

News in brief

17 killed in Egypt motorway collision

Seventeen people were killed when a truck and a bus collided on a motorway in southern Egypt yesterday, the health ministry said. It said another 29 people were injured, and that 26 ambulances were sent to the scene of the accident on the road between the southern cities of Kharga and Asyut. The injured were taken to nearby hospitals. Egypt's roads are notoriously dangerous and often badly maintained, and drivers often break speed limits and other traffic rules. With a population of more than 105 million, Egypt is the Arab world's most populous country.



Indian authorities deployed hundreds of military personnel and cut off internet services to a northeastern region

Troops deployed to Indian state after protests kill six

The troops were sent to the state of Manipur, along the border with Myanmar, after a protest march by tribal groups turned violent on Wednesday. "Curfew has been imposed... situation is tense but is now under control," Awangbow Newmai, a Manipur government minister, said. He confirmed the death toll. The state governor yesterday issued "shoot at sight orders in extreme cases" to local authorities.



Suspect arrested in deadly Atlanta hospital shooting

Police have arrested a man suspected of shooting five people -- one of whom died -- at an Atlanta hospital on Wednesday, authorities in the southern US city said.

One person was killed and four were injured when Deion Patterson allegedly opened fire in a hospital waiting room just after midday (1700 GMT). Patterson then allegedly stole a truck that had been left running at a nearby gas station and fled. A manhunt went into the night before Patterson was apprehended outside the city in neighbouring Cobb County.



CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Star swallows planet in first glimpse of Earth's likely end



An artist's impression shows a star devouring one of its planets
AFP | London

Scientists said that they have observed a dying star swallowing a planet for the first time, offering a preview of Earth's expected fate in around five billion years.

But when the Sun finally does engulf Earth, it will cause only a "tiny perturbation" compared to this cosmic explosion, the US astronomers said.

Most planets are believed to meet their end when their host star runs out of energy, turning into a red giant that massively expands, devouring anything unlucky enough to be in its path.

Astronomers had previously seen the before-and-after effects of this process, but had never before caught a planet in the act of being consumed.

Kishalay De, a postdoc researcher at MIT in the United States and the lead author of the new study, said the accidental discovery unfolded like a "detective story".

"It all started about three years ago when I was looking at data from the Zwicky Transient Facility survey, which takes images of the sky every

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The team of researchers established that the swallowed planet was a gas giant with a similar mass to Jupiter, but was so close to its star that it completed an orbit in just one day

night," De told an online press conference.

He stumbled across a star that had suddenly increased in brightness by more than 100 times over a 10-day period.

The star is in the Milky Way galaxy, around 12,000 light years from Earth near the Aquila constellation, which resembles an eagle.

De had been searching for binary star systems, in which the larger star takes bites out of its companion, creating incredibly bright explosions called outbursts.

Russia blames US for Kremlin

Kremlin administration shifts focus from Kyiv to Washington

Washington denies accusation

AFP | Moscow

Moscow yesterday accused the US of masterminding a drone attack on the Kremlin, a charge denied by Washington, and said Ukrainian sabotage on Russian territory had reached "unprecedented momentum".

Moscow said President Vladimir Putin was working from the Kremlin the day after the attack, which it said was a Ukrainian attempt to kill him.

"Decisions on such attacks are not made in Kyiv, but in Washington," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

"Kyiv only does what it is told to do... Washington should understand clearly that we know this," he said.

Ukraine has denied responsibility, with President Volodymyr Zelensky saying "We do not at-



A "No Drone Zone" sign sits just off the Kremlin in central Moscow

tack Moscow or Putin."

The US also denied any involvement.

"Peskov is just lying there, pure and simple," John Kirby, spokesperson for the White House National Security Council, said on MSNBC.

Throughout its more than year-long offensive in Ukraine, Moscow has maintained that Kyiv is taking orders from the US -- accusing the West of leading a war against Russia by proxy.

'Unprecedented' sabotage

The Kremlin attack came as Russia prepares to mark one of

its main holidays of May 9 -- celebrating the Soviet victory over the Nazis -- with a traditional military parade on Red Square.

It came after five days of extraordinary apparent sabotage attacks, including trains derailed by explosions and massive fires in annexed Crimea.

Yesterday, Russia's southern Krasnodar and Rostov regions, both near Ukraine, reported drone strikes that caused fires.

But the Kremlin insisted the May 9 parade will go ahead, despite the attacks in border regions and in the heart of Russian power, though under "strengthened"

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KREMLIN SPOKESMAN DMITRY PESKOV

security.

Russian television yesterday showed Putin in the Kremlin for the first time since the drone attack.

The Russian leader does not plan "any address on this topic", according to his spokesman.

Moscow did however acknowledge that the country was facing an "unprecedented" wave of sabotage.

Russia has opened a terrorism probe into the Moscow attack.

Russia has not released official images of the attack. Unverified social media images showed a drone hitting the Kremlin Senate building.

Peskov said "two copper sheets" on the dome of the 18th-century building had been damaged by fire.

"They have been or will be re-

Five teachers among eight killed in Pakistan sectarian attack

AFP | Parachinar

Five teachers were among eight people killed in rural Pakistan yesterday, in an attack linked to sectarian tensions, police and government officials said.

Two gunmen entered a school in the remote border town of Teri Mangal in Kurram district -- less than a kilometre (mile) from the Afghan border -- as teachers gathered exam papers students had completed earlier in the day.

"They identified Shiite people and separated them before opening fire," Muhammad Imran, police chief for the district, told AFP.

Officials said five teachers and two labourers were gunned



Security personnel and officials at the site of sectarian violence in a school

down at the school -- their bodies taken to hospital before carried out in coffins to be buried the same day.

The shooting occurred hours

after a man from the local Sunni community died in hospital from injuries he sustained after being attacked in his car, said Amir Nawaz, a senior govern-

ment official in the area.

Sectarian tensions stretch back decades and have practically divided the district in two, said Akhtar Ali Shah, a former provincial police chief.

"There is Shiite population on one side and a Sunni population on the other. Even a minor incident can spark clashes, so caution is always needed," he said.

Shiite Muslims make up roughly 20 percent of Pakistan's population of more than 220 million, but they are a majority in Kurram district -- part of the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas that were merged with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in 2018, bringing it into the legal and administrative mainstream.

Fears 860,000 could flee as Sudan fighting leaves truce in tatters

AFP | Khartoum

Gunfire and explosions rocked Sudan's capital Khartoum for a 20th straight day yesterday, leaving the latest ceasefire effort in tatters as the UN warned of an exodus of 860,000 refugees.

As the latest ceasefire expired at midnight, the army said it was ready to abide by a new seven-day truce, but there was no word from its foes in the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

In Khartoum, witnesses reported loud explosions and exchanges of fire on the streets around dawn and clashes during the day in the city of five million people.

The foreign ministry accused the RSF of attacking the Indian embassy in Khartoum, the latest in a spate of such incidents which the diplomatic mission



Smoke billows during fighting in the Sudanese capital Khartoum

did not immediately confirm.

Deadly urban combat broke out on April 15 between Sudan's de facto leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, who commands the regular army, and his deputy turned rival Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who heads the RSF.

The fighting has killed about 700 people, most of them in

Khartoum and Darfur, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project.

The UN refugee agency said it was preparing for an outflow of 860,000 people from the north African country, adding \$445 million would be needed to support them just through October.

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RAOUF MAZOU, THE UNHCR'S ASSISTANT CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

new funding to respond to the mounting needs," said Raouf Mazou, the UNHCR's assistant chief of operations.

"The needs are vast, and the challenges are numerous. If the crisis continues, peace and stability across the region could be at stake."