

Indian forces kill 22 Maoist rebels, one soldier dead

Delhi(News Desk) At least 22 Maoist rebels were killed in the jungles of central India on Thursday in one of the deadliest clashes since the government ramped up efforts to crush the long-running insurgency. More than 10,000 people have been killed in the decades-long “Naxalite” rebellion, whose members say they are fighting for the rights of marginalised people in India’s resource-rich central regions. An Indian paramilitary soldier was also killed in one of two separate skirmishes that broke out in Chhattisgarh state, both of which carried on through the day, according to police. “22 Naxalites were killed in 2 separate operations of our security forces,” Amit Shah, Indian interior minister, wrote on social media platform X, using the common Indian name for the insurgent movement. Police said the soldier had been killed during a skirmish that broke out soon after dawn in Bijapur district, where 18 guerrillas had also been killed.

‘Dark universe detective’ telescope releases first data

PARIS: (News Desk) Europe’s Euclid space telescope, which is on a mission to shed light on the mysteries of dark matter and dark energy, released its first data on Wednesday with a little help from volunteers and artificial intelligence. The telescope launched in 2023, aiming to chart one third of the sky — encompassing 1.5 billion galaxies — to create what has been billed as humanity’s most accurate 3D map of the universe. Euclid, which is now hovering 1.5 million kilometres from Earth, has previously released images of a range of strange galaxies, colourful nebulas and shining stars. But the first release of astronomical data is “a new milestone for our dark universe detective,” the European Space Agency’s science director Carole Mundell told a press conference. The huge amount of data — which was accompanied by 27 scientific papers — still only covers less than 0.5 percent of the sky that Euclid will scan over its six-year mission. Snagging the ‘cosmic web’. Yet the early data already offers hints about the overall structure of the universe known as the “cosmic web,” project scientist Valeria Pettorino said. Between large empty spaces, there are massive clusters of galaxies connected by filaments of material which make up this web, she explained.

US strikes hit targets in Yemen

CAIRO: (News Desk) The United States struck targets in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa on Wednesday, Houthi-run Al Masirah TV reported, the latest in a wave of strikes carried out in retaliation for attacks by the Iran-aligned group on shipping in the Red Sea. Three residents said that the strikes had hit the Al-Jarraf district of Sanaa, close to the city’s airport. The strikes also hit an under-construction occasions hall in a residential neighbourhood in Al-Thawra directorate in Sanaa, injuring nine people, mostly women and children, Anees al-Asbahi, spokesperson for the Houthi-run health ministry said in a post on X. Al Masirah said the strikes also targeted Al-Suwaidia directorate in Yemen’s al-Bayda province in southern Yemen. The province is known to have military sites and weapons warehouses owned by the Houthis. The US began the current wave of strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen last Saturday, killing at least 31 people in the biggest such operation since President Donald Trump returned to the White House in January. Trump also threatened to hold Iran accountable for any future Houthi attacks, warning of severe consequences. Iran’s Revolutionary Guards said the Houthis were independent and took their own strategic and operational decisions. “Yemen will never back down — we defy the Americans, we defy the Zionists,” said a man shouting slogans to the Sanaa crowd, who chanted back: “We are the men of the Prophet.” Houthis also claimed they had attacked the USS Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier group twice within 24 hours. One US official said the strikes might continue for weeks. Washington has also ramped up sanctions pressure on Iran while trying to bring it to the negotiating table over its nuclear programme. Houthi media reported fresh US air strikes on Monday targeting rebel-held Hodeida on Yemen’s western coast. “A strike by the American aggression targeted the region of Bajel in the Hodeida governorate”, while others targeted a steel factory in the Al-Salif region in the same governorate, according to the Houthis’ Saba press agency. Al-Masirah also reported the strikes. Unfazed by the US strikes and threats, the Houthis have said they will escalate their attacks, including on Israel, in response to the US campaign. On Tuesday, the Houthis said they had fired a ballistic missile towards Israel and would expand their range of targets in that country in coming days in retaliation for renewed Israeli airstrikes in Gaza after weeks of relative calm. The Houthis have carried out over 100 attacks on shipping since Israel’s war with Hamas began in late 2023, saying they were acting in solidarity with Gaza’s Palestinians.



PROTESTERS clash with police during a rally in Jerusalem against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

US seeks to deport pro-Palestinian Georgetown University academic

Washington(News Desk) US President Donald Trump’s administration has detained an Indian man studying at Washington’s Georgetown University and is seeking to deport him after deeming him harmful to US foreign policy, the student’s lawyer said on Wednesday. The US Department of Homeland Security accused Badar Khan Suri of ties to Hamas and said he had spread the

group’s propaganda and anti-Semitism on social media, according to a statement it shared with Fox News. The DHS statement to Fox News, which was reposted by White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, did not cite evidence. It said Secretary of State Marco Rubio determined that Suri’s activities “rendered him deportable.” Suri — who is living in the US on a stu-

dent visa and is married to an American citizen — has been detained in Alexandria, Louisiana, and is awaiting a court date in immigration court, his lawyer said. Federal agents arrested him outside his home in Rosslyn, Virginia, on Monday night. The case comes as Trump seeks to deport foreigners who took part in pro-Palestinian protests against Israel’s offensive in Gaza following

an October 2023 Hamas attack. Trump’s measures have sparked an outcry from civil rights and immigrant advocacy groups who accuse his administration of unfairly targeting political critics. Suri is a postdoctoral fellow at Georgetown’s Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, which is part of the university’s School of Foreign Service.

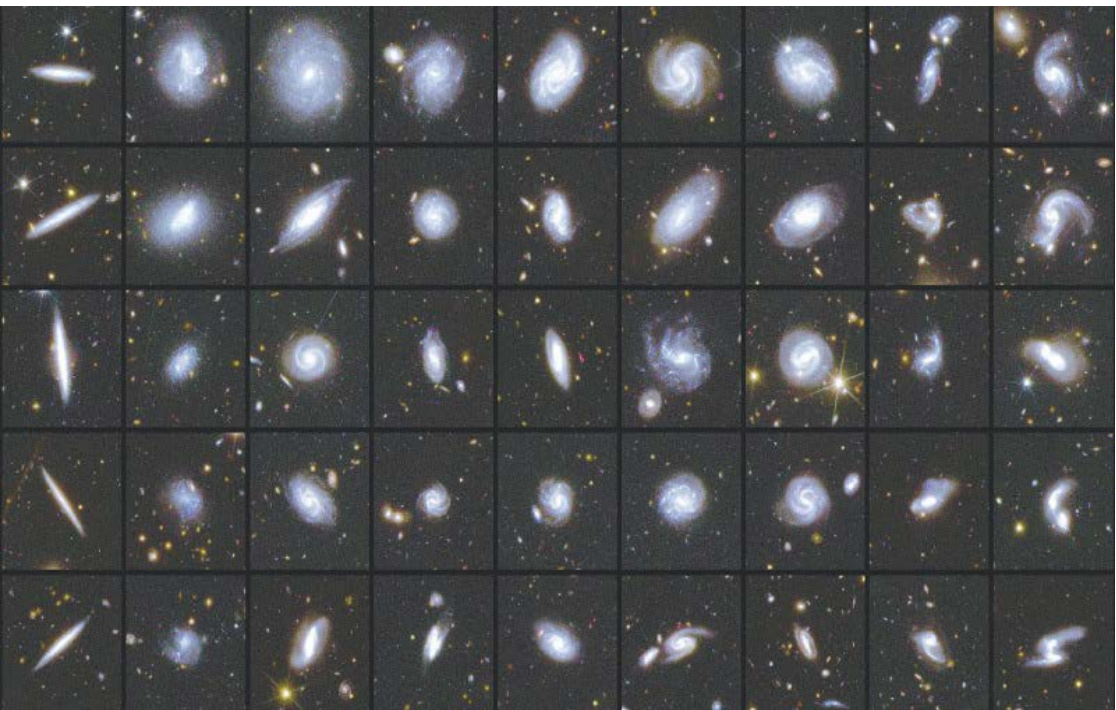
India detains hundreds of farmers as police bulldoze protest sites

Delhi(News Desk) Police in India’s northern state of Punjab detained hundreds of farmers and used bulldozers to tear down their temporary camps in a border area where they had protested for more than a year to demand better crop prices. The farmers had camped on the border with adjoining Haryana since last February, when security forces halted their march toward the cap-

ital, New Delhi, to press for legally-backed guarantees of more state support for crops. “We did not need to use any force because there was no resistance,” Nanak Singh, a senior police officer, told the ANI news agency about Wednesday night’s clearance action. “The farmers cooperated well and they sat in buses themselves.” The farmers had been given prior notice, he added. Televi-

sion images showed police using bulldozers to demolish tents and stages, while escorting farmers carrying personal items to vehicles. Media said among the hundreds detained were farmers’ leaders Sarwan Singh Pandher and Jagjit Singh Dallewal, the latter carried away in an ambulance as he had been on an indefinite protest fast for months. “On one hand the government is

negotiating with the farmer organisations and on the other hand it is arresting them,” Rakesh Tikait, a spokesperson for farmer group Bhartiya Kisan Union said on X. Punjab’s ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which authorised the eviction, said it stood by the farmers in their demands, but asked them to take up their grievances with the federal government.



EUROPEAN telescope Euclid’s new image of galaxies in different shapes during its first observations of deep space.

Israel killed 710 Palestinians in Gaza since Tuesday: health ministry

Gaza(News Desk) Khalil Al-Daqran, spokesperson for the Ministry of Health in the Gaza Strip, has been quoted by Al Jazeera Arabic as saying that 900 Palestinians have also been injured since Tuesday. Many of those wounded in the Israeli massacre died due to the impossibility of providing urgent

medical care due to the shortage of basic equipment and medicines, he added. About 70 per cent of those injured are children and women, and most of their injuries are serious, Al-Daqran said. Israeli military forbids movement into northern Gaza from the south. Israel’s Arabic language

spokesperson has issued a statement forbidding Palestinians from using Gaza’s Salah al-Din Street to travel between the north and south, announcing that the Israeli military has launched a “limited ground operation”, Al Jazeera reports. Spokesman Avichay Adraee stated that Palestinians wishing to trav-

el from the north to the south should only do so via al-Rashid Street along the coast and should avoid approaching Israeli soldiers for their safety. The military operation, according to Adraee, is aimed at expanding Israel’s buffer zone along the Netzarim Corridor, which divides the Gaza Strip from north to south.

Opposition to Israeli PM finds voice as conflict returns to Gaza

JERUSALEM: (News Desk) A coalition of Hamas-held Israeli prisoner’s families and protesters against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s moves against the judiciary and parts of the security establishment is coming together again after conflict returned this week to Gaza. The prime minister’s decision to resume the conflict and bombard the Palestinian enclave, with 59 prisoners — around 24 of whom are believed to be alive — still held in Gaza has added fresh fuel to the anger of protesters, who accuse the government of continuing the conflict for political reasons. Tens of thousands demonstrated on Tuesday night and more protests were taking place on Wednesday after Netanyahu announced at the weekend that he had lost confidence in Ronen Bar, the head of the Shin Bet domestic intelligence agency, and had decided to sack him.

Judge says Columbia protester must remain in US for now

NEW YORK: (News Desk) A US judge on Wednesday said Columbia University student Mahmoud Khalil must remain in the United States for now, but moved his challenge to the legality of his arrest over his participation in pro-Palestinian protests to a court in New Jersey. Manhattan-based US District Judge Jesse Furman denied a bid by the Trump administration to dismiss the case, but agreed with the Justice Department that he did not have jurisdiction because Khalil was held in New Jersey at the time his lawyers first challenged his arrest in New York. The case has become a flashpoint for Republican President Donald Trump’s pledge to deport some non-US citizens who took part in the protests against Israel’s military campaign in Gaza that swept American college campuses including Columbia after the October 2023 raid by Hamas. It will now be up to the New Jersey court to rule on Khalil’s bids to declare his arrest unconstitutional, and to be released on bail or moved. Khalil’s lawyers say his wife, an American citizen named Noor Abdallah, cannot visit him in Louisiana, where he is currently being held, because she is eight months pregnant with their first child. Khalil’s lawyer Samah Sisay said in a statement on Wednesday that the government moved him to Louisiana to avoid having the case heard in New York or New Jersey.

Toy trouble: Vietnam pulls dolls over South China Sea map

HANOI: (News Desk) Seething international tensions over the South China Sea have struck an unlikely victim in Vietnam: popular children’s dolls pulled from shops over a facial mark supposedly resembling Beijing’s claims in the flashpoint waterway. Small and fluffy, with large eyes and rabbit ears, Chinese-made “Baby Three dolls” became a must-have among Vietnamese kids and Generation Z earlier this year and had been flying off shelves across the country. That was until an online backlash began over the “Town rabbit V2” model of the doll — and a marking on its cheek that was said to resemble China’s “nine-dash line”. Beijing has long used the line to justify its claims over most of the resource-rich South China Sea, often to the displeasure of Vietnam, which also claims parts of the waterway. In response to the online outcry, the industry and trade ministry ordered an inspection of toys supposedly displaying the nine-dash line, which it warned were “affecting national security and territorial sovereignty”. Vendors in Hanoi said that most of the offending dolls had been pulled from shelves.

Victorious India team gets \$6.7m bonus for Champions Trophy win

Delhi(News Desk) The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) handed its team, which claimed the Champions Trophy title earlier this month, a \$6.72 million cash bonus on Thursday, an amount three times the winner’s purse for the 50-overs tournament. Rohit Sharma and his men beat New Zealand by four wickets in the March 9 final in Dubai to win their second successive global title, following their Twenty20 World Cup triumph last year. The team took home \$2.24m for the Champions Trophy win. The BCCI, the world’s richest cricket board, announced an additional 580m Indian rupees for the players, support staff and members of the selection committee for their latest success in an International Cricket Council (ICC) tournament. The Congress said her post did not reflect the party’s position and that Mohamed had been asked to delete the post. Sharma also found support from Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, as well as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), which said such comments could have an adverse effect on the team. India are unbeaten in this year’s Champions Trophy and are set to face Australia in the semi-finals on Tuesday. Sharma retired from Twenty20 international cricket minutes after leading the team to their World Cup triumph last year. “Winning back-to-back ICC titles is special and this reward recognises Team India’s dedication and excellence on the global stage,” BCCI president Roger Binny said in a statement. “The cash award is a recognition of the hard work that everyone puts in behind the scenes.” Board secretary Devajit Saikia said the players deserved the bonus for India’s recent domination of limited-overs cricket. “This victory has justified India’s top ranking in white-ball cricket, and we are sure the team will continue to excel in the years to come,” Saikia said.

Trump floats US ownership of Ukraine’s power plants

WASHINGTON: (News Desk) President Donald Trump has raised the possibility of the United States taking ownership of Ukrainian power plants, the White House said on Wednesday as efforts to end the war with Russia proceed. “American ownership of those plants would be the best protection for that infrastructure and support for Ukrainian energy infrastructure,” Karoline Leavitt told a briefing hours after Trump spoke with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelen-

sky. Trump hailed a “very good” call with Zelensky on Wednesday, a day after his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, agreed to temporarily halt attacks on Kyiv’s power plants. Trump said efforts to secure a full ceasefire remained “on track” despite the fact that his call with Putin failed to produce any broader peace deal. In phone call with the US president, Zelensky says Kyiv is ready to stop attacks on Russian power plants. As Kyiv and Moscow accused each other of

continuing attacks, Zelensky said after the “frank” call that Ukraine was ready to pause strikes on both Russian energy and civilian infrastructure. Trump said he spoke for around an hour with his Ukrainian counterpart, their first conversation since they had a blazing televised row in the Oval Office just over two weeks ago. “Much of the discussion was based on the call made yesterday with President Putin in order to align both Russia and Ukraine in terms of

their requests and needs,” Trump said on his Truth Social network. “We are very much on track.” The White House later said that during the call Trump had floated US “ownership” of Ukrainian power plants as it would be the “best protection” for them. The billionaire former real estate mogul has already pushed Kyiv into a deal to give the United States preferential access to its critical mineral resources. Trump also pledged to help Ukraine get more air

defence equipment from Europe, a statement from National Security Adviser Mike Waltz and Secretary of State Marco Rubio said. “Rejected” But while Ukraine has already agreed to a US plan for an unconditional 30-day ceasefire with Russia, Putin is still refusing. The Kremlin leader insisted during his call with Trump that a full ceasefire was only possible if the West halts its billions of dollars in military aid to Kyiv — Moscow’s long-standing demand. Putin also demanded

Ukraine must not be allowed to rearm, and that it must halt mandatory mobilisation. Despite both Ukraine and Russia saying they now backed a temporary truce on power plants, each accused the other of failing to adhere to the halt. Ukraine’s defence ministry said an overnight barrage of Russian missile and drones struck the war-battered nation, killing one person and damaging two hospitals. “Today Putin effectively rejected the proposal for a full ceasefire,” said Zelensky.