

## Pak troops kill 33 militants crossing from Afghanistan

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistani security forces killed 33 militants trying to cross from Afghanistan overnight, the military said yesterday, describing them as "Indian-sponsored".

The fighters were intercepted and engaged with "precise" fire, the military's public relations wing said, adding that weapons, ammunition and explosives were recovered.

A search operation was underway to find and eliminate any remaining insurgents, the military said.

Pakistan often accuses the Taliban government in Afghanistan of turning a blind eye to militants operating near the frontier. Kabul denies the charge.

Pakistan and India, nuclear-armed neighbours with a history of conflict, often accuse each other of backing insurgents. New Delhi denies supporting militants in Pakistan.



**A Palestinian woman standing in a doorway reacts as she watches the aftermath of an Israeli strike that hit Gaza City's southern al-Zeitoun neighbourhood yesterday. Story on Page 12.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Floods kill 10 in northwest China

REUTERS, Beijing

President Xi Jinping yesterday ordered "all-out" rescue efforts in China's arid and mountainous northwest after flash floods caused by exceptionally heavy rain killed 10 people and left 33 missing.

Torrential downpours began around 6 p.m. on Thursday and unleashed flash floods in Gansu province's Yuzhong, stranding some 4,000 people, state broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) reported.

In one mountainous area, precipitation had reached up to 195mm (7.7 inches) since early Thursday evening. Yuzhong county normally sees 300-400mm of rainfall for the entire year.

Yuzhong is situated among gullies and hills of wind-blown silt on one of the world's biggest loess plateaus. That makes it vulnerable to flash floods and landslides given the loose structure of the soil.

Ankle-high muddy water could be seen coursing down a hilly road flanked by uprooted trees in a video posted by CCTV.

Record rainfall has lashed China's north and south in recent weeks in what meteorologists describe as extreme weather events linked to climate change.

Heavy rains and flooding have killed at least 60 people across northern China, including Beijing, since late July.

## Xi welcomes US-Russia talks

Modi speaks to Putin, discusses Ukraine amid US tariff row

REUTERS, Beijing

China is pleased to see Russia and the United States maintaining contact and improving ties to advance a political resolution of the Ukraine crisis, President Xi Jinping said in a phone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday.

Beijing will maintain its stance on the need for peace talks and a diplomatic solution to the conflict, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV quoted Xi as telling Putin.

The call was held at Putin's request, CCTV said.

The call came after the Kremlin said on Thursday that Putin would meet US President Donald Trump in the coming days in the search for an end to the war, now in its fourth year.

Trump took a more conciliatory

approach towards Russia after returning to the White House in January but has voiced growing frustration with Putin over the lack of progress towards peace and has threatened to impose heavy tariffs on countries, including

said that he spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin by phone and thanked him for sharing the latest developments on Ukraine.

The conversation between the two leaders came days after Trump announced an additional 25% tariff on Indian goods to penalise New Delhi for continuing to buy Russian oil.

The penalty took the total levy on Indian goods exported to the US to 50%, among the highest levied on any US trading partner.

"Had a very good and detailed conversation with my friend President

Putin. I thanked him for sharing the latest developments on Ukraine," Modi said in a post on X.

India's foreign ministry said Modi invited Putin to New Delhi for the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit later this year.

China, that buy Russian oil.

Putin is expected to visit China in September for events marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two.

Meanwhile, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday



## AL discreetly sets up 'party office'

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the office fit the bill. The furniture was left behind by the previous tenants," one AL leader told BBC Bangla.

He added that 30-35 people can hold meetings there.

Apart from AL leaders and activists, various professionals, civil servants, police officers, and retired military officials have also fled to India.

About six months ago, party sources estimated that around 200 people, including at least 70 MPs, district-level party leaders, upazila chairmen, and mayors, had fled to greater Kolkata.

Some live with families; others share flats with colleagues. Families occasionally travel from Bangladesh for visits.

"Someone who arrived have since moved on to the US, Canada, or Australia," another leader told BBC Bangla.

The party office has no fixed hours, with senior leaders dropping in as needed.

According to the report, Indian intelligence agencies are aware of it, as operations here could not proceed without the approval from India's Ministry of Home Affairs.

"It's not true that the party is being run from India," Saddam Hossain, the president of the now-banned Bangladesh Chhatra League, told BBC Bangla.

"How many leaders of the main party and its affiliates are even abroad? Most remain in Bangladesh," he added.

Until recently, top leaders hadn't met Hasina in person. She reportedly held a meeting with them in Delhi on July 31.

Multiple leaders confirmed this to BBC Bangla but declined to reveal the agenda or location.

Separate WhatsApp and Telegram groups have been created, and live online programmes are regularly held, with Hasina occasionally joining.

Former lawmaker Pankaj

Debnath told BBC Bangla that they are in regular contact with grassroots workers through digital platforms.

On social media, questions frequently arise about why grassroots activists are being assaulted, arrested or harassed in Bangladesh, while senior leaders remain in India.

"This is a valid question," said Pankaj Debnath. "But look at 1971; if the then-leadership hadn't fled to India and formed a government-in-exile, could the Liberation War have been coordinated? I'm not equating 1971 to now, but history offers such examples, even globally. Leaders who built strength from abroad have returned to power. Think of Nawaz Sharif, Benazir Bhutto, or Tarique Rahman."

As Bangladesh's interim government marks its first year, the AL has stepped up criticism, accusing it of multiple failures.

AL General Secretary

200 per kg respectively. Furthermore, prices of okra and pointed gourd rose to Tk 70 to Tk 80 per kg yesterday, up from Tk 40 to Tk 50 a week earlier.

He said that a month ago, these vegetables were sold at Tk 30 to Tk 40 per kg.

Although the ongoing monsoon is considered the prime season for hilsa, there has been no sign of a price decrease for the popular fish in the capital's markets.

Yesterday, hilsa weighing between 600 grammes and one kilogramme per piece were sold for Tk 1,400 to Tk 2,300 per kg.

Yusuf Mia, a trader at Tejgaon who visited Karwan Bazar to buy food items for his family, said, "I wanted to buy a one-kilo hilsa, but a trader asked for Tk 2,300, which is beyond my means."

Farm-grown rohu and katla weighing one kilo per piece were sold at Tk 350 to Tk 400 per kg yesterday, up from Tk 320 to Tk 350 per kg a week earlier.

Farm-produced eggs were sold at Tk 135 to Tk 140 per dozen yesterday.

Farm-grown Sonali chicken was sold at Tk 320 to Tk 350 per kg, marking a Tk 10 increase from the previous year.

## Japan daily

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Perplexity users click only on its search summaries and not on the newspaper's website, reducing traffic.

The Yomiuri, with a daily circulation of around six million -- down from over 10 million in 2010 -- and some 2,500 reporters, is one of five major daily newspapers in Japan.

Perplexity was not immediately available for comment.

After a lawsuit by the Wall Street Journal and the New York Post in October, Perplexity criticised the "adversarial posture" of many media as "shortsighted, unnecessary, and self-defeating".

## US offers \$50m for Maduro's arrest

REUTERS

The United States has doubled its reward for information leading to the arrest of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to \$50 million over allegations of drug trafficking and links to criminal groups, US Attorney General Pam Bondi announced on Thursday.

In a video posted to X, Bondi accused Maduro of collaborating with prominent criminal groups such as Tren de Aragua and the Sinaloa Cartel.

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yvan Gil said on Telegram that the announcement was "the most ridiculous smokescreen ever seen."

"While we're debunking the terrorist plots orchestrated from her country, this woman

is coming out with a media circus to please the defeated far-right in Venezuela," Gil said.

"The dignity of our homeland is not for sale. We repudiate this crude political propaganda operation," he added.

The reward was first set at \$15 million in 2020, when US prosecutors charged Maduro with drug trafficking. It was increased to \$25 million in January 2025, as Maduro was sworn in for a third term, alongside new sanctions on top officials.



## Mobile data service cut in Balochistan

REUTERS, Quetta

Pakistan has suspended cell phone data services for three weeks in the restive southwestern province of Balochistan in a bid to block communications among separatist insurgents behind a surge in recent attacks, an official and the government said.

Separatist militants demanding a bigger share of profits from the resources of the mineral-rich province have stepped up attacks in recent months, particularly on Pakistan's military, which has launched an offensive against them.

In an order on Wednesday seen by Reuters, the government said the services would be suspended until the end of the month because of the law and order situation in the province, home to key Chinese Belt and Road projects. The news follows Pakistan's ban on road travel to Iran late last month, citing security threats.

The region is home to the Gwadar Port, built by Beijing as part of a \$65-billion investment in Pakistan in the Belt and Road programme designed to expand China's global reach.

Islamabad accuses India of funding and backing the insurgents in a bid to stoke instability, as Pakistan seeks international investments in the region, a charge New Delhi denies.

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## Onion, vegetable prices soar amid rain

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said he sold a kilogramme of locally grown onions at Tk 85 yesterday, compared to Tk 60 a couple of weeks earlier.

Mosharrar Hossain, a retail vegetable trader at Karwan Bazar, said prices of most vegetable items had risen by Tk 20 to Tk 50 within a week, reaching over Tk 100 per kg.

For example, he sold round-shaped eggplants at Tk 160 per kg and common long eggplants at Tk 100 per kg yesterday.

He said ridge gourd and bitter gourd each sold at Tk 100 per kg, while cucumber and tomato prices reached Tk 100 and Tk 180 to Tk

200 per kg respectively.

Furthermore, prices of okra and pointed gourd rose to Tk 70 to Tk 80 per kg yesterday, up from Tk 40 to Tk 50 a week earlier.

He said that a month ago, these vegetables were sold at Tk 30 to Tk 40 per kg.

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