

# 16 killed as Russian missiles, drones bombard Ukraine

KYIV, Apr 16 (AP)

RUSSIA hammered civilian areas of Ukraine with hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles in an attack that stretched for hours from daytime into the night, killing at least 16 people and injuring more than 80 others as terrified residents cowered in their homes, officials said Thursday.

Russia launched nearly 700 drones and dozens of ballistic and cruise missiles, primarily targeting civilians, authorities said. Moscow's forces have hit civilian areas almost daily since its all-out invasion of its neighbour more than four years ago, with the regular assaults occasionally punctuated by massive attacks.



A woman walks among the rubble of a house damaged after a Russian strike on residential area in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Thursday. (AP)

More than 15,000 Ukrainian civilians have died in the strikes, the United Nations says. The latest bombardment came in the wake of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's 48-hour trip this week to Germany, Norway and Italy in an urgent search for more air defence systems that can stop Russian missiles.

Ukraine fears the Iran war is burning through stockpiles of the advanced American-made systems it needs, and has argued against a US temporary waiver on Russian oil sanctions that Kyiv says is helping finance the Kremlin's war effort.

"Another night has proven that Russia does not deserve any easing of global policy or lifting of sanc-

tions," Zelenskyy said on X.

He thanked Germany, Norway and Italy for new agreements this week on supporting Ukraine's air defence. Officials are also working with the Netherlands on additional supplies, he said.

At the same time, he noted that some partner countries haven't followed through on pledges of military support.

"I have instructed the Commander of the Air Force to contact those partners who earlier committed to providing missiles for Patriot and other systems," Zelenskyy said.

At least four people were killed in Kyiv, including a 12-year-old, with more than 50 others injured, according to authorities.

# Asia will be driver of global growth: IMF

■ By Sagar Kulkarni

WASHINGTON, Apr 16 (PTI)

ASIA will remain the main driver of global growth with India and China contributing 70 per cent of the regional expansion, the IMF said Thursday, adding that the energy shock due to the Gulf crisis will negatively impact the region.

However, the five per cent regional growth witnessed in 2025, despite the impact of US tariffs and trade uncertainty, is projected to moderate to 4.4 per cent in 2026 and 4.2 per cent in 2027, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in its report on the Asia-Pacific segment.

"Asia entered 2026 on a solid footing with growth remaining resilient despite the region bearing the brunt of US tariffs and

heightened uncertainty," Krishna Srinivasan, Director for the IMF Asia Pacific Department told reporters here.

However, he said, given the region's high fossil fuel intensity and reliance on conflict areas for key commodities, the new energy shock will negatively impact the region.

"The shock is raising inflation, weakening external balances, tightening financial conditions, and narrowing policy space," he said.

According to the IMF, Asia consumes about 38 per cent of the world's oil and 24 per cent of its natural gas.

It's also one of the largest crude refiners, accounting for about 35 per cent of global refining capacity, which is heavily concentrated in China, India, Korea, and

Singapore.

Srinivasan said growth across most Asian economies turned out stronger than expected in late 2025. This is thanks to exports and consumption which held up better than anticipated, supported by accommodative policies and financial conditions.

"Asia's exports to the US declined but that to the rest of the world increased," he said.

As for other growth drivers, Srinivasan said consumption recovered at different speeds across countries, while investment, not surprisingly, remained soft in many economies amid uncertainty and country-specific shocks.

"In the context of the war in the Middle East, oil and gas prices have risen sharply, and there is considerable uncertainty about

how persistent this shock will be," he said.

Srinivasan said so far, inflation expectations remain broadly anchored in 2027, which gives central banks some room to look through the first-round rise in headline inflation.

"But monetary policy should remain agile. A prolonged energy shock could weaken currencies and generate more persistent inflation through exchange-rate pass-through and broader second-round effects," he said.

The Asian region's oil and gas use amounts to about four per cent of gross domestic product, nearly double Europe's share. It exceeds 10 per cent in economies such as Malaysia and Thailand, where transport and industry play larger roles.

# No dates set for second round of Iran-US talks: Pakistan

■ By Sajjad Hussain


ISLAMABAD, Apr 16 (PTI)

PAKISTAN on Thursday said that no dates have been decided for the second round of talks between the United States and Iran. Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi's statement comes amidst reports that another round of talks is possible after the latest contacts made by the Pakistani side with regional leaders, including the Iranian leadership.

Andrabi said in response to a query that "no dates have been set as yet", as he avoided rejecting the possibility of the second round of talks.

When asked about the arrival and composition of the delegations for a second round of dialogue, he said, "Who will come, how large the dele-

gation will be, who will stay, and who will leave - this is for the parties to decide." "The details of the negotiations that we had were entrusted to us by the negotiating parties," he added.



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# Modi, Macron discuss West Asia conflict

NEW DELHI, Apr 16 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi spoke with French President Emmanuel Macron and discussed the situation in West Asia, with both leaders emphasising the need to urgently restore safety and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

In a post on X about his telephonic conversation with Macron, PM Modi said on Thursday, "We will continue our close cooperation to advance peace and stability in the region and beyond."

"Received a phone call from my dear friend President Emmanuel Macron. We discussed the situation in West Asia and agreed on the need to urgently restore safety and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. "We will continue our close cooperation to advance peace and stability in the region and beyond," Modi said.

# PM Modi pitches for lasting peace in M-E



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Austria's Chancellor Christian Stocker during a meeting, at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Apr 16 (PTI)

**THE** world is going through a "very tense" situation impacting all nations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday, pitching for bringing lasting peace to Ukraine and West Asia as military conflict cannot solve any problem.

Modi made the remarks after holding wide-ranging talks with Austria's Federal Chancellor Christian Stocker that focused on significantly ramping up bilateral ties in areas of trade, defence and infrastructure.

In their talks, Modi and Stocker  
*(Contd on page 3)*

## Voice of India carries lot of weight: Stocker

NEW DELHI, Apr 16 (IANS)

**AUSTRIAN** Chancellor Christian Stocker on Thursday hailed India's role bilaterally and in international forums, saying that New Delhi's "voice carries a lot of weight". Stocker stated that he and Prime Minister Narendra Modi agree that peace in all conflicts can

*(Contd on page 3)*



Wang Yi

# Ensure freedom of navigation through Hormuz: China to Iran

BEIJING, Apr 16 (PTI)

**CHINESE** Foreign Minister Wang Yi has asked Iran to ensure freedom and safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, a first such call issued by Beijing ever since Tehran started to put a squeeze on the critical waterway in the midst of its war with the US.

Wang has sought guarantees

of freedom and safety of international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz in a phone call with Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi on Wednesday.

Wang's call coincided with a Pakistan mediation delegation headed by Field Marshal Asim Munir reaching Tehran on Wednesday to discuss new peace proposals for a second

round of talks between the US and Iran in Islamabad.

China, a close ally of Iran and the largest importer of Iranian oil, was also concerned over the energy crisis accentuated by the US blockade of the Strait, preventing ships from carrying oil and gas from Iran's ports.

"The current situation has reached a critical stage of tran-

sition between conflict and peace, and a window for peace is opening," Wang told Araghchi, according to a statement by the Chinese foreign ministry.

Wang said Iran, as a coastal state of the Strait of Hormuz, should have its sovereignty, security and legitimate rights and interests respected and safeguarded.

## Israel and US goals 'identical'; prepared for any scenario: Netanyahu

JERUSALEM, Apr 15 (PTI)

**PRIME** Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday said Israel and the US share "identical goals" in the ongoing conflict with Iran.

The Israeli Prime Minister said the US has been keeping Israel updated on its contacts with Iran and reiterated that both nations seek the removal of enriched material, an end to Iran's enrichment capabilities, and the reopening of key maritime routes.

"Our goals and those of the United States  
(Contd on page 3)



A woman holds a candle during a vigil for people killed in Lebanon during the Iran war, in Dearborn, Mich. (AP/PTI)

## Israel, Lebanon agreed to 10-day ceasefire: Trump

CAIRO, Apr 16 (AP)

**ISRAEL** and Lebanon have agreed to a 10-day ceasefire, President Donald Trump said.

The President announced pause in fighting on social media, saying it followed "excellent" conversations with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Trump said he has directed Vice President J D Vance others to work with Israel and Lebanon to "achieve a Lasting PEACE". The President also invited the leaders of Israel and Lebanon to the White House for the first high-level talks since 1983.

Lebanon has insisted on a ceasefire to stop fighting between Israel and Hezbollah before talks, while vowing to commit to disarming the group.