

News in brief

◆ **A magnitude 6.5** earthquake rocked India's Nicobar Islands region early yesterday but did not trigger a tsunami alert, the United States Geological Survey and Tsunami Warning System said. The quake struck at a depth of 10 kilometres (six miles) at 12 minutes past midnight local time (18:42 GMT Monday), 259 kilometers west-northwest of Sabang, in western Indonesia's Aceh province, the USGS said. Aceh was the area most devastated by the magnitude-9.1 earthquake and tsunami that killed more than 220,000 people in 15 countries in 2004.



**Magnitude 6.5 quake hits India's Nicobar Islands**

◆ **Iran vows stronger response if attacked again by US, Israel**

manner" should they attack Iran again. The comments appeared to be in response to remarks by US President Donald Trump, who had threatened earlier in the day to "wipe out" the Islamic republic's nuclear programme if it resumed atomic activities following a round of US strikes last month. "If aggression is repeated, we will not hesitate to react in a more decisive manner and in a way that will be IMPOSSIBLE to cover up," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a post on X. "If there are concerns about the possible diversion of our nuclear program into non-peaceful purposes, the 'military option' proved incapable -- but a negotiated solution may work," he added.

◆ **Iran's foreign minister** warned on Monday that it would respond to the United States and Israel in a "more decisive

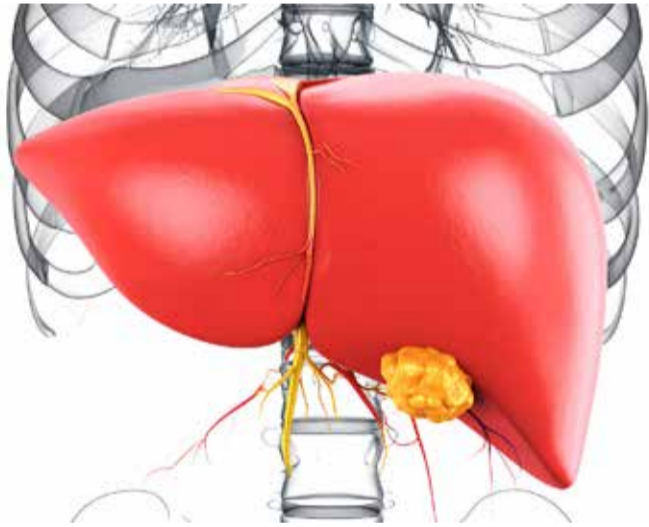
◆ **A passenger plane** from Pyongyang landed at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport Tuesday, the first direct flight from the North Korean capital to Moscow in decades as the two countries deepened ties. The Boeing 777 aircraft, operated by Russia's Nordwind Airlines, had already flown from Moscow to Pyongyang on Sunday. It landed back in the Russian capital at 0750 GMT on Tuesday, completing its first round trip on the route, according to the website of Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport. The 440-seater plane was "completely full", with most of the passengers being North Korean, Russia's state RIA news agency reported. Russian diplomat Matvei Krivosheyev, who was also on board, was quoted as saying it was the first such flight in almost three decades. "We are confident that this flight will be in demand both by Russian tourists and by Korean comrades," he told the RIA news agency. Russia and North Korea have forged closer ties in recent years, with Pyongyang supplying troops and weapons for Russia's military operations in Ukraine.

**First direct flight from Pyongyang lands in Moscow**



SPOTLIGHT

Liver cancer to double worldwide, most of it preventable: study



AFP | Paris, France

The number of people with liver cancer will nearly double worldwide by 2050 unless more is done to address preventable causes such as obesity, alcohol consumption and hepatitis, a study warned Tuesday.

New cases of liver cancer -- the sixth most common form of the disease -- will rise to 1.52 million a year from 870,000 if current trends continue, according to data from the Global Cancer Observatory published in the Lancet medical journal.

It is also the third deadliest of all cancers, with the study predicting it would take 1.37 million lives by the middle of the century.

However three out of five cases of liver cancer could be prevented, the international team of experts said.

The risk factors are drink-

ing alcohol, viral hepatitis and a build-up of fat in the liver linked to obesity called MASLD, which was previously known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

The viruses that cause hepatitis B and C are expected to remain the leading causes of liver cancer in 2050, according to the study, published on World Hepatitis Day.

Vaccination at birth is the best way to prevent hepatitis B, but vaccine coverage remains low in poorer countries including in sub-Saharan Africa, the study said.

Unless vaccination rates are increased, hepatitis B is expected to kill 17 million people between 2015 and 2030, it added.

Alcohol consumption is estimated to cause more than 21 percent of all cases of liver cancer by 2050, up more than two percentage points from 2022.



Destroyed buildings are pictured in the Gaza Strip as seen from a position along the border in southern Israel

UK to recognise **Palestine** in September unless Israel acts

Macron said last week France would formally recognise a Palestinian state

● The two countries would be the first G7 nations to do so

● Starmer has been under growing domestic and international pressure

● Macron publicly pressed for joint recognition of Palestine during his UK state visit

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced yesterday the UK will formally recognise the State of Palestine in September unless Israel takes various "substantive steps" in Gaza, including agreeing to a ceasefire.

The potentially landmark move, part of a plan for "lasting peace" that Starmer is putting forward, came after the UK leader recalled his cabinet from recess for urgent talks on the worsening situation in the besieged territory.

Starmer told his ministers London will

**UK aid has been air-dropped into Gaza**

London, United Kingdom

The UK carried out its first air drop of aid into Gaza on Tuesday, the government said, as UN agencies warned the Palestinian territory was slipping into famine.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office said "the first air drops of British aid" were landing Tues-

day "containing around half a million pounds worth of lifesaving supplies".

"The Palestinian people have endured terrible suffering now in Gaza because of a catastrophic failure of aid, we see starving babies, children too weak to stand," Starmer said in a televised address, adding "the suffering must end".

formally recognise a Palestinian state in September if the Israeli government has not taken the steps demanded, his office said. They include ending "the appalling situation in Gaza", reaching a ceasefire, making "clear there will be no annexation in the West Bank", and committing "to a long-term peace process that delivers a two-state solution," it added.

"I have always said that we will recognise a Palestinian state as a contribution to a proper peace process at the moment of maximum impact for the two-state solution," Starmer later said in a Downing Street address.

"With that

solution now under threat, this is the moment to act."

**Hamas demands**

French President Emmanuel Macron said last week that his country would formally recognise a Palestinian state during the UN General Assembly meeting in September.

Starmer said "the UK will recognise the state of Palestine by the United Nations General Assembly in September unless the Israeli government takes substantive steps to end the appalling situation in Gaza".

The two countries would be the first G7 nations to do so, with Ma-

cron's announcement last week drawing a strong rebuke from both Israel and the United States.

However, Starmer is believed to have presented his plan for the long-running conflict in the Middle East to US President Donald Trump when the pair met in Scotland on Monday.

Trump appeared to give his blessing for the recognition move, saying during a wide-ranging press conference lasting more than an hour that "I don't mind him (Starmer) taking a position."

Speaking Tuesday, Starmer also detailed several demands for the Palestinian militant group Hamas, which is holding Israeli hostages seized in its attacks on October 7, 2023.

"They must immediately release all of the hostages, sign up to a ceasefire, disarm and accept that they will play no part in the government of Gaza," he said.

The UK leader added that London "will make an assessment in September on how far the parties have met these steps", adding: "No one should have a veto over our decision."

A Israeli army infantry fighting vehicle (IFV) leaves a cloud of dust as it moves at a position along the border with the Gaza Strip and southern Israel

