

OIL TRADE

## Russia slams Trump tariff threats on India

REUTERS, Moscow

Russia yesterday accused the United States of exerting illegal trade pressure on India after US President Donald Trump threatened again to raise tariffs on India over its purchases of Russian oil.

“We hear many statements that are in fact threats, attempts to force countries to cut trade relations with Russia. We do not consider such statements to be legal,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

“We believe that sovereign countries should have and do have the right to choose their own trading partners, partners for trade and economic cooperation, and to choose for themselves the forms of trade and economic cooperation that are in the interests of a particular country.”



PHOTO: REUTERS

A local resident walks past a damaged passenger train at the site of a Russian drone strike in the town of Lozova, Kharkiv region, Ukraine, yesterday. Russian strikes killed three people, including a mechanic at the railway station, and wounded 12 people, authorities said.

## Uttarakhand Four dead, 50 missing as mudslide hits Indian village

REUTERS, Lucknow

Surging floodwaters and a torrent of mud swept through a village in the northern Indian Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, killing at least four people while more than 50 others were missing, authorities and local TV channels said yesterday.

Teams from army and disaster response forces had reached the area, local authorities said, with workers trying to rescue people trapped under debris and sludge.

TV news channels showed floodwaters and mud surging down a mountain and crashing into the village, sweeping away houses and roads as people ran for their lives.

The mudslide cleaved through Dharali village, burying some houses, according to a video update shared by the state chief minister's office.

Four people were killed and many more had been rescued so far, Uttarkashi district administrator Prashant Arya told local media. “A massive mudslide struck Dharali village in the Kheer Gad area near Harsil, triggering a sudden flow of debris and water through the settlement,” the Central Command of the Indian Army said in a post on X.

# Israel expands ground, air raids on Gaza

52 Palestinians, including eight aid seekers, killed

AGENCIES

An Israeli military ground campaign accompanied by “very heavy fire from its air force and also from Israeli artillery units” was under way in various parts of Gaza yesterday, according to the Gaza authorities.

Israel is still deepening its operations in Gaza City. This comes amid reports that Israel's cabinet could authorise a complete military takeover of the Palestinian enclave for the first time in two decades, despite international pressure for a ceasefire to ease appalling conditions in the besieged territory.

- Aussie FM warns of 'risk there will be no Palestine left to recognise'
- Palestinians too weak to travel on foot to aid sites: aid agency
- Israel allowing just 86 trucks of aid into Gaza a day

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected to meet security chiefs in Jerusalem to issue new orders yesterday, even as Israel's diplomats convened a UN Security Council meeting in New York to highlight the plight of Israelis held in Gaza.

The timing of the security meeting has not been officially confirmed. Netanyahu said



Monday that it would be “in the coming days”.

Inside Gaza yesterday, Israeli gunfire and strikes killed at least 52 Palestinians, local health authorities said, including five people in a tent in Khan Younis and eight aid seekers near Rafah in the south.

Israeli tanks pushed into central Gaza, but it was not clear if the move was part of a larger ground offensive, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong has told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) “there is a risk there will be no Palestine left to recognise”.

However, Wong did not elaborate on when Australia would recognise Palestinian statehood, saying only that it was “a matter of when, not if”.

The UN's children's fund has decried the scale of children being killed in Gaza, which it said averages out to 28 a day — “the size of a classroom”, Al Jazeera reports.

“Gaza's children need food, water, medicine and protection. More than anything, they need a ceasefire, now,” said the UN agency.

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has said that 70 percent of Palestinians are suffering from “extreme weakness caused by starvation” making it difficult to access aid.

“The physical exhaustion is so profound that many are unable to make the long journey on foot to distribution sites or carry heavy loads even if they receive assistance,” the DRC said in a survey of Palestinians in Deir el-Balah, Khan Younis, Gaza City and North Gaza.

## Israeli military intercepts Houthi missile fired from Yemen

AFP, Jerusalem

Yemen's Houthi rebels claimed responsibility for firing a missile at Israel's main airport yesterday, as the Israeli military said it intercepted it.

The Iran-backed rebels targeted Ben Gurion airport “using a ‘Palestine 2’ hypersonic ballistic missile” in support of Palestinians in Gaza, their military spokesman Yahya Saree said in a video statement.

The Israeli military posted on X that “a missile that was launched from Yemen was intercepted by the Israeli air force”.

Since the start of the war in the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023, the Houthis have repeatedly fired missiles and drones at Israel. Most of them have been intercepted but they have prompted Israeli air strikes on rebel targets in Yemen.

The rebels have also attacked commercial shipping in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden alleged to be linked to Israel, prompting several rounds of US-led air strikes.

The Huthis sank the Magic Seas and Eternity C in separate Red Sea attacks this month, after a temporary hiatus in their campaign against maritime traffic.

## Pak police arrest 120 workers of PTI ahead of protest

REUTERS, Lahore

Police arrested 120 activists of Pakistan's main opposition party in raids overnight, security officials said, ahead of protests planned for yesterday, the second anniversary of the jailing of their leader, Imran Khan.

Most of the detentions, made on Monday night and early yesterday, were in the eastern city of Lahore, two police officers told Reuters, where Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party vowed its biggest demonstration, as well as protests elsewhere.

At least 200 activists had been arrested from Lahore, said party spokesperson Zulfikar Bukhari, adding that the protest would go ahead.

Lahore is the capital of the eastern province of Punjab, the country's most politically important region and home to half its population.

The Punjab government and the provincial police did not respond to requests for comment yesterday. In a statement on Monday, police said large contingents of police were providing security in all the province's major cities.



## CLASHES WITH CAMBODIA Thailand approves \$600m deal for Swedish fighter jets

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand approved the purchase of four Swedish-made Gripen fighter jets yesterday, the air force said, a week after reaching a ceasefire in deadly border clashes with Cambodia.

The \$600 million agreement for the Saab JAS 39 Gripens was first announced in June as part of a long-term plan to modernise the air force's combat capabilities.

During five days of clashes with Cambodia that left more than 40 people dead, Thailand used its fleet of F-16s to strike military targets across the border.

It was the deadliest border fighting between the two countries in decades.

“The cabinet has approved the purchase of JAS 39 Saab Gripen to strengthen the Royal Thai Air Force and protect Thailand's sovereignty,” the air force said on its official Facebook page.

A procurement committee began deliberations in August last year, concluding a 10-month review that favoured the Scandinavian-made jets over American F-16s.

The kingdom already operates 11 older Gripens, as well as dozens of F-16s acquired in the 1980s.

The country's total defence budget stands at 200 billion baht (\$6 billion), which includes allocations for the army, navy and air force.

Meanwhile, Thailand's cabinet has approved a 10 million baht (\$310,000) compensation payment to the families of its soldiers who died in the last month's border conflict with Cambodia, acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai said yesterday.

Families of civilians who died during the conflict will each receive a payment of 8 million baht, Phumtham said after a cabinet meeting.

Thailand and Cambodia may have reached a ceasefire to halt their bloody border clashes, but cyber warriors are still battling online, daubing official websites with obscenities, deluging opponents with spam and taking pages down.

## ALLEGED COUP PLOT Brazil judge puts Bolsonaro under house arrest

US State Dept condemns the order

REUTERS, Brasilia

Brazil's Supreme Court put former President Jair Bolsonaro under house arrest on Monday ahead of his trial for an alleged coup plot, underscoring the court's resolve despite escalating tariffs and sanctions from US President Donald Trump.

Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, the target of US Treasury sanctions last week, issued the arrest order against Bolsonaro. His decision cited a failure to comply with restraining orders he had imposed on Bolsonaro for allegedly courting Trump's interference in the case.

Bolsonaro is on trial before the Supreme Court on charges he conspired with allies to violently overturn his 2022 electoral loss to leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Trump has referred to the case as a “witch hunt” and called it grounds for a 50 percent tariff on Brazilian goods taking effect today.

The US State Department condemned the house arrest order, saying Moraes was using Brazilian institutions to silence opposition and threaten democracy, adding the US would “hold accountable all those aiding and abetting sanctioned conduct.”

It did not provide details, though Trump has said the US could still impose even higher tariffs on Brazilian imports.

The Monday order from Moraes also banned Bolsonaro from using a cell phone or receiving visits, except for his lawyers and people authorized by the court.



Congress supporters protest in Srinagar yesterday, demanding statehood for India's Kashmir region—six years after New Delhi revoked Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which had granted the region special status and autonomy. India's Supreme Court is scheduled to hear a petition seeking the restoration of Kashmir's federal statehood later this week.

PHOTO: AFP

## Iran detains cell linked to exiled opposition

AFP, Tehran

Iran has arrested three members of a suspected sabotage cell linked to the exiled opposition for attempting to disrupt public order, Iranian media reported yesterday.

The suspects, who are allegedly linked to banned former rebel group the People's Mujahedeen Organization of Iran (MEK), were detained by the Revolutionary Guard in the county of Pakdasht, southeast of Tehran, the ISNA news agency said.

“Three members of MEK-linked sabotage cells who sought to disrupt public order and security were identified and arrested,” prosecutor Mohammad Hassanpour told ISNA.

He accused the MEK of using underground propaganda networks to recruit individuals to form “sabotage cells” aimed at disrupting public order.