

Stop buying Russian oil

Trump tells Nato states

REUTERS, Bedminster

President Donald Trump yesterday said that the United States is prepared to impose fresh energy sanctions on Russia, but only if all Nato nations cease purchasing Russian oil and implement similar measures.

"I am ready to do major sanctions on Russia when all Nato nations have agreed, and started, to do the same thing, and when all Nato nations stop buying oil from Russia," Trump said in a social media post.

In recent weeks, the United States has stepped up pressure on Nato countries to tighten energy sanctions on Russia in a bid to help end its war with Ukraine – a conflict Trump has struggled to bring to a close despite repeated threats of harsher penalties on Moscow and its partners.

Trump has also faced criticism at home for repeatedly setting two-week deadlines for Russia to de-escalate and allowing them to pass without concrete action.

The Group of Seven nations' finance ministers in a Friday call discussed further sanctions on Russia and possible tariffs on countries they consider "enabling" its war in Ukraine.

Energy revenues remain the Kremlin's single most important source of cash to finance the war effort, making oil and gas exports a central target of Western sanctions. But officials and analysts warn that aggressive curbs on Russian crude also carry risks of driving up global oil prices, a prospect that could strain Western economies and weaken public support for the measures.

Since 2023, Nato member Turkey has been the third-largest buyer of Russian oil, after China and India. Other members of the alliance involved in purchasing Russian oil include Hungary and Slovakia.

Trump said Nato, acting as a bloc, should impose tariffs of 50% to 100% on Chinese imports, a move he argued would weaken Beijing's economic grip on Moscow.

250,000 left Gaza City since stepping up operations

Claims Israeli army

AFP, Jerusalem

The Israeli military yesterday said that more than 250,000 people had fled Gaza City since it began intensifying operations there, as Palestinian officials reported many had been unable to evacuate south due to overcrowding.

The United Nations estimated in late August that about one million Palestinians lived in and around Gaza's largest urban centre.

The world body and members of the international community have urged the military to abandon its plans to capture the city, warning the assault and ensuing displacement could worsen the already dire humanitarian situation.

On Saturday, an Israeli army spokesman said on X that "more than a quarter of a million residents of Gaza City have moved out of the city for their own safety".

Gaza's civil defence agency, however, reported a much lower figure, saying fewer than 70,000 had managed to leave.

The Israeli military dropped leaflets yesterday urging residents in western districts to evacuate, as the civil defence reported continuous air strikes.

Nepalis hope protest deaths will bring change

AFP, Kathmandu

Grieving families of those killed in Nepal's anti-corruption demonstrations say they hope the deaths will not be in vain, as the protesters' choice of interim prime minister took charge yesterday.

Among the dead was 30-year-old Santosh Bishwakarma, one of at least 51 people killed in two days of chaos this week – the worst unrest since the end of a decade-long civil war and the abolition of the monarchy in 2008.

His widow Amika, also 30, her eyes swollen with grief, recalled his "ultimate dream" to "die having contributed to the nation".

Santosh was shot dead on Monday during the first wave of protests, led by the youth-driven "Gen Z" movement.

A temporary social media ban sparked the demonstrations, tipping longstanding frustration over entrenched corruption and economic malaise into wider anger.

"He used to say he wouldn't die like a dog," Amika told AFP in her modest Kathmandu home, clutching a framed photo of her late husband.

"His dream was to make Nepal known to the world – and he did."

KP Sharma Oli, the 73-year-old leader of the Communist Party, quit as prime minister a day after Santosh's death and as protesters torched parliament, ending his fourth term in the post.

On Friday, former chief justice Sushila Karki was sworn into office to lead a six-month transition to elections.



A Buddhist devotee feeds pigeons at the Boudhanath Stupa in Kathmandu yesterday. Kathmandu took a step back towards normality yesterday as a curfew was eased and daily life returned, with markets opening, traffic returning, and families visiting temples.

PHOTO: STAR

Pak Taliban kills 12 troops in northwest

AFP, Peshawar

At least 12 soldiers were killed in an ambush in northwest Pakistan yesterday, government and security officials said, in an attack claimed by the Pakistani Taliban.

Militancy has surged in the border regions with Afghanistan since the return to power of the Afghan Taliban in Kabul in 2021, although yesterday's attack was one of the deadliest in months in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Islamabad accuses neighbouring Afghanistan of failing to expel militants using Afghan territory to launch attacks on Pakistan, an accusation that authorities in Kabul deny.

The Pakistan military said after the ambush early on Saturday that intelligence reports "have unequivocally confirmed physical involvement of Afghan Nationals in these heinous acts".

"Pakistan expects the Interim Afghan Government to uphold its responsibilities and deny use of its soil for terrorist activities against Pakistan," it said in a statement.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban, claimed responsibility for the attack in a message on social media.

The group is separate from but closely linked with the Afghan Taliban.

'We're more than our pain'

Miss Palestine to compete on global stage

AFP, Dubai

Nadeen Ayoub, the first Palestinian to compete in Miss Universe, will step onto the stage at the height of one of the most harrowing periods in her people's history, determined to show they are more than headlines of war.

"We're more than our struggle and pain," she told AFP in Dubai, where she is preparing to raise the Palestinian flag at the pageant in Thailand in November.

"Right now, our people need a voice and we don't want our identity to be erased," she said, nearly two years into the Israeli war on the people of Gaza.

Palestinians are also "children who want to live, women who have dreams and aspirations," she said.

Part of the difficulty of electing Miss Palestine is that Palestinians are divided between the occupied West Bank, besieged Gaza and annexed East Jerusalem, while many are refugees in neighbouring countries, living abroad or in Israel.

In 2022, the first Miss Palestine pageant was held online to allow for Palestinians scattered abroad, in Israel and in the territories to participate.

As the first winner of the title, Ayoub has worked on the organisation's philanthropic activities and competed in Miss Earth, an environmentally minded pageant, in 2022. But since the Gaza war erupted in October 2023, she has not participated in any beauty pageants.

Ayoub said she would take any opportunity to speak out for her people. "We must be present on every single international stage. Every single opportunity that we have to talk about Palestine, to show Palestine, we must take it," she said.

107 killed as boat sinks in Congo

REUTERS, KINSHASA

At least 107 people have died after a whaleboat caught fire in the west of the Democratic Republic of Congo, according to an internal government report seen by Reuters on Friday.

The boat, a narrow, double-ended open vessel caught fire on the Congo River near Malange village in Lukolela territory on Thursday evening, leaving 146 people missing, the Ministry of Social Affairs said in the memo.

Rescue teams recovered 209 survivors, several with injuries, after the vessel burned and drifted downstream, the note said. The fire also destroyed cargo on board and ignited 15 riverside homes.

Search operations continued on Friday with naval personnel and community volunteers combing the banks while authorities pledged medical care for the injured, assistance to bereaved families and the repatriation of survivors to their places of origin and destination.

River transport is a lifeline in Congo's vast rainforest regions, where old, wooden vessels are the main form of transport between villages, but accidents are frequent due to overloading, poor maintenance and the use of riverboats at night.

The accident comes days after at least 86 people died in a separate shipwreck on Wednesday night at the confluence of the Nsolo and Great Maringa rivers in Basankusu territory, northeast of Malange, after a river boat sank on Wednesday, Congo state media reported Thursday.

"The motorised canoe... sank due to blatant overloading and night-time navigation, which is formally prohibited," civil society activist Akula Mboyo said in a statement.

Rescue operations are often hampered by limited resources and the remote locations of accident.



Police Officers scuffle with far-right activists during a 'Free speech' march in central London yesterday. More than 100,000 people massed in central London for the march amid growing anti-immigration sentiment in the country.

TAIWAN STRAIT China slams sailing of US, UK warships

REUTERS, Beijing

China's military on Friday condemned the sailing of a US and British warship through the sensitive Taiwan Strait, saying it ordered naval and air forces to monitor and warn the two ships.

The People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theatre Command said the US destroyer USS Higgins and British frigate HMS Richmond were engaged in "trouble-making and provocation".

"The actions of the United States and Britain send the wrong signals and undermine peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," it said in a statement.

Britain's defence ministry said the sailing was a routine passage.

Earlier on Friday, China's navy said its third aircraft carrier, the Fujian, which is still undergoing sea trials, had passed through the strait as well.