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THE DAILY tribune

QUOTE
OF THE
DAY

I HATED EVERY MINUTE OF TRAINING, BUT I SAID, DON'T QUIT, SUFFER NOW AND LIVE THE REST OF YOUR LIFE AS A CHAMPION
MUHAMMAD ALI

News in brief

◆ **The head of Russia's** FSB security agency claimed yesterday that Western and Ukrainian special services had aided the attackers who stormed a Moscow concert hall last week, killing dozens. Russia continues to allege Ukraine was somehow involved in Friday's massacre, even after President Vladimir Putin acknowledged "radical Islamists" had carried it out. "We believe the action was prepared both by the radical Islamists themselves and, of course, facilitated by Western special services, and Ukraine's special services themselves have a direct connection to this," FSB head Alexander Bortnikov was cited as saying by Russian news agencies. He also repeated the Kremlin's claim that the attackers tried fleeing over the Ukrainian border, an assertion that Kyiv has called absurd.



Russia claims West aided Moscow attackers

◆ **Natural disasters cost insurers \$108 bn in 2023: Swiss Re**

◆ **Natural disasters** caused \$280 billion in damage worldwide in 2023, including \$108 billion covered by insurance companies, Swiss reinsurance giant Swiss Re said Tuesday, warning the bill could double within 10 years. The total amount of damage, and the share covered by insurers, both fell compared to 2022, which saw Hurricane Ian -- one of the deadliest storms to hit the United States this century -- send costs soaring. In 2022, the damage caused by natural disasters amounted to \$286 billion, while the bill for insurers reached \$133 billion. Despite the drop from the previous year, the bill for insurers in 2023 nonetheless exceeded the \$100-billion mark for the fourth year in a row, Swiss Re said in its Sigma study. The annual overview by the Zurich-based group -- which acts as an insurer for insurers -- details the cost of disasters and natural catastrophes.

◆ **A Russian court** yesterday remanded an eighth suspect in custody over the attack on a Moscow concert hall that killed at least 139 people, officials said. Moscow earlier announced it had detained 11 people in connection with the attack, which saw camouflaged gunmen storm into Crocus City Hall, open fire on concert-goers and set the building ablaze. The court's press service said the latest suspect to be remanded was a man originally from the Central Asian country of Kyrgyzstan. Officials said he was ordered to be held in detention until at least May 22, without detailing the exact accusations against him.

Russian court remands eighth Moscow attack suspect in custody

◆ **Five Chinese dam workers, Pakistan driver killed in suicide attack**

◆ **Five Chinese nationals** working on a major dam construction site were killed along with their driver on Tuesday when a suicide bomber targeted their vehicle in northwest Pakistan, police said. Islamabad is Beijing's closest regional ally, but the security of Chinese workers has long been of concern in Pakistan. "Five Chinese and their local driver were killed in the attack," Muhammad Ali Gandapur, a senior police official in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, told AFP.

SPOTLIGHT

Major US bridge collapses as cargo ship plows into pylon



In this aerial image, the steel frame of the Francis Scott Key Bridge sits on top of a container ship after the bridge collapsed, Baltimore, Maryland

Baltimore, United States

A major bridge in the US city of Baltimore collapsed early yesterday after being struck by a container ship, sending multiple vehicles and people plunging into the frigid harbour below.

Dramatic nighttime footage showed a 300-meter vessel hitting a pylon of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, bringing most of the steel-built structure crashing into the Patapsco River within seconds.

Vehicles could be seen on the road surface as the bridge

warped and crashed in sections, with the third tranche cantilevering upwards before it, too, tumbled into the water.

Rescuers said they were still looking for at least seven people, having pulled two people free.

As daylight broke the extent of the disaster became apparent.

Twisted stanchions of steel lay draped over the deck of the ship, on which stacks of containers teetered precariously -- adding further danger to rescue and recovery work.

Gaza teens hoping to be killed to end their 'nightmare': UN



Displaced people fleeing from Gaza City walk along the coastal road

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

The situation in war-ravaged Gaza is so desperate that teenagers are now saying they hope to be swiftly killed to escape the "nightmare", a spokesman for the UN children's agency said yesterday.

"The unspeakable is regularly said in Gaza," said James Elder, spokesman for the United Nations children's agency UNICEF. Speaking to journalists in Geneva via video message from Rafah in southern Gaza, he said the agency had on Monday held a meeting with adolescents.

Several said they were "so desperate for this nightmare to end that they hoped to be killed", he said.

The war began with Hamas's October 7 attacks, which resulted in about 1,160 deaths in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

Militants also seized about 250 hostages, of whom Israel believes around 130 are still held in Gaza, including 33 presumed dead.

Israel's retaliatory campaign against Hamas has killed at least 32,333 people in Gaza, most of them women and children, according to the health ministry.

The UN has warned that Gaza is facing a looming famine, spurring increasingly urgent appeals for Israel to open up more border crossings and to stop hampering the movement of aid through the Palestinians territory.

The Israelis "have a right to control. They inspect every single gram, litre, kilo of whatever goes into Gaza," Jens Laerke, spokesman for the UN humanitarian agency, told reporters. "But they cannot say that once it's inside, we leave it with you. They must create this enabling environment that allows us to move it around."

"We need to dispel this notion that their obligation with getting aid in somehow stops with getting a few trucks, a fraction of what is needed, across the border," he said.

"That is not correct."

Elder meanwhile pointed out that the Israelis had denied a quarter of the 40 mission requests to the north since the beginning of the month.

"Now there is an existing old crossing point that could be used in the north 10 minutes from where those people are putting their hands to their mouth pleading for food," he said, referring to the Erez Crossing.

"10 minutes. Open that and we could turn this humanitarian crisis around in a matter of days. But it remains closed."

"Let's be clear, life-saving aid is being obstructed, lives are being lost, dignity is being denied."

Planting trees in wrong places heats the planet: study

AFP | Paris, France

Planting trees in the wrong places can actually contribute to global warming, scientists said yesterday but a new map identifies the best locations to regrow forests and cool the planet.

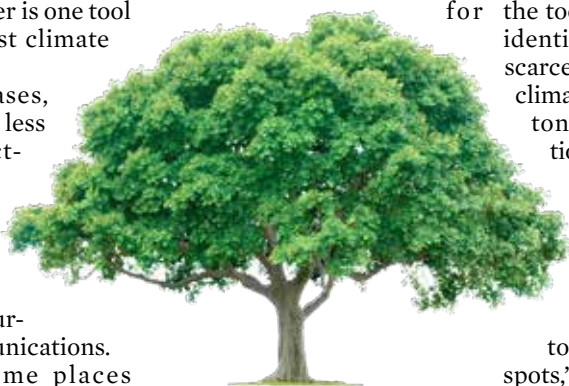
Trees soak up carbon dioxide and restoring areas of degraded woodlands or planting saplings to boost forest cover is one tool in the fight against climate change.

But in some cases, more trees means less sunlight is reflected back from the earth's surface and more heat is absorbed by the planet, according to a study in the journal Nature Communications.

"There are some places

where putting trees back leads to net climate negative outcomes," Susan Cook-Patton, one of the study's co-authors, told AFP.

Scientists had already understood that restoring tree cover led to changes in albedo -- the amount of solar radiation bounced back off the planet's surface -- but didn't have the tools to account for



it, she said.

Using new maps, researchers were able to consider, for the first time, the cooling effect from trees and the warming caused by decreased albedo.

They found that projects that didn't factor albedo into the equation overestimated the climate benefit of additional trees by between 20 to 80 percent.

But the maps also provide the tools to help policymakers identify where best to funnel scarce resources for maximum climate impact, said Cook-Patton, senior forest restoration scientist at The Nature Conservancy.

"There's also lots of places still where restoring tree cover is a great idea for climate change. We're just trying to help people find those spots," she said.



TOP
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TWEETS

01



When I see Jordan, I see solidarity in action. I've commended the compassion of the Jordanians for those fleeing upheaval in my meeting with His Majesty @KingAbdullahII. I salute you for your support for silencing the guns & the relentless efforts to get humanitarian assistance into Gaza

@antonioguterres

02



The United States supports a strong, independent, resilient, and prosperous Vietnam that bolsters regional prosperity and stability. Vietnamese @FMBuiThanhSon and I met today to build on the progress of our new Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

@SecBlinken

03



Spoke to Belgium PM @alexanderdecroo. Congratulated him on the success of the First Nuclear Energy Summit in Brussels. Exchanged views on strengthening bilateral ties; advancing India-EU Partnership under Belgian Presidency; and cooperation on regional and global issues.

@narendramodi

04



Our heartfelt condolences go out to the families of the victims of the tragic terrorist attack in Moscow. Terrorism, the deliberate targeting of civilians for political or religious ends, is a heinous crime.

@IsraeliPM

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