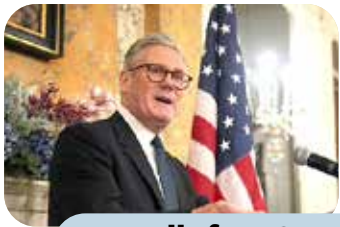


News in brief

◆ The UK government

yesterday called for a 50-day drive to arm Ukraine to take advantage of a recent ultimatum put to Russia by US President Donald Trump. Earlier this month, Trump gave Russian President Vladimir Putin 50 days to strike a peace deal with Kyiv in the three-year war or face sanctions. UK Defence Secretary John Healey told a meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group (UDCG) that Kyiv's backers stand at a moment of "maximum opportunity". "As members of this UDCG, we need to step up, in turn, a 50-day drive to arm Ukraine on the battlefield and to help push Putin to the negotiating table," Healey told the virtual meeting of 52 nations. Trump also pledged to supply Kyiv with new military aid, sponsored by NATO allies, as its cities suffer ever-increasing Russian aerial attacks since Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Healey, chairing the meeting alongside German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, said the UK "backs this policy". "We will play our full part in its success," he added.



UK calls for 50-day drive to arm Ukraine

◆ Tehran yesterday

Iran accuses Europeans of not respecting 2015 nuclear deal

accused Britain, France and Germany of failing to respect the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, after they threatened to reimpose sanctions over its atomic programme. The 2015 deal, reached between Iran and the UN Security Council's permanent members -- Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States -- plus Germany imposed curbs on Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief. But it unravelled when the United States in 2018, during Donald Trump's first term as president, unilaterally withdrew from the accord and reimposed sweeping sanctions. The Europeans had pledged continued support for the deal, but the mechanism intended to offset US sanctions never materialised effectively and many Western firms were forced to exit Iran, which has since faced a deepening economic crisis.

◆ Japanese Prime Minister

Shigeru Ishiba clung yesterday even after an election debacle left his coalition without a majority in the upper house, as painful new US tariffs loom. In Sunday's election Ishiba's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has governed almost continuously since 1955, and its partner Komeito fell a projected three seats short of retaining a majority in the upper house. Voters angry at inflation turned to other parties, notably the "Japanese first" Sanseito, which made strong gains with its "anti-globalist" drive echoing the agenda of populist parties elsewhere. "I even think (the LDP) should have lost more," 25-year-old Kazuyo Nanasa, who voted for a small ultra-conservative party, told AFP, adding that Ishiba should quit. The debacle comes only months after Ishiba's coalition was forced into a minority government in the more powerful lower house, in the LDP's worst result in 15 years.

Japan PM hangs on after election debacle



SPOTLIGHT

'Comrade VS', Kerala's grand old Communist leader, dies at 101

TDT | agencies

Former Kerala Chief Minister and the icon of Communist movement VS Achuthanandan died yesterday, after a long hospitalisation. The 101-year-old was admitted to a private hospital in Thiruvananthapuram on June 23 after he suffered a cardiac arrest at home. He had been on ventilator support in the intensive care unit since.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and CPM state secretary MV Govindan have rushed to the hospital to meet the family. A steady stream of political leaders are already making a beeline for the hospital to pay their respects.

A lifelong fighter for the rights of disadvantaged sections and a towering presence in state politics, Achuthanandan had withdrawn from public life after he suffered a minor stroke in 2019.

In January 2021, he had quit as the Chairman of the Administrative Reforms Committee and had been staying alternately with his son or daughter in Thiruvananthapuram since.

A founder leader of CPM after the split in undivided party in 1964, Achuthanandan's populist stance and uncompromising image winning him admiration across party lines.

He had been the Leader of the Opposition from 2001 to 2006, when he had spearhead-



ed the attack on the UDF government led by AK Antony. In 2006, he led the CPM-led Left Democratic Front to victory and served as Chief Minister till 2011.

In 2011, he crafted the LDF campaign and leading from the front, came close to securing a second term, but the Oommen Chandy-led UDF had managed a narrow victory, securing 72 of the 140 seats in the state Assembly. The veteran leader was no stranger to controversies - his frequent clashes with rival Pinarayi Vijayan often generating headlines.

He had ascribed his removal from the party politburo to his open comments against Mr Vijayan and months later, on his 90th birthday, made a series of stronger remarks.



Bangladesh's fire service and security personnel conduct a search and rescue operation after an Air Force training jet crashed into school in Dhaka

At least 19 killed as Bangladesh fighter jet crashes into school

Chinese-made F-7 BJI aircraft crashed moments after students were let out of class

● At least 51 people, mostly students, were undergoing treatment

● A day of national mourning on Tuesday

AFP | Dhaka, Bangladesh

A Bangladeshi training fighter jet crashed into a school in the capital Dhaka yesterday, killing at least 19 people and injuring dozens more in the country's deadliest aviation accident in decades.

An AFP photographer at the scene saw fire and rescue officials taking away the injured students on stretchers, while military personnel helped clear the wreckage.

A military statement said 19 people were killed, including the pilot, and 20 others were critically wounded.

At least 51 people, mostly students, were undergoing treatment at Dhaka's National Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute, its director Mohammad Nasir Uddin told AFP.

The Chinese-made F-7 BJI aircraft crashed moments after students were let out of class at 1:00 pm (0700 GMT) at the Milestone School and College.

A witness said he heard a huge blast that felt like an earthquake. "We have two playgrounds, one for the senior students and one for the juniors," said Shafiur Rahman Shafi, 18, who is enrolled at the school.

"We were on the playground for the seniors. There were two fighter planes... Suddenly one of the two planes crashed here (in the junior playground)," he told AFP.



People crowd a street as fire fighting trucks remain on standby outside a school where an Air Force training jet crashed in Dhaka



Bangladesh's fire service and security personnel conduct a search and rescue operation

"It created a boom, and it felt like a quake. Then it caught fire, and the army reached the spot later."

The interim government of Muhammad Yunus announced.

'We frantically searched'

Grieving parents and relatives of the victims thronged the National Burn and Plastic Surgery

Institute.

Tofazzal Hossain, 30, broke down in tears on learning that his young cousin had been killed.

"We frantically searched for my cousin in different hospitals," Hossain told AFP.

"He was an eighth grader at the school. Finally, we found his body."

Yunus expressed "deep grief

and sorrow" over the incident in a post on X.

"The loss suffered by the Air Force, the students, parents, teachers, and staff of Milestone School and College, as well as others affected by this accident, is irreparable," he said.

"This is a moment of profound pain for the nation."

The crash was the worst aviation accident in the country in several decades.

The deadliest ever disaster happened in 1984 when a plane flying from Chattogram to Dhaka crashed, killing all 49 on board.

Last month, a commercial aircraft crashed in neighbouring India, killing 260 people.



The Chinese-made F-7 BGI (not BJI) aircraft is an advanced variant of the Chengdu F-7, which itself is a Chinese version of the Soviet MiG-21—but with a major twist.

Despite its roots in a 1950s-era design, the F-7 BGI features a modern glass cockpit, hands-on throttle-and-stick (HOTAS) controls, and multi-function displays (MFDs)—technology typically found in much newer 4th-generation fighters. This makes it one of the most modernised versions of the MiG-21 still flying.