

News in brief

◆ **The UK has revoked** a Russian diplomat's accreditation in a tit-for-tat move after Moscow expelled a British envoy last month, the foreign ministry in London said yesterday. "We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked and unjustified decision to expel a British diplomat last month and its baseless accusations against our staff," a spokesperson said. A senior official "made it clear" to the Russian ambassador, who was summoned by the ministry, that the UK "will not stand" for the intimidation of British embassy staff. "It is deeply disappointing that Russia continually seeks to disrupt the work of the UK's diplomatic missions and deter our support for Ukraine," the spokesperson added. "Any further action taken by Russia will be considered an escalation and responded to accordingly."



UK revokes Russian diplomat's papers in tit-for-tat move

◆ **China's top general probe to 'remove obstacles' in military: state media**

a sweeping drive to root out graft at all levels of the Chinese Communist Party and state since President Xi Jinping came to power more than a decade ago. The ministry did not say why the probe into Zhang and Liu had been opened. However, the PLA Daily -- the Chinese military's mouthpiece -- said they were "corrupt elements" in a front-page editorial published yesterday.

◆ **Russia has confirmed** that a new round of talks with Ukraine and the United States in Abu Dhabi on ending the four-year war will start Wednesday, after they were postponed from this weekend. Moscow blamed a scheduling issue for the delay, a day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also said the negotiations would take place in the UAE capital on Wednesday and Thursday. "They were indeed originally planned for this past Sunday. But additional coordination of the schedules of the three parties was needed," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters "Now, on Wednesday-Thursday, the second round will indeed take place. It will be held in Abu Dhabi. We can confirm that," he added. The talks will take place less than two weeks before the fourth anniversary of Moscow launching its full-scale offensive against Ukraine.

Kremlin confirms Ukraine war talks this week in Abu Dhabi



SPOTLIGHT

Airline sector falling behind on clean fuel switch: IATA

AFP | Singapore, Singapore

The airline industry's green transition is stalling as high costs and limited output choke the rollout of cleaner jet fuel, the head of the industry's trade association said on Monday.



A Republic of Singapore Air Force F-16C fighter jet and AH-64D Apache attack helicopter participate during a media preview aerial display

"Unfortunately, we're not making sufficient progress on sustainable aviation fuel," International Air Transport Association (IATA) director-general Willie Walsh told the Changi Aviation Summit in Singapore.

Sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) is billed as a key tool to curb carbon emissions from planes, and took centre stage at the conference ahead of the Singapore Airshow.

"SAF output reached 1.9 million tonnes in 2025, representing just 0.6 percent of total jet fuel consumption, and this is a downward revision from our earlier estimates," Walsh said.

Mandatory rules requiring airlines to include a certain percentage of SAF in their fuel mix "have pushed prices higher" and "discouraged voluntary demand," he added.

European Union rules, for example, require carriers to include two percent of SAF in their fuel mix starting this year, rising to six percent in 2030 and 20 percent in 2035, before soaring to 70 percent from 2050.

Walsh said that SAF prices exceeded fossil-based jet fuel

"by a factor of more than two, while the evidence shows that in markets with mandates, that factor can increase to four times".

To bolster take-up, Singapore's civil aviation authority signed an agreement on Monday with nine companies for a "voluntary trial" to buy SAF through a central procurement firm set up by the regulator.

The trial, which includes Google, state investment firm Temasek and Singapore Airlines, will support Singapore's aim to increasingly favour green jet fuel.

From October 1, Singapore will require all flights departing from the city-state to use one percent of the more expensive SAF in their fuel mix, and will collect a levy to finance that, likely raising ticket prices.

Singapore said it will increase the ratio of SAF in the blend to three to five percent by 2030 in line with targets set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Rafah crossing makes limited reopening after two-year war

Border crossing with Egypt is Gaza's only gateway to the outside world

◆ **Israeli forces seized control of the crossing in May 2024**

◆ **150 Palestinians were allowed into Egypt on Monday**

◆ **Another 50 Palestinians would be allowed to enter Gaza**

AFP | Rafah, Palestinian Territories



Ambulances wait on the Egyptian side of the Rafah border crossing with the Gaza Strip in northeastern Egypt

aid groups.

"The Rafah crossing has now opened to the movement of residents, for both entry and exit," the Israeli official said.

Three Egyptian border officials told AFP that 150 Palestinians would be allowed into Egypt on Monday, composed of 50 patients each accompanied by two companions.

Another 50 Palestinians would be allowed to enter Gaza, the officials said.

Khaled Mogawer, governor of North Sinai -- which includes the Egyptian side of Rafah -- said on Monday that 50 Palestinian patients and 84 companions were expected to enter Egypt on Monday.

Israeli state broadcaster Kan reported that the crossing would be open for about six hours daily, while AlQahera News said the Egyptian side would remain open "round the clock".

'I will hug my mother'

Abdul Rahim Mohamed, 30, said he was eagerly awaiting the return to Gaza of his mother who had left for cancer treatment in Egypt in March 2024.

"Two days ago, she was informed she could return to Gaza and told me on the phone, 'Come and wait for me at the crossing,'" he told AFP.

"I am very happy today... I will hug my mother," he added.

Rafah lies in an area held by Israeli forces following their withdrawal behind a so-called "Yellow Line" under the terms of a US-brokered ceasefire in effect since October 10.

Israeli troops still control more than half of Gaza, while the rest remains under Hamas authority. The EU's top diplomat Kaja Kallas said the opening of the crossing "marks a concrete and positive step in the peace plan" for the territory, where humanitarian conditions remain dire after two years of war.

Despite the ceasefire, violence continued over the weekend. Gaza's civil defence agency, which operates as a rescue force under Hamas authority, said Israeli bombings killed 32 people including children on Saturday.

Israel's military said the strikes were retaliation for an incident on Friday in which eight Palestinian fighters exited a tunnel in Rafah, which it said was a truce violation.

The Rafah crossing had been briefly opened in early 2025 but has been largely shut since it was seized by Israeli forces.

No aid entry

The director of Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital, Mohammed Abu Salmiya, said there were 20,000 patients in the territory in urgent need of treatment, including 4,500 children.

AlQahera News, citing Egypt's health ministry, reported that 150 hospitals and 300 ambulances had been prepared to receive Palestinian patients.

It said 12,000 doctors and 30 rapid deployment teams had been allocated to work with those transferred.

COGAT, the Israeli defence ministry body coordinating Palestinian civilian affairs, made no mention of allowing in a long-hoped-for surge of aid for Gaza.

Israel had previously tied Rafah's reopening to the return of the remains of Ran Gvili, the last Israeli hostage held in the territory. His body was recovered and buried last week, prompting Israel to announce the phased reopening.



The Rafah Border Crossing is the only crossing point between the Gaza Strip and Egypt that does not directly involve Israel – making it Gaza's sole non-Israeli border exit and entry point for people and goods

Trump says US talking deal with 'highest people' in Cuba

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump said Sunday that Washington was negotiating with Havana's leadership to strike a deal, days after he threatened Cuba's reeling economy with a virtual oil blockade.

Trump's second administration has ratcheted up pressure on the communist-run island nation since the January 3 US ouster of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro, whose country was a close ally of Havana and a crucial source for oil exports to Cuba.

"Cuba is a failing nation. It has



Tourists traveling in vintage American cars drive past vehicles waiting in line to refuel at a gas station in Havana

been for a long time, but now it doesn't have Venezuela to prop it up," Trump told reporters at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

"So we're talking to the people from Cuba, the highest people in Cuba, to see what happens. I think we're going to make a

deal with Cuba," he added, giving no indication what such a deal would look like.

Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not confirm the US president's remarks in a statement released on its website on Sunday, but took the opportunity to once again reject that the island is a "threat to the security of the United States."

It specifically asserted that Cuba does not "host any foreign military or intelligence bases", but added that it is willing to "maintain a respectful and reciprocal dialogue," with the United States.