

Zelensky Says Final Agreement On F-16 Fighter Jets For Ukraine Soon

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Tuesday he received "a serious, powerful" offer from leaders of countries ready to provide Kyiv with F-16 fighter jets and is awaiting final agreements with key allies.

"Our partners know how many aircraft we need," Zelensky was quoted as saying in a statement on his website. "I have already received an understanding of the number from some of our European partners. It is a serious, powerful offer."

Kyiv now awaits a final agreement with its allies, including "a joint agreement with the United States," Zelensky said.

It is still unclear which Kyiv's allies are ready to send the jets to Ukraine.

US President Joe Biden told G7 leaders last month that Washington supported joint allied training programmes for Ukrainian pilots on F-16s. But US National Security adviser Jake Sullivan has said there was no final decision on Washington sending aircraft.

Zelensky has long appealed for the F-16 jets, saying their appearance with Ukrainian pilots would be a sure signal from the world that Russia's invasion would end in defeat.

Russia said on Tuesday that US-built F-16 fighter jets can "accommodate" nuclear weapons and warned that supplying Kyiv with them will escalate the conflict further.

Saudi Arabia's City Of The Future Gets \$5.6 Billion Investment

Saudi Arabia's Neom, an entirely new city being built on the Red Sea coast, has finalized a deal worth more than 21 billion riyals (\$5.6 billion) with a group of local investors, in the third investment to back the kingdom's most ambitious project to diversify its economy in the past month.

Four local firms will develop temporary housing and facilities for 95,000 people under a public-private partnership deal, according to a statement.

Neom, spearheaded by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, is the biggest project in his plan to diversify the country's oil-dependent economy. He wants the city to be a showpiece that will transform Saudi Arabia's economy and serve as a testbed for technologies that could revolutionize daily life.

Over the past few weeks it also raised 3 billion riyals from Riyad Bank to fund the development of an island-tourism resort called Sindalah and completed a \$8.4 billion from a group of international and regional banks to build one of the world's largest green hydrogen plants.

The four firms building the accommodation at Neom are Alfanar Global Development, Almutlaq Real Estate Investment Company, Nesma Holding Co., and Tamasuk. Nesma was one of a group of contractors that Neom's owner, the Public Investment Fund, invested in earlier this year as it looked to help boost the industry's ability to build vast new construction projects.

This City Has Replaced Hong Kong As Most Expensive For Expats

New York has leapfrogged Hong Kong as the world's most expensive city to live in as an expat, while skyrocketing rents saw Singapore crash into the top five, according to a new study.

Soaring inflation and rising accommodation costs were cited as reasons for New York topping ECA International's Cost of Living Rankings for 2023, while Geneva and London remained in third and fourth places.

Residential villas on the waterside of the Palm Jumeirah backdropped by residential skyscrapers beyond in the Dubai Marina district of Dubai.

Singapore climbed from 13th place last year to break into the top five for the first time. That move bucks a general trend among Asian cities of slipping down the rankings, partly attributed to lower rates of inflation relative to other regions.

The Southeast Asian financial hub's rise "was due largely to major increases in accommodation costs," said ECA International's Regional Director for Asia, Lee Quane.

"Science Fiction": Russia's Mercenary Arm Slams Moscow's Ukraine Strike Claim



KHERSON, UKRAINE: About 42,000 people were at risk from flooding in Russian and Ukrainian controlled areas along the Dnipro River after a dam collapsed, as the United Nations aid chief warned of "grave and far-reaching consequences."

Ukraine and Russia blame each other for the collapse of the massive dam on Tuesday, which sent floodwaters across a swathe of the war zone and forced thousands to flee. Ukraine said Russia committed a deliberate war crime in blowing up the Soviet-era Nova Kakhovka dam, which powered a hydroelectric station. The Kremlin blamed Ukraine, saying it was trying to distract from the launch of a major counteroffensive Moscow says is faltering.

UN aid chief Martin Griffiths told the Security Council that the dam breach "will have grave and far-reaching consequences for thousands of people in southern Ukraine on both

sides of the front line through the loss of homes, food, safe water and livelihoods."

"The sheer magnitude of the catastrophe will only become fully realized in the coming days," he said.

No deaths were initially reported, but U.S. spokesman John Kirby said the flooding had probably caused "many deaths."

Ukrainian officials estimated about 42,000 people were at risk from the flooding, which is expected to peak on Wednesday.

In Kherson city, about 60 kms (37 miles) downstream from the dam, water levels rose by 3.5 meters (11-1/2 feet) on Tuesday, forcing residents to slog through water up to their knees to evacuate, carrying plastic bags full of possessions and small pets in carriers. "Everything is submerged in water, all the furniture, the fridge, food, all flowers, everything is floating. I do not know what to do," Oskana, 53, said when asked

about her house.

Buses, trains and private vehicles were marshalled to carry people to safety in about 80 communities threatened by flooding.

In Kherson, cracks of incoming artillery sent people trying to flee running for cover on Tuesday. In the evening, Reuters reporters heard four incoming artillery blasts near a residential neighborhood where civilians were evacuating.

Residents in flooded Nova Kakhovka on the Russian-controlled bank of the Dnipro told Reuters that some had decided to stay despite being ordered out.

"They say they are ready to shoot without warning," said one man, Hlib, describing encounters with Russian troops.

The Kazkova Dibrova zoo on the Russian-held riverbank was completely flooded and all 300 animals were dead, a representative said via the zoo's Facebook account.

"More and more water is coming every hour. It's very dirty," Yevheniya, a woman in Nova Kakhovka, said by telephone.

Washington said it was uncertain who was responsible, but Deputy U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Robert Wood told reporters it would not make sense for Ukraine to destroy the dam and harm its own people.

The Geneva Conventions ban targeting dams in war because of the danger to civilians.

Rishi Sunak To Meet Biden At White House, Discuss AI, Ukraine War

WASHINGTON: Prime Minister Rishi Sunak flew in to Washington on Wednesday lobbying for Britain to take a lead role in regulating artificial intelligence, after a dire warning of the technology's existential dangers.

Mr Sunak will meet President Joe Biden on Thursday for a White House summit, pledging unstinting support for Ukraine after Russia was accused of blowing up a major dam to thwart an apparent counter-offensive. Any intentional attack on the Kakhovka dam would represent "the largest attack on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine since the start of the war, and just would demonstrate the new lows that we would have seen from Russian aggression," Mr Sunak told reporters aboard his plane from London.

But while the United States and Britain are inching closer on giving Ukraine air support, and on a robust approach to China, Mr Sunak faces a harder sell with Mr Biden about the UK's post-Brexit relevance elsewhere.

The need for a coordinated response on AI was underlined by Downing Street task force advisor Matt Clifford, who warned the chances of the fast-learning systems wiping out humanity within two years were "not zero."

Ukraine Satellite Pics Show Devastation Caused By Floods After Dam Collapse

The breach of a dam on the Dnipro River, a major strategic waterway in Ukraine, could lead to an environmental disaster for civilians in the region. On Tuesday, the dam in southern Ukraine collapsed, sending floods gushing toward surrounding towns and forcing hundreds of civilians to flee.

Satellite images showed that many towns and villages in the area between Nova Kakhovka and the Dnirovskaya Gulf, southwest of Kherson city on the Black Sea, were flooded.

The images show that the Nova Kakhovka dam and hydroelectric station have been largely destroyed. Houses and buildings are submerged in water, with many only their roofs showing. Water has also taken over parks, land, and infrastructure. Ukraine and Russia have accused each other of causing the collapse. Ukraine's military intelligence said that Russian forces blew up the dam, while Russia's defense ministry said that Ukrainian forces shelled the dam. "On the night of 6th June, the Kiev regime committed an unthinkable crime. Exploding the dam of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant, resulting in an uncontrolled discharge of water downstream on the Dnieper River. Settlements have been flooded," said Vasily Nebenzya Russia's UN Ambassador.

"Thousands of people are in



Interviewed on TalkTV, he said the world needed "to regulate them on a global scale, because it's not enough I think to regulate them nationally."

Mr Sunak wants a future global AI regulator to be based in London, according to sources, arguing Britain has the requisite expertise and size of tech sector.

But it is pushing uphill as the United States talks directly to the European Union about AI regulation, to build on a pledge by G7 leaders including Mr Sunak in Japan last month. And Mr Sunak, who meets US business leaders before Thursday's summit, has given up on securing a post-Brexit trade deal with the Mr Biden administration any time soon.

"Battlefield advantage" En route to Washington, the prime minister announced cumulative US investment of more than £14 billion (\$17 billion) into Britain -- although

need of evacuation, and that evacuation has already begun. Colossal damage has been dealt to the agriculture of the region and the ecosystem of the Dnieper Estuary. I want to emphasize that the leadership of the armed forces of Ukraine had openly declared their readiness to blow up this dam, to gain a military advantage as far back as last year," Mr Nevenzya added.

Meanwhile, Sergiy Kyslytsya, Ukraine's UN Ambassador countered by blaming the collapse of the dam as a "terrorist act against Ukrainian critical infrastructure". "This is a terrorist act against Ukrainian critical infrastructure that aims at causing as many civilian casualties and as much destruction as possible," Mr Kyslytsya said. "My delegation requested this urgent meeting of the Security Council. As this regime has detonated a bomb of mass environmental destruction, which has led to the largest manmade disaster in Europe in decades.

"Let me note that Russia has been controlling the dam and the entire Kakhovka HBP for more than a year. It is physically impossible to blow it up somehow from the outside by shelling. It was mined by the Russian occupiers and they blew it up," he added.

The United Nations Security Council met on Tuesday to discuss the collapse of the dam.

some of that has already been deployed. Underlining the US-UK military alliance at the heart of NATO, Mr Sunak said their economic relationship should also be deployed to defend Western democracy.

"By combining our vast economic resources and expertise, we will grow our economies, create jobs and keep our people safe long into the future," said the prime minister, a wealthy former banker who studied in the United States and retains a property in California. "Just as interoperability between our militaries has given us a battlefield advantage over our adversaries, greater economic interoperability will give us a crucial edge in the decades ahead." Mr Sunak is pushing for US relief to UK carmakers, via greater access to critical minerals used in electric batteries, after Mr Biden's Inflation Reduction Act

"Silent Barker": US Spy Satellite To Counter Russia, China Threats

The US Space Force is set to launch a constellation of satellites this summer to track Chinese or Russian space vehicles that can potentially disable or damage orbiting objects, the latest step in the burgeoning extra-terrestrial contest between superpowers.

Dubbed "Silent Barker," the network would be the first of its kind to complement ground-based sensors and low-earth orbit satellites, according to the Space Force and analysts. The satellites will be placed about 22,000 miles (35,400 kilometers) above the Earth and at the same speed it rotates, known as geosynchronous orbit.

"This capability enables indications and warnings of threats" against high-value US systems and will "provide capabilities to search, detect, and track objects from space for timely threat detection," the Space Force, which is developing the satellites with the National Reconnaissance Office, said in a statement.

The Silent Barker constellation is scheduled for launch after July on board an Atlas V booster operated by the Boeing Co.-Lockheed Martin Corp.'s United Launch Alliance, the NRO said in a statement. The launch date will be announced 30 days in advance on Facebook and Twitter - quite a change for an agency that's been around for decades but whose existence wasn't declassified until 1992. Silent Barker is a response to efforts by China and Russia to develop systems capable of being launched into orbit and taking out other satellites.

offered vast subsidies to US companies.

On the NATO front, Mr Sunak has been talking up Defence Secretary Ben Wallace as the Western alliance seeks a new secretary-general at a summit in Lithuania next month.

"I have absolutely zero doubt that the war in Ukraine will be a prime issue of discussion" in Thursday's summit, US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said.

"And the Brits have been right there -- literally at the fore in terms of helping Ukraine," he added.

"I have no doubt that they'll talk about ways in which we can work together going forward."

No home run On Wednesday, Mr Sunak will lay a wreath at Arlington National Cemetery outside Washington before heading to Capitol Hill for talks with leaders in Congress.

He will then watch the Washington Nationals play the Arizona Diamondbacks for the second annual "UK-US Friendship Day", marking 238 years of diplomatic relations. But Mr Sunak, a keen cricketer, has ducked the opportunity to throw the ceremonial first pitch at the baseball game -- sparing his blushes if the throw goes astray in front of tens of thousands.

Prince Harry Tells Court: "I Couldn't Trust Anybody Due To Phone Hacking"



Prince Harry has accused Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) Ltd -- publisher of The Mirror, Sunday Mirror and the Sunday People

tabloids -- of illegal information gathering, including phone hacking. He has become the first royal in more than 100 years to give evidence in court. At London High Court, the Duke of Sussex accused tabloid newspapers of hacking his voice-mails when he was a teenager.

According to a BBC report, he said he made him feel he "couldn't trust anybody".

He said that he had been the victim of relentless and distressing media intrusion "most of my life up until this day" and attacked negative portrayals of him as the "spare to the heir". The duke said that stories he believed originated from hacking not only caused security concerns but damaged his relationships.

He accused the press of

repeatedly trying to break up his relationships, saying the "twisted objective" continues today.

"How much more blood will stain their typing fingers before someone can put a stop to this madness," the younger son of King Charles III added in a witness statement.

Prince Harry called some media houses "incredibly invasive".

Prince Harry on Tuesday said he had suffered a lifelong "press invasion" and accused some media of having blood on their hands, as he became the first royal in more than 100 years to give evidence in court. Harry, 38, said he had been the victim of relentless and distressing media intrusion "most of my life up until this day" and attacked negative portrayals of him as the "spare to the heir".

"How much more blood will stain their typing fingers before someone can put a stop

Ukraine Dam Destruction A "Consequence" Of Russian Invasion: UN Chief

UNITED NATIONS: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Tuesday that the partial destruction of the Kakhovka dam in Ukraine was "another devastating consequence" of Russia's invasion of its neighbor.

An attack on the major Russian-held dam in southern Ukraine unleashed a torrent of water that flooded a small city, inundated two dozen villages and sparked the evacuation of 17,000 people.

"Today's tragedy is yet another example of the horrific price of war on people," Guterres told reporters at UN headquarters in New York.

"The floodgates of suffering have been overflowing for more than a year. That must stop," he added.

Moscow and Kyiv traded blame for ripping a gaping hole in the dam in what Kyiv said was an attempt by Russia to hamper Ukraine's long-awaited offensive.

Guterres said the UN "has no access to independent information on the circumstances that led to the destruction" of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant dam.

"But one thing is clear," he added. "This is another devastating consequence of the Russian invasion of Ukraine."

Guterres, who since the start of Russia's invasion has condemned Moscow for violating the UN charter, said attacks against civilians and



critical civilian infrastructure "must stop."

"We have all seen the tragic images coming out today of the monumental humanitarian, economic and ecological catastrophe in the Kherson region of Ukraine," the secretary-general said.

"The United Nations and humanitarian partners are rushing support in coordination with the government of Ukraine -- including drinking water and water purification tablets and other critical assistance," he added.

Speaking at a Security Council meeting devoted to the dam blast, humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths said the destruction of the dam was a "massive blow" to food production in the region, as well as carried significant risks of mines and explosives being shifted by water to areas previously deemed safe.

The destruction of the dam "will have grave and far-reaching consequences for thousands of people in southern Ukraine -- on both sides of the front line -- through the loss of homes, food, safe water and livelihoods."

Russian Ambassador to the UN Vasily Nebenzya said the dam blast was caused by a "deliberate sabotage undertaken by Kyiv."

"It is the criminal Kyiv regime and the Western patrons obstinately pumping it full of weapons who bear full responsibility for the unfolding tragedy," Nebenzya said.

Ukraine's envoy Sergiy Kyslytsya said Moscow was "blaming the victim for your own crimes."

"The explosion of the dam of the Kakhovka (hydroelectric power plant) is an act of ecological and technological terrorism," he told the Council.

US Court Refuses To Throw Out Crypto Scam Case Against Kim Kardashian



Kim Kardashian failed to persuade a judge to throw out a lawsuit in which she's accused of scamming investors in a cryptocurrency called EthereumMax by falsely hyping the digital tokens. Floyd Mayweather Jr. fared better, with the judge finding that his public statements about the growth prospects for the EMAX token were mostly harmless. But investors who claim they paid "inflated prices" for the blockchain-based digital assets will get a chance to revise and refile their allegations that the ex-boxing champion failed to disclose he was being paid to promote EMAX. US District Judge Michael Fitzgerald in Los Angeles on Tuesday rejected arguments by Kardashian's lawyers that he should dismiss false advertising claims over her social media posts in which she said EMAX tokens would be accepted at certain night clubs as payment for table reservations. The judge said the investors adequately alleged the posts were "literally false." He also found that a Kardashian post suggesting that EMAX tokens were scarce was misleading.

Fitzgerald had dismissed the claims in November, saying "there is just a lot that is wrong with this case." In Tuesday's 84-page ruling, he noted that

lawyers for the investors "artfully cured" some deficiencies in their previous version of the complaint, but warned that he's giving them just one more opportunity to address remaining shortcomings in some claims or they will be dismissed for good. In addition to targeting celebrity promoters, investors sued several EMAX co-founders and consultants. A lawyer for Kardashian didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. Mayweather can't be sued for stating his "belief" about the future growth of EMAX at a 2021 Bitcoin conference, because that amounts to "quintessential nonactionable puffery," the judge said. The US Securities and Exchange Commission

announced in October that Kardashian had agreed to pay \$1.26 million to settle allegations that she broke US rules by touting EMAX tokens.

The SEC said Kardashian didn't disclose that she was paid \$250,000 to post on her Instagram account about the tokens.

Kardashian settled without admitting or denying the SEC allegations. And she agreed to refrain from touting any additional digital assets for three years.

The law requires anyone who touts a security, such as a stock or even some types of cryptocurrencies, to not only say they are getting paid to do so, but also to disclose the amount, the source, and the nature of those payments.

Dam Destroyed In The Dead Of Night Upstages Ukraine's Counteroffensive

The 24 hours before Tuesday's flooding of the Dnipro River basin were already dramatic, as Ukraine appeared on the cusp of a counteroffensive that many in Kyiv see as their best chance to defeat Russia's invasion.

US President Joe Biden, just hours earlier, gave a fingers-crossed sign in response to a question on the Ukrainian campaign's chances.

Russia, meanwhile, claimed without evidence it fended off a large armored attack in the country's eastern Donbas region. But the Kremlin had to dismiss as fake a putative address to the nation by President Vladimir Putin, in which he allegedly called on Russians to rally against invasion by Ukraine in the wake of strikes across the border in recent days.

Nothing, however, compared to what appeared to be an horrific escalation of the war early on Tuesday, as up to 18 million cubic meters of water poured through a massive breach in the Kakhovka dam, swamping communities along the banks of the Dnipro river.

Ukraine accused Russia, which occupies the dam, of blowing it up, while Moscow said shelling by Kyiv's troops was the cause. Intelligence agencies for Ukraine's allies, including the US, are still assessing who is responsible, but are leaning toward Russia, a Western official said on Tuesday.

The motive for Russia to have blown up the dam also was still being assessed, but appears to have been to make it more difficult for Ukraine to conduct a river crossing downstream, while at the same time creating a significant humanitarian challenge for Kyiv to deal with, the official said. "Sooner or later this would have happened, and it happened at 2:50 a.m. this morning," Ihor Zhovkva, deputy head of the office of Ukraine's president said in a phone interview. "It will have no impact on military operations, and we will make the counteroffensive."

Zhovkva called on "European and US allies to clearly say that full security for Ukraine can only happen with fully fledged EU and NATO membership."

In fact, the impact of the dam breach may be bigger off than on the battlefield, as the unfolding humanitarian and ecological disaster refocuses the attention of Ukraine's international backers, after more than 15 months of war and tens of billions of dollars spent on the nation's military and financial support.