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No casualties reported after 6.6-magnitude quake hits Indonesia

Jakarta: No casualties or major damage have been reported after a 6.6-magnitude earthquake struck Indonesia's Papua province on Thursday...

At least 18 killed, 360 wounded in Pakistan-Afghanistan clashes so far, UN says

Islamabad: At least 18 people have been killed and more than 360 wounded in Afghanistan in military clashes between Pakistan and Afghanistan since Oct. 10...

BLF captures police officers in Dhadar

Balochistan: Two distinct incidents involving militant groups were reported, with the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) announcing that its fighters had taken police officers captive in Dhadar...

China calls on US to respect facts and multilateral trade rules

Beijing: China has urged the United States and related companies to respect facts, follow international trade rules, and stop actions that harm China's interests, after US President Donald Trump threatened to impose a 100 per cent tariff on Chinese goods...

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's plane makes emergency landing in UK

Washington: US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's aircraft made an emergency landing in the United Kingdom after a windshield crack was detected during his return flight from a NATO Defense Ministers' meeting...

Israel, Hamas trade blame over truce violations

Rafah border reopening eyed but no date set



Agencies, Cairo/Tel Aviv

Israel said on Thursday it was preparing for the reopening of Gaza's Rafah crossing with Egypt to let Palestinians in and out...

A row over the return of bodies of hostages held by Hamas in Gaza retains the potential to upend the truce along with other major planks of the plan yet to be resolved...

Israel demanded that Hamas fulfill its obligations in turning over the bodies of the 28 deceased hostages. The Islamist faction said it had handed over 10 bodies but Israel said one of them was not that of a hostage.

"We will not compromise on this, and we will spare no effort until our fallen hostages return, every last one of them," Israel's government spokesperson said on Wednesday.

The armed wing of Hamas said the handover of more bodies in

Gaza, which was reduced to vast tracts of rubble by the war, would require the admission of heavy machinery and excavating equipment into the Israel-blockaded Palestinian enclave.

On Thursday, a senior Hamas official accused Israel of flouting the ceasefire by having killed at least 24 people in shootings since Friday, and said a list of such violations was handed over to mediators.

"The occupying state is working day and night to undermine the agreement through its violations on the ground," he said.

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to the Hamas accusations. It has previously said that some Palestinians have ignored warnings not to approach Israeli ceasefire positions and troops "opened fire to remove the threat".

US-led Gaza reconstruction center to begin operations

Moscow (UNI/SPUTNIK): The US-led coordination center based in Israel to monitor the implementation of the Gaza ceasefire agreement will begin operations in the coming days...

The center is expected to be headed by a US lieutenant general, whose identity has not yet been disclosed, the report said on Wednesday.

The report noted that the center will not be located on an Israeli military base to ensure its openness to representatives from other countries involved in the region's reconstruction.

US President Donald Trump, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Sisi, Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed a comprehensive document on the Gaza ceasefire. The same day, Palestinian movement Hamas released the 20 remaining living hostages held in the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023...

It called for an immediate ceasefire, contingent on the release of hostages within 72 hours. The document also proposed that Hamas or other Palestinian armed factions should have no role in governing the Gaza Strip and that control of the enclave should be transferred to a technocratic committee supervised by an international body led by Trump.

Moreover, Gaza City authorities have reported that more than 80 per cent of the city's infrastructure has been destroyed since Israel launched its offensive to seize the urban center in October 2023.

Syrian transitional President Al-Sharaa, Putin discuss resumption of direct flights

Moscow: Syria's transitional president, Ahmed al-Sharaa, and Russian President Vladimir Putin held discussions on the resumption of direct flights between Syria and Russia during a meeting in Moscow on Wednesday.

According to Mahmoud al-Hamza, a representative of the Syrian diaspora, President Putin responded positively to the proposal.

This marks al-Sharaa's first official visit to Russia since assuming the role of transitional president. During his working trip, he met with President Putin and also held a separate meeting with members of the Syrian diaspora in the Russian capital.

President al-Sharaa discussed the resumption of direct flights with Vladimir Putin during today's meeting.

Prominent Indian-American foreign policy expert Ashley J Tellis arrested

Charged with unlawfully retaining US defense information

Washington/New Delhi (UNI)

Ashley J. Tellis, a prominent Indian-American foreign policy and security expert, has been arrested and charged in the US with unlawfully retaining national defense information. An FBI affidavit alleges that Tellis illegally kept over 1,000 pages of classified documents and held undisclosed meetings with Chinese officials.

The India-born Tellis, who is a State Department employee, was placed on administrative leave after being accused of removing classified documents from secure locations and meeting with Chinese officials dating back to 2023.

The Justice Department announced on Tuesday that Ashley Tellis of the



Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was arrested over the weekend, Fox News reported.

"We are aware of the allegations

Trump says he has authorised CIA to conduct covert operations in Venezuela



Washington (UNI)

US President Donald Trump said he has authorised the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to conduct covert operations in Venezuela, a move that was decried by Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

Speaking to reporters at the White House, Trump accused Caracas of releasing prisoners and mental patients to illegally cross into the United States and of smuggling large volumes of narcotics.

"They have emptied their prisons into the United States of America" and "allowed thousands and thousands of prisoners" and "people from mental institutions, insane asylums," Trump accused, without offering evidence.

Asked whether he had authorized the CIA to kill Maduro, Trump refused to answer, saying, "I think Venezuela is feeling heat."

Trump added that his administration is considering strikes against Venezuela on land. "We are certainly looking at land now because we've got the sea very well under control," he said.

Shortly after Trump's comments, Maduro decried what he called "coups d'etat orchestrated by the CIA," according to media reports.

According to The New York Times (NYT), the new authorisation allows the CIA to conduct lethal missions in Venezuela and the Caribbean, as well as to coordinate with broader US military operations in the region.

Trump accuses BRICS of attacking USD, claims nations are 'dropping out' amid threat of tariffs

Washington (UNI)

In a sharp escalation of his anti-BRICS rhetoric, US President Donald Trump has accused the multi-national alliance of allegedly launching "an attack on the (US) dollar," and claimed that several BRICS nations have begun "dropping out" of the group after his threats of new tariffs.

However, no such move has been declared by any of the member of partner nations of the bloc.

Trump reportedly made his remarks during a bilateral lunch with his Argentinian counterpart President Javier Milei at the White House.

"I'm very strong on the dollar, and anybody that wants to deal in dollars, they have an advantage over people that aren't," Trump said.

"I told anybody that wants to be in BRICS, that's fine, but we're going to put tariffs on your nation... Everybody dropped out. They're all dropping out of BRICS."

"BRICS was an attack on the dollar and I said, you want to play that game, I'm going to put tariffs on all of your products coming into the US. They said, like I said, we're dropping out of BRICS...They don't even talk about it anymore," he added.

The US President had asserted that he and his administration were dedicated to preserving the dollar's global dominance, and would never allow it to be dethroned, warning of harsh retaliation against any country or alliance it considers being a threat.

US expects Japan to stop buying Russian energy: Bessent

Washington/ Moscow: US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said he held a meeting with his Japanese counterpart, Katsunobu Kato, during which he said that Washington expects Tokyo to stop buying oil from Russia.

"Minister Kato and I also discussed important issues pertaining to the US-Japan economic relationship and the Administration's expectation that Japan stop importing Russian energy," Bessent said on X on Wednesday.

Bessent added that he also discussed investments with his Japanese counterpart.

On August 27, an additional 25% tariff on imports from India, imposed by US President Donald Trump, went into effect, bringing the total tariff rate to 50% - one of the highest rates set by Washington.

French PM survives no-confidence votes after making pension concession



Agencies, Paris

French Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu survived two no-confidence votes in parliament on Thursday, winning crucial backing from the Socialist Party thanks to his pledge to suspend President Emmanuel Macron's contested pension reform.

The two motions presented by the hard-left France Unbowed and the far-right National Rally (RN) secured just 271 and 144 votes respectively - well short of the 289 votes needed to bring down Lecornu's days-old government.

Lecornu's offer to mothball the pension reform until after the 2027 presidential election helped sway the Socialists, giving the government a lifeline in the deeply fragmented National Assembly.

Despite the reprieve, the motions underscored the fragility of Macron's administration midway through his final term.

Police investigating 2 public place shooting, fire incidents

Sydney: Police are investigating two shooting and fire incidents that occurred in the city's western suburbs in the early hours of Thursday.

Police in the state of New South Wales (NSW) said in a statement that emergency services were called to reports of a fire in Cabramatta, 26 km west of central Sydney, at around 12:45 a.m. local time on Thursday.

On arrival at the scene, officers found a house and vehicle both alight.

Both fires were extinguished, but the house and car sustained significant damage.

Police officers were told that a number of gunshots had been heard, and subsequently found bullet casings at the scene.

Macron's legacy evaporates as France's political and fiscal woes mount

Agencies, Paris

In a 2018 interview with Fox News ahead of his first state visit to the United States, a fresh-faced President Emmanuel Macron was asked whether he might back down on reforms amid fierce domestic opposition.

"No. Chance," Macron replied, separating each word for emphasis.

Fast forward to 2025: a politically cornered Macron, under siege from a resurgent parliamentary opposition, has been forced to shelve the only major economic reform of his second term - a totemic pension overhaul pushed through at great political cost.

For months, as France faced its worst political crisis in decades,



Macron rejected leftist demands to shelve the reform.

His painful concession, delaying the reform until after the 2027 presidential election, was made as a last-ditch attempt to prevent the collapse of Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu's weak minority government.

Zelenskiy goes to Trump for more support as Ukraine war escalates

Agencies, London/Kyiv

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy meets Donald Trump on Friday to push for more military support at a time when Kyiv and Moscow are escalating the war with massive attacks on energy systems and NATO is struggling to respond to a spate of air incursions.

Since Trump's summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in August failed to yield a breakthrough in the U.S. peace push, Kyiv has been hammering Russian oil refineries with drones while Russian strikes have caused major power outages across Ukraine.

NATO's eastern flank is also on edge after Poland and Estonia said Russia had violated their airspace with drones and jets last month, eliciting denials from Moscow. There have since been other drone incidents in Germany and Denmark.



A former senior Ukrainian official said Russia and Ukraine were both trying to ramp up pressure and improve their hands ahead of any new window for negotiations, and that they lacked the resources to keep up the current intensity for long.

"I think two (more) months is quite enough for this round of esca-

lation," said the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Zelenskiy is expected, among other things, to press Trump for long-range U.S. Tomahawks that would put Moscow and other major Russian cities within range of missile fire from Ukraine.

Trump has said he could supply the weapons to Ukraine if Putin fails to come to the negotiating table.

Russia, meanwhile, is seeking to revive momentum in U.S.-Russian relations that has been lost since the Alaska summit by underlining shared values, while at the same time vowing a tough response to any U.S. action that might harm it.

Trump's rhetoric shifted in Ukraine's favour last month, after weeks of voicing frustration with Putin and the lack of Russian movement towards a peace deal.

Having previously suggested that

Kyiv should give up land to cut a deal, Trump said that Kyiv's military was capable of expelling Moscow's forces from all its territory and mocked Russia as a paper tiger.

He also praised Ukrainians, in a striking change of tone just over half a year since he and Zelenskiy clashed publicly in the White House. Even so, many Ukrainians greeted the change in tone with a shrug and doubted it would be backed with action.

Since then, two officials told Reuters on Oct. 1 that the United States would provide intelligence for Ukrainian long-range attacks on Russian oil infrastructure.

A senior government official in Kyiv also said that Ukraine hoped the ceasefire in Gaza would reinvigorate Trump's peace push in Ukraine and train Trump's focus more closely on ending Russia's war.

Venezuela FM denounces U.S. "militarization" in Caribbean

Caracas: Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yvan Gil on Wednesday denounced the United States' "militarization" of the Caribbean Sea, which has claimed the lives of at least 27 civilians. "We emphasise that there is no justification whatsoever for the militarization of our coasts," Gil said while addressing the midterm ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Uganda.

Gil condemned recent U.S. missile strikes on ships in the region as "extrajudicial executions," the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry said in a statement. "These are murders committed with total premeditated malice, in international waters, thousands of kilometers from the U.S. coast, in actions that violate every norm of international law," Gil was quoted as saying.