

Afghan air force strikes Pak militant hideouts

Taliban says; Islamabad denies claim

REUTERS, Kabul

Afghanistan said yesterday it had launched airstrikes on hideouts of militants in two Pakistani provinces, an assertion swiftly rejected by Islamabad, months after the neighbours engaged in their worst conflict in years.

The Taliban government's defence ministry said in a post on X that hideouts in Pakistan's Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, both of which share a border with Afghanistan, had been targeted by the Afghan air force on Thursday night.

It did not specify how the attack — Kabul's first major offensive action in months — was carried out.

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aircraft and 23 helicopters, according to data from the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies. The Taliban forces are also known to have drones that have been used in fighting with Pakistan.

"These bases, allegedly used in cooperation with certain hostile intelligence circles to plan and organize attacks against Afghanistan, had previously served as staging grounds for several deadly attacks," the Afghan ministry said.

"According to preliminary information, the operation successfully hit its key pre-designated targets," it added, without giving details about casualties. Reuters was not immediately able to verify the assertion.

Pakistan's Information Ministry denied the Taliban assertion, saying that a "rudimentary drone" from Afghanistan had entered Pakistani airspace but was immediately identified and shot down.

"The claims are false, as usual. Terrorist camps... are factually located, run and patronised from inside the territories under the control of the Afghan Taliban regime," it said in a post on X.



Israeli law enforcement officers detain an activist during a protest over a new Israeli settlement in Deir Abu Mishal village, near Ramallah in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Iran war keeps regime intact, foes divided

Analysts say exiled factions' infighting deepens as domestic opposition weakens after decades of crackdowns

AFP, Paris

The Iran war, launched by US President Donald Trump with Israel on February 28, was billed as a turning point for the Islamic republic.

Trump argued it would spark an uprising after January's mass protests, the most serious challenge to Iran's clerical leadership in years. But months of fighting failed to topple the regime, leaving opposition groups fractured and dissidents facing harsher repression.

Exiled figures such as Reza Pahlavi, son of the last shah, struggled to unify opposition movements abroad, while Nobel

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laureate Narges Mohammadi and other activists inside Iran remain under pressure.

Analysts say infighting among



exiled factions has deepened, while domestic opposition has been weakened by decades of crackdowns.

Rights groups report thousands killed in protest crackdowns, alongside fresh arrests and more than 40 executions since the war began. Internet blackouts and economic hardship compounded the suffering. "This war was never about human rights," said Mahmood Amiry Moghaddam of Iran Human Rights, arguing authorities used it to intensify repression.

The US-Iran memorandum of understanding to end the war has fueled anger among dissidents.

Tehran resident Sima, 34, said peace with the regime "would feel like making peace with my executioner."

Pahlavi warned that negotiating with Iran after the crackdown was "morally wrong and strategically misguided."

Other opposition leaders, including Maryam Rajavi of the People's Mujahedin, criticized both monarchists and the regime, while Amnesty International cautioned that protesters remain at grave risk.

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Russian strikes on Ukraine kill three: Kyiv

One dead in Russian drone strikes on civilian ships in Black Sea

AFP, Kyiv

Russia renewed its strikes on Ukraine yesterday, killing three people including an eight-year-old girl, Ukrainian officials said.

The strikes come a day after Ukraine launched its biggest-ever drone attack on Moscow, killing a different eight-year-old girl and sparking an inferno at a major oil refinery, according to Russian officials.

The Kremlin said yesterday it would "continue" striking Ukraine following that attack. Both sides have escalated attacks on each other in recent weeks, as US-led talks on ending the more than four-year conflict remain effectively frozen.

Meanwhile, Russian drone attacks hit two civilian vessels in the Black Sea late Thursday, killing one person and wounding five others, Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Oleksiy Kuleba said yesterday.

One ship was operating under the flag of Panama and the other Saint Kitts and Nevis, Kuleba posted on Telegram.

Fatal Ebola spreading 'fast' in DR Congo: WHO

AFP, Geneva

The fatal Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo is spreading rapidly, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned yesterday, despite accelerating efforts to tackle the virus.

The WHO said it was still racing to catch up with the worsening situation gripping northeastern DRC.

"The outbreak remains serious" and is "evolving so fast", said Marie-Roseline Belizaire, the WHO Africa emergencies chief.

"However, I have seen a response that is growing stronger every day," she told reporters in Geneva, speaking from Bunia, the capital of the DRC's Ituri province.

The outbreak was declared on May 15, though transmission had been going undetected for some time. It is caused by the rare Bundibugyo strain of the virus, for which there is no vaccine.

There have been 896 confirmed cases so far in the DRC, including 232 confirmed deaths, with 21 new cases in the last 24 hours, according to the latest WHO update.

More than 90 percent of known cases in the DRC have been in Ituri, a province racked by conflict. The outbreak has also spread to North Kivu and South Kivu provinces.

Belizaire said the epidemic was evolving so quickly that the response was racing to keep pace with the virus, which spreads by close contact and infected bodily fluids.

Fresh arrests target Turkey's opposition-run municipalities

AFP, Istanbul

The Turkish government is tightening its grip on the opposition, with fresh arrests yesterday targeting elected officials from the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) as it faces a deepening leadership crisis.

Authorities carried out operations targeting CHP-run municipalities in Istanbul's islands district and in southern Turkey over a range of allegations, including corruption and fraud.

Police conducted simultaneous raids in four cities, detaining 37 of 47 suspects named in arrest warrants, the Istanbul prosecutor's office said in a statement.

Among those detained was Adalar (islands) mayor Ali Ercan Akpolat.

The suspects are accused of bribery, embezzlement, forgery of official documents, forming and leading a criminal organisation, and abuse of office, according to the statement.

A separate operation targeted the municipality of Silifke in the southern coastal province of Mersin.

Turkish media reported that several people, including the mayor, were detained as part of an investigation into allegations of bribery, embezzlement, bid-rigging and abuse of office.

The detentions follow a series of operations over the past week against CHP municipalities, including in Istanbul's Beylikduzu and Silivri districts, as well as in the Seferihisar district in the western city of Izmir.



Indian court rejects appeal over ban on Telegram app

AGENCIES

An Indian court has rejected an appeal by the Telegram social media app against a temporary ban.

The New Delhi High Court issued the ruling yesterday after a closed-door hearing between Telegram and Indian officials, court records show. India blocked the app over allegations that it was being used to sell leaked exam questions.

The ban took Telegram offline and removed it from app stores earlier this week, according to app tracking data.

India's Ministry of Information Technology said on Sunday that channels on the platform were selling undergraduate medical entrance exam questions. The ministry added that even fake questions could mislead candidates.

A month ago, India cancelled the results of the test after allegations that the questions had been leaked in advance, reports Al Jazeera online.

The case has become one of the most closely watched legal clashes between a global tech company and the Indian government this year. Delhi High Court judge Tejas Karia said the government orders banning the app were reasoned and had strictly followed legal procedure.

India is Telegram's largest market, with more than 150 million users. Founder Pavel Durov publicly criticised the ban, saying it penalised the platform's users, even though the exam leaks had already been disseminated elsewhere.

The ban followed days of private arguments, according to court filings. Indian officials told Telegram it had not acted fast enough to remove the accounts selling exam papers. Telegram rejected the Indian government's account of the meetings in court filings, calling it "one-sided and inaccurate".



Members of the Students' Federation of India (SFI) shout slogans and hold posters during a protest against alleged mismanagement and scams linked to the NEET and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) examinations, demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, at a demonstration organised by the SFI near a college in New Delhi, India, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Cambodian court upholds opposition politician ban

AFP, Phnom Penh

Cambodia's top court yesterday suspended a prison sentence handed to opposition politician Rong Chhun but upheld a ban on him running for office, his lawyer said.

The outspoken Nation Power Party adviser was sentenced to four years in jail last year for incitement to cause social unrest — a charge Cambodian authorities frequently use against activists.

He was also banned from voting, running for office and holding office for five years.

Rong Chhun lodged an appeal on Monday and the Supreme Court suspended his jail sentence for three years yesterday but upheld the ban on voting, as well as holding and running for office, his lawyer Em Chantha told reporters.

The case was brought against Rong Chhun in 2024.