6 killed
after terrorists attack paramilitary compound in Pakistan's Karachi

GLOBAL WEATHER

Beijing	34	23	SNY	Los Angeles	27	18	SNY
Colombo	31	27	SNY	Melbourne	26	15	LC
Dhaka	32	28	SNY	Moscow	28	16	SNY
Dubai	34	32	SNY	New York	24	22	SNY
Houston	33	27	TDS	Singapore	31	29	TDS
Istanbul	33	21	SNY	Toronto	23	17	SNY
London	29	19	SNY	Washington	26	22	SNY

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

Tehran warns against Strait of Hormuz bypass as US, Iran trade fresh attacks

Fresh exchanges across the Gulf test a fragile ceasefire and threaten global energy supplies

WASHINGTON

IRAN's top diplomat warned Sunday that any attempt by shipping to bypass its preferred route through the Strait of Hormuz would "increase tensions" in the West Asia, as US and Iranian forces again traded attacks across the vital seaway. The exchanges underscored the fragility of a Pakistan-brokered agreement aimed at ending the war launched by the United States and Israel in February, which disrupted shipping through the strait and rattled global energy markets.

Although a ceasefire took effect in April, sporadic violence has continued in the Gulf region, with ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz often the spark. Early on Sunday, US Central Command (CENTCOM) said it had attacked 10 Iranian military targets over "continued Iranian aggression against commercial shipping". Iran then said it had carried out retaliatory strikes against US bases in Kuwait and Bahrain in response. Both Kuwait and Bahrain denounced the attacks.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, centre, arrives to meet his Iraqi counterpart Fouad Hussein at Baghdad in Iraq on Sunday | AP

WAR WATCH

Tehran has continued to insist on controlling passage through the vital strait, through which a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas travel in normal times, something it did not have before the war.

At the moment, Iran insists ships transiting the strait pass through a corridor close to its own shores, though this week dozens of vessels have travelled along the opposite side of the waterway, hugging the Omani coast. "Any attempt to adopt new or separate arrangements compared to what is underway by the Islamic Republic of Iran, will only lead to more complicated situations and delays in the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, and will increase the tensions," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said.

"I urge all parties... to adhere to the memorandum of understanding and not to allow this MoU to deviate from its course." Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Sunday they were taking measures to control traffic in the strait and that vessels in violation of those measures would be dealt with more firmly than before. Mohammad Mokhber, adviser to Iran's supreme leader, wrote on X that as long as Iran managed the strait, Washington's "hegemonic dreams in the region will not be realised". *AFP*

Vehicles pass a burned "Lebanon first" billboard near Hezbollah's Beirut stronghold following Lebanon's framework agreement with Israel | AFP

Israel strikes Lebanon despite peace deal

BEIRUT: Israel launched fresh strikes on Lebanon on Sunday, two days after both countries signed a US-backed framework agreement aimed at ending decades of conflict. Lebanon's state media reported multiple strikes, while Israel said a soldier was killed in southern Lebanon and vowed to continue operations in its self-declared security zone. Hezbollah rejected the deal as "null and void", warning it would spark "internal conflict".

Trump's plan for Syria to fight Hezbollah raises alarm

BEIRUT

AS the White House has soured on Israel's war with Hezbollah in Lebanon, US President Donald Trump has shocked many in the region by pushing an alternative: Let Syria fight the Iran-backed militant group instead.

He has suggested that the battle-hardened and Islamist-led insurgents who overthrew Syria's autocratic President Bashar Assad a year and a half ago and formed a new government would do a better job of rooting out Hezbollah than the Israeli army. Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa has said he has no interest in doing so, and has asserted that Trump's comments were misconstrued. But Trump has doubled down on the idea.

Although it remains unclear how serious the White House is about the proposal, the prospect of a Syrian invasion has raised alarms in Lebanon — and also in Israel, which regards al-Sharaa's Islamist-led government with suspicion and has seized control of a strip of southern Syria since he took power. Syria has also become the site of rising tensions between Israel and Turkey — a key backer of al-Sharaa's government — as both seek to limit the other's influence. Israeli security officials convened a meeting on Wednesday, an official familiar with the matter said. *AP*

France sees 1,000 excess deaths as Europe swelters in deadly heatwave

BERLIN/GENEVA

FRANCE saw around 1,000 additional deaths last week at the height of its record-smashing heat wave, the country's public health agency said Sunday, as the head of the World Health Organization warned that Europe is now the fastest-warming continent and needs to do more to protect its citizens.

And across Europe, "more than 1,300 excess deaths have been recorded since 21 June linked to high temperatures in Europe", WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on X. "Heat stress is often called the 'silent killer' – and European homes, workplaces and schools were not built for these temperatures," he said.

At least 191 million people are forecast to endure temperatures of at least 35 degrees Celsius on Sunday in Europe, with the heat particularly intense in Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, according to AFP estimates. Germany marked a new record for the third day in a row with 41.7 degrees Celsius in Neißemünde, near the border with Poland, which baked under its new all-time high of 40.5 degrees Celsius. The Czech Republic also experienced its hottest day ever with 41.1 degrees Celsius.

People refresh in a fountain after the Angelus noon prayer celebrated by Pope Leo XIV from the window of his studio overlooking St Peter's Square, at the Vatican | AP

A new study from the World Weather Attribution, a Europe-based collaboration of scientists, reported Friday that the record-breaking heat and humidity in Europe this past week would not have been possible without climate change.

Driven by climate change and global warming, the phenomenon of the "once-in-a-generation" heatwave is now occurring nearly annual, Tedros said, pointing out that "Europe is the fastest-warming continent on Earth, heating at twice the global average". *Agencies*

14 killed after Saudi Aramco helicopter crashes in Ras Tanura

RIYADH

A helicopter crash in Saudi Arabia killed 14 Saudi citizens on Sunday, the kingdom's official press agency reported, adding that the aircraft belonged to state oil giant Aramco.

The Saudi Press Agency, citing an official at the energy ministry, reported the helicopter crashed in Ras Tanura in the country's east.

"The accident claimed the lives of all 14 passengers, all Saudi citizens," the agency said, adding that an investigation was under way to determine the cause of the crash.

Aramco says it operates more than 60 aircraft, including helicopters serving more than 300 heliports in Saudi Arabia, making it one of the largest corporate fleets in the region.

The deadly accident comes as oil-rich Gulf nations seek to ramp up their output following Iranian attacks and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway for the export of oil and gas. The Gulf monarchy did not indicate the incident was in any way connected to a hostile attack.

During the West Asia war, Iranian attacks had targeted energy facilities in the Gulf.

Ras Tanura is home to one of the largest refineries in the West Asia, with a capacity of 550,000 barrels per day, and is critical to Saudi Arabia's energy sector. The refinery has been targeted several times, notably during an Iranian drone attack at the beginning of the conflict, which caused a fire and forced a partial shutdown. Riyadh said in April that the weeks-long attacks had disrupted several production operations at key facilities, with refineries in Ras Tanura as well as Jubail, Yanbu and Riyadh targeted. Saudi Arabia, the world's leading crude exporter, produces a little over 10 million bpd. *AFP*

Armenian genocide: Israel approves recognition

TEL AVIV

ISRAEL's Cabinet unanimously approved a proposal on Sunday to designate violence against Armenians by the Ottoman Empire during World War I as a genocide. The step, which still needs approval in Parliament, reflects deteriorating ties between Israel and Turkey. Turkey has fiercely lobbied to prevent countries from officially recognizing the mass deaths of Armenians around 1915 as a genocide, even as Armenians have pushed for it.

Historians estimate that up to 1.5 million Armenians were killed by Ottoman Turks around the time of World War I, an event widely viewed by scholars as the first genocide of the 20th century. Turkey denies the deaths were genocide, saying the toll was inflated and victims died in civil war and unrest. Israel long steered clear of the issue for fear of angering Turkey, but ties have worsened. Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar who brought the decision to the government. *AP*

Skydiving plane with instructors and students crashes; 11 killed

TOMBLAINE

A skydiving plane crashed Sunday in eastern France, killing all 11 people on board, local authorities said, in the country's deadliest ever general aviation accident. The crash in the town of Tomblaine killed five instructors, five students and the pilot, said Yves Seguy, the prefect of the Meurthe-et-Moselle department. The students were a group of nurses, according to a source close to the case and confirmed by the head of Meurthe-et-Moselle's nursing council, Thierry Pechey.

"They were colleagues who had decided to go on a first skydiving jump, no doubt to unwind, as we're going through a difficult time with the heatwave," he said. Mayor of the nearby city of Nancy, Mathieu Klein, said the victims "died in full view of their loved ones, who were preparing to film the tandem skydives". Medical and psychological support teams were caring for relatives of the victims who were present, as well as other witnesses, according to local authorities.

The cause of the incident was not immediately cleary. *AFP*

Venezuela quake rescue effort turns into recovery mission

LA GUAIRA

RESCUE crews raced on Sunday to pull survivors from the rubble of Venezuela's powerful twin earthquakes as the death toll reached 1,430 and hopes dwindled more than three days after the disaster struck.

Tens of thousands of people were reported missing as collapsed buildings dotted cities in a country already enduring an economic crisis and political upheaval after US forces captured former president Nicolas Maduro in January.

Millions of people across the country were also feared to lack sanitation and other basic needs after one of Latin America's most devastating earthquakes. In one of the worst hit areas, the coastal city of La Guaira, Hector Aguilera came to search for four family members buried in the rubble since the back-to-back quakes of magnitude 7.2 and 7.5 struck on Wednesday. Two other of his family members were rescued.

"We don't have the support to get our family out -- we can't do it alone. They are buried there: we know they are dead, but here we are," he said. "We have no hope left, all I have are memories." Experts say the first 72 hours after natural disasters — which have now passed — are the key, narrow window for finding the living. After that the search becomes one of recovering bodies. In the Caracas neighborhood of Chacao, large electronic screens on a building usually used for advertising were showing the faces of missing people in a bid to help find them.

Rescuers carry a person who was pulled alive from the rubble of a collapsed building in La Guaira state, Venezuela | AFP

National Assembly President Jorge Rodriguez reported 1,430 dead and 3,238 people injured — a toll that was expected to rise. Interim Venezuelan President Delcy Rodriguez said late Saturday rescuers had pulled 33 people from the ruins. International rescue teams with dogs scoured the rubble and US helicopters ferried in aid, but hope was running out for more people to be pulled out alive. *AFP*

EXPRESS READ

Ukraine drones hit Russian refinery

KYIV: Ukraine intensified its drone campaign against Russia on Sunday, setting a major oil refinery ablaze in the southern Krasnodar region and killing at least two people, Russian authorities said. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said two refineries were hit, while President Vladimir Putin acknowledged Russia was going through a "difficult period" as fuel shortages deepened amid sustained Ukrainian strikes targeting energy infrastructure. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that the military hit the Slavyansk and the Yaroslavl refineries, about 300 and 700 kilometres from the front line, respectively, overnight with long-range drones. Reuters

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TELESCOPE RESCUE

NASA races to save Swift from a fall

CAPE CANAVERAL

NASA is racing to save an aging telescope from falling back to Earth with a daring rescue mission. The $30 million salvage operation gets underway as soon as this week with the planned launch of a robotic lifesaver.

NASA hired startup Katalyst Space Technologies to boost the Swift Observatory to a higher orbit where it can continue hunting for some of the universe's biggest explosions. A three-armed spacecraft built by Katalyst will chase after Swift once it takes off from an atoll in the Pacific's Marshall Islands aboard an airplane-launched Pegasus rocket. Liftoff could occur as early as Tuesday.

FILE: The LINK spacecraft undergoes pre-launch testing at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center | AP

Scanning the cosmos since its launch in 2004, Swift has been sinking faster because of recent intense solar activity. It needs to get to a higher, more stable orbit as soon as possible to survive. NASA's Hubble Space Telescope — also at risk — could be next. Like Swift, Hubble is losing altitude as the sun erupts with one flare after another, raising concerns over its long-term future. Katalyst Space CEO Ghonhee Lee said his company's next-generation robot, still in development, could save the day for the much bigger Hubble in a couple years. Only China has attempted a mission like the upcoming one, successfully boosting a satellite into a higher graveyard orbit four years ago. "This is the first American space robot to go up and do anything like this," Lee told The Associated Press. "NASA has all these big senior observatories ... all of them can benefit from a service like this. So what we're proving with this mission is this is a new play in the playbook that's available." *AP*

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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 16/07/2026 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.
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