

Russian strikes on Ukraine kill three, including child: Kyiv

AFP | Moscow

Russia renewed its strikes on Ukraine yesterday, killing three people including an eight-year-old girl, Ukrainian officials said.

The strikes come a day after Ukraine launched its biggest-ever drone attack on Moscow, killing a different eight-year-old girl and sparking an inferno at a major oil refinery, according to Russian officials.

The Kremlin said yesterday it would “continue” striking Ukraine following that attack.

Both sides have escalated attacks on each other in recent weeks, as US-led talks on ending the more than four-year conflict remain effectively frozen.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly rejected an offer from Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelensky for direct talks, vowing instead to achieve Russia’s war aims on the battlefield.

Between late Thursday and early yesterday, Russia launched 90 drones at Ukraine, according to the Ukrainian air force.



The site of an Israeli attack that destroyed houses and carpentry shops in the village of Al-Qailah in the Tyre district in southern Lebanon

Israel, Hezbollah agree ceasefire as US-Iran deal under strain

Lebanon fighting delays planned Iran-US negotiations in Switzerland

Ebola spreading ‘fast’ in DR Congo, warns WHO

AFP | Geneva

The fatal Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo is spreading rapidly, the World Health Organization warned yesterday, despite accelerating efforts to tackle the virus.

The WHO said it was still racing to catch up with the worsening situation gripping the northeastern DRC.

“The outbreak remains serious” and is “evolving so fast”, said Marie-Roseline Belizaire, the WHO Africa emergencies chief.

“However, I have seen a response that is growing stronger every day,” she told reporters in Geneva, speaking from Bunia, the capital of the DRC’s Ituri province, the outbreak’s epicentre.

The outbreak was declared on May 15, though transmission had been going undetected for some time beforehand.

It is caused by the rare Bundibugyo strain of the virus, for which there is no vaccine or specific treatment.

● Lebanon clashes killed dozens

● Hormuz shipping begins recovering

AFP | Washington

Israel and Hezbollah agreed a ceasefire yesterday, a US official said, after deadly exchanges between the two sides in Lebanon put a deal to end the Middle East war under strain, less than two days after it was signed.

Talks that were scheduled to take place between the US and Iran in Switzerland yesterday to build on the deal and work towards a lasting settlement were postponed amid the fighting, with no new date announced.

Iran’s chief negotiator said Tehran would not compromise on its stated positions and warned that its forces remained ready to act, even as shipping appeared to pick up in the Strait of Hormuz, which had essentially been closed during the war.

The deal signed this week by President Donald Trump and his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian aims to end a war that began on February 28 with US-Israeli strikes that killed supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The agreement was also meant to halt the fighting in Lebanon, a condition Iran had insisted upon, turning Israel’s ongoing campaign there into a source of

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US Vice President JD Vance delivered a rare public rebuke of Israel, telling the New York Times that a nation “can’t just kill your way out of solving every single national security problem” – a notable break from Washington’s typical public deference to its closest Middle East ally

frustration for Washington.

Israel’s military said yesterday that it had struck more than 80 Hezbollah targets in Lebanon and killed dozens of members of the Iran-backed group.

‘Permanent war’

Lebanon said 47 people were killed and 97 others wounded in Israeli strikes on Lebanon yesterday. Israel’s military reported four troops were killed.

But a US official said a truce between Israel and Hezbollah, beginning immediately, had been brokered by US and Qatari mediators following talks with Israel and Iran. A Gulf diplomat confirmed the ceasefire.

Yet even after the truce was an-

nounced, Lebanese state media reported an Israeli airstrike on the country’s south in the Jezzine region.

A previous truce agreed in April, however, did nothing to stop attacks by either side, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had said just hours earlier that the Israeli army would stay in Lebanon “as long as necessary” and would make Iran-backed Hezbollah pay a “heavy price” for its attacks.

Far-right Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir went even further, saying after the soldiers’ deaths that “all of Lebanon must burn”.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi accused Israel of only being interested in “permanent war”.

‘Two spoilers’

Preparations had been made to host Iranian and US delegations led by Tehran’s top negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and US Vice President JD Vance at the Swiss resort of Burgenstock, overlooking Lake Lucerne.

The talks were due to kick off a two-month period of negotiations to discuss outstanding is-

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commercial vessels crossed the newly-reopened Strait of Hormuz on Thursday, marking the highest traffic volume recorded since mid-April

suces not covered by the initial deal, notably Iran’s nuclear programme.

Switzerland’s foreign ministry confirmed the discussions had been postponed but said it “remains ready to facilitate these talks”.

Quoting diplomats, the Financial Times said Israel’s strikes on Lebanon had led to the postponement but there was no immediate confirmation.

‘Crushing response’

Ghalibaf said yesterday that any further negotiations with

the United States would remain subject to Tehran’s stated limits.

“If the enemy seeks to be excessive, we have proven that our fingers are on the trigger and we have no hesitation in giving a crushing response to the enemy,” he said in remarks published by the official IRNA news agency.

Vance, meanwhile, has expressed a degree of exasperation with the Israeli government rare for a top US official, telling the New York Times “you can’t just kill your way out of solving every single national security problem that you have”.

Iran’s new supreme leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, who succeeded his father, said Thursday that he had approved the accord with the US, despite holding a “different view”.

A key aspect of the deal was the immediate re-opening of the Strait of Hormuz, the key shipping bottleneck whose closure caused global energy prices to rise.

A total of 25 commercial vessels crossed the newly-reopened strait on Thursday, the highest number since mid-April, according to data from maritime tracking firm AXSMarine published yesterday.

A fifth of the world’s oil and liquefied natural gas exports passed through the strait in peacetime, according to economists.

American forces on Thursday lifted their parallel naval blockade of Iranian ports, the US military said, noting that American warships “will remain in the general area”.

Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir said that “all of Lebanon must burn” after Israel’s military announced the deaths of four soldiers there