

## 'Deadliest year ever'

UN migration agency says Red Sea migrant deaths hit record 922 last year

AFP, Addis Ababa

The number of migrants who died on the "Eastern Route" from the Horn of Africa to the Arabian Peninsula doubled to a record high of 922 last year, the UN migration agency said yesterday.

Tens of thousands of migrants from Ethiopia, Somalia and neighbouring countries take the route across the Red Sea each year, mostly from Djibouti to Yemen, in search of work as labourers or domestic workers in wealthy Gulf countries.

"2025 was the deadliest year ever recorded on the Eastern migration route... with 922 people dead or missing -- double the number from the previous year," Tanja Pacifico, head of mission for the



Aerial view of demonstrators holding a banner with portraits of disappeared people during a march to Mayo Square on the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the last military dictatorship (1976-1983) in Buenos Aires, Argentina on Tuesday. PHOTO: AFP

## Ukraine hits Russian port in drone barrage

Moscow claims it downs 389 drones; separate drone from Russian airspace hits Estonian power plant

AFP, Kyiv

Russia yesterday said a Ukrainian attack sparked a fire at a major port in the country's northwest in a barrage of almost 400 drones, launched a day after a record Russian aerial assault on Ukraine.

A power plant in Estonia was also hit by a drone that had flown into the Nato member from Russian airspace, while another crashed into Latvian territory, with officials in Riga saying that it was likely a Ukrainian drone gone astray.

The attack came after Russia fired nearly 1,000 drones at Ukraine over a 24-hour period starting late Monday, killing a total of eight people across the country, hitting the historic centre of Lviv and residential houses in western Ukraine during Tuesday evening rush hour.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky slammed what he called Russia's "absolute depravity" and vowed a response to the pummeling.

Russia's defence ministry said yesterday that its air defence systems had intercepted and

destroyed 389 Ukrainian drones overnight, mostly in regions that border Ukraine as well as around Moscow.

The attack triggered a fire at the Baltic port of Ust-Luga, an oil exporting hub on the Gulf of Finland, close to Russia's border with Estonia.



The blaze was "being brought under control" regional governor Alexander Drozdenko said on social media, adding that no casualties had been reported.

Drozdenko did not specify which part of the port had been hit. The facility is a major hub for Russian fertilisers, oil and coal exports.

There was no comment from Ukraine's military on the attack. Earlier this week Ukraine hit

another of Russia's major Baltic Sea port -- Primorsk -- triggering a large fire that poured thick black smoke into the air, visible from satellite images.

A Ukrainian rocket attack also dealt "serious damage" to electricity and water facilities in the Russian border region of Belgorod, Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said.

Ukraine has been intensifying its retaliatory attacks on Russia's infrastructure -- including refineries, oil depots and ports -- in past weeks, calling it fair retribution and an attempt to cut Russia's energy proceeds that fund its war effort.

EU and Nato member Estonia said yesterday a drone coming from Russian airspace hit a chimney of the Auvere power plant, near the town of Narva on the Russian border, causing no injuries.

"These are the effects of Russia's large-scale war of aggression," said Estonia's Internal Security Service Director General Margo Palloson, expressing concern about "the occurrence of such incidents in the future".

## Afghanistan frees detained US citizen

AFP, Kabul

Afghanistan's Taliban government released a US national on Tuesday who had been detained for more than a year, after a letter from his family requesting his freedom.

The foreign ministry said the family of linguist and researcher Dennis Coyle had written to the supreme leader of Afghanistan, asking that he be freed and pardoned for Eid.

"The Supreme Court of the Islamic Emirate deemed his period of detention sufficient and decided on his release," a statement read.

The announcement came after a meeting of Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, US former special envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad, the UAE ambassador to Kabul, Saif Mohammed Al-Ketbi, and a member of Coyle's family.

The UAE facilitated the release, the ministry said, adding that the decision was made on humanitarian grounds and as a gesture of "goodwill".

## Trump destroyed Venezuela's socialist ideology

Says opposition leader

AFP, Houston

Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado told AFP on Tuesday that her country's formerly all-powerful socialist ideology has been fatally "wounded" by US President Donald Trump.

The regime known as "Chavismo" that held Venezuela in its grip for quarter of a century under Hugo Chavez and his successor Nicolas Maduro is "wounded irreparably and is being dismantled," Machado said. The oil-rich Latin American country was thrown into turmoil this January when US military forces toppled leftist Maduro, who has now been replaced with his former deputy Delcy Rodriguez.

While Rodriguez served under Maduro, she has proved eager to bend to Trump's demands, including reopening the country to US oil companies. Last week, she ordered a wide-ranging reshuffle of senior military leaders.

"Following President Trump's instructions, they are dismantling their own repressive and corrupt structures -- a crucial step toward the transition," Machado said during an interview with AFP in Houston, Texas, where she was attending the CERWeek global energy forum.

Machado said that when presidential elections are held again in Venezuela, she will participate "in that electoral process." However, she did not specify whether she would run.



## DENMARK ELECTION

### PM's left-wing bloc wins polls, but no majority

AFP, Copenhagen

Denmark's Social Democrats, led by Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, finished first in Tuesday's general election but posted their weakest showing in more than 120 years and the left-wing bloc failed to secure a majority.

With all votes counted in metropolitan Denmark, the left bloc was credited with 84 seats in the 179-seat parliament and the right with 77, while 90 are needed for a majority.

The centrist Moderate party, headed by Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen, became kingmaker with 14 seats, and thorny negotiations are expected in the coming weeks to build a coalition government.

Frederiksen, who has been in office since 2019, told cheering supporters that she was "ready to take on the responsibility of serving as Denmark's prime minister again for the next four years".



International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Djibouti, told AFP.

The majority of victims were from Ethiopia, the second most populous country in Africa with more than 130 million people. It is plagued by multiple internal conflicts and deep poverty.

"IOM remains fully committed to working alongside the government of Djibouti to promote safe and dignified migration pathways, in order to prevent further tragedies," said Pacifico.

Many migrants who cross the Red Sea find themselves stuck in Yemen, the poorest country on the Arabian Peninsula, which has been embroiled in a civil war for nearly a decade, and some even choose to return.

Rapid economic growth in Ethiopia -- estimated to reach around 10 percent in 2026 -- could encourage less migration, IOM says, but that is mitigated by high inflation, also around 10 percent in February.

# স্বাধীনতা আমাদের গর্ব আমাদের প্রতিজ্ঞা

২৬ মার্চের সেই অম্লিভরা দিন।

বাংলার মানুষকে দিয়েছিল স্বাধীনতার অমোঘ ডাক।

শহীদদের ত্যাগে অর্জিত এই লাল-সবুজ পতাকা  
চিরকাল আমাদের সাহস ও স্বপ্নের প্রতীক হয়ে থাকবে।

মহান স্বাধীনতা দিবসে  
সকল শহীদ এবং বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের প্রতি বিনম্র শ্রদ্ধা এবং  
দেশবাসীকে আত্মিক প্রভেদে।

শাহজালাল ইসলামী ব্যাংক পাবনা

## Meta liable for endangering children

New Mexico jury finds

AFP, Washington

A New Mexico jury on Tuesday found social media giant Meta liable for endangering children by making them vulnerable to predators on its platforms and other dangers.

The verdict came after roughly a day of deliberations following a six-week trial in which the state accused Facebook and Instagram's parent company of failing to protect minors from sexual abuse, online solicitation and human trafficking.

The state had sought the maximum \$2.2 billion in damages, but the jury awarded a lesser amount of \$375 million.

The case, tried in a Santa Fe court, is among the first involving social media platforms and child safety to produce a jury verdict.

"The jury's verdict is a historic victory for every child and family who has paid the price for Meta's choice to put profits over kids' safety," said New Mexico Attorney General Raul Torrez, who brought the case.

মুক্তির ডাকে  
স্বাধীনতার আলায়ে  
আলোকিত হোক  
আমাদের এগিয়ে চলা

সবাইকে মহান স্বাধীনতা দিবসের শুভেচ্ছা