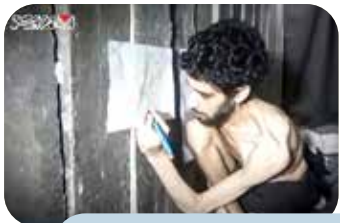


News in brief

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said yesterday

that the plight of hostages held in Gaza should top the global agenda, ahead of a UN Security Council session on the issue. "The world must put an end to the phenomenon of kidnapping civilians. It must be front and centre on the world stage," Saar told a press briefing. "I will head to New York tonight to participate in a special UN Security Council session that I initiated, taking place tomorrow (Tuesday) on the situation of the hostages," the minister added. Of the 251 hostages seized during Hamas's October 2023 attack on Israel that triggered the ongoing Gaza war, 49 are still held in the Palestinian territory, including 27 the Israeli military says are dead.



Israel wants Gaza hostages 'front and centre' on world stage: minister

Netanyahu asks Red Cross for help after 'profound shock' of Gaza hostage videos

Hamas's armed wing said it would allow the agency access to the hostages but only if "humanitarian corridors" for food and aid were opened "across all areas of the Gaza Strip". The Al-Qassam Brigades said it did "not intentionally starve" the hostages, but they would not receive any special food privileges "amid the crime of starvation and siege" in Gaza.

Sudanese paramilitary fighters have killed at least 14 civilians trying to flee a besieged city in Darfur, a rights group said yesterday, more than 27 months into their war against the army. The Emergency Lawyers, which documents atrocities in the war between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese army, said that "dozens more were injured and an unknown number of civilians detained" in the paramilitary attack on Saturday on the outskirts of El-Fasher city, in the western Darfur region. The RSF has in recent days launched its latest attack on El-Fasher, the North Darfur state capital which it has besieged since May 2024 but has been unable to seize from the hands of the army. Just two days before Saturday's attack, the RSF's political administration urged residents to evacuate to Qarni village, where the Emergency Lawyers says the civilians were killed.

Sudan paramilitaries kill 14 civilians fleeing besieged city: monitor



SPOTLIGHT

South Korea removing loudspeakers on border with North



South Korean soldiers removing loudspeakers that were set up for propaganda broadcasts

AFP | Seoul, South Korea

South Korea said yesterday it was removing loudspeakers used to blare K-pop and news reports to the North, as the new administration in Seoul tries to ease tensions with its bellicose neighbour.

The nations, still technically at war, had already halted propaganda broadcasts along the demilitarised zone, Seoul's military said in June after the election of President Lee Jae Myung.

It said in June that Pyongyang stopped transmitting bizarre, unsettling noises along the border that had become a major nuisance for South Korean locals, a day after the South's loudspeakers fell si-

lent.

"Starting today, the military has begun removing the loudspeakers," Lee Kyung-ho, spokesman of the South's defence ministry, told reporters on Monday.

"It is a practical measure aimed at helping ease tensions with the North, provided that such actions do not compromise the military's state of readiness."

All loudspeakers set up along the border will be dismantled by the end of the week, he added.

He did not disclose the number to be removed, but a Yonhap news agency report -- which the defence ministry declined to verify -- said it was about 20.

Russia urges caution in nuclear 'rhetoric'

Trump said he would deploy two nuclear submarine

Medvedev accused Trump of "playing the ultimatum game"

Trump did not say whether he meant nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed submarines

AFP | Moscow, Russia

Russia urged caution yesterday after US President Donald Trump said he would deploy two nuclear submarines following an online row with former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev.

Trump said he had ordered the deployment in response to what he alleged were highly provocative comments by Medvedev, saying the submarines would be positioned in "appropriate regions".

Trump did not say whether he meant nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed submarines.

He also did not elaborate on the locations, which are kept secret by the US military.

"Russia is very attentive to the topic of nuclear non-proliferation. And we believe that everyone should be very, very cautious with nuclear rhetoric," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, including from AFP, on Monday.

The row between Medvedev and Trump erupted against the backdrop of the US leader's ultimatum for Russia to end its military offensive in Ukraine or face fresh economic sanctions, including on its remaining trading

Trump envoy's visit will be 'important', Moscow says

Washington, United States

The Kremlin said yesterday it was anticipating "important" talks with Donald Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, later this week, ahead of the US president's looming deadline to impose fresh sanctions on Moscow if it does not make progress towards a peace deal with Ukraine.

Trump confirmed Sunday that special envoy Steve Witkoff will visit Russia, likely on "Wednesday or Thursday",

where he is expected to meet President Vladimir Putin.

Speaking to reporters, Trump also said that two nuclear submarines he deployed following an online row with former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev were now "in the region".

The Republican leader said Witkoff would visit "I

think next week, Wednesday or Thursday".

Russian President Vladimir Putin has already met Witkoff multiple times in Moscow, before Trump's efforts to mend ties with the Kremlin came to a grinding halt.

When reporters asked what Witkoff's message would be to Moscow, and if there was anything Russia could do to avoid the sanctions, Trump replied: "Yeah, get a deal where people stop getting killed."

The Kremlin said another meeting with Putin was possible and that it considered talks with Witkoff to be "important, substantial and helpful".

Nuclear Strength Comparison: United States vs Russia

Feature	United States	Russia
Total warheads	~5,244	~5,889
Deployed strategic warheads	~1,770	~1,674
ICBMs	400	~310
Nuclear submarines	14 Ohio-class	10-11 (Borei, Delta IV)
Bombers	B-52H, B-2	Tu-95MS, Tu-160
Nuclear triad	Yes	Yes
Stockpile trend	Modernising, reducing	Modernising, expanding



Dmitry Medvedev, US President Donald Trump

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday backed Trump's actions.

"The concept of peace through strength works," Andriy Yermak wrote on social media.

"The moment American nuclear submarines appeared, one Russian drunk -- who had just been threatening nuclear war on X -- suddenly went silent."

Medvedev, who has not posted on social media since the spat, is currently the deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council.

He served one term as president from 2008 to 2012, effectively acting as a placeholder for Putin, who was able to circumvent constitutional term limits and de facto remain in power.

The chief of staff to



The Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine USS Tennessee

Israeli PM says to brief army on Gaza war plan

Jerusalem, Undefined

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised Monday to update Israel's Gaza war plan, a day before a UN Security Council meeting on the fate of hostages still held in the Palestinian territory. Addressing a cabinet meeting nearly 22 months into the war, the Israeli

leader told ministers that later in the week he would instruct the military on how "to achieve the three war objectives we have set".

Netanyahu's announcement comes as he faces increasing pressure to return the remaining hostages in Gaza, as well as mounting international calls to address the dire food situa-

tion in the Gaza Strip.

Israel -- backed by the United States and Panama -- is preparing to convene a UN Security Council meeting on Tuesday to highlight the fate of the hostages.

At the weekly cabinet meeting, Netanyahu reiterated that Israel's three war goals remain "the defeat of the enemy, the re-

lease of our hostages and the promise that Gaza will no longer pose a threat to Israel".

His statement came after hundreds of retired Israeli security chiefs wrote to US President Donald Trump to urge him to convince Netanyahu to end the war.

Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said ahead of the UN session in New York

that "the world must put an end to the phenomenon of kidnapping civilians. It must be front and centre on the world stage".

Of the 251 hostages seized during Hamas's October 2023 attack on Israel, 49 are still held in the Palestinian territory, including 27 the Israeli military says are dead.