



Ford Motor Company institutes the world's first moving assembly line for the Model T Ford

Leningrad mayor Sergei Kirov is assassinated, Joseph Stalin uses it as an excuse to begin his Great Purge of 1934-38

Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to move to the back of a bus and give her seat to a white passenger in Montgomery, Alabama

British and French workers meet in the middle of the Channel Tunnel, 40 meters under the English Channel, achieving a major engineering feat and fulfilling the long-held dream of linking Britain to Europe



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Together with French President @EmmanuelMacron and with the participation of UK Prime Minister @Keir_Starmer, we just spoke with the head of Ukrainian delegation Rustem Umerov and US President's Special Envoy Steve Witkoff following the Ukraine-U.S. delegations' meeting in Florida.

@ZelenskyyUa

02



Despite progress, millions still lack access to HIV prevention and treatment services. Ending AIDS means empowering communities, investing in prevention and expanding access to treatment for all people. We have the power to transform lives and #endAIDS once and for all.

@antonioquterres

03



Truly transformative! Rapid and visible improvements in solid waste management across Punjab. My deep commendation to Chief Minister Punjab @MaryamNSharif and her team for their dedicated efforts in this regard.

@CMShehbaz

04



During natural disasters, Starlink provides free internet. We never profit from tragedy

@elonmusk

Israel to deploy 'Iron Beam' laser defence

To enhance interception of drones and other projectiles

● Iron Dome offers short-range protection against missiles and rockets

● Major milestone in a project more than a decade old

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Israel's defence ministry announced yesterday the completion of a laser air defence system known as "Iron Beam", which will be deployed by the end of December.

"The Iron Beam laser system is expected to fundamentally change the rules of engagement on the battlefield," Daniel Gold, head of defence ministry research and development, told a defence summit in Tel Aviv.

"With development complete and a comprehensive testing programme that has validated the system's capabilities," he added, promising to deliver "initial operational capability" by the end of the year.

The announcement comes as Israeli military steps up its strikes against Hezbollah and its infrastructure, despite a ceasefire that began just over a year ago.

Contacted by AFP, the defence ministry refused to provide more details on what exactly would happen on that date.

The announcement marks a major milestone in a project more than a decade old, de-



Picture for representation only

Iron Beam is a high-power laser air-defence system designed to destroy rockets, mortars, drones and other short-range aerial threats – and each interception costs only a few dollars in electricity, instead of tens of thousands of dollars for conventional missile interceptors.

veloped jointly with the state-owned arms company Rafael and Israeli private defence group Elbit.

The laser system seeks to enhance Israel's interception of drones and other projectiles, and will supplement other aerial defence capacities such as the more well-known Iron Dome.

Iron Dome offers short-range protection against missiles and rockets. The David's Sling system and successive generations of Arrow missiles are Israeli-American technology built to bring down ballistic missiles.

During the 12-day war

launched by Israel against Iran in June, the country's missile defence system failed to intercept all the projectiles fired by Tehran toward Israeli territory.

Israel has since acknowledged being hit by more than 50 missiles during the war with Iran, resulting in 28 deaths.

The new system is "a ground-based high-power laser air defence system designed to counter aerial threats", Rafael said.

The company added that the system has the "unique advantage of rapidly neutralising threats using laser technology at negligible cost".

Taiwan says test flights of US fighter jets to start this month

AFP | Taipei, Taiwan

Test flights of US F-16V fighter jets built for Taiwan will start this month, a Taiwanese Air Force official said Monday, but warned of "very serious delays" in delivery.

The \$8 billion deal for 66 warplanes was approved during US President Donald Trump's first term in the White House, with delivery scheduled for 2026. Speaking in parliament, Air Force Chief of Staff Lee Ching-jan said flight tests of the new fighters would be carried out "earlier" than planned this month.

"For now, 54 aircraft have entered the assembly line, compared with 50 in October. The progress is being accelerated," Lee said.

Defence Minister Wellington Koo said last month that Lockheed Martin, the US defence contractor building the jets, had ramped up production, running two shifts every weekday.



Representative picture

"There are 50 aircraft on the assembly line at the same time, and some airframes have already completed structural assembly," Koo said.

But Koo said it would be "challenging" for all the aircraft to be delivered in 2026.

Taiwan is seeking to strengthen its defences to deter China, which claims the democratic island is part of its territory and has threatened to use force to annex it.

The F-16V -- a fourth-generation multi-role fighter -- is a significantly upgraded version of

Taiwan's ageing F-16 A/B jets. Taiwan completed upgrades of 141 older F-16s to the V standard in late 2023.

The United States does not have formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, but Washington remains Taipei's most important backer and biggest arms supplier.

It has sold billions of dollars in weapons to Taiwan -- including fighter jets, missiles, and warships -- as part of its commitment to help the island maintain sufficient self-defence capabilities.

Bangladesh court sentences former PM's sister, UK lawmaker

AFP | Dhaka, Bangladesh

A Bangladesh court sentenced Sheikh Rehana, sister of former premier Sheikh Hasina, to seven years in prison on Monday for corruption in a case involving the grabbing of lucrative plots in the capital.

Rehana's daughter Tulip Siddiq, who is a British lawmaker, was handed a two-year sentence in the same case, said Khan Mainul Hasan, prosecutor for the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Hasina, who was given the death penalty for crimes against humanity last month, and 14 other government officials were condemned to five years of imprisonment.

The 78-year-old former premier has sought refuge in In-



Sheikh Rehana

dia since her ouster last year following a student-led uprising, but Rehana's whereabouts remain unknown.

Siddiq, who resigned as British anti-corruption minister in January after being named in graft probes in Bangladesh, called the trial "flawed and farcical from the beginning to the end".

Asia floods death toll tops 1,160 as troops aid survivors



A woman prepares food aid packages for flood-affected residents in Thailand's southern province of Narathiwat

Padang, Indonesia

The toll in deadly flooding and landslides across parts of Asia climbed past 1,160 yesterday as hardest-hit Sri Lanka and Indonesia deployed military personnel to help survivors. Separate weather systems brought torrential, extended rainfall to the island of Sri Lanka and large parts of Indonesia's Sumatra, southern Thailand and northern Malaysia last week. Much of the region is currently in its

monsoon season but climate change is producing more extreme rain events and turbo-charging storms.

The World Health Organization said it was deploying rapid response teams and critical supplies to the region.

The UN agency's chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters in Geneva that it was "another reminder of how climate change is driving more frequent and more extreme weather events, with disastrous effects".

Kremlin says Putin to meet US envoy Witkoff today afternoon

Moscow, Russia

Russian President Vladimir Putin will hold talks on Ukraine with US envoy Steve Witkoff in Moscow today afternoon, the Kremlin said.

The pair will meet after American and Ukrainian officials held negotiations on a US plan that Washington wants to be a basis to end fighting between Moscow and Kyiv.

"The meeting with Witkoff is planned for tomorrow," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, including from AFP, in a briefing on Monday, adding that it will take place "in the second half of the day."

Putin last week repeated his maximalist demands for Moscow to drop its offensive: for Kyiv to surrender territories Moscow claims as its own, saying his army will take them by force otherwise.

Witkoff has met Putin in the Kremlin several times.

The US official has faced



Russia's President Vladimir Putin

criticism for his approach in talks with Moscow, with an initial US plan to end the war widely seen as heeding to much of the Kremlin's demands.

The EU has said the coming week could be "pivotal" for Ukraine.

Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky was in Paris on Monday, seeking to boost European support for Kyiv, while US President Donald Trump expressed optimism for a potential deal to end almost four years of war.

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