

44 lives lost after ferry capsizes on Zimbabwe's Lake Kariba



Passengers being rescued after a boat capsized on Zimbabwe's Lake Kariba following an encounter with strong waves

AFP | Harare, Zimbabwe

At least 44 people drowned after an overcrowded ferry capsized on Zimbabwe's Lake Kariba, police said Wednesday, releasing an updated toll a day after the disaster.

A witness told AFP soon after the government ferry sank in rough weather on Tuesday that bodies could be seen in the water as rescuers tried to reach the vessel.

It was carrying 114 adult passengers, five crew members and an unspecified number of children when it went down, the civil protection unit (CPU) said.

The Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (RIDA) vessel -- which ferries people between the northern town of Kariba and several islands and fishing villages -- had the capacity for 90 people, it said.

The unit said initially that 77 people were rescued and 15 bodies retrieved.

The Zimbabwe Republic Police updated the toll lat-

er Wednesday, saying on X: "The ZRP informs the public that the death toll in the Kariba RIDA boat accident is now 44."

It is one of the worst recorded passenger boat disasters on the lake, which is on the border with Zambia and more than 300 kilometres (185 miles) northeast of the capital, Harare.

It is the world's largest man-made lake by volume.

Two funeral parlours were engaged to collect the bodies, the CPU said, as the search continued for any unaccounted people.

The witness, Maxton Kanhema, told AFP that the boat left in the morning in bad weather and may have been hit by a wave, causing its engines to switch off.

"When we were in the waters, then you could see a distress sign and then boats that were close by responded," Kanhema, who was on a small boat which attended the scene o

Pakistan interior minister in Iran to discuss regional security

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Pakistan's interior minister is visiting Iran to discuss regional security, stability and other developments, the Pakistani foreign office said Wednesday, as Islamabad tries to mediate a resolution to the Middle East

war.

Mohsin Naqvi is known to be close to the powerful head of the Pakistani army, Asim Munir. Iranian state news agency IRNA reported late Tuesday that Naqvi met with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, Foreign Minis-

ter Abbas Araghchi and Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni.

He is discussing bilateral relations, security, regional security and stability, and constructive engagement amongst the parties in the region and regional developments," Pakistani foreign min-

istry spokesman Tahir Andrabi said in Islamabad.

The Iranian government's website said Naqvi conveyed to Pezeshkian "a message from the Pakistani prime minister and the chief of the army", without specifying its content.

Israel seeking to 'remove Palestine from world's agenda': Erdogan

AFP | Istanbul, Turkey

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday accused the Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu of seeking to "remove Palestine" from the world's agenda.

"The aim of the Netanyahu government is to remove Palestine from the common agenda of humanity by profiting from chaos and new conflicts in the region," Erdogan said at a joint



news conference with his Palestinian counterpart Mahmoud

Abbas.

"No matter what they do, they

will not succeed.

The Palestinian cause will continue to grow in people's hearts as they try to destroy it," he said, vowing Turkey would fight for the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Abbas arrived in Ankara on Tuesday accompanied by his diplomatic advisor Majdi Khalidi, intelligence chief Majed Faraj and senior Palestinian official Ziad Abu Amr.

Skies darken as solar eclipse heads south from Arctic to Spain

AFP | Burgos, Spain

One of nature's greatest spectacles -- a rare total solar eclipse -- cast its shadow yesterday, briefly turning day into night in Russia's remote Arctic north and western Iceland before heading towards mainland Europe.

The Moon first blotted out the Sun at the northernmost tip of mainland Russia at about 1700 GMT, leaving only the shimmering glow of its outer corona.

It raced south through parts of Greenland before total darkness fell over Keflavik, some 50 kilometres (30 miles) southwest of Iceland's capital, Reykjavik at 1747 GMT.

Reykjavik has not seen a total solar eclipse since 1433.

It was next due to hit mainland Europe, which has not experienced the dramatic natural phenomenon in 20 years, arcing diagonally in a narrow path from the northwestern Atlantic coast of Spain to the Mediterranean Sea in the south, where it is expected to fade at about 1830 GMT.

Spain has not witnessed a total solar eclipse in more than a century.

"It's the first time and it's the last time, the only time I'm going to see an eclipse," Yenny Guevera, a 50-year-old Peruvian living in France, told AFP excitedly in



The diamond ring effect appears as the Sun begins to emerge from behind the Moon following totality of the solar eclipse as seen from Berlanga de Duero, 240 km north-east of Madrid



People look through welding shields during the solar partial eclipse in the landscape park Halde Hoheward in Herten, western Germany

Burgos, northwest Spain.

"I like painting and I really

the eclipse's passage in a park in Colmenar Viejo, some 30 kilometres (19 miles) north of Madrid.

"So I find it interesting to see how it's going to look."

Supplies of special viewing glasses were in high demand, with huge crowds turning out to watch a partial eclipse across Europe, with the event also visible in Canada, the northern United States and northwest Africa.

The partial eclipse began in parts of northern Spain shortly after 1730 GMT, prompting gasps from waiting crowds and applause from South Korean tourists in a field in Lodoso, near Burgos, an AFP reporter said.

"It's starting! It's starting!" said a group of young people in Colmenar Viejo, in the Madrid region. "How wonderful!" said one woman in the crowd.

Spain in total darkness

A large part of Spain switched from daylight into total darkness Wednesday as the Moon covered the Sun, as thousands of spectators across the country looked on.

The total eclipse lasted less than two minutes in Lodoso, near Burgos, to the delight of thousands of people observing the phenomenon using special spectacles for safety, an AFP journalist at the scene said.

Turkish F-16 crashes after pilot ejects safely

AFP | Ankara, Turkey

An F-16 fighter jet crashed during a training exercise in northwestern Turkey on Wednesday but no-one was hurt, the pilot ejecting to safety, the defence ministry said.

"An F-16 aircraft belonging to our air force was involved in an accident during a training flight in Yalova, and our pilot survived by ejecting," a statement said, pledging a thorough investigation.

Yalova lies southeast of Istanbul on the shores of the Sea of Marmara.

CCTV footage broadcast by IHA news agency showed a plane hurtling through the air at a very low altitude before disappearing behind some trees, sending up a cloud of thick black smoke as it crashed.

According to the private NTV channel, the plane crashed near an air base, with several teams of rescuers dispatched to the scene. It said the pilot



had been taken to hospital.

Six months ago, another Turkish F-16 fighter jet crashed, killing the pilot, shortly after takeoff during an alert-response mission near the Bulgarian border.

In November, Turkey suspended flights by its C-130 cargo planes after one crashed in Georgia while returning from Azerbaijan, killing all 20 on board.

India's Tata Sons chairman says he is stepping down

AFP | Mumbai, India

Tata Sons chairman N. Chandrasekaran said yesterday he would not seek reappointment when his term ends next year, deepening a leadership crisis at India's largest conglomerate.



Tata Sons is the single largest shareholder in firms including IT giant Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Tata Motors, which owns British luxury car maker Jaguar Land Rover.

Chandrasekaran, 63, said he had informed the board that

he would step down when his tenure ends early next year, after directors failed to reach a decision on his future.

He said a decision on the new leadership was needed as several major projects were at critical stages.