

Israeli forces take part in a raid in Qalandia refugee camp in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday. Mohammad Aslan, spokesman for the committee that runs the affairs of Qalandia camp, said the Israeli army had arrested at least 20 people and took up positions on the roofs of a number of houses inside the camp. PHOTO: REUTERS

Won't repatriate Myanmar refugees if lives are at risk

Says Malaysia govt spokesman

AFP, *Kuala Lumpur*

Malaysia will not send 5,000 refugees back to Myanmar if authorities conclude their lives would be at risk, a government spokesman said Wednesday, while preparations continued for the potential repatriation.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim announced last week that Myanmar had agreed to take back 5,000 members of the persecuted Rohingya minority, in a rare repatriation push that has prompted concern from rights groups.

Communications Minister Fahmi Fadzil, without specifying the refugees' ethnicity, told a news briefing that "Malaysia, as a responsible country, will not send them back if they would either be persecuted or their lives would be threatened".

"The junta government in Myanmar is ready to receive them, but we will examine what the criteria are. And if appropriate, we will implement" the repatriation plan, he said.

"We cannot send them back if their lives are threatened. So there are several matters that are being looked into by the foreign ministry." Myanmar authorities have made no public comment on the plan.

Malaysia hosts over 215,000 refugees and asylum seekers registered with the UN refugee agency, including more than 126,000 Rohingyas from Myanmar.

META ERRORS

Zuckerberg apologises to India govt

REUTERS

Meta Platforms' Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg has apologised to the Indian government over child sexual abuse material on the company's platforms and for operational errors, local television channels reported yesterday.

Zuckerberg apologised for the presence of the material, as well as deepfake content and operational lapses on Meta's platforms, financial news publication Moneycontrol reported, citing sources.

The publication added the apology was conveyed during a meeting between Meta executives and Indian government officials on Tuesday.

Meta, whose major social media apps include Facebook and Instagram, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In July, the Indian government ordered Meta to remove advertisements and content promoting child sexual abuse material on Instagram, the BBC reported.

The government also sought an explanation from Meta within seven days on how advertisements containing such material were allowed on the platform, the report added.

Russian missile, drone barrage on Kyiv kills 17

Warehouses, logistics centres of major retailers destroyed; 40 hurt; Ukraine fails to down single missile

AGENCIES

Russia fired dozens of ballistic missiles at Ukraine's capital Kyiv and the surrounding region yesterday, killing at least 17 people and destroying warehouses and logistics centres of major retailers, Ukrainian officials said.

Multiple explosions ripped through the area during the night, and fires lit up the dark skies over the Ukrainian capital, which has come under missile attack every three to four days in recent weeks as Russia has escalated its air war.

President Volodymyr Zelensky warned that Ukraine's lack of missile defences had once again cost lives and urged Ukraine's foreign allies to replenish its supplies of interceptors.

Alarm at German airport after drone found near Ukrainian plane, mid-air incident

Ukrainian defences downed nearly 90 percent of 115 drones launched by Russia but failed to intercept a single one of the 24 ballistic missiles and four Zircon cruise missiles, the air force said. More than 40 people were injured in the attack, reports Reuters.

The main targets were warehouses, infrastructure and a railway station, Zelensky said, adding that a brewing company, construction materials warehouses and other civilian logistics facilities were destroyed.



"Ballistic missile interceptors could have saved the lives of those killed today," Zelensky said.

"It is very important that our partners understand that delays in supplying them, or an unwillingness to provide anti-ballistic systems, lead directly to such horrific casualties and destruction."

Russia's Defence Ministry said it had struck seven logistics centres in Kyiv and the surrounding region, accusing them of being used to store or distribute dual-use goods and drone components.

Both Russia and Ukraine deny targeting civilians in the war triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Meanwhile, German police deployed a bomb disposal robot at an airport overnight after a drone was found on the tarmac near a Ukrainian cargo plane, sparking alarm and forcing the diversion of numerous flights, reports AFP.

One aircraft that had to abort its scheduled landing at Leipzig-Halle airport then collided mid-air with an unknown object nearby but later landed safely elsewhere, a government spokesman said.

Bild daily reported that the drone found on the tarmac of the eastern German airport carried explosives and a detonator -- but police did not confirm this report to AFP, saying the investigation was ongoing.

STRONG EL NINO

49m more may face acute hunger: WFP

REUTERS, *Geneva*

A powerful El Niño weather event could push an additional nearly 49 million people into acute food insecurity across some of the world's most vulnerable regions by the end of next year, the World Food Programme (WFP) said yesterday.

The UN agency said in a report that there was an 81 percent chance of a very strong El Niño event, with sea surface temperatures at their warmest levels since at least 1982 and potentially making it the strongest such event since 1950.

El Niño alters global weather patterns and is often associated with drought in Southern Africa, delayed monsoons in parts of Asia and erratic rainfall elsewhere.

"These are events that in the past have triggered large-scale hunger," Jean-Martin Bauer, director of WFP's Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Service, told reporters.

Based on an analysis of 45 countries, WFP estimates that the number of people facing acute food insecurity could rise by almost 49 million to a total of 274 million people, an increase of 22 percent, relative to the baseline population already experiencing crisis-level food insecurity or worse.

US STATE OF MICHIGAN

Progressive El-Sayed wins primary in jolt to Democrats

REUTERS

The Democratic Party's progressive wing scored a high-profile victory when Abdul El-Sayed won Michigan's US Senate primary, US media projected yesterday, giving its anti-establishment message a boost ahead of November's midterm elections.

El-Sayed, whose message focused on healthcare, the economy and an end to unconditional military aid to Israel, was the first progressive to win a statewide primary in a state that President Donald Trump carried in 2024.



Tuesday's vote, billed as a defining test of the party's direction, became an election-night cliffhanger before US media projected early yesterday that El-Sayed had narrowly prevailed over US Representative Haley Stevens, a moderate supported by Democratic leaders and pro-Israel groups.

The race served as a battleground between progressives and moderates over support for Israel, an issue that has played out in primaries nationwide this year. But unlike contests in liberal bastions, this was a statewide race in a Midwestern swing state for a seat Democrats must win if they have any hopes of securing a Senate majority in November.

Stevens benefited from tens of millions of dollars in spending by a pro-Israel super PAC, and her supporters argued she was the more electable candidate in the general election, when she will face Republican Mike Rogers, a former US representative.

Analysts had said one significant factor in El-Sayed's favor was that Michigan is home to some of the country's largest Arab American communities, where hostility to Israel runs deep.

DIPLOMATIC DISPUTE

US revokes visa of Brazilian envoy to Washington

AFP, *Washington*

The United States has revoked the visa of Brazil's ambassador, a State Department official said Tuesday, in a mounting diplomatic row just months before elections in Latin America's largest nation.

The move would be reversed, the official said on customary condition of anonymity, if Brazil granted its approval of President Donald Trump's nominee to be ambassador Brasilia.

Trump nominated Daniel Perez, a prominent Florida Republican, as the new ambassador to Brazil in early June.

While the nomination still requires confirmation by the US Senate, he would not be able to take up the post until Brazil gives approval.

"We think the government of Brazil owes us a prompt and positive answer to our request," the official said.

Brazil's envoy, Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, was however not being declared persona non grata and forced to leave the United States, the official clarified.

Brasilia responded swiftly and condemned the US move as an escalation of a diplomatic standoff.

"Today's decision is not an isolated incident. It is part of a deliberate escalation of hostile measures against Brazil, motivated by ideological reasons," the office of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said in a statement.

The latest spat comes just months before Brazil holds a presidential election in October, with leftist incumbent Lula facing a challenge from right-wing candidate Flavio Bolsonaro.



A firefighting helicopter makes a drop on the Gann Fire near Angels Camp in Calaveras County, California, US on Tuesday. Evacuation orders have been issued as California fire crews try to control the blaze, which has rapidly grown to 3,000 acres. PHOTO: REUTERS

TRUMP SECURITY

Armed man arrested at LA golf course

AFP, *Los Angeles*

An armed man was arrested at President Donald Trump's golf course in Los Angeles two days before the US leader's visit on Tuesday, the local sheriff's office said.

The suspect, identified as 38-year-old Jeanine John Taele from nearby Downey, California, was arrested on Sunday afternoon at the golf course in Rancho Palos Verdes.

Plainclothes federal agents spotted him "walking throughout the golf course grounds taking photographs and videos and appearing to monitor security-planning activities".

Trump arrived by helicopter at the golf club Tuesday evening to attend a fundraising dinner.

During the suspect's detention, deputies recovered a 16-round magazine containing hollow-point ammunition from the pants pocket.