

**MUSTREAD**

**Coal mine fire kills 4, injures 7 in Vietnam's northern province**

Hanoi: Four coal miners lost their lives and seven others were injured on Wednesday in a methane gas fire in Vietnam's northern province of Quang Ninh, Vietnam News Agency reported. The mine, which covers 23 square meters in Cam Pha city, was reportedly under excavation when the accident occurred. The mine operates under Thong Nhat coal mine company of the Vietnam National Coal and Mineral Industries Group. The seven injured workers were being treated at a local hospital. The case was under investigations.

**Fire engulfs 450 shops, 9 houses in market**

Yangon: A devastating fire swept through a municipal market in Kyauktaga Township of Myanmar's Bago region, engulfing shops and houses, an official from the Bago region Fire Services Department said Wednesday. No casualties have been reported in the fire that broke out at around 6 p.m. local time on Tuesday, he told Xinhua. Due to the incident, 450 out of the nearly 500 shops in the market, as well as nine nearby houses, were engulfed in flames, he said. It took nearly six hours to extinguish the flames, which originated from a barbershop. The cause of the fire, supposed to be an electrical wire failure, is still under investigation, the official said.

**Senegal's new president names PM**



Dakar: Newly-elected Senegalese President Bassirou Diomaye Faye has appointed Ousmane Sonko, leader of the African Patriots of Senegal for Work, Ethics and Fraternity (PASTEF) party, as prime minister, an official of the presidency announced recently. Sonko, 49, is the current mayor of Ziguinchor and the leader of the PASTEF party, which was dissolved by a presidential decree in July 2023. Faye, 44, was sworn in earlier Tuesday in Diambriadiou, 30 km from Dakar, the capital of Senegal, for a five-year term.

**China's authorities lift tsunami warning issued after earthquakes hit off Taiwan**

Beijing: The Chinese Ministry of Natural Resources lifted a tsunami warning on Wednesday that was issued after a series of powerful earthquakes hit the eastern coast of Taiwan, China Central Television (CCTV) reported. Earlier on Wednesday, the ministry issued a level 1 tsunami alert, or red alert—the highest of four levels in China—following the earthquakes off Taiwan. According to the China Earthquake Administration, a 7.3-magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Hualien County in eastern Taiwan on Wednesday.

**2 in cardiac arrest after lightning strike in southwestern Japan**

Tokyo: Two high school students have suffered cardiac arrest after being struck by lightning on Wednesday as they attended a football match in Japan's southwestern prefecture of Miyazaki, local media reported. Local fire department received a report at around 2:30 p.m. local time that multiple people were injured by a lightning strike on the ground of Miyazaki Sangyo-keiei University in Miyazaki City, Japanese daily Mainichi Shimbun reported, citing the Miyazaki City Fire Department. Firefighters arrived at the scene and transported the injured to the hospital, with two people suffering cardiac arrest, the report said.

**NATO chief urges to build up military aid to Ukraine**

Brussels: It is necessary to strengthen military assistance by North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to Kiev amid problems on the battlefield, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said on Wednesday. "Ukraine has urgent needs; any delay in proving support has consequences on the battlefield as we speak," Stoltenberg told reporters ahead of the NATO foreign ministers' meeting, adding that the alliance needs to "shift the dynamics of our support [towards Ukraine]."

# 9 killed, 821 others injured in Taiwan earthquake

Taipei (UNI)

At least nine people have died and 821 have been injured in an earthquake that occurred in Taiwan, Taiwanese broadcaster Sanlih reported on Wednesday, citing fire services.

Earlier in the day, a 7.3-magnitude earthquake that struck off the coast of Taiwan has become the strongest to hit the island in 25 years, Wu Chien-fu, the director of the Central Weather Administration's Seismology Centre, said. As of 16:30 local time (8:30 GMT), the death toll stands at nine; another 821 are injured, and at least 127 have been trapped, the broadcaster reported.

At least eight F-16 fighter jets stationed at the Taiwanese air forces' base in Hualien County were slightly damaged by the earthquake, the China Times newspaper reported later in the day, saying that the tremors had cracked base hangar walls, causing them to collapse. The main mechanisms of the fighters were not harmed by the quake,



the newspaper reported, adding that the necessary repair work has been conducted and the combat readiness of the fighters has been fully restored.

About 1,000 people might be trapped

in the mountains of Taiwan's Taroko National Park as the rescue team is attempting to get in touch with climber groups, the island's Central News Agency reported on Wednesday. At least

654 people were staying in the park overnight on Tuesday, while another 680 climbers registered to visit the national park on Wednesday, the news agency reported. At least two German citizens have been trapped in Chongde Tunnel in Taroko Park, German newspaper Bild reported. There have been no reports of Russian citizens injured or killed in the earthquake, the Taipei-Moscow Economic and Cultural Coordination Commission told Sputnik, adding that it continues to closely monitor the situation.

There are currently no organised Russian tourist groups on the island, the Association of Tour Operators of Russia (ATOR) said later in the day.

On Wednesday morning, a series of powerful earthquakes were recorded off Taiwan. A spokesperson for the Japan Meteorological Agency said the powerful earthquake had a magnitude of 7.7, followed by a 6.6-magnitude earthquake and a 6.3-magnitude earthquake.

## 21 killed in armed confrontations in S. Yemen

Aden, Yemen (UNI)

A total of 21 people were killed in intense armed confrontations between Yemen's government forces and the Houthis group in the country's southern province of Lahj, said a military official.

The military source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said ferocious armed confrontations erupted on the Shurayjah front in the north of Lahj, where the government forces and the Houthi militants exchanged artillery fire and shelling.

The fierce fighting resulted in the deaths of 12 government soldiers, including a site commander, and the injury of eight others. Meanwhile, nine Houthi militants were killed

and more than 15 injured in the fighting.

The clashes in Lahj come just days after similar fighting between the two warring parties in the southern province of Dhalea and neighboring areas, underscoring the escalating tensions across multiple fronts in Yemen.

Yemen has remained in a fragile calm since Oct. 2, 2022, when the United Nations announced the failure of the Yemeni government and the Houthi group to extend and expand the six-month truce that had been in place.

As hopes for a peaceful resolution to the long-standing Yemeni conflict continue to diminish, there are

growing concerns about the potential resumption of hostilities and the further deterioration of the already dire humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

Yemen has been embroiled in a protracted civil conflict since 2014, when the Houthis seized control of the capital, Sanaa. In 2015, a Saudi-led military coalition intervened in an attempt to restore the government.

Despite diplomatic efforts over the years, neither side has shown willingness to revive negotiations aimed at resolving the conflict, which, according to UN estimates, has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and pushed millions to the brink of famine.

## "PoK not part of Pakistan by constitution", says Awami Action Committee leader

Agencies, Mirpur [PoK]

Arif Chaudhry, a prominent leader of the Joint Awami Action Committee's Mirpur chapter, held a press conference at the Mirpur Press Club recently, addressing the Pakistani administration's disregard for the people of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK).

Chaudhry emphasised the lack of fulfilment of promised rights and resources for PoK residents, highlighting Mirpur's repeated sacrifices for Pakistan's benefit despite ongoing neglect and suppression.

Chaudhry stated, "We, the people of Mirpur, are civilised but have been suppressed, looted, forcefully



dislocated and suppressed, and the same destruction continues even today."

During the conference, Arif Chaudhry asserted that PoK is not constitutionally part of Pakistan.

**6 children killed, 10 wounded in accident in S. Iraq**

Baghdad: Six children of a primary school were killed and some 10 others wounded on Tuesday in a run-over accident in Iraq's southern Basra province, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) said. The incident occurred in the afternoon when a refrigerator truck ran over the children on a street outside their school in al-Hartha, some 15 km north of the namesake provincial capital Basra, INA said. According to an initial investigation, the driver lost control of the truck due to brake failure, causing a run-over accident, INA said.

Iraqi security forces arrested the driver, while the authorities of the province declared a three-day mourning. More than 7,000 traffic accidents occurred in 2023, mainly due to old and unqualified roads, the lack of sufficient traffic signals and safety barriers, as well as negligence of traffic rules, according to the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights.

## Papua New Guinea's PM visits disaster-stricken areas

Port Moresby (UNI)

Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape visited areas in the country's East Sepik and Chimbu provinces in the past few days as natural disasters, including floods, landslides, and a major earthquake, recently wreaked havoc on local communities.

Marape flew to Angoram and Wosera-Gawi in East Sepik on Sunday, taking the opportunity to make an aerial assessment of the damages while assuring local residents of government support, according to a statement released Tuesday by PNG's Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council.

In mid-March, people living along the Sepik River saw their homes and food gardens destroyed by major flooding after torrential



rains soaked the area. Following that, a 6.9-magnitude earthquake also hit the province on March 24, resulting in the loss of three lives.

During the prime minister's visit to Wosera-Gawi, Marape expressed his sympathies to the victims.

He announced that a disaster relief package of 2 million PNG Kinas

(about 523,571 U.S. dollars) was being released by the National Treasury to the East Sepik Provincial government.

"Local level governments, provincial governments, and district development authorities are the working hands of the national government on the ground, so we will empower them to assist our people with immediate relief and care as well as the next phase of restoration and development," said Marape.

The prime minister also travelled to Gumine and Gembogl in Chimbu Province on Monday to deliver relief assistance.

On March 15, local newspaper The National reported that flash floods and huge landslides, caused by heavy downpours, killed 23 people in the province.

## DPRK successfully test-fires intermediate-range hypersonic ballistic missile - KCNA

Seoul (UNI)

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Tuesday successfully test-fired an intermediate-range hypersonic ballistic missile with its top leader guiding the event on the spot, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported on Wednesday. The test-fire marked the first time the country has launched the new-type intermediate-range solid-fueled ballistic missile, called Hwasongpho-16B, which was loaded with newly-developed hypersonic gliding warhead, according to the KCNA report. The missile was launched towards the northeast at an army unit's training field on the outskirts of Pyongyang, the report said. After separation from the missile, the hypersonic gliding warhead reached its first peak at the height of 101.1 kilometers and the second peak at the height of 72.3 kilometers while making 1,000-



km-long flight as scheduled, before it accurately fell into the eastern waters off the Korean Peninsula, the report said. The test-fire had made no adverse effect on the security of neighboring countries, it added. Calling the missile "another powerful strategic offensive weapon to demonstrate the absolute advantage of the DPRK defense science and technology," Kim Jong Un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and president of the State Affairs of the DPRK, said the country has "put all of its tactical, operational and strategic missiles with various ranges on solid-fueled, warhead-controlled and nuclear warhead-carrying basis," representing the successful implementation of the party's principles of missile development drive for "rapidly, accurately and powerfully striking any target in the enemy side worldwide," according to the KCNA report.

## Several killed, wounded in drone attack in N. Sudan

Khartoum: A number of people were killed and wounded recently in a drone attack on a gathering of an Islamist brigade in Atbara city in northern Sudan's Nahr al-Neel State, said the state's security committee.

"A group of worshipers were attacked by a drone while performing sunset prayer after the iftar meal," the committee said in a statement.

The attack left several people dead and wounded, said the statement, adding the wounded had been transferred for treatment.

Meanwhile, local media reported that a drone attack targeted the al-Baraa Bin Malik Brigade during an iftar meal after the sunset prayer.

According to eyewitnesses, the attack left seven people dead and about 17 others injured, while no official information on the number of casualties has been issued yet.

No party has yet claimed responsibility for the incident.

## Cambodia's ex-PM Hun Sen elected as senate president in 5th mandate

Phnom Penh: Cambodia's former Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen was elected as the president of the Senate in the fifth mandate on Wednesday, the state-run National Television of Cambodia reported.

All 62 senators present at the first session of the upper house of the parliament unanimously elected Hun Sen as the president, according to the report.

Also, they voted for ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) senators Prak Sokhonn, ex-deputy prime minister and ex-foreign minister, and Ouch Borith, ex-senior minister, to be the first president and the second president, respectively. "I'd like to thank all of you for giving confidence in me, allowing me to lead the Senate in the fifth legislature," he said.

## Death of aid worker in Gaza airstrike outrageous, unacceptable: Australian FM

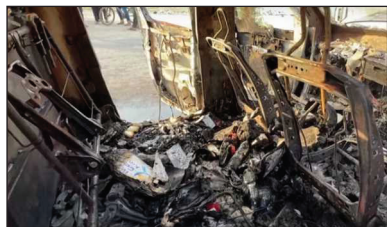
Canberra (UNI)

Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong has condemned Israel for an airstrike that killed an Australian citizen in Gaza.

In a statement issued on Tuesday night, Wong said the Australian government expects full accountability from Israel for the deaths of seven people who were working with World Central Kitchen to deliver aid in Gaza when they were killed by an airstrike on Monday local time.

The group included Australian citizen Lalzawmi "Zomi" Frankcom, a Melbourne-born 43-year-old who had worked with the aid organization for five years.

"The death of any aid worker is outrageous and unacceptable," Wong



said.

"The Australian government condemns this strike. The government has made representations to the Netanyahu government and seeks a thorough and expeditious review."

She confirmed the foreign affairs department is providing consular assistance to Frankcom's family in Australia. On Tuesday, Prime Minister

Anthony Albanese said he had requested a phone call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to discuss the incident.

Appearing on Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio on Wednesday morning, Wong said she expected Netanyahu to make himself available to speak to Albanese and urged the Israeli leader to change course to avoid further civilian deaths.

Frankcom's family said in a statement on Tuesday that they were mourning the news that "Zomi" had been killed doing the work she loves.

They said "Zomi" was a kind, selfless and outstanding human who will leave behind a legacy of compassion, bravery and love.

## E China hailstorm disaster death toll rises to 7

Nanchang: The death toll resulting from hailstorms and severe convective weather that has been affecting east China's Jiangxi Province since Sunday has risen to seven, local authorities said on Wednesday.

As of 10 a.m. Wednesday, 54 counties in nine cities, including the provincial capital of Nanchang, had been hit by the weather disaster, with 93,000 people affected, according to statistics from the Jiangxi provincial flood control and drought relief headquarters.

The severe weather has resulted in damage to 5,700 hectares of crops, while 12 households suffered collapsed homes and another 80 households severely damaged homes. An immediate estimate of the direct economic losses caused by the disaster has reached 150 million yuan (about 21.1 million U.S. dollars).