

News in brief

◆ **The prime minister of Yemen's Huthis** was killed in an Israeli airstrike along with other officials earlier this week, the Iran-backed rebels announced yesterday. Ahmed Ghaleb Nasser Al-Rahawi, who was appointed last year, is the most senior official known to have been killed in a series of Israeli strikes during the war in Gaza. "We announce the martyrdom of the fighter Ahmed Ghaleb Nasser Al-Rahawi... along with several of his ministerial colleagues, as they were targeted by the treacherous Israeli criminal enemy," a Huthi statement said. "Others among their companions were injured with moderate to serious wounds and are receiving medical care since Thursday afternoon," it added. The Israeli military struck in the area of Sanaa, the Huthi-held capital, on Thursday. The Huthis, claiming solidarity with the Palestinians, have frequently fired missiles and drones at Israel during the Gaza war.



Yemen's Huthis say PM killed in Israeli strike

◆ **Nearly half a million people** have been displaced by flooding in eastern Pakistan after days of heavy rain swelled rivers, relief officials said yesterday, as they carried out a massive rescue operation. Three transboundary rivers that cut through Punjab province, which borders India, have swollen to exceptionally high levels, affecting more than 2,300 villages. Nabeel Javed, the head of the Punjab government's relief services, said 481,000 people stranded by the floods have been evacuated, along with 405,000 livestock. Overall, more than 1.5 million people have been affected by the flooding. "This is the biggest rescue operation in Punjab's history," Irfan Ali Khan, the head of the province's disaster management agency, added at a press conference.

◆ **Floods and landslides** triggered by record-breaking rain killed at least 11 people, including four children, in India's Jammu and Kashmir, officials said yesterday. An intense monsoon rainstorm in the Indian-administered territory since Tuesday has caused widespread chaos, with raging water smashing into bridges and swamping homes. A local disaster official told AFP that Ramban and Reasi districts were hit by heavy rainfall and landslides on Friday night, killing 11 people. One child aged five was trapped in the debris and still missing, he added. On Wednesday, a landslide slammed the pilgrimage route to the Hindu shrine of Vaishno Devi in Jammu, killing 41 people. India's Meteorological Department said the torrential rain had smashed records at two locations in the region. Jammu and Udhampur recorded their highest 24-hour rainfall on Wednesday, with 296 millimetres (11.6 inches) in Jammu, nine percent higher than the 1973 record, and 629.4 mm (24.8 inches) in Udhampur -- a staggering 84% surge over the 2019 mark.

Floods, landslides kill at least 11 in India's Jammu region



SPOTLIGHT

Ancient tombs unearthed in Iraq due to drought



Kurdish members of the Dohuk Antiquities Department work on a grave unearthed on the banks of Mosul Dam on an archaeological site in the Khanke sub-district of Dohuk Governorate

AFP | Khanke, Iraq

Archaeologists in drought-hit Iraq have discovered 40 ancient tombs after water levels in the country's largest reservoir declined, an antiquities official said yesterday. The tombs, believed to be over 2,300 years old, were unearthed at the edges of the Mosul Dam reservoir in the Khanke region of Duhok province in the country's north. "So far, we have discovered approximately 40 tombs," said Bekas Brefkany, the director of antiquities in Duhok, who is leading the archaeological work at the site. His team surveyed the area in 2023 but only spotted parts

of a few tombs. They were only able to work on the site when water levels dropped "to their lowest" this year, Brefkany said. In recent years, archaeologists have uncovered ruins dating back thousands of years in the same area, as a result of droughts that have plagued Iraq for five consecutive years. "The droughts have significant impact on many aspects, like agriculture and electricity. But, for us archaeologists... it allows us to do excavation work," Brefkany said. The newly discovered tombs are believed to date back to the Hellenistic or Hellenistic-Seleucid period, according to Brefkany.

Modi arrives in Tianjin ahead of summit hosted by China

North Korea's Kim Jong Un will be among some 26 world leaders



Indian PM, Zelensky discuss Ukraine conflict

AFP | New Delhi, India

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday he discussed restoring peace and stability in Ukraine with President Volodymyr Zelensky, ahead of a key meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in China. Modi, who arrived in the Chinese port city of Tianjin earlier on Saturday for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit, also said he extended India's "full support" during his telephone call with Zelensky. "We exchanged views on the ongoing conflict, its humanitarian aspect, and efforts to restore peace and sta-

bility," Modi said in a social media post. "India extends full support to all efforts in this direction," he added. Modi is set to meet Putin on Monday on the sidelines of the summit which would be attended by leaders from more than 20 countries. Zelensky, on his part, said he held "productive and important conversation" with Modi during which he reaffirmed Ukraine's readiness for a meeting with Putin. "India is ready to make the necessary efforts and to deliver the appropriate signal to Russia and other leaders during the meetings on the sidelines of the summit," he said in a post on X.

discussed "the need to strengthen multilateralism and reform international institutions, in particular the global financial architecture", according to a UN readout of the meeting.

Bilateral meetings

Multiple bilateral meetings are expected to be held on the sidelines of the summit. The Kremlin said on Friday that Putin will discuss the Ukraine conflict with Erdogan on Monday. Putin will also meet with his Iranian counterpart Pezeshkian to discuss Tehran's nuclear programme on Monday, a meeting that comes as Iran faces fresh Western pressure. Britain, France and Germany, known as the E3, triggered a "snapback" mechanism on Thursday to reinstate UN sanctions on Iran for failing to comply with commitments made in a 2015 deal over its nuclear programme.

● **Russian President Vladimir Putin is also due to arrive in Tianjin**

● **Summit will be attended by leaders from more than 20 countries**

● **United Nations chief Antonio Guterres met Xi yesterday**

AFP | Tianjin, China

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi touched down in the Chinese city of Tianjin yesterday evening, Indian TV networks showed, a day before a summit that will be attended by leaders from more than 20 countries. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation gathering will be held in the northern port city on Sunday and Monday, days before a massive military parade in nearby Beijing to mark 80 years since the end of World War II. North Korea's Kim Jong Un will be among some 26



world leaders slated to attend the parade, though Modi was not on a list of attendees for the parade published by Chinese state media on Thursday. Modi's visit -- his first to China since 2018 -- comes straight after a trip to Japan, which pledged to invest \$68 billion

in India. Xi began welcoming leaders including Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet and Egyptian Premier Moustafa Madbouly yesterday. Russian President Vladimir Putin is also due to arrive in Tianjin ahead of the summit. Other leaders including Iranian and Turkish presidents Masoud Pezeshkian and Recep Tayyip Erdogan will also attend the bloc's largest meeting since its founding in 2001. United Nations chief Antonio Guterres met Xi yesterday and



The SCO comprises China, India, Russia, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus. Another 16 countries are affiliated as observers or "dialogue partners".



China's Indian community accorded a very special welcome in Tianjin

