

Ukraine strikes Russia's gas plant, satellite centres



A fire rages in a multistorey building in Ukraine.

(AP/PTI)

KYIV, June 24 (AP)

UKRAINIAN forces struck a major natural gas processing plant and two key satellite communications centres in their latest nighttime attack on Russia, Ukraine's General Staff said Wednesday.

The operation was part of Ukraine's aerial campaign targeting energy facilities and military industries that has intensified as Kyiv builds bigger and better long-range weapons to defeat Russia's all-out invasion, now in its fifth year.

The overnight attack hit the Orenburg Gas Processing Plant, which is part of a complex that also houses the only helium plant in Russia, the General Staff said in a statement on the Telegram messaging app. The attack set the complex on fire, it said. Orenburg is located more than 1,200 kilometres behind the front line that snakes along eastern and southern Ukraine, it said.

Bangladesh PM Rahman arrives in Beijing; to hold talks with Xi on bilateral ties

BEIJING, June 24 (PTI)

BANGLADESH Prime Minister Tarique Rahman on Wednesday arrived in Beijing, where he will hold talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping on strengthening bilateral ties and charting the future course of relations between the two countries. Rahman arrived in the Chinese city of Dalian from Kuala Lumpur on Monday. In the coastal city, he attended the 17th Annual Meeting of the New Champions organised by the World Economic Forum (WEF), aimed at translating technological promises into economic progress and employment opportunities.

Rahman on Wednesday took a high-speed train from Dalian to Beijing, where he will meet Xi,

Premier Li Qiang and other senior officials in the next two days.

“The leaders will chart the future course of bilateral ties” in their talks, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a media briefing in Beijing on Monday.

“Through the visit, China looks forward to working with the new Government of Bangladesh to enhance strategic communication, carry forward the traditional friendship, advance high-quality BRI cooperation, expand exchanges and cooperation in various areas, and enhance co-ordination on multilateral affairs to bring the China-Bangladesh comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation to a new level”, he said. Ahead of Rahman’s China

visit, Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam told media in Dhaka on June 20 that Bangladesh and China are expected to sign 15 to 17 bilateral instruments, including 13 Memorandums of Understanding, two agreements, one action plan and one protocol, according to a report in Bangladesh’s state-run BSS news agency. There would also be discussions regarding the Teesta water project during the visit, he said. The Teesta project is a sensitive issue in India-Bangladesh relations. Ties between the neighbouring countries have shown signs of improvement since Rahman’s Government took office in February, ending the brief rule of an interim Government headed by Mohammad Yunus.

Europe gripped by heat wave, triggers health warnings

■ By Danica Kirka
LONDON, June 24 (AP)

PEOPLE in large parts of the UK are being warned that high temperatures will present a risk to life on Wednesday as a "heat-dome" over Western Europe brings extreme conditions to the continent.

The "red heat health" alert for much of central and southern England, as well as Wales, is only the second such warning ever issued by UK authorities. The first was in July 2022, when temperatures exceeded 40 degrees C (104 F).

Authorities in France, Italy and

Spain have also issued warnings about the risks of extreme heat for tens of millions of people.

The UK is braced for the highest ever June temperatures, with the Met Office forecasting a high of 38 degrees in southern England. Temperatures reached 34.6 degrees C on Tuesday in Wisely, south-west of London.

"Red warnings are reserved for the most severe events and we're expecting severe and significant impacts from this heat wave, with health impacts likely for many, even beyond those who are normally more vulnerable to the heat," said Mark Sidaway, deputy chief forecaster for the UK Met



Office.

Some schools in England are closed due to the heat and many train services have been can-

celled with passengers urged to avoid non-essential travel in areas covered by the red warning.

Network Rail, which operates Britain's railroad network, warned of "significant disruption" across England and Wales as it imposes speed restrictions to minimise the risk from heat-related issues such as buckled tracks and sagging overhead electric wires.

Eurostar said it cancelled four trains planned between London and Paris on Wednesday and Thursday "due to expected adverse weather".

France recorded its hottest day ever on Tuesday, prompting the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre museum to restrict visiting hours while schools and transporta-

tion schedules were upended.

The record of 29.8 C (85.6 F) for France's national thermal indicator - an average of temperatures measured at 30 weather stations - was only the latest in a series of never-before-registered highs heaped on Europe's largest country.

Italy's Health Ministry issued "red alerts" for 16 cities on Wednesday with major cities such as Rome, Milan, Florence and Turin affected. The "bollino rosso" red alert signals emergency conditions that can affect not only vulnerable people but also healthy adults.

Temperatures could reach

highs of 41 C (105 F) in Florence and 38 C (104 F) in Milan, while Rome and Naples are forecast to remain below 36 C (96.8 F).

Britain's heat advisory remains in effect through Thursday, with overnight temperatures remaining well above average.

It's so hot in the tradition-bound seat of British democracy that male journalists covering Parliament are being allowed to remove their jackets in the press gallery of the House of Commons on Wednesday. "If you think it's hot already, well, we ain't seen nothing yet," Met Office meteorologist Alex Burkill said on Wednesday morning.

India-China border trade via Lipulekh Pass to resume after 6 yrs; 26 passes issued

PITHORAGARH, June 24 (PTI)

THE first batch of 26 Indian traders is expected to enter the Chinese territory of Tibet through the Lipulekh pass on June 26, marking the resumption of border trade after a six-year hiatus, according to administrative sources in Dharchula.

Ashish Joshi, Trade Officer and Dharchula Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), said that 26 trade passes have been issued, which include 17 traders and nine helpers. A customs office has also been opened at Gunji to facilitate the process.

“We expect the first batch of Indian traders to reach Tibet on June 26, as they have already stored their goods in warehouses at villages near the Lipulekh pass,”



Joshi said.

The administration has received applications from more than 103 traders and is currently planning to issue trade passes for a second batch of 25 traders shortly.

Inspectors will visit Iran's nuclear sites: UN nuclear agency head

TOKYO, June 24 (AP)

THE head of the UN's nuclear agency signalled on Wednesday that Iranian nuclear enrichment sites would be visited by his inspectors, a key component in the interim deal between the United States and Iran to reach an end to the war.

The comment by International Atomic Energy Agency head Rafael Mariano Grossi was the firmest yet from the United Nations agency, which is viewed as key in determining the status of Iran's nuclear stockpile.

Since Israel launched a 12-day war on Iran in 2025, the IAEA has been blocked by Tehran from visiting enrichment sites where the Islamic Republic is believed to store enough highly enriched

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Inspections only after final deal: Iran diplomat

TOKYO, June 24 (AP)

AN IRANIAN diplomat rejected comments on Wednesday by the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, saying nuclear site inspections would only be possible after a final US-Iran deal.

Kazem Gharibabadi, a Deputy Foreign Minister, made the comment on X. He was reacting to remarks earlier in the day by Rafael Mariano Grossi in Japan.

India slams Pakistan for 'unwarranted' remarks on J&K at UNSC meet

UNITED NATIONS, June 24 (PTI)

INDIA slammed Pakistan for making "unwarranted" remarks on Jammu and Kashmir at an informal UN Security Council meeting organised by Beijing and Islamabad, asserting that the union territory is a matter "strictly internal" to the country.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, made the remarks at an Arria-formula meeting of the Security Council on 'Bridging the Implementation Gap: Security Council Resolutions and the Maintenance of International Peace and Security'.

"I also refer to the unwarrant-



ed remarks made by the representative of Pakistan. It is incredible that a co-chair expected to be balanced and unbiased in conduct has chosen to politicise this forum," Harish said.

"I would only like to stress, for brevity of time, that the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is a matter strictly internal to India. It has always been, is, and will remain so," he said.

China's newest aircraft carrier sails through Taiwan Strait



TAIPEI, June 24 (AP)

CHINA'S newest and most powerful of its three aircraft carriers sailed through the Taiwan Strait on Tuesday, the Taiwanese defence ministry said, a day after Taiwan began a five-day military exercise on responding to a Chinese attack.

The Fujian carrier first sailed through the narrow body of water separating China and Taiwan in a trial run last September. It later transited the strait for the first time as a fully commissioned military vessel in December.

China claims the self-governed island as part of its territory and has not ruled out the use of force to bring it under Beijing's control. China regularly sends navy vessels and war planes towards Taiwan in military exercises that have become more frequent in recent years to where they now occur almost daily.

Wang Yi meets PM Modi, calls for deeper India-China cooperation



NEW DELHI, June 24 (IANS)

CHINESE Foreign Minister Wang Yi met Prime Minister Narendra Modi here and expressed his country's readiness to work with India to implement the important consensus reached between leaders of the two nations, continuously enhance trust and dispel doubts, properly handle sensitive issues, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, maintain the positive momentum of bilateral ties, and jointly advance their respective modernisation processes.

During the meeting, Wang stated that China and India should play an exemplary role in promoting solidarity and self-reliance among Global South nations.

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Sharing details regarding the meeting, China's Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, in a post on X, wrote: "Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. Wang said China and India, as the two

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Wang says, China and India should play an exemplary role in promoting solidarity, self-reliance among Global South nations.