

**Israel kills 9**

Israel intensified strikes on Lebanon Wednesday, with Beirut's health ministry reporting nine people, including two children, killed in attacks targeting cars between the capital and the coastal city of Sidon despite a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah. Israel's military said it had attacked Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon. An AFP correspondent reported thick smoke from Burj al-Shemali in the Tyre region.

**Iran hangs man**

Iranian authorities hanged a man in his early 30s convicted of spying for Israel, the sixth person to be executed on such charges since the start of the US-Israeli war against the Islamic republic. The Iranian judiciary's Mizan Online website described Ehsan Afreshteh, 32, as "a spy trained by Mossad in Nepal who sold sensitive information to Israel". But the Norway-based Hengaw and Iran Human Rights (IHR) NGOs said in separate statements that Afreshteh had denied the accusations, and said he had been subjected to televised "forced confessions" obtained through torture.

**Sunk Russian ship held nuclear reactor components**  
Madrid, Spain

A US-sanctioned Russian cargo ship that sank in the Mediterranean Sea in 2024 was carrying "nuclear reactor components" similar to those used in nuclear submarines, according to a Spanish government letter, shedding some light on the mystery. The Ursa Major, owned by a company that belongs to the Russian defence ministry, sank in international waters off southern Spain in December 2024 with 16 people on board -- two of whom were never found.

**Russian barrage of 800 drones kills 6 in Ukraine**  
Kyiv, Ukraine

A daytime Russian drone barrage mainly targeting western Ukraine killed at least six people and wounded dozens, the Ukrainian president said on Wednesday, in what appeared to be a pivot in Moscow's aerial bombardment strategy. Russia has been pounding Ukrainian cities for more than four years but usually launches large-scale drone and missile attacks at night. "Since midnight, at least 800 Russian drones have already been launched," Zelensky said on social media,

**Italy minesweepers**

Italy said it was sending two warships closer to the Gulf but would only deploy them as part of an international mission in case of a lasting truce in the region. Defence Minister Guido Crosetto told parliament that a possible mission to the Strait of Hormuz could only happen with prior approval from lawmakers.

**China urges Pakistan to step up**

China's top diplomat urged Pakistan to step up mediation efforts between Iran and the United States, and help to "properly" address the reopening of the Hormuz strait, Chinese state media said. Foreign Minister Wang Yi spoke to his Pakistani counterpart Ishaq Dar on a call, state news agency Xinhua reported, ahead of US President Donald Trump's visit to Beijing.

**Israeli strikes kill 13 in Lebanon**

Israel hammered south Lebanon with more strikes Tuesday, killing 13 people in the south, including two rescuers responding to an earlier raid in the city of Nabatieh and a wounded person they went to save, Lebanon's health ministry said. Beirut reported 380 people had been killed in intensified Israeli attacks since an April 17 ceasefire took effect and Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem vowed to turn the battlefield into "hell" for Israeli forces.

**Iran's missile capabilities**

The New York Times reported Tuesday that classified US intelligence assessments say Iran still has substantial missile capabilities -- with about 70% of its mobile launchers and pre-war missile stockpile still in action -- and has restored access to 30 of 33 missile sites along the Strait of Hormuz.

**Australian shipping defence**

Defence Minister Richard Marles said Australia will join a "strictly defensive" mission led by France and Britain to secure shipping through the strait, once it is established, and contribute a surveillance aircraft to protect the United Arab Emirates from Iranian drone attacks.

**Trump arrives in China for superpower summit with Xi**

- Trump and Xi will hold talks at 10:00 am (0200 GMT) on Thursday in Beijing's opulent Great Hall of the People
- The US president will also visit the historic Temple of Heaven, a world heritage site where China's emperors once prayed for good harvest
- The leaders will then enjoy a state banquet in the evening.
- On Friday, they are set to have tea and a working lunch before Trump heads home.



US President Donald Trump (C), US Ambassador To China David Perdue (center-R) escorted by China's Vice President Han Zheng (R) are greeted by Chinese youth upon arriving at Beijing Capital Airport in Beijing

AFP | Beijing, China

US President Donald Trump landed in Beijing yesterday for a high-stakes summit with Chinese

leader Xi Jinping aimed at easing deep tensions between the rival superpowers. Giving a fist pump, Trump descended the steps of Air Force One after touching down at Beijing Capital International Airport, kicking off the first visit to China by a US president in nearly a decade. Right behind him were Tesla boss Elon Musk and Nvidia chief Jensen Huang -- potent

symbols of the business deals that Trump hopes to sign between the world's biggest economies. Trump was greeted with a bunch of flowers and then walked along the red carpet, which was lined with 300 Chinese youth in white uniforms chanting "welcome" and waving small Chinese and US flags in unison. While en route to Beijing, Trump said on social media

he would "be asking President Xi, a Leader of extraordinary distinction, to 'open up' China so that these brilliant people can work their magic". Nvidia's Huang was a surprise late addition to the trip, joining the plane at a stopover in Alaska. China is currently banned under US national security rules from buying the cutting-edge AI chips that the company produces.

Iran sees **windfall** in Hormuz control

Military says control over Hormuz to bring significant economic revenues



Qatari LNG tanker MV Al Kharaitiyat arriving at Engro Elengy Terminal (EETL) in Karachi.

Agencies

Iran said yesterday that control over the Strait of Hormuz could deliver a major economic windfall and boost the country's geopolitical influence, as officials outlined plans to tighten management of the vital waterway. Military spokesman Mohammad Akraminia said Iran's over-

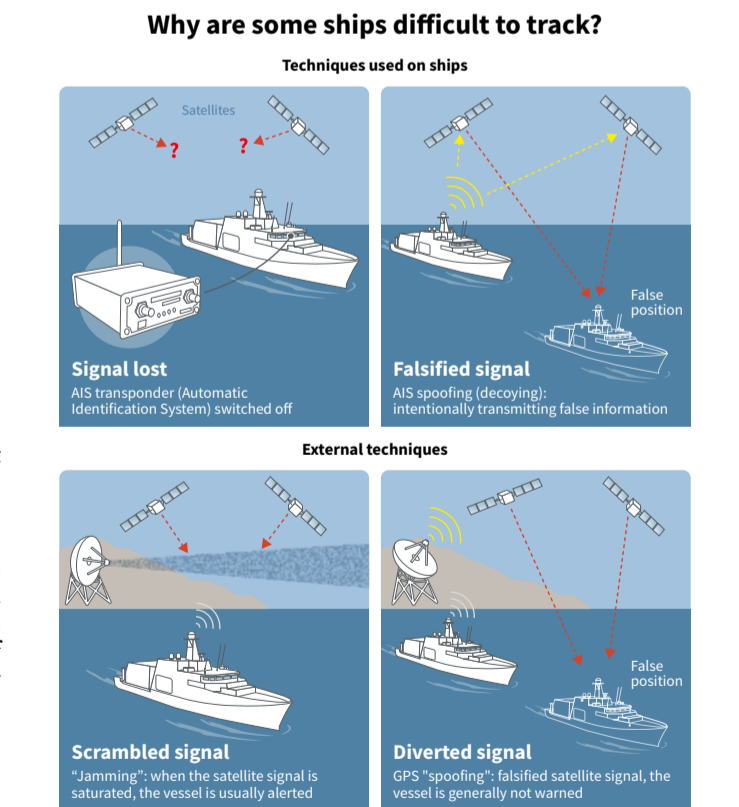
sight of the strait could generate "significant economic revenues" and potentially double the country's oil income. He added that greater control over the route would strengthen Tehran's position on the international stage. The Strait of Hormuz handles about a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments in peacetime, making it one of the world's most critical energy

**Gaza board envoy says ceasefire holding**

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

The high representative for Gaza in US President Donald Trump's Board of Peace on Wednesday said the fragile ceasefire in the Palestinian territory was holding despite daily violations.

"We have a ceasefire. It is holding... It is far from perfect. There are violations every day, and some of them are very serious," said Nickolay Mladenov during a meeting with the Foreign Press Association in Jerusalem.



chokepoints.

Akraminia said the western section of the strait was under the control of the Revolutionary Guards' naval forces, while the eastern side was overseen by the Iranian navy. Separately, Ebrahim Azizi,

head of parliament's national security commission, said lawmakers had finalised a plan for managing the strategic passage. "The Islamic Republic of Iran intends to use this strategic position as a lever of power," he said, according to state television.