mid February next year could help resolve the current crisis and dispel confusion surrounding the country's future.

Addressing an event virtually, Tariq said the BNP has designed all its future action plans keeping in mind the hopes and aspirations of women as the party believes the country cannot move forward without ensuring the dignity, security, and active participation of women in every sphere of life, reports UNB.

Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal organised the programme titled "Women's Contribution to the Anti-Fascist Movement" at the Shaheed Abu Sayed International Convention Centre of Bangladesh Medical University, marking the first anniversary of the July-August mass uprising.

The law adviser said the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) has been

## Polls date 'within a few days'

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while 90 percent said they hadn't voted at all. There will be no such regret this time," he added.

He also reaffirmed the government's commitment to conduct a free and fair election.

"I can only speak about our government's intention, and that is to hold the best election in the history of Bangladesh. Our sir [Prof Yunus] always says it."

When asked how the upcoming election would gain international acceptance, given past controversies, he disagreed with the question's suggestion.

"Even the 2008 election had issues. If journalists look into it, they'll find many troubling facts about that election too," he added.

Calling false cases and mob violence the "most unfortunate" incidents under the interim government, Prof Nazrul said both

"I keep saying that two very unfortunate things have happened during our time -- one is false cases, where people are wrongly accused and harassed; the other is mob violence. These two incidents have hurt us a lot," he said.

The law adviser said the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) has been

amended to help prevent false cases or to release those falsely accused.

He explained that police will now submit a preliminary report to the court instead of waiting for the final report. If the court finds that a case was filed against 400 people but

"We'll know in the coming five or six days where we are going. These days are very crucial," he said while speaking at the "BSRF Dialogue" organised by the Bangladesh Secretariat Reporters Forum (BSRF) at its office in the Secretariat.

He also mentioned that the timeframe announced in London for holding the 13th national parliamentary election will not be delayed.

Shafiqul said, "The next four or five days will be crucial for Bangladesh's political settlement. Work is underway on the July Declaration and July Charter."

"He [Prof Yunus] initially mentioned early April [2026]. Later, we said in London that if substantial reforms take place... if progress is made, then it [election] might happen in February. That's still where we stand -- the election will be held on schedule."

"We hope the upcoming election will be a festive one. There are always incidents of violence during elections, but we will make our utmost efforts to reduce it to zero," he said.

Meanwhile, Chief Adviser's Press