

Australia politician admits texting ‘my job is boring’ during meeting

AFP | Sydney

An Australian politician has been left red-faced after being forced to admit yesterday he texted “my job is boring” and an expletive to a contact during a meeting.

Mark Parton -- who leads the opposition Liberal Party in the Australian Capital Territory -- was subject this week to a complaint alleging he sent the message to a sex worker, local media reported.

“And f--- my job is boring. Wanna swap,” Parton reportedly wrote, accompanied by a picture of a committee meeting last month, according to the Canberra Times.

After initially denying the complaint in full as a “smear”, he told journalists yesterday that he did send the text but denied that it was to a sex worker.

Landslides kill at least four in northern Philippines



Rescuers working at a landslide site

AFP | Manila

Landslides in the Philippines killed four people, authorities said yesterday, as heavy rains driven by a tropical depression raked the country's north and forced school closures.

The archipelago nation's main island Luzon has been battered by heavy rains over the past four days.

Government offices and schools were ordered closed in the capital and across a swathe of northern provinces due to the rain.

In Benguet province, a six-hour drive north of Manila, a hillside gave way and collapsed on a small restaurant yesterday, burying three employees who had been in the kitchen.

“One is alive. Two were dead on the spot,” Colonel Dionisio Bonoy of the Benguet provincial police told reporters.

“At 10:00 am (0200 GMT), the survivor was retrieved. That was our priority earlier. With the help of God, we hope he survives.”

Environmental disaster looms as tanker leaks off Oman



Satellite image shows a slick that is consistent with an oil leak emanating from a ship

AFP | Dubai

Oman is facing an impending environmental catastrophe as an alleged Russian shadow fleet tanker leaks oil across hundreds of square kilometres near a nature reserve, NGOs warn.

The ship was rocked by explosions, a maritime security firm said, but the cause of the blasts is unclear.

Russia has built up a ghost fleet of old ships with opaque ownership to get around Western sanctions since its 2022 Ukraine invasion, and experts have said the vessels' poor condition increases the risk of oil spills.

Satellite imagery showed what appeared to be an oil slick spreading from a ship that has been stranded for over a month near al-Qibliyyah island, off Oman's southern coast.

It is far from the Strait of Hormuz, which has seen regular tanker attacks in the Middle East war.

“With oil apparently continuing to leak and the vessel stranded in a difficult location, the risk of an even larger environmental disaster remains serious,” Nina Noelle of Greenpeace said.

She warned of a “severe and long-lasting” consequence.

Greenpeace said the oil slick had expanded from up to 20 square kilometres on July 24 to an estimated 600 on August 4, according to satellite imagery it reviewed.

Environmental open-source investigator Wim Zwijnenburg, from Dutch peace organ-

isation PAX, gave the same estimate for the August 4 sheen.

Kpler data showed that the Caroline Bezenji, which is believed to be the ship leaking off Oman, loaded one million barrels of crude oil at the Russian Black Sea terminal of Sheskhari on May 11.

It still had the oil when its last signal was recorded a month later.

Large stretches of the island's shoreline appear affected and “additional oil slicks extend far out to sea, further polluting and damaging this protected marine ecosystem”, Noelle said.

Zwijnenburg added that “a complete break of the ship can cause a regional environmental catastrophe, affecting both the lives of Omani fishing communities and the wider marine and island biodiversity”.

Last year, Oman established a marine reserve around the al-Hallaniyat islands, which include al-Qibliyyah and are home to diverse marine life including rare sea turtles.



The protected islands host rare Arabian Sea humpback whales, nesting sea turtles, migratory seabirds, coral reefs and seagrass meadows

Trump denies weapon shortages

White House denies clash with Pentagon chief



President Donald Trump takes a look at a Lockheed Martin THAAD anti-ballistic missile launcher (file photo)

● Trump asserts US holds vast munitions stockpiles

● Threatens jail for alleged leakers

● Rejects reports of depleted stockpile

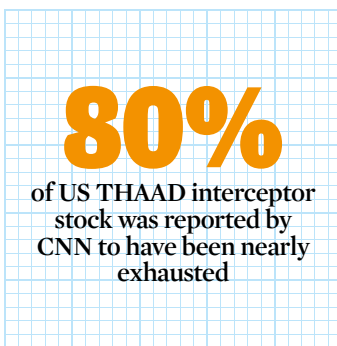
● White House brands coverage fake news

AFP | Washington

President Donald Trump said yesterday the United States has a vast supply of munitions and threatened those who suggested otherwise with jail terms as his frustration with the Iran war boiled over.

The Republican leader lashed out on his Truth Social platform at media reports about the dwindling weapons stockpile, saying that the United States has “massive amounts of ‘munitions’ especially of certain types,” without giving further detail.

“Additionally, large amounts



are being manufactured and shipped to the US as needed. Defense companies are building the largest number of plants and factories in our country's history,” he said.

The Washington Post reported that Trump demanded answers about the munitions shortages from Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth last Friday, when they attended a cabinet meeting at the Camp David presidential retreat.

Trump told Hegseth that he thought the munitions issue “had been fixed,” the Post reported, citing two unidentified sources familiar with the exchange.

Trump railed against the media reports, threatening yesterday that “the ‘leakers’ of these

treasonous statements are being hunted down” and “Long term jail sentences will be sought!”

CNN also reported that shortages of long-range guided missiles and air-defense interceptors had affected Trump's strategy in the conflict with Iran, with the US military having “nearly exhausted 80%” of its stock of THAAD interceptors.

The Post also said that the shortages led Trump to call off fresh strikes against Iran, despite having threatened to hit the Islamic republic “very hard”.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt branded coverage of the exchange with Hegseth “FAKE NEWS!”

“I was at Camp David with president Trump and Secretary Hegseth. This literally never happened,” she wrote on X.

Chief Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell said the reports about Trump's clash with Hegseth and the weapons shortages were “equally fictional.”

Iran's foreign ministry has denied there are any negotiations under way with Washington, even as Trump said Tehran was keen for a deal.

India approves \$2.5 billion scheme to boost biogas output

AFP | New Delhi

India approved a \$2.5 billion biogas programme to sharply expand domestic clean fuel production yesterday.

A government statement said the latest National Circular Bioenergy Scheme “marks a defining moment in India's clean energy journey”.

It will back waste collection, manure processing and the expansion of existing biogas plants.

“It will transform the country's abundant agricultural residue, cattle dung, press mud (sugar cane waste), municipal



Residents pour cow dung into their biogas plant at a village in Uttar Pradesh



India has subsidised more than five million rural biogas digesters since the 1980s, converting farm waste into cooking fuel and fertiliser

organic waste and other biomass resources into clean fuel, organic manure, rural income and national economic value,” the statement said.

India -- the world's most populous nation, has pushed large-scale biogas production as part of a bid to achieve carbon neutrality by 2070.

Since the 1980s, it has also promoted biogas as a low-cost rural energy source, subsidising more than five million “diger” units that convert farm waste into methane for cooking, and nitrogen-rich slurry for fertiliser.