

Acts of Union come into force, uniting England and Scotland to form the Kingdom of Great Britain

Publication of "Species Plantarum" by Carl Linnaeus, the formal start date of plant taxonomy adopted by the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature



"Penny Black," the world's first adhesive postage stamp is issued by the United Kingdom

Nationwide demonstrations and strikes demanding an eight-hour workday begin in the US

Cost of Iran war equals aid for more than 87m people: UN aid chief

AFP | Nairobi, Kenya

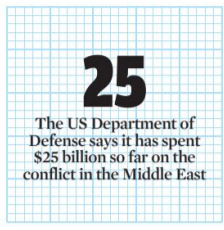
The Pentagon's spending on its war with Iran could cover the UN's entire 2026 aid appeal and bring lifesaving support to more than 87 million people, its aid chief told AFP Thursday.

The US Department of Defense says it has spent \$25 billion so far on the conflict in the Middle East, while the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) sought \$23 billion for this year's aid appeal.

"I know what we could do with 25 billion," OCHA head Tom Fletcher told AFP. "We have a direct comparison of what we can do with that money."

The OCHA appeal target is "less than one percent of what the world is spending on guns and arms and defence in the coming year," he added.

Fletcher said the war, and the resulting closure of the Strait



The US Department of Defense says it has spent \$25 billion so far on the conflict in the Middle East of Hormuz, has doubled fuel prices and driven up food costs by 20 percent. "That makes our job much harder. But it also pushes more people into hunger and starvation," he said, referring specifically to Somalia, from where he spoke to AFP. "We reckon the numbers who are hungry right now are double what it was six months ago." Worldwide, Fletcher said there were



more than 300 million people in critical need of support, but he had been forced to prioritise 87 million due to tightening budgets, as the United States and others curb donations.

Without funding, "hundreds of millions of lives over several years" will be lost, he said.

Somalia has been particularly hard-hit by the shortages from the war as well as drought and flooding.

"It's a poisonous cocktail of factors," he said, adding it had been a "very rough visit".

With its Somalia programme only 13 percent funded, the UN has had to shut down health centres at a time when half a million children face severe acute malnutrition, he said.

Doctors at one clinic told him patients were seven times more likely to die due to the extra walking distances.

"It's just devastating," said Fletcher.

First direct US-Venezuela flight in years arrives in Caracas



A ribbon in the colors of the Venezuelan flag is cut following the arrival of an American Eagle, operating a regional flight for American Airlines, aircraft at Simon Bolivar International Airport in La Guaira, La Guaira state, Venezuela

AFP | Caracas, Venezuela

The first direct flight between the United States and Venezuela in seven years landed Thursday in Caracas, a new sign of a thaw after Washington deposed leftist leader Nicolas Maduro.

The American Airlines flight took off at 10:26 am (14:26 GMT) from Miami en route

to Caracas, where the United States has resumed diplomatic relations after years of tension. Envoy Air flight 3599 landed less than three hours later.

The flight's manifest included senior officials from Washington set to fly to Caracas to meet the government, a prospect unthinkable just months ago.



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Earthquakes are inevitable, but the devastation they cause does not have to be. With intention & forethought, we can build safer towns & cities, however hard the ground shakes. Let us honour the victims by investing in disaster resilience.

@antonio gutierrez

02



It's never too late to start something new, but it's always too late to wait for 'the perfect time.' Make today the day you take one small step forward. Anon.

@DrTedros

03



Europe needs bold, innovative companies that can compete on the global stage.

We have the talent. Now we must create the environment for Europe's next champions.

Today, we are publishing our draft merger guidelines to better support companies to thrive, scale, and innovate.

And boost Europe's competitiveness

@vonderleyen

04



Let us #PrayTogether that everyone, from large producers to small consumers, be committed to avoid wasting food, and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food.

@Pontifex

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stance)

Israel may soon have to 'act again' against Iran

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Israel's defence minister on Thursday said his country may soon have to "act again" against Iran, to ensure

the Islamic republic "does not once again become a threat to Israel".

"US President Donald Trump, in coordination with (Israeli) Prime Minister Benjamin Ne-

tanyahu, is leading the efforts to achieve the campaign's objectives, to ensure that Iran does not once again become a threat to Israel, the United States and the free world in the

future," Israel Katz said during a military ceremony, according to a statement from his office.

"We support this effort and are providing the necessary

support, but it is possible that we may soon have to act again to ensure these objectives are met," he added.

Lebanon slams Israel

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun condemned the "continuing Israeli violations" in south Lebanon, saying they were occurring "despite the ceasefire, as do demolitions of homes and places of worship, while the number of killed and

wounded rises day after day".

"Pressure must be exerted on Israel to ensure it respects international laws and conventions and ceases targeting civilians, paramedics, civil defence, and humanitarian health and relief organisations," he added.

'Major energy crisis'

The world is facing a "major energy and economic challenge" as oil prices have soared in the wake of the war in the Middle East, said IEA chief Fatih Birol at the same

Paris meeting.

With the world faced with "the biggest energy crisis in history", oil prices were "putting a lot of pressure in many countries", he added.

Florida to execute man who has spent nearly 50 years on Death Row

Miami, United States

A Florida man who has spent nearly 50 years on Death Row is to be executed by lethal injection on Thursday for the murder of a 13-year-old girl.

James Hitchcock, 70, was convicted of the 1976 murder of Cynthia Driggers, his step-niece, and sentenced to death

in 1977. Hitchcock, who maintains his innocence, is to be executed at 6:00 pm (22:00 GMT) at the Florida state prison in Raiford.

Hitchcock's nearly five decades on Death Row make him among the inmates who have spent the most time in prison awaiting execution in the United States.

Myanmar moves Aung San Suu Kyi to house arrest

Yangon, Myanmar

Myanmar's junta chief-turned-president yesterday ordered deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi to be moved to house arrest, five years after sweeping her into detention in a 2021 coup.

A statement from the office of Min Aung Hlaing said he had "commuted the remaining sentence" of the 80-year-old Suu Kyi "to be served at the designated residence".

The office also shared a photograph seeming to show Suu Kyi sitting flanked by two men -- one in a khaki shirt and another in a police uniform.

It was not immediately clear where she will be moved, but a senior source from her dissolved National League for Democracy

(NLD) party told AFP she would likely be kept sequestered at an address in the capital Naypyidaw.

"We do not know where it is exactly," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity for security reasons.

A Naypyidaw police source said security forces had been ordered to "enforce restrictions" in areas of the capital on Thursday night.

"The 'designated residence' mentioned in the order will remain under their direct custody and control," they said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The official statement also did not make clear how many years remain in Suu Kyi's sentence.



China FM says Taiwan is 'biggest risk point' in US-China ties

Beijing, China

China's foreign minister Wang Yi on Thursday urged the United States to maintain "stability" between the two countries and help promote "world peace", but said Taiwan posed the "biggest risk, point" to their relationship.

In a call with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Wang said that Beijing and Washington should "safeguard the hard-won stability" in China-US relations, China's foreign ministry said.

The talks between the two -- which also included discussions of the situation in the Middle East -- came two weeks before US President Donald Trump is expected to visit China for a high-stakes meeting with counterpart Xi Jinping.

In 2025, Washington and Beijing clashed over trade and tariffs until a truce was declared in October, when Trump and Xi met in South Korea.