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.

WAR WATCH

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

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*

Yair Lapid, Israel's opposition leader

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".

ASIA MATTERS

INDONESIA

SCORPENE SUB PROJECT WORK ADVANCES

State-owned shipbuilder PT PAL said the Scorpene Evolved-class submarine project has entered the pre-production stage to strengthen maritime defence. The phase includes design readiness, workforce development and infrastructure ahead of construction. PT PAL is developing the submarines with France's Naval Group under a technology-transfer programme aimed at boosting domestic defence capabilities. Company officials said engineers are training in France, while fabrication work for qualification sections has already begun in Surabaya.

MALAYSIA

COMMITTEE FORMED OVER CABLE THEFT

Authorities have formed a special committee to tackle rising cases of cable theft, open manholes affecting telecommunications infrastructure and public safety. Officials said 377 open manholes were recorded by March, up 68 per cent year-on-year. Stricter legal action will be taken against offenders under communications laws going forward.

THAILAND

RESERVOIRS, DAMS UNDER FLOOD WATCH

The Office of National Water Resources said reservoir storage stood at 57% capacity on May 24, with four major dams and 32 medium-sized reservoirs under close monitoring as water levels rise during the southwest monsoon. Heavy rain remains possible in parts of the North and South despite forecasts of easing rainfall. Authorities said four water sources had exceeded upper rule curves, while dozens of reservoirs were above 80% capacity. Residents in low-lying and flood-prone areas downstream of dams were advised to follow updates and warnings.

Suspected capsaicin spray injures 20 at Tokyo 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.

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. *AFP*

Truck overturns in B'desh, killing 15

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. *AP*

EQUITAS SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED
Corporate Office: No.769, Spencer Plaza, 4th Floor, Phase-II, Anna Salai, Chennai, TN - 600 002

POSSESSION NOTICE (U/S. RULE 8 (1) - FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of M/s. Equitas Small Finance Bank Limited, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest [Act, 2002 (54 of 2002)] and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with [Rule 3] of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice calling upon the below mentioned Borrowers to repay the total outstanding amount mentioned in the notice being within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. Since the below mentioned Borrowers having failed to repay the below stated amount within the stipulated time, notice is hereby given to the below mentioned borrowers and the public in general that, the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security interest Enforcement Rules, 2002. The Borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the schedule mentioned properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of M/s. Equitas Small Finance Bank Limited and further interest and other charges thereon."The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub –section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets."

S. No.	Name of the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)
1	Branch : Hosur LOAN NUMBER SSEHSOUR0370618 / 700010248137 / 200001803897 Borrowers: Mr.C.RAJAMANIKKAM Mrs.R.JOTHI Mr.RAJESH Mrs.YOGALAKSHMI R	SCHEDULE -I Applicant : RAJAMANIKKAM All that piece and parcel of land and building ,Comprised in S.No.30/1A1B,with an extent of 2178 Sq.ft,Situated at Chetty kuppam Village,Gudiyatham Taluk,Vellore District,Bounded on the North by : Boundary of Seruvangi Village South by : Property belongs to Mrs.Shami East by : Paravakal Road West by : Land belongs to Mrs.Dharani Measurement : Situated at within the Sub-Registration District of Gudiyatham and Registration District of Vellore. SCHEDULE – II Applicant : RAJESH All that piece and parcel of land and building , with an extent of 2160 Sq.Ft., Comprised in Natham Old S.No.46 Part,New Natham S.No.46/55,Situated at Chetyy Kuppam Village ,Gudiyatham Taluk,Vellore District .Bounded on the North by : House belongs to Mrs.Chengamalam. South by : Vacant Plot belong to Mr.Ashokan East by : Street West by : Land belongs to Mrs.Tharani Measurement : East to West -Both sides -80 Ft & North to South-Both sides - 27 Ft. Total extent of 2160 Sq.Ft.(200.66 Sq.m) Situated at within the Sub-Registration District of Gudiyatham and Registration District of Vellore. Demand Notice Date & Amount: 13.12.2025 & ₹ 35,58,838 Date of Possession: 19.05.2026

Date: 26.05.2026
Place: VELLORE
Authorized Officer, Equitas Small Finance Bank Ltd

JOURNEY OF FAITH

A sea of Muslim pilgrims beats the heat, descends on Mecca for Hajj

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. 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 the tent city of Mina. "I pray that I emerge on the other side of this journey with a new sense of purpose and the discipline to see it through." *AP*

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

EXPRESS READ

Cambodia pardons 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.

MANAPPURAM FINANCE LTD.
CIN: L65910KL1992PLC006623, Registered Office: W - 4/ 638A, Manappuram House, P.o. Valapad, Thrissur - 680 567, Kerala, India

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:-

RANIPET, ARCOT, 0104470730008363, MUTHUKADAI RANIPET, 0123780700018006, OLD BUS STAND CIRCLE, 0128720700012634, PANAPAKKAM, 0118790700040976, 1110, 1150, 1303, RANIPET, 0125160700021887, 2153, 2211, 2221, 2314, 2317, 2371, 2608, SHOLINGUR, 0125430700020435, 1840, THOLKAPIYAR STREET VELLORE, 0120860730006477, TRUNK ROAD WALAJAHPET,VELLORE, 0129460700021869, WALAJAPET, 0101910700756158, THIRUVANNAMALAI, ARNI, 0122150700026260, 7066, 7083, 7505, 0122150730006914, CHETPUT, 0102430700744505, GANDHI ROAD ARNI, 0104700700039003, 9172, NATARAMPALLI, 0124270730023615, PUDUPPETTAI MAIN ROAD THIRUPPATHUR, 0124380700028695, 0124380730038354, TEACHERS COLONY,THIRUPATHUR, 0127770700028408, 0127770730014480, THIRUPPATHUR, 0114840700036425, 6632, 0114840730014855, VANIYAMBADI MARKET, 0122650700022798, 4294, 0122650730008402, TIRUVANNAMALAI, ERATTAI PILLAYAR KOIL STREET, 0114680700026248, 6413, POLUR MAIN ROAD, 0113880700048335, 8598, 8845, 0113880730026861, 7044, 7045, 7481, POLUR THIRUVANNAMALAI, 0120290730010580, VELLORE, ARAKKONAM, 0122740700030402, 1056, 1218, 1490, 1561, ARANI ROAD VELLORE, 0108670700046616, 0108670730014240, 4241, GANDHI ROAD ARAKKONNAM, 0108320700043248, 3728, 3805, 0108320730012292, GUDIYATHAM, 0122060700030583, 0625, 0846, 1360, 0122060730014749, 5389, 5390, 6186, NEW BUS STAND, VELLORE, 0128100730004377, PALLIKONDA,VELLORE, 0130610700020000, 0015, 0130610730012396, 2397, SANTHAPET BAZAR, 0124020700028678, 9292, 9328, 9679, 9772, 9894, 0124020730014165, 5480, 6078, 6079, SATHUVACHARI R T O ROAD, 0108470730014066, VELLORE KATPADI, 0101830730012486,

Persons wishing to participate in the above auction shall comply with the following:- Interested Bidders should submit Rs. 10,000/- as EMD (refundable to unsuccessful bidders) by way of NEFT/RTGS on the same day of auction. Bidders should carry valid ID card/PAN card. For more details please contact .9072607147.

Authorised Officer
For Manappuram Finance Ltd