

MUSTREAD

US ready to deploy medium-range missiles in Indo-Pacific

Washington: The United States intends to deploy medium-range missiles in the Indo-Pacific region in the near future, Indo-Pacific Land Forces Cmdr. Gen. Charles Flynn said. Finding a way to counter China's modernising missiles is a critical role for US ground forces, he said in an interview with the Japanese newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun. Flynn added that he considered the orbit in which China was moving to be dangerous. In 2023, Flynn had already announced US plans to deploy medium-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific region to potentially deter China over Taiwan.

2 killed, 15 injured as strong winds batter Moscow

Moscow: Two people were dead and 15 others injured after strong winds hit the Russian capital Moscow on Wednesday, according to city Mayor Sergei Sobyenin. Wind velocity reached more than 21 meters per second, prompting the city to close large municipal parks and other open public places, Sobyenin said on Telegram. All injured people have been provided with the necessary medical care, and city services are taking all measures to eliminate the consequences, Sobyenin added.

3 dead, 10 injured in fire at south China nursing home

Guangzhou: Three were killed and 10 others were injured in a fire that broke out at a nursing home in south China's Guangdong Province on Thursday, said local authorities. The fire broke out at the Kangyi nursing home in Dongguan City around 4:21 a.m. Thursday and was extinguished at 4:48 a.m., according to the city's emergency management bureau. Among the 10 injured, one is in critical condition and the others are in stable condition. Relevant investigation into the accident is underway.

1 dead, 7 arrested in clashes in Ecuador's Amazon region

Quito: One suspect was killed and seven others were arrested during clashes between Ecuadorian troops and armed groups in the country's Amazon region, the armed forces said Wednesday. The clashes took place in the Amazonian province of Orellana, in the northeast of the country, during a military operation against illegal mining, the military said. According to army intelligence, those arrested participated in attacks on military personnel on March 22 in the Barranca Bermeja district of the northern Amazonian province of Sucumbios, which left one soldier dead and four others wounded by gunshot.

Two killed as Ukrainian drone hits truck with food, water in Khesron region

Kyiv: Two people were killed as a result of a Ukrainian drone hitting a truck that was carrying food and water to the village of Babyne in the Kherson region, Andrey Alekseyenko, the head of the regional government, said on Thursday. "There are things that go beyond good and evil, even in war. There are war crimes for which there cannot be a statute of limitations. Like this savage, shockingly cruel murder of two civilians who were taking food and water to a store in Babyne. A Ukrainian drone hit the driver's door," Alekseyenko wrote on Telegram.

Elections to upper house of Belarusian parliament to be held on Thursday

Minsk: Elections of lawmakers to the upper house of the Belarusian parliament will be held in all regions of the republic on Thursday, the country's Central Election Commission (CEC) said in a statement. "On April 4, elections of members of the eighth Council of the Republic of the National Assembly [upper house of parliament] will be held in all regions and Minsk," the CEC said. The Council of the Republic is a chamber of territorial representation.

48.3 kg heroin seized in Myanmar

Yangon: Authorities have seized 48.3 kg of heroin worth over 1.93 billion kyats (about 920,000 U.S. dollars) in Mon state, southern Myanmar, the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CC-DAC) reported on late Wednesday.

US questioned on silence on arrest of Pakistan's opposition leaders while being vocal on similar cases in India

Agencies, Washington

The US Department of State spokesperson Mathew Miller was put on the spot during a press briefing on Wednesday when a journalist questioned him on the state department taking a stand on the arrest of Indian opposition leader Arvind Kejriwal but not doing the same on arrests of Pakistani opposition leaders.

Mathew Miller refused to categorise both cases into one and said that the US wanted to see everyone in Pakistan treated with consistent rule of law and human rights.

"I would not agree with that characterization. We have made clear on a number of occasions that we want to see everyone in Pakistan treated consistent with the rule of law, treated with respect for human rights, as is our position with respect to any country in the world," Miller said.

Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate for alleged money laundering in connection with the Delhi excise policy case. On Tuesday, highlighting on US, German and the UN envoys making political remarks over Indian politics after Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's arrest, External Affairs Minister S



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Jaishankar used the word "Maryada", saying that we are sovereign countries and should not be interfering in each other's internal affairs. Speaking at a press conference in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, EAM Jaishankar emphasised that these are old and bad habits.

"...These are old habits. These are bad habits...The word I use is 'Maryada' among countries, we are sovereign countries. We should not be interfering in each other's internal affairs. We should not be passing comments about each other's politics," he said.

He further underscored that they have told the diplomats of these countries that India strongly objects to this. "Because once, if it becomes a rule, where do you stop? So we have been, in the cases where it has happened, we have told the diplomats of that country very clearly that we take very strong objection to it," Jaishankar said.

Three officers killed fighting terrorists who attacked police stations in Iran

Tehran (UNI)

Three security forces officers have been killed in a firefight with Jaish al-Adl terrorists who attacked two police stations in the cities of Rask and Chabahar in the southeastern Iranian provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Deputy Governor Alireza Markhamati said on Thursday.

Markhamati said earlier in the day that the attackers planned to infiltrate the headquarters of Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), but a shootout with law enforcement officers prevented them from doing so.

"Three security forces officers have

been killed in a fight with Jaish al-Adl," Iranian news website Jamaran quoted Markhamati as saying.

The deputy governor added that the attack began around 10:00 p.m. local time (18:30 GMT) on Wednesday and emphasised that Sunni militant group Jaish al-Adl, which is fighting for the independence of the Sistan and Baluchestan provinces and has recognised a terrorist group in Iran, is linked to Israel. His statement came amid a deteriorating situation in the Middle East over Monday's Israeli airstrike on the consular annex of the Iranian Embassy in Damascus.

Iranian news agency Mehr reported that Abbas Mir, the deputy chief of the 11th police station in Chabahar, was among the killed officers.

Iranian media reported that several terrorists have been killed and wounded, but the reported numbers varied. Some reported that only one terrorist has been killed, and some reported about two killed attackers.

On Monday, Israel carried out an airstrike on the consular annex of the Iranian Embassy in Damascus, destroying the building. Iran's IRGC said seven of its members have been killed in the attack, including two commanders.

9 dead, over 1,000 injured in 7.3-magnitude quake in China's Taiwan

Taipei/Beijing (UNI)

The 7.3-magnitude quake in China's Taiwan on Wednesday morning had left nine people dead and 1,011 people injured as of 10 p.m., according to the local emergency operation center.

Meanwhile, more than 100 people were trapped following the earthquake that hit the sea area near Hualien County, Taiwan, data from the center showed.

As of 10 p.m., rescuers had successfully saved 24 out of the 25 residents trapped in a severely tilted building in Hualien. Tragically, the last remaining individual, a woman, showed no signs of life when she was rescued.

At least 28 buildings collapsed throughout Taiwan following the earthquake, with 17 of them located in Hualien County. Local authorities



reported power outages affecting over 360,000 households, alongside water cuts affecting more than 120,000 households.

According to an official from Taiwan transportation authorities, the railway linking Yilan County and Hualien has been severely disrupted,

Member of Japan's ruling party accuses leaders of dictatorship

Tokyo: Former Japanese Education Minister Ryu Shionoya, who is expected to be forced to resign from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) on Thursday, has accused party leaders of dictatorial management methods and called on Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to take responsibility for the kickback scandal.

On Thursday, Shionoya, along with some other senior members of the largest LDP faction, previously led by the late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, is expected to receive the second toughest punishment at a disciplinary commission, being asked to apply to leave the party for accepting fundraising kickbacks.

"I strongly protest against the dictatorial and tyrannical management of the party," Shionoya's written statement was quoted as saying by Japanese broadcaster NHK.

The ex-minister also expressed his outrage towards LDP leader Kishida.

"As for the party's responsibility, Prime Minister Kishida, who led the faction whose accountant is being prosecuted, must bear both moral and political responsibility," the lawmaker said.

14 civil servants arrested on organised crime charges in Ecuador

Quito (UNI)

At least 14 civil servants in Ecuador, including judges and police officers, were arrested on Wednesday in a nationwide operation against corruption within the legal system, the country's Attorney General's Office said.

Police arrested and raided homes in eight provinces as part of Operation Plague, which targeted civil servants suspected of systematically allowing criminals to elude justice in exchange for "money or favors."

"Those allegedly involved ... benefited highly dangerous people, granting them freedom through legal tricks and abuse of the law," the office said in a post on social media site X, formerly Twitter.



Judges implicated let criminals already in prison "obtain their freedom illegitimately though it appeared legal," said the office. The operation aims "to eradicate this plague that operates in the justice system, which has been systematized as a vicious circle and which accounts, once again, for the deep emergence of corruption in state institutions," it added.

No issue with oil payment from India: Russia

Agencies, Moscow

The Russian Foreign Ministry has said that deliveries of Russian oil to India are steadily high, with no payment issues encountered, the state-owned news agency TASS reported.

"Russian oil supplies to India are maintained at a steadily high level; no problems arise with determining means of payment for oil exported by Russia," Maria Zakharova, the official spokeswoman for the Russian Foreign Ministry, said at a briefing on Wednesday (Local Time).

The priority in payments "is given to national currencies," she highlighted.

"This makes it possible not to depend on the so-called 'rules of the game' imposed by the Westerners when making banking transactions," TASS quoted Zakharova as saying.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in February this year reaffirmed India's stance on buying Russian oil despite sanctions on Moscow amid military conflict with



Ukraine.

He said that India and Russia have always shared "stable and friendly ties" and Moscow has never hurt the interests of New Delhi.

In an interview with the German economic daily, Handelsblatt during his visit to Germany for the Munich Security Conference, Jaishankar said that Europe should understand that India cannot have a view of Russia that is identical to the European one.

PoK activists stage anti-Pakistan protest outside UN, demand dismantling of terror camps

Agencies, Geneva [Switzerland],

The political activists from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) organised a protest against Pakistan to highlight the hardships faced by local residents due to various issues, including the increasing presence of terrorism and fundamentalism.

The protest against human rights violations in Pakistan and its occupied Jammu and Kashmir was held during the 55th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on Wednesday.

Activists from the United Kashmir People's National Party (UKPNP) and Swiss Kashmir Human Rights were seen carrying banners with messages such as 'Stop land grabbing occupying hilltops



in PoK and Gilgit Baltistan' and 'Stop Human Rights abuses in PoK and Gilgit Baltistan'.

Nasir Aziz Khan, the central spokesperson of the United Kashmir

People's National Party said, "Our main purpose was to highlight the miseries and the plight of the people of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, where people are protesting for their ba-

sic rights. They are deprived, their rights are compromised and people are protesting and demanding that Pakistan must give them the ownership of their natural resources and self-rule. People are protesting, they are demanding that illegal taxes on the electricity bills must be abolished by Pakistan".

Subsequently, the UKPNP organised an event at the John Knox Centre, where activists raised concerns about the presence of terror camps in the region and the increasing rise of fundamentalism.

Sardar Shaukat Ali Kashmiri, Chairman of UKPNP said, "The conference aimed to address the scourge of terrorism, which has far-reaching impacts globally, particularly on communities advocating for peace and dignity.

Death toll from Israeli strikes on Gaza Strip tops 33,000

Gaza (UNI)

The death toll from Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip has topped 33,000, with more than 75,600 people injured, the enclave's Health Ministry said on Thursday.

"The number of victims of the Israeli aggression since October 7 has risen to 33,037, with 75,668 people injured," the ministry said in a statement.

Over the past 24 hours, 62 civilians were killed in the enclave, the ministry added.

On October 7, Palestinian movement Hamas launched a large-scale rocket at-



tack against Israel and breached the border, attacking both civilian neighborhoods and military bases. Nearly 1,200 people in Israel were killed, and some 240 others were abducted during the attack. Israel launched

retaliatory strikes, ordered a complete blockade of Gaza, and started a ground incursion into the Palestinian enclave with the declared goal of eliminating Hamas fighters and rescuing the hostages.

Ferry catches fire in Thailand, passengers rescued

Bangkok: Around a hundred people on board were all safely rescued after a night ferry caught fire in southern Thailand on Thursday, local media reported.

According to public broadcaster Thai PBS, the fire broke out at around 6:40 a.m. local time, about two nautical miles off the popular tourist island of Koh Tao in the Gulf of Thailand. The sleeper boat, carrying 90 passengers and eight crew members, was en route from Surat Thani province to the island.

Nearby boats were dispatched to assist the passengers and crew, and all the people on board were brought to safety, Marine Department Director General Krittetch Chaichuay told Thai PBS. The blaze, which started in the engine room, was later brought under control, and the cause of the incident is under investigation, the official added.