

WAR SNIPPETS

REVERSE RUSSIA OIL WAIVER, ADMIN TOLD A group of US senators has accused the Trump administration of handing Russian President Vladimir Putin a financial windfall by pausing sanctions on Russian oil exports during a global energy crisis. In a letter to Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, 13 Democratic senators urged the Trump govt to restore sanctions on Russian oil deliveries and intensify efforts to curb Moscow's energy revenues amid the Ukraine war.

AIRLINES CUT 13,000 FLIGHTS IN MAY Airlines have cut 13,000 flights globally in May as jet fuel prices soar. Airlines have removed two million seats from flights over May, new data shows. Cuts come ahead of UK half-term holidays at the end of month. Istanbul and Munich have seen largest cut in flights.

AMERICA SHUTS PESHAWAR MISSION The US announced the phased closure of its Consulate General in Peshawar, saying diplomatic engagement with Pakistan's KP province will be handled by its embassy in Islamabad.

FRIENDLY VISIT | Beijing appreciates commitment of Tehran not to develop nuclear arms, affirms its legit right to peaceful N-energy use: Yi to Aragachi

Open strait ASAP, China urges Iran

PTI BEIJING

China on Wednesday called on Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz "as soon as possible" as it appreciated Tehran's commitment not to develop nuclear weapons, a prime demand of US President Donald Trump to end the war against the Islamic Republic.

"On the issue of the strait, the international community shares a common concern over restoring normal and secure navigation through the strait, and China hopes relevant parties will respond as soon as possible to the strong call from the international community," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi (R) told his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi in Beijing.

Significantly, Wang appreciated Iran's commitment not to develop nuclear weapons. Trump has been demanding Iran hand over stockpiles of



enriched uranium and a 20-year commitment from Tehran not to develop nuclear weapons.

China appreciates Iran's not-to-develop-nuclear-weapons commitment, and affirms Iran's legitimate right to peaceful use of nuclear energy, Wang told Araghchi.

The Iranian foreign minister, who is on his first visit to Beijing after the US-Iran war started, briefed Wang on the ongoing negotiations with Washington to end the war. "China believes that achiev-

ing a comprehensive ceasefire is an urgent priority, while re-opening hostilities would be even more undesirable," Wang said. According to the Chinese foreign ministry, Araghchi said, "Priority can be given to promptly resolving the issue of reopening the strait. Iran will firmly safeguard its national sovereignty and national dignity, while continuing to build consensus through peaceful negotiations and seek a comprehensive and lasting solution."

Separately, the Iranian and Saudi foreign ministers discussed regional developments over the phone on Wednesday, stressing on the need to continue diplomatic efforts and regional cooperation to avoid renewed tensions, according to the Iranian foreign ministry.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanked President Donald Trump for announcing a pause in the operation in the Strait of Hormuz.

US presses China over Iran support

IANS WASHINGTON

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio stepped up pressure on China and Russia over the strait crisis, warning countries helping Iran evade sanctions could face economic consequences in the Gulf.

At a White House briefing, Rubio said the Trump administration was preparing a renewed push at the UN while warning Beijing its economic interests were being harmed by Iran's actions in the Gulf.

"We're going to the UN," Rubio said. "We're going to give it another chance to be a forum in which we're not even asking people to commit troops to the region. All we're asking them to do is to condemn it, to remove these mines, and to allow humanitarian relief to come through," he said.

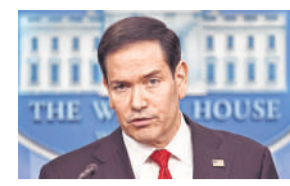
The secretary described the crisis as a test of the credibility of the UN system. "These guys (Iranians) are bombing commercial vessels," Rubio said. "They're not bombing naval vessels; they're bombing commercial tankers."

Rubio warned foreign financial institutions and companies helping Tehran bypass sanctions could face secondary sanctions.

Rubio addressed the growing relationship between Beijing and Tehran. "I hope the Chinese tell him what he needs to be told, causing you to be globally isolated," Rubio said. "That what you were doing in the straits is causing you to be globally isolated."

The secretary of state argued China's export-driven economy would also suffer if instability in the strait disrupted global trade flows.

"It is in China's interest that



Iran stop closing the straits," he said. "It's harming China as well." Rubio defended Trump's authority to conduct military operations against Iran without congressional approval, calling the War Powers Act "100% unconstitutional". "That has been the position of every single presidential administration since the day that law passed."

Rubio said major US military operations against Iran are over — but he stopped short of saying the conflict cannot be rebegun. "Operation Epic Fury" "is concluded" as its objectives were met.

Rubio said recent clashes with Iran related to US efforts

to reopen the strait were "defensive in nature." "We're not cheering for an additional situation to occur," he said.

"At least 10 sailors have already died as a result." The sailors come from 87 countries and are innocent bystanders. Further, Rubio described Hezbollah as the main obstacle to lasting peace between Israel and Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Pope Leo called out Trump's misrepresentation of his views on Iran and nuclear weapons. Leo said the Catholic Church "for years has spoken out against all nuclear weapons, so there is no doubt there."

Trump again accused Leo in an interview of being "OK for Iran to have a nuclear weapon." Leo has said no such thing, and Catholic Church teaching says the mere possession of nuclear weapons is "immoral."

Russia snubs Kyiv's unilateral truce, fire drones

Kyiv: Russia fired dozens of drones in Ukraine in nighttime attacks, Ukrainian officials said on Wednesday, disregarding a unilateral ceasefire announced by Kyiv that began at midnight. Defence Ministry claimed Ukraine hadn't abided by its own ceasefire, saying air defences shot down 53 drones over Russian regions, the illegally annexed Crimean Peninsula and the Black Sea between Tuesday evening and dawn on Wednesday. —AP

PIO Nithya Raman shakes up Los Angeles mayor race

Born in Kerala in 1981, Nithya Raman moved to the US as a child and has since built a career at the intersection of policy and community work. She currently serves as the councilmember for Los Angeles' District 4, a role she took on in 2020 after a breakthrough electoral win.

Her victory marked a milestone. She became the first Asian American woman and the first South Asian to sit on the Los Angeles City Council.

Raman's political outlook is deeply informed by her academic and grassroots background. She studied at Harvard University and later completed a master's in urban planning from Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Before entering electoral politics, she co-founded the SELAH Neighbourhood Homeless Coalition, working directly on homelessness, an

issue that remains central to her platform.

Raman entered the 2026 LA mayoral race hours before the filing deadline in Feb. The decision raised eyebrows, because she had previously backed sitting mayor Karen Bass.

Observers increasingly likened Raman to Zohran Mamdani, a prominent progressive voice in US politics.



Iran to use 'kamikaze dolphins' to attack US ships in Hormuz?

Washington: Amid continued concerns over Iranian mines disrupting the shipping in the strait, US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth fielded questions on whether Tehran might turn to "dolphins" to confront the US Navy in the war in West Asia. The idea isn't very far-fetched, it seems, as several nations, including the US, have reportedly used "kamikaze dolphins" in conflict areas in the past — though not as weapons.

Hegseth dismissed the idea, saying he could "confirm" Iran didn't have dolphins to deploy as part of operations but said he would neither "confirm nor deny" whether the US had kamikaze dolphins.

The idea was first reported by the Wall Street Journal on April 30, with an article claiming Iranian officials had said Iran could use "mine-carrying dolphins" to attack US war-



ships. It is not clear whether Iran has that capability.

The US Navy has a decades-old programme to train dolphins to detect mines. The US Marine Mammal Programme is part of the Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Department within the Naval Information Warfare Centre Pacific. But the dolphins trained by the US are not kamikaze dolphins, meaning they do not sacrifice their lives to detonate mines. Instead, they're focused on detection. However, citing a source, CNN reported the US military isn't using dolphins as part of its efforts to reopen the strait. —

Agencies

New system to regulate traffic

Tehran: Iran has launched a new system to control ship traffic through the strait, state media reported, continuing a maritime standoff that now involves a US blockade and threats of military action. Under the new rules, all ships planning to pass through the narrow waterway must receive permission via email from Iranian authorities, according to state-run Press TV.

Iran is calling the initiative a "sovereign governance system". Ships would be required to adjust their operations accordingly and obtain permission before entering the waterway, Press TV reported. It described the initiative as a "sovereign governance system" now in effect in the strategic chokepoint. —Agencies

Briefs

Bus-tanker crash kills 16

A passenger bus collided head-on with a fuel tanker truck on a highway on Indonesia's Sumatra island on Wednesday, killing at least 16 people and injuring four others. The bus was carrying at least 20 people when it hit a tanker truck travelling in the opposite direction. The bus may have emitted sparks, prompting the driver to steer it towards the right of the road. An oil tanker truck was approaching at high speed, said the police.

Surprise Pope call to priests

Pope Leo XIV surprised 13 priests from southern Lebanon, near the border with Israel, by joining a video call from Rome on Wednesday, telling them they were in his prayers and that he hoped peace would soon prevail along the tense frontier. The Lebanese Catholic and Maronite priests were asked to attend an online morning meeting with the Vatican's ambassador to Lebanon, Archbishop Paolo Borgia. Once online, Borgia told them Leo was also present and would like to speak with them. The 13 holy men from Rmeich, Ain Ebel, Debel and Marjayoun, were pleasantly surprised.

Iran mall fire leaves 8 dead

A fire in a shopping centre near Iran's capital killed eight people and injured 40, Tehran's emergency service department said on Wednesday. The fire started on Tuesday in the Arghavan shopping centre in Andisheh. It was unclear what caused the blaze. Iran's state television IRIB said authorities were investigating. TV footage showed firefighters battling the flames as large plumes of black smoke billowed from the multistory building. With the PM's popularity in

3 positive cases evacuated to Europe

Praia (Cape Verde): Three patients with suspected hantavirus infections were being evacuated from a cruise ship to the Netherlands on Wednesday, the UN health agency said, as the vessel at the centre of a deadly outbreak remained off Cape Verde with nearly 150 people on board waiting to head to Spain's Canary Islands.

A footage showed health workers in protective gear heading to the ship for the evacuation that included the ship's British doctor, who Spain's health ministry said had been in "serious condition" but has improved. An air ambulance later departed.

Three people have died, and one body remained on the ship, the WHO said. Eight cases have been recorded in all, three of them confirmed by laboratory testing. Hantavirus usually spreads by inhaling contaminated rodent droppings and can spread person-to-person, though the WHO calls that rare.

Contact tracing had begun

SHIP WITH HANTAVIRUS OUTBREAK



Health workers arrive to evacuate patients from the MV Hondius cruise ship at a port in Praia, Cape Verde. —AP

on two continents, Europe and Africa, in search of infections around people who earlier left the ship, which departed over a month ago from South America for stops in Antarctica and several remote Atlantic islands.

Two Argentine officials investigating the origins of the outbreak said the government's leading hypothesis is that a Dutch couple contracted the virus while bird-watching in the

city of Ushuaia before boarding. They said the couple visited a landfill during the tour and may have been exposed to rodents. Authorities previously said Ushuaia and surrounding Tierra del Fuego province had never recorded a hantavirus case. Those still on board show no symptoms.

The Dutch foreign ministry said the three people evacuated were a 41-year-old Dutch national, a 56-year-old British na-

tional and a 65-year-old German national who would be "immediately transferred to specialised hospitals in Europe". A Dutch hospital confirmed it would take one. German authorities were preparing for a second.

Two remain in "serious condition," Dutch ship operator Oceanwide Expeditions said, and the third had no symptoms but was "closely associated" with a German passenger who died on the MV Hondius ship on May 2. Health officials said passengers and crew members still on the ship are without symptoms; the WHO said passengers represent 23 nationalities.

Meanwhile, authorities said testing in Switzerland, South Africa and Senegal had shown positive for the Andes strain of the virus. The WHO says the species of hantavirus is found in South America, primarily in Argentina and Chile, and can spread between people, though that's rare and only through close contact.

BJP win: B'desh hopes no 'pushback'

Dhaka: Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed on Wednesday expressed hope people will not be pushed in Bangladesh after the BJP's victory in the recent polls in bordering states.

"I hope no such incident (push backs) will happen," Ahmed told reporters when asked if he feared an increase in cases of

people suspected of being illegal immigrants being pushed from India. Ahmed, however, said the Border Guard Bangladesh have been asked to "remain alert" along the frontiers.

Ahmed's comments came a day after Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman was quoted in the ruling Bangladesh National-

ist Party's official Facebook page saying Bangladesh will take action if "push-in" incidents occur amid the change of power in the bordering state of West Bengal.

The term "pushback" is typically used to describe the action of forcefully sending people, believed to be illegal migrants, across borders. —PTI

Ramaswamy wins Republican nomination for Ohio governor

Columbus: Republican Vivek Ramaswamy will run for the position of Ohio governor in November, after the staunch ally of US President Donald Trump emerged victorious in one of a series of primary contests held in the US Midwest. Projected results on Tuesday night showed the health-tech entrepreneur had defeated Casey Putsch to earn the Republican nomination.

Ramaswamy, who gained prominence during his unsuc-



cessful run against Trump for president in 2024, said at a victory party his plan was to "leave this state and this country better than we found it".

Meanwhile, Democratic candidate Amy Acton, who ran unopposed for her party's

own nomination, told supporters she wanted to make Ohio more affordable again.

"It shouldn't be this hard," said Acton, who is the former Ohio public health director.

"It is time to put working families first." Trump himself hailed Ramaswamy in a flurry of social media posts that announced victories for various candidates he had backed in primary races — notably in Indiana.

Local polls could hasten exit of Britain's embattled PM

London: British voters will cast ballots on Thursday in elections that could hasten the end of PM Sir Keir Starmer's troubled term and confirm that an increasingly fractured UK has entered an era of messy multiparty politics.

Starmer's Labour Party is expected to take a battering in elections for local authorities across England and for semi-autonomous legislatures in Scotland and Wales.

With the PM's popularity in

the doldrums from a weak economy and repeated questions about his judgment, rival parties are framing Thursday's mid-term votes as a referendum on Starmer and his 2-year-old government. "Vote Reform, Get Starmer Out" is the campaign slogan of the hard-right party Reform UK.

Meanwhile, police launched a Community Protection Team of an initial tranche of 100 officers to tackle antisemitic hate crimes. —PTI

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