

News in brief

◆ Tiny tsunami waves hit

Japan's northern Pacific coast on Sunday after an offshore earthquake, the national weather service said. The first tsunami hit the northern city of Miyako at 5:37 pm (0837 GMT), but it was so small that the Japan Meteorological Agency said it could not measure its size. Later, ports in Kuji and Ofunato, located in the same region, saw waves as high as 20 centimetres (less than eight inches), while smaller waves reached other ports in Iwate, the meteorological agency said. The quake struck around 5:03 pm (0803 GMT) in waters off Iwate, according to the Japanese agency which initially estimated its strength at magnitude 6.7 but later revised it to 6.9. The US Geological Survey measured the quake as magnitude 6.8.



Japan observes tiny tsunami following 6.9-magnitude quake

◆ The Taliban government expressed its disappointment yesterday that it was not invited to the COP30 conference despite Afghanistan being one of the nations most vulnerable to climate change. The 30th UN Climate Change Conference opens Monday and is set to draw representatives from dozens of countries to Brazil. Afghanistan's National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) expressed its "deep concern over the fact that, despite Afghanistan being one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, it has unfortunately not received an official invitation" to COP30. Last year the Taliban government, which is currently only recognised by Russia, sent a delegation to COP29 -- but as a "guest" of host Azerbaijan rather than a party directly involved in the negotiations.

Taliban govt protests no invitation to UN climate summit

Change Conference opens Monday and is set to draw representatives from dozens of countries to Brazil. Afghanistan's National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) expressed its "deep concern over the fact that, despite Afghanistan being one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, it has unfortunately

◆ Pakistan said yesterday it was committed to "dialogue" with Afghanistan despite peace talks ending after deadly violence, with Islamabad stressing its security concerns persist. The two sides met in Istanbul in an effort to cement a truce agreed on October 19 in Qatar, after dozens of people were killed in cross-border fire between the South Asian nations. In its first acknowledgement that the negotiations were over, Islamabad said the third round of talks "concluded" on Friday. "Pakistan remains committed to (the) resolution of bilateral differences through dialogue," the foreign ministry said in a statement. "However, Pakistan's core concern, i.e. terrorism emanating from Afghanistan needs to be addressed first and foremost." Islamabad accuses Kabul of harbouring militant groups, particularly the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) that regularly claims deadly attacks in Pakistan. The Afghan Taliban deny sheltering the group.

Pakistan commits to 'dialogue' despite Afghan talks ending



SPOTLIGHT

‘Predator: Badlands’ conquers N. American box office

AFP | Los Angeles, United States

“Predator: Badlands,” the latest installment in the sci-fi horror franchise that started nearly 40 years ago, devoured the competition at the North American box office, debuting at \$40 million, industry estimates showed Sunday.



based drama drawn from history about a young Black girl in early 20th century Oklahoma who inherits land she believes is oil-rich. It earned \$4.5 million.

The 20th Century Studios film stars Dimitrius Schuster-Koloamatangi as an out-cast Predator who is the hero this time, teaming up with an android (Elle Fanning) on an epic journey to prove himself. It is the ninth entry in the popular franchise launched in 1987 with Arnold Schwarzenegger as its star. In second place was Paramount's "Regretting You," the latest film adaptation of a Colleen Hoover novel, at \$7.1 million for the Friday to Sunday period, Exhibitor Relations reported.

Directed by Josh Boone, the romantic drama tells the story of a mother (Allison Williams) and teenage daughter (McKenna Grace) navigating life and love after tragedy strikes.

Universal's horror sequel "Black Phone 2," once again starring Ethan Hawke as a devilish villain, came in third with \$5.3 million in ticket sales in the United States and Canada.

Debating in fourth place was "Sarah's Oil," MGM's faith-

And in fifth place at \$4.1 million was another new film, Sony's "Nuremberg," which retells the story of the post-war Nazi trials with a focus on Hitler's right-hand man, Hermann Goering.

Russell Crowe's portrayal of the Luftwaffe commander is earning Oscars buzz.

Rounding out the top 10 were:

- “Chainsaw Man - The Movie: Reze Arc” (\$3.6 million)
- “Bugonia” (\$3.5 million)
- “Die My Love” (\$2.8 million)
- “Springsteen: Deliver Me from Nowhere” (\$2.2 million)
- “Tron: Ares” (\$1.8 million)

Israel receives remains believed to be officer killed in 2014 war

● If confirmed, Goldin would be the 24th deceased hostage whose remains have been returned

● Goldin's body has been held in Gaza since his death

● Goldin, 23, was part of an Israeli unit tasked with locating and destroying Hamas tunnels

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Israel said it had received yesterday the remains of a hostage that Hamas said were those of Israeli officer Hadar Goldin, killed more than a decade ago in the 2014 Gaza war. Israeli forensic experts were determining the identity of the remains after they were brought to Israel.

If confirmed, Goldin would be the 24th deceased hostage whose remains have been returned by Hamas since the start of the ceasefire on October 10 that has halted the latest war in Gaza, which broke out in October 2023. "Israel has received, via the Red Cross, the coffin of a fallen hostage that was transferred to IDF and Shin Bet personnel inside the Gaza Strip," the prime minister's office said.

Hamas' armed wing, the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, said earlier it had found Goldin's remains in a tunnel in Rafah the day before.

Goldin's body has been held in Gaza since his death. Until now, Hamas had never acknowledged his death nor possession of his remains. Israeli media reported on Saturday that Israel had allowed Hamas and Red Cross personnel to search in an area under Israeli control in Rafah to locate Goldin's remains.

"Lieutenant Hadar Goldin fell in heroic combat during Operation Protective Edge" in 2014, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said at the weekly cabinet meeting on Sunday.

"His body was abducted by Hamas, which refused to return him throughout this entire period."

Killed in ambush

Goldin, 23, was part of an Israe-



Israeli soldiers salute and people hold national flags as a van carrying human remains, thought to be those of Lt. Hadar Goldin, whom Hamas claims to have returned as part of a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Palestinian factions in Gaza, arrives at the National Center for Forensic Medicine in Tel Aviv

Israel confirms remains returned are officer Goldin killed in 2014 Gaza war

Jerusalem, Undefined

Israel said the remains it received yesterday from Ha-

mas were those of Lieutenant Hadar Goldin, an Israeli officer killed more than a decade ago in the 2014 Gaza war.

li unit tasked with locating and destroying Hamas tunnels when he was killed on August 1, 2014, just hours after a 72-hour humanitarian ceasefire took effect.

Israeli government spokeswoman Shosh Bedrosian said Goldin had been killed in an ambush.

Previous efforts to retrieve his remains through prisoner swaps had failed.

"The return of his (Goldin's) body, after an 11-year delay, carries great significance," said Israeli columnist Amos Harel in the left-leaning Haaretz newspaper.

"It will close a painful chapter and send a message that Israel's commitment to leaving no soldier behind remains steadfast."

Samah Deeb, displaced from northern Gaza to central Gaza, remained apprehensive even as Hamas returned hostages.

"We still feel like hostages to the situation," Deeb, 33, told AFP.

"The next stage of the ceasefire, which involves disarmament of Hamas and administration of the Strip worries us.

"I want my children to have

a dignified life, for schools and education to return, and for us to live in a proper home, not a tent or temporary shelter."

Her views were echoed by Mohammed Zamlout, another displaced Gazan.

"We want Israel's withdrawal. We want to return to our destroyed homes, begin reconstruction, rebuild infrastructure and schools, and restore life for our children," he said.

Israel listed Goldin among the deceased hostages whose remains it is seeking to repatriate under the ongoing US-brokered ceasefire deal to end the latest Gaza war.

At the start of the truce, Hamas was holding 20 living hostages and the bodies of 28 deceased captives.

It has since released all the living hostages and returned 23 remains of the deceased in line with the ceasefire terms.

In exchange, Israel has released nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners that had been in its custody and returned the bodies of hundreds killed in Gaza.

Apart from Goldin, four hostage bodies -- three Israeli and one Thai -- remain to be returned from Gaza, all of them seized during the October 2023 attack.

Hostage buried

Meanwhile, the family of Staff Sergeant Itay Chen laid him to rest on Sunday after his body was handed over just days ago.

Chen, a dual Israeli-US national, was working at the border with the Gaza Strip when Hamas and its allies attacked Israel on October 7, 2023.

The Israeli military announced his death in March 2024, saying he had died in combat and his body had been taken to Gaza.

"In those harrowing moments, Itay revealed the quiet heroism that defines true courage, the willingness to face unthinkable danger so that others may live," US special envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff said in a video eulogy released by Chen's family.

Hamas's attack resulted in the deaths of 1,221 people on the Israeli side, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures.

The Israeli military's retaliatory campaign has since killed 69,176 Palestinians, also mostly civilians, according to Gaza's health ministry.

The ministry, whose figures are considered reliable by the UN, does not specify the number of fighters killed within this total.

Ukraine scrambles for energy after Russian attacks

AFP | Kyiv, Ukraine

Around 100,000 people were still without power in the northeastern Ukrainian region of Kharkiv, Kyiv authorities said Sunday, a day after Russia's latest attacks on energy infrastructure.

Moscow, which has escalated attacks on Ukraine's infrastructure in recent months, launched hundreds of drones at energy facilities across the country overnight into Saturday.



Aa heavily damaged residential building in Dnipro

Some of these strikes affected the Kharkiv region, home to Ukraine's second biggest city,

Restoration Minister Oleksiy Kuleba said.

"Time is needed to restart the equipment. Currently, around 100,000 consumers remain without electricity, water, and heating," Kuleba said.

Ukraine's energy minister Svirlana Grynchuk said the wave of attacks, which killed four people, marked "one of the most difficult nights" for Ukrainian energy since the Russian invasion began.

In the Poltava region, one of

the most affected, power was mostly restored on Sunday. But damaged equipment left parts of its main city still in the dark, local authorities said.

State energy operator Ukren-ergo implemented scheduled power cuts, allowing to balance the system, in most Ukrainian regions. Russia has targeted the power and heating grid throughout its almost four-year invasion, destroying a large part of the key civilian infrastructure.