**28 KILLED** when illegal gold mine collapses in Angola

**GLOBAL WEATHER**

LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • LS: Light Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beijing | 21 | 1 | SNY | Los Angeles | 20 | 12 | SNY |
| Colombo | 28 | 24 | SNY | Melbourne | 26 | 15 | LC |
| Dhaka | 31 | 19 | SNY | Moscow | 4 | 2 | SNY |
| Dubai | 26 | 21 | SNY | New York | 7 | 2 | SNY |
| Houston | 31 | 19 | TDS | Singapore | 28 | 25 | TDS |
| Istanbul | 33 | 21 | SNY | Toronto | 1 | -5 | SNY |
| London | 13 | 9 | SNY | Washington | 3 | -2 | SNY |

Rescuers work to reach people who have been trapped in a cave in Laos | AP

## Thai rescuers race to reach 7 trapped in cave

**VIENTIANE**

Cave rescue experts from Thailand who aided the dramatic 2018 retrieval of a youth football team joined efforts Monday to extract seven people trapped in a flooded cave for five days in neighbouring Laos, Laotian state media said.

Seven Laotian villagers entered the cave in central Xaysomboun province, about 125 kilometres (78 miles) northeast of the capital Vientiane, on May 20, state-run *Laophattana News* said. They were searching for gold but were trapped inside the cave after heavy rain triggered flash flooding, blocking their exit, it added. Authorities and villagers have been working to pump water out of the cave, but rescue teams have not been able to reach the group. "We still do not know whether there are any signs of life or if they are still alive," Bounkham Luanglat, president of a Laotian volunteer rescue association, told AFP.

About 100 people from Laos and Thailand have gone to the site in Long Chanh district to help in the rescue operations, the association said.

Two Thai rescue specialists and a Finnish expert involved in the 2018 Tham Luang cave rescue in Thailand arrived at the Laos cave on Monday, Laophattana News said. *AFP*

# No quick deal as Hormuz, N-stockpile are sticking issues

Local media says any potential agreement would preserve Tehran's management over the strait, for which it imposes a tax on oil tankers

**TEHRAN**

THE United States and Iran have both played down chances of a quick deal to end a war that has engulfed the West Asia and disrupted the global oil market. US President Donald Trump said on Monday that a deal with Tehran would either be "great and meaningful" or there would be "no deal" at all. He added that Saudi Arabia and other Gulf nations must normalise ties with Israel as part of efforts to reach a deal with Iran, adding fresh uncertainty into protracted peace negotiations.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said progress had been made in talks with Washington, but a final agreement was not yet within reach.

### Talks remain inconclusive

A major issue in the talks is traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, the vital global conduit for oil shipments that has come under Iranian control since the outbreak of the war. Iran has insisted that vessels must obtain permission from its armed forces.

Trump said on Saturday that "in addition to many other elements of the Agreement, the Strait of Hormuz will be opened", a development that would bring relief to global energy markets.

But Iran's Fars news agency said that, if finalised, the potential agreement would preserve Iran's management over the strategic waterway.

Tasnim news agency reported that the "status of the Strait of Hormuz would not revert to its pre-war situation". Tasnim also reported that "the naval blockade, according to the reported framework, would need to be fully lifted within 30 days", referring to the US blockading Iranian ports.

### Focus on maritime access

Iran has long demanded the release of its frozen assets held under longstanding US sanctions. According to Tasnim, "Iran has insisted that any initial understanding must be conditional on at least partial access to the assets".

It quoted an informed source as saying that Iran "has stressed that there will be no agreement unless a specified portion of Iran's frozen assets is released at the very first stage".

According to Fars, a potential understanding would also see the US temporarily lifting sanctions on oil, gas and petrochemicals during the negotiation period.

Iran has previously said that any ceasefire must apply to all fronts of the regional war, including Lebanon. *AFP*

Smoke rises following an Israeli airstrike that targeted the southern Lebanese village of Nabatieh | AFP

### Israel orders evacuations in Lebanon ahead of strikes

JERUSALEM: Israel's military on Monday warned residents of 10 villages in southern Lebanon to evacuate ahead of expected strikes on alleged Hezbollah targets. Military spokesman Avichay Adraee accused Hezbollah of violating the ceasefire agreement and urged civilians to move at least 1,000 metres away. Later, fresh evacuation warnings were issued for buildings near the city of Tyre, which Israel said were linked to Hezbollah facilities. Despite an April 17 ceasefire, Israel and Hezbollah have continued near-daily exchanges of fire. Lebanese authorities say Israeli strikes since early March have killed over 3,100 people. The Israeli military also said a soldier was killed in southern Lebanon on Sunday, raising its military death toll to 23.

### WHY US-IRAN DEAL REMAINS ELUSIVE?

**NUCLEAR ISSUE**

Iran says nuclear negotiations will be discussed separately later

US and Israel want the nuclear threat eliminated completely

**STRAIT OF HORMUZ**

Trump says the key oil shipping route will reopen

Iran insists control over the waterway will remain with Tehran

**SANCTIONS & FUNDS**

Iran seeks access to frozen assets at the first stage

Tehran also wants guarantees on sanctions relief

**LEBANON FRONT**

Iran wants fighting to end across all fronts, including Lebanon

Any understanding could require Israel to halt strikes in Lebanon

**STATUS**

Both sides say progress has been made, but no final agreement has been reached yet.

**Sign Abraham Accords**

Trump urged Muslim nations across the West Asia and beyond to normalise relations with Israel as part of the peace deal

## Israel opposition leader says deal bad for country

**JERUSALEM**

Yair Lapid, Israel's opposition leader

THE deal being discussed between the US and Iran fails to achieve any of Israel's goals for the war, Israel's opposition leader Yair Lapid said on Monday, as he accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of failing to influence a better agreement.

Lapid, who is part of an alliance attempting to unseat Netanyahu in elections this year, said details of the emerging deal are "disturbing."

"The deal is bad for Israel, bad for the region, bad for the citizens of Iran," Lapid told reporters in Jerusalem.

Israel and the US launched the war on February 28 vowing to destroy Iran's ballistic missile program, end its support for proxy militant groups across the region and end Iran's ability to pursue a nuclear bomb. Both Netanyahu and President Donald Trump also said they hoped to create conditions to topple Iran's government.

According to regional officials, under the current deal being discussed Iran would give up its stockpile of highly enriched uranium and reopen the strategic Strait of Hormuz in exchange for ending a US blockade of Iranian ports and the lifting of sanctions against Iran. Key details on Iran's nuclear program would then be negotiated during a 60-day period. It is unclear if the deal will address Iran's missiles or support for regional militant groups.

Lapid thanked Trump for backing Israel in the war, but criticised Netanyahu for allowing the US to negotiate a potential deal with little coordination with Israel. He said Israel's ability to influence Washington had hit "an all-time low". Netanyahu has repeatedly stressed to Trump that Israel maintains "freedom of action" against threats in any arena, according to an official familiar with the prime minister's conversations with Trump, who spoke on condition of anonymity. *AP*

### ASIM MUNIR, PAKISTAN PM BRIEF XI ON MEDIATION

BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping met Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Beijing on Monday as diplomatic efforts to end the Iran war continued. Xi praised Pakistan for playing a mediating role in the West Asia, while Sharif thanked China for supporting peace efforts. Pakistan, which hosted direct US-Iran talks in April, has emerged as a key mediator in the conflict. Sharif was accompanied by army chief Asim Munir, Islamabad's main negotiator with Washington and Tehran. The earlier talks, however, failed to produce a lasting agreement, with Iran accusing the United States of making "excessive demands".

**WORLD WATCHES**

## Belarus under scrutiny after major Russian strike on Kyiv

**KYIV**

BELARUS' exiled opposition leader visited Kyiv on Monday as the Ukrainian capital cleaned up after Russia's biggest missile attack of the year, and world leaders kept a close eye on how much support the Belarusian government is ready to provide for Moscow's all-out invasion.

Russia and ally Belarus held joint nuclear drills last week, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has warned in recent days that Belarus could provide a launchpad for Russia to open a new front in northern Ukraine. Some Russian troops entered Ukraine from Belarusian territory in Moscow's invasion on February 24, 2022.

In a further sign of concern, French President Emmanuel Macron spoke by phone with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on Sunday about the war in Ukraine, their first call since the invasion began. Further "systemic strikes" on Kyiv are in store, the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement Monday. It urged foreign citizens, including members of diplomatic missions, to leave the city as quickly as possible and told residents to stay away from military and government facilities.

The ministry said on Friday's deadly Ukrainian drone strike on a college dormitory in Starobilsk was "the final straw." Ukraine said it hit only targets supporting Russia's invasion.

The Russian army is locked in a hard and costly slog on the 1,250-kilometer front line that mostly snakes through eastern and southern Ukraine. "Russia hit a dead-end on the battlefield, so it is terrorising Ukraine with deliberate strikes," European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said on X after the weekend barrage that killed two people in Kyiv.

With U.S.-made air defence missiles running low amid the Iran war, Ukraine struggles to stop Russian strikes as peace efforts stall. *AP*

## Overloaded truck overturns in B'desh; 15 dead, 10 injured

**DHAKA**

A truck carrying iron rods and extra passengers overturned on a major highway early Monday in central Bangladesh, leaving at least 15 people dead and 10 others injured, police said.

The crash happened after the driver lost control around 5 a.m. at Soratoil area in Tangail district, 83 kilometers (52 miles) northwest of the nation's capital, Dhaka, said local police chief Fuad Hossain.

Hossain said the truck was carrying hitchhiking passengers and travelling from Dhaka to the northern region as vacationers began traveling ahead of the Islamic festival Eid al-Adha on Thursday. The truck overturned and killed them at the scene, he said. The official said most of the passengers were day laborers.

Witnesses told TV stations that they rushed to the scene after hearing noise and started rescuing passengers who got trapped. Road accidents kill thousands every year in the nation of more than 170 million because of lax oversight of traffic rules, bad road conditions and unskilled driving. *AP*

## Man sprays suspected capsaicin at luxury mall

**TOKYO**

AROUND 20 people were injured at a luxury shopping complex in central Tokyo on Monday after a man sprayed a substance inside, police and fire department officials said.

Tokyo police spokesman Yusuke Koide told AFP that a man sprayed a substance at an ATM on the ground floor of the building, while a local fire department official said "around 20 people were injured" after a report of a "smell".

The road in front of the mall — located in the touristy and upmarket shopping district of Ginza — was blocked off following the incident, and fire trucks lined the street.

However, shoppers continued to come and go from the building using side entrances.

A person is taken on a stretcher to an ambulance by paramedics at the Ginza 6 Shopping Center in Tokyo | AFP

An AFP reporter at the scene saw two people on stretchers being put into an ambulance, while firefighters and officials dressed in hazmat suits brought people from the mall into specialised trucks to examine them. "As of now, 19 people have been transported to a hospital," fire department official Ryosuke Kobayashi told reporters.

Public broadcaster NHK said the injuries appeared to be light. It said the spray was believed to have contained the irritant capsaicin, the active component of chilli peppers, according to unidentified investigative sources.

One 70-year-old woman who was at the mall told the broadcaster that her throat started "stinging and hurting" as she approached the ATM.

"By the time I arrived, the commotion had started, and I thought there might have been a small fire.

"Once I went into the ATM corner, my throat felt scratchy, almost numb," she said. Police are investigating the cause, a fire officer said. *AFP*

**JOURNEY OF FAITH**

## *A sea of Muslim pilgrims beats the heat, descends on Mecca*

**MECCA**

The annual Hajj pilgrimage, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, officially began on Monday. More than 1.5 million pilgrims have arrived in Saudi Arabia from outside the country, Saleh bin Saad Al-Murabba, commander of the Hajj passport forces, said on Friday. The faithful have been pouring into the country for the Hajj against the backdrop of a tenuous ceasefire in the Iran war and related regional tensions and uncertainty.

Egyptian pilgrim Samya Abdul Moneim said she was grateful to God that she made it to the Hajj, which is required once in a lifetime of every Muslim who can afford it and is physically able to make it. "I am in a state of blessing and happiness," she said in Mecca on Sunday. "It's an indescribable feeling, truly. I mean, thank God, I am in a blessing." Typically on the first day, many pilgrims in Mecca converge on a vast tent camp in the nearby desert.

A group of Muslim pilgrims discuss the rituals of circumambulating the Kaaba, during the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, Saudi Arabia | AP

Ahead of that, pilgrims have been circling the cube-shaped Kaaba in the Grand Mosque in sweltering temperatures. For pilgrims, Hajj can be a deeply moving spiritual experience and a chance to seek God's forgiveness and the erasure of past sins. Pilgrims perform the Hajj rituals over several days. This Hajj "is, in effect, a hard reset for me," Youssef Chouhoud, a political scientist at Christopher Newport University in Virginia, said from city of Mina. *AP*

**EXPRESS READ**

### Cambodia pardons oppn leader Kem Sokha

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia's acting head of state Hun Sen on Monday pardoned opposition leader Kem Sokha, who was serving a 27-year sentence for treason under house arrest. Kem Sokha has repeatedly denied the charges, while rights groups and UN experts criticised the case as politically motivated. However, his political rights remain revoked and he is barred from leaving the country for five years.

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**GOLD AUCTION NOTICE**

The pledges, in specific and the public, in general, are hereby notified that public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the below accounts is proposed to be conducted at the following branches on 16/06/2026 from 10.00 am onwards. We are auctioning gold ornaments defaulted customers who have failed to make payment of his/her loan amount despite being notified by registered letters. Unauctioned items shall be auctioned on any other days without further notice. Changes in venue or date (if any)will be displayed at auction centre and on website without any further notice.

List of pledges:-

ARIYALUR, 0117200700040652, 1724, JAYANKODACHOLAPURAM, 0123700700048592, 0123700730036617, 6942, KARUR, ARAVAKKURICHI KARUR, 0127090700033334, 5345, 5724, 0127090730016201, 6321, 6326, CHURCH CORNER KARUR, 0126130700029930, 0126130730025584, 6314, GANDHIGRAMAM KARUR, 0124910700031419, 1975, 2000, 0124910730034268, KARUR, 0101290700050956, 0101290730020469, 0470, 0519, KARUR TRICHY ROAD, 0122160700031000, 1166, 3149, 3939, 4015, 4157, 4420, 4421, 4476, KAVERI NAGAR KULITHALAI,KARUR, 0116140700037129, 0116140730030890, PALLAPATTI KARUR, 0125090700044305, 0125090730007681, 7686, PASUPATHIPALAYAM KARUR, 0124240700037884, PULIYUR KARUR, 0132650700023276, THANTHONNIMALAI KARUR, 0120060700052364, 4913, 0120060730033549, VELAYUTHAMPALAYAM KARUR, 0120990700032788, 0120990730024667, NAGAPATTINAM, MAYILADUTHURAI, 0136200700011341, 2357, 2519, 2521, 2616, 3453, 3462, 0131, NAGAPATTINAM, 0116230700037285, 8541, 0888, 1097, 1498, 1595, 0116230730025267, 5268, 5269, NEELA SOUTH STREET, 0129640700024771, 8201, 8209, 8212, 8254, 8279, 8794, 8902, 9012, 0129640730024271, 4576, 4913, SIRKALI, 0112720700055473, 0112720730008111, 0142, VEDARANYAM, NAGAPATTINAM, 0123390700033943, 5809, 6718, 7049, 7131, 7830, PERAMBALUR, BAZAR STREET JAYAKONDACHOLAPURAM, 0102650700795649, 5925, 7626, 0102650730022351, PERAMBALUR, 0116560700053171, 3364, 3422, 3578, 4338, 4340, 4530, 4546, 0116560730016513, 6779, 6831, VENKATESHAPURAM PERAMBALUR, 0122310700030827, 1129, 1347, 1389, 1554, 1877, 1902, 2020, 2037, 2128, 0122310730012548, PUDUKKOTTAI, ALAMKUDI, 0128240700042109, 2530, 4417, 5061, 5382, 0128240730014673, 4717, 5025, ANNAVASAL PUDUKKOTTAI, 0128940700038383, 0128940730007659, ARANTHANGI, 0126500700033553, 3718, 0126500730035577, 5578, ARIMALAM PUDUKOTTAI, 0132080700021213, 1528, 1549, 1633, ILLUPUR, 0126930730005839, KARAMBAIKUDI PUDUKOTTAI, 0127790700055088, 6889, 0881, 1097, 0127790730052919, 3578, KEERAMANGALAM, 0133510700025556, KEERANUR, 0115800700051288, 1614, 2301, 2409, 0115800730010234, NORTH MAIN STREET PUDUKOTTAI, 0126640700032942, 3222, PONNAMARAVATHI, 0124470700024586, 0124470730009776, WEST 4TH STREET PUDUKOTTAI, 0127730700046471, THANJAVUR, AYYAMPETTAI THANJAVUR, 0132130700063606, 3726, 3809, 4376, 4980, 6311, J S NAGAR KUMBAKONAM, 0103070700750342, 1406, 2144, 2172, 0103070730014118, 4119, 0197, KAVERI NAGAR,THANJAVUR, 0116310700046339, 7100, 7757, NAGESWARAM SOUTH STREET KUMBAKONAM, 0129770700026736, 0129770730008489, ORATHANADU THANJAVUR, 0129600700046784, 7169, 8938, 0129600730022654, 4286, 4536, 4573, 4580, PAPANASAM, 0102360700758621, 9101, 0102360730010084, PATTUKKOTTAI, 0112970700043355, 3405, 4210, 4366, 4932, THANCHAVUR, 0102900700056188, 6602, 6913, 7130, 9262, 0102900730027210, 7211, THIRUNAGESWARAM THANJAVUR, 0121030700047168, 0121030730012803, THIRUPPANANTHAL, 0121670700046701, 8752, 9565, 9568, 9591, 0203, TIRUVAIYARU, 0101890700753926, 3974, 4417, 4778, 5524, 5535, THIRUVARUR, KOOTHANALLUR, 0130900700040642, 1410, 1414, 1496, 3566, 3643, 3722, 3746, 3830, 3840, 0130900730014766, 4943, 4990, MANNARGUDI, 0102080700768792, 9383, 9553, 0102080730026455, 7002, 7370, NIDAMANGALAM, 0101870700756125, 6736, 6794, 6839, 7149, 7271, 7330, THIRUTHIRAPOONDI, 0131190700034766, 5478, 5644, 5726, 6258, 6294, 6315, 0131190730022619, 2620, 2626, 2635, 2695, 2774, 2999, TIRUVARUR, 0101850700755674, 5836, 8140, TIRUCHIRAPPALLI, EVR ROAD TRICHY, 0108980700051771, 4244, PALAKARAI, 0113180700038164, 8359, 0113180730010815, 1020, WORIUR TRICHY, 0109720700062663, 3358, 4139, 0109720730021204, 2363, 2364, 2365, TRICHY, DALMIAPURAM TRICHY, 0116780730014866, 6194, 6833, 6949, 9458, K.K NAGAR, TRICHY, 0122470700029737, 9860, 9896, 0122470730011123, KARUMANTAPAM, TRICHY, 0125230700026466, 0125230730014277, 4712, KATTUPUTHUR, 0126360700046693, 0235, 0126360730031278, KATTUR TRICHY, 0111530700031399, 3028, 3062, LALGUDI TRICHY, 0116490700062024, MANACHANALLUR TRICHY, 0120720700062188, 2276, 3505, 0120720730017038, MANAPARAI TRICHY, 0127810700029156, 9595, MELCINTHAMANI, 0119010700047836, 7842, 7941, 7975, 8091, MUSIRI TRICHY, 0115200700059018, 9097, 0115200730015684, 5922, PULLAMPADI TRICHY, 0121230700056263, 0064, 1299, 1351, 1451, 1522, 5381, 0121230730010941, 1826, 1827, 1876, 2188, SRINIVASA NAGAR TRICHY, 0116060700040790, 2958, 3019, SUBRAMANIAPURAM TRICHY, 0103120730019728, THATHAIYANGARPET, 0125050700040112, 2894, 3597, 0239, THIRUVANI KOIL TRICHY, 0115110700055786, THOTTIYAM, 0126670700066868, 8266, THURAIYUR, 0111610700048276, 8424, 8930, 9009, 9018, 9177, 0111610730011264, 2122, 2273, 2275, THUVARANKURICHI, 0120170700033482, 0120170730008498, 8499, 8500, 8677, TRICHITOLLGATE, 0124750700036367, 7622, 9316, 0124750730014226, UPPILIYAPURAM TRICHY, 0121130700058732, 2292, 2378, 3297, 3735, 3833, 3890, 3916, 4020, 4073, 4212, 4292, 4384, 4851, 4869, 4912, 4992, 5078, 5304, 5582, 5583, 5848, 0121130730017900, VAIYAMPATTI TRICHY, 0117050700043983, 5206, 5951, 6487, 6978, 7037, 7403, 0117050730008531,

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