



Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomes Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, as US Vice President JD Vance, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff stand in the background, before the start of a quadrilateral meeting between the US, Iran, Pakistan, and Qatar at the Lake Lucerne Summit, aimed at advancing a deal to end the Middle East conflict, at Buergenstock Resort Lake Lucerne, near Stansstad, Switzerland, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

King Charles to reveal personal tax bill: palace

AFP, London

King Charles III will reveal his personal tax bill in a bid to improve transparency, Buckingham Palace confirmed to AFP yesterday, as royal finances come under increasing public scrutiny in Britain.

British monarchs are legally exempt from paying certain taxes, though they have paid some duties voluntarily for decades.

They also have no obligation to disclose their private tax bills, but recent scandals surrounding the disgraced former prince Andrew have thrust the royal family's finances into the spotlight.

Charles began releasing his personal tax information when he was heir to the throne, but will become the first monarch to disclose it.

"The decision to do so as Sovereign has come at the express wish of the King himself," a palace spokesperson said in a statement released late Saturday to a limited number of British media outlets.

It added that the move was "part of the adaptations carried across" since Charles acceded to the throne in 2022.

"To put it simply: we continue to modernise and evolve."

Ukraine hits Crimea as fighting escalates

At least four killed, 28 wounded; fuel sales halted

AFP, Moscow

Four people were killed, and fuel sales were suspended in Russian-occupied Crimea, the Moscow-backed authorities there said yesterday, after a massive Ukrainian barrage hit the Black Sea peninsula.

Ukraine said it targeted military and energy facilities in Crimea – Moscow's key logistics base for its four-year military offensive – in one of the biggest attacks on the peninsula in recent months.

"As a result of the enemy's drone attack on the Kerch peninsula, unfortunately, there are casualties among the civilian population," said Russia-backed Crimea governor Sergey Aksyonov, referring to the part of Crimea that borders Russia.

"According to the latest information, four people were killed, 28 were wounded," he added.

"Today, June 21, starting from 09:00am (0700 GMT), fuel sales at Crimean petrol stations have been suspended," said Aksyonov in a separate statement, adding that fuel would only be sold to state enterprises.

The mass raid also killed one person on a ferry and hit an oil terminal in Russia's southern Krasnodar region bordering Crimea, the authorities there said.

Part of the Crimean peninsula, which was annexed by Russia in 2014, was left without power after the attacks, local utilities company

Krymenergo said.

Separately, overnight Russian strikes in eastern Ukraine killed three people.

"Last night, our long-range sanctions targeted the occupiers' military logistics, oil industry and air defence," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on social media.

Ukraine calls its retaliatory

attacks on Russia and occupied territories "long-range sanctions" and denies targeting civilians.

"All of this is a just response to Russia's brutal attacks against our people," Zelensky continued.

He added that Ukrainian forces also struck the Crimean Bridge connecting the peninsula to Russia, as well as radar and air defence systems.

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it can strike at will along the land corridor through occupied southeastern Ukraine that Russia uses to supply Crimea and its forces stationed there.

Ukraine has in recent months also stepped up drone attacks on energy facilities in Russia, striking targets deep behind the front lines.

Earlier this week, it hit a large refinery in Moscow twice.

92% Israelis believe Iran won war: poll

AFP, Jerusalem

Israelis overwhelmingly believe that Iran emerged stronger from the Middle East war and its subsequent deal with the United States, a poll released on Sunday found.

The poll of 3,644 respondents, conducted between June 17 and 20 by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in collaboration with the Agam Institute, paints a stark picture of public sentiment following the US-Iran deal.

Of those surveyed, 92.1 percent said Iran had won or gained more from the conflict, while 82.9 percent felt that Israel's long-term security had been weakened.

The survey found that even among voters who support the right-wing bloc, the electoral base of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, 93.1 percent believed Iran had won.

Opposition to the US-Iran agreement was widespread, with 63.2 percent of respondents opposing it compared with just 12.1 percent expressing support.

The findings pointed to a broader crisis of confidence in Israel's leadership.

Nearly three-quarters of those surveyed, 72.5 percent, said they did not believe Netanyahu's claims about the military campaign's achievements, while 56.4 percent rated his management of the campaign as "failed" or "poor".



The poll also pointed to the political price paid by Netanyahu, with support for his premiership plummeting from 40.5 percent in early March to 29.4 percent in June.

Despite this, the survey found ongoing support for military action against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Nearly half of respondents, 48.2 percent, backed renewed major military action against Hezbollah in Lebanon, even if it risked confrontation with Washington, while only 21 percent opposed such a move.

Negotiations to turn the temporary Iran-US agreement into a more permanent deal are taking place in Switzerland, despite the conflict in Lebanon threatening negotiations. Washington announced a renewed ceasefire there on Friday after Israeli troops clashed with Hezbollah fighters in southern Lebanon.

Taiwan to hold combat readiness drills

REUTERS, Taipei

Taiwan's military will hold a five-day combat readiness drill this week, the defence ministry said yesterday, as part of modernisation plans to shift its training focus to more realistic exercises simulating war, away from setpiece events.

Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory despite the objections of the government in Taipei, says China's armed forces routinely operate in the skies and seas around the island in an effort to pressure it to accept Chinese sovereignty.

Taiwan's military has begun basing some of its drills on a scenario in which China suddenly turns one of its regular exercises around the island into an actual attack.

The "Immediate Combat Readiness Exercise" would start on Monday and run until Friday, the defence ministry said in a statement.

The announcement came on the same day the ministry said China had sent another large number of military aircraft into the skies near Taiwan.

There were 21 aircraft, including J-16 fighters, KJ-500 airborne early warning and control aircraft, and Y-20 aerial refuelling aircraft, it added.

'Fooling no one' Al Jazeera rejects Israeli accusations against journo killed in Gaza

AFP, Doha

Al Jazeera yesterday rejected Israeli accusations that one of its journalists, killed in Gaza a day earlier, was a Hamas operative, as family and colleagues mourned the cameraman in the Palestinian territory.

The Qatar-based network said in a statement that it "condemns the Israeli occupation army's baseless accusations, which seek to justify its crimes against Al Jazeera journalists and cameramen in Gaza, most recently the killing of cameraman Ahmed Wishah".

The Israeli military said in a statement issued late on Saturday that Wishah was killed in a "precise strike" alongside two other Hamas militants and that he had served as a "sniper operative" in Hamas.

The Israeli military provided no evidence to support the accusations.

In its Sunday statement, Al Jazeera said an "Israeli campaign of incitement has relentlessly spread false allegations and baseless accusations against Al Jazeera staff".

"These attempts deceive no one," it added.

On Saturday, Al Jazeera reported that Wishah was killed in an Israeli airstrike that targeted a house in the Bureij refugee camp.

Ahmed Wishah's brother Mohammed Wishah, also an Al Jazeera journalist, was killed by Israeli shelling in April, the Qatari broadcaster said at the time.

According to the media rights group Reporters Without Borders, Israeli forces have killed more than 220 journalists since the war in Gaza erupted. At least 70 of them were killed in the context of their professional duties.



'Historical justice'

Dutch PM makes formal apology to Moluccans

AFP, The Hague

Dutch Prime Minister Rob Jetten yesterday issued a formal state apology to members of the Moluccan community for their decades-long mistreatment by the Netherlands after Indonesia won independence from colonisation.

Many Moluccans, from the so-called "spice islands" in eastern Indonesia, fought for the Dutch colonial army during the post-World War II struggle for independence.

After Indonesia gained independence in 1949, around 12,500 Moluccans were brought to the Netherlands in a state-organised transfer to escape reprisals.

They were supposed to stay only briefly before returning to an independent country, as part of negotiations at the time between the Dutch government and Indonesia.

However, the Dutch reneged on their promise to repatriate them, and they were housed in dire conditions, with little attempt to find them jobs or integrate them into broader Dutch society.

Unveiling a monument to commemorate that dark period of Dutch history, a visibly moved Jetten told hundreds of Moluccans gathered in Rotterdam that it was "high

time" to apologise.

"For the inadequate reception and housing. For being unseen and abandoned. For the unfulfilled longing for home. And for the grief and pain in so many families. For this, I offer my apologies today on behalf of the Dutch government," said Jetten.

The Ulu Kora monument was unveiled on the Lloydkade in Rotterdam, where the first ships transporting Moluccans arrived in the Dutch port.

Those who were in the army were immediately discharged, and many were sent to former concentration camps used to gather Jews in the Nazi-occupied Netherlands.

The 1970s saw a number of violent actions by second-generation Moluccans, who felt betrayed by the Dutch for failing to secure their independent homeland.

"I realise the injustice cannot be suddenly removed with apologies. We cannot change the course of history and the reality of today with a few sentences," said Jetten.

"But I do hope that the words I just spoke are perceived as a form of recognition and an act of historical justice for you," he told members of the community, many of them clutching family photos of first-generation Moluccans now dead.



Participants perform yoga exercises during an event to mark International Yoga Day at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP