

1497

Italian navigator Amerigo Vespucci leaves for his first voyage to the New World (disputed)

1775

Second Continental Congress convenes in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, issuing paper currency for the first time



1801

First Barbary War: The Barbary pirates of Tripoli declare war on the United States of America (first US foreign war)

1857

Indian Mutiny against rule by the British East India Company begins with the revolt of the Sepoy soldiers in Meerut

# Israel to release two Gaza flotilla activists ahead of deportation

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Israel will release two foreign activists taken off a Gaza-bound flotilla from detention on Saturday before handing them to immigration authorities ahead of their deportation, the rights group representing them said.

Saif Abu Keshek, a Spanish national of Palestinian origin, and Brazilian Thiago Avila were among dozens of activists aboard a flotilla intercepted by the Israeli navy in international waters off the coast of Greece on April 30.

The pair were seized by Israeli forces and brought to Israel for questioning, while the others were taken to the Greek island of Crete and released.

"Today, the Shabak Israeli intelligence agency informed Adalah's legal team that Global



Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg (R) and Spanish activist Saif Abu Keshek (C) talk to members of the media as a flotilla carrying humanitarian aid and activists prepare to leave for Gaza, in Barcelona

Sumud Flotilla (GSF) activists and leaders Thiago Avila and Saif Abukeshk would be released from Israeli detention today, Saturday," the rights group

Adalah said in a statement. "They will be handed to Israel's immigration authorities later today and kept in custody pending their deportation," it

added.

Adalah said it was closely monitoring developments "to make sure that the release from detention goes ahead, followed by their deportation from Israel in the coming days".

Spain, Brazil and the United Nations had all called for their swift release.

Avila and Abu Keshek "have been held unlawfully by Israel for over a week after being taken into Israeli detention", Adalah said on Saturday.

"Throughout their detention, they were held in total isolation under punitive conditions despite the purely civilian nature of their mission," it added.

Both Avila and Abu Keshek had been on hunger strike while in detention, Adalah said, adding that Abu Keshek had "escalated to refusing water on the evening of May 5". Israeli authorities

have previously rejected allegations of abuse but have filed no charges against the men.

Adalah previously said authorities had accused the pair of "assisting the enemy during wartime" and "membership in and providing services to a terrorist organisation".

Israel says both men were affiliated with the Popular Conference for Palestinians Abroad (PCPA), a group accused by Washington of "clandestinely acting on behalf of" Palestinian militant group Hamas.

The flotilla had set sail from France, Spain and Italy with the aim of breaking Israel's blockade of Gaza and delivering humanitarian aid to the war-ravaged Palestinian territory.

Israel controls all entry points into Gaza, which has been under an Israeli blockade since 2007.

# No signs of talks in sight

Iran keeps US waiting for response on peace plan

● Trump had said on Friday that he was expecting Iran's response to Washington's latest proposal for a deal

● US Secretary of State Marco Rubio reiterated on Friday that it was "unacceptable" for Tehran to control the key oil route.

● Washington has sent Iran, via Pakistani mediators, a proposal to extend the truce

● Iran's foreign ministry spokesman said Friday that the proposal was still "under review"

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Iran questioned the seriousness of American diplomacy yesterday in the wake of renewed naval clashes in the Gulf, while keeping Washington waiting for a response to its latest negotiating position.

US President Donald Trump



This satellite image obtained from Copernicus Sentinel Data appears to show an oil slick spreading off the coast of Kharg Island, a key oil export terminal for Iran.

## Oil slick spreading off the coast of Kharg Island

Satellite images have shown that an oil slick is spreading off the coast of Iran's Kharg Island, a key oil export terminal for the Islamic republic.

It was not immediately clear what had caused the apparent spill, which was off the is-

land's west coast and appeared to cover more than 20 square miles (52 square kilometres), according to global monitor Orbital EOS. A UK-based non-governmental organisation, the Conflict and Environment Observatory, told AFP

that by Saturday the slick was "much reduced", and may have been caused by leaking oil infrastructure.

Kharg Island is at the heart of Iran's oil export industry, and lies in the Gulf far north of the narrow Strait of Hormuz.

had said on Friday that he was expecting Iran's response to Washington's latest proposal for a deal to extend a fragile truce and launch peace talks -- "supposedly tonight".

But if Iran did send Pakistani mediators a response, there was no public sign of it, and Tehran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called into question the reliability of the US leadership in a call with his Turkish counterpart.

"The recent escalation of tensions by American forces in the Gulf and their numerous actions in violating the ceasefire have added to suspicions about the motivation and seriousness of the American side in the path of diplomacy," he said, according to an Iranian account of the call published by the ISNA news agency.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio reiterated on Friday that it was "unacceptable" for Tehran to control the key oil route.

Washington has sent Iran, via Pakistani mediators, a proposal to extend the truce in the Gulf to allow for talks on a final settlement of the conflict launched 10 weeks ago with US-Israeli strikes on Iran.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said Friday that the proposal was still "under review", according to ISNA.

# Hezbollah says targeted troops in northern Israel with drone

AFP | Beirut, Lebanon

Hezbollah on Saturday said it targeted troops in northern Israel with a drone in response

to repeated Israeli attacks on Lebanon despite an ongoing truce between the two sides.

In a statement, the group said that it "targeted a gathering of

Israeli enemy army soldiers near Misgav An" with a drone in response to "the Israeli enemy's violation of the ceasefire".

Hezbollah also announced at-

tacks on Israeli military targets inside Lebanon using rockets and drones. The Israeli military in a statement reported "several" explosive drone launches by

Hezbollah into Israeli territory, saying one army reservist was severely wounded and two others moderately injured in one of the attacks.



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TWEETS

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Welcome the announcement of a ceasefire & the planned large-scale exchange of prisoners between Ukraine & Russia. I commend the efforts of the USA in facilitating this agreement & fully support its implementation. I reiterate my call for an immediate, full, unconditional & lasting ceasefire, as a first step toward a just, sustainable & comprehensive peace, in line with the @UN Charter & international law.

@antonio gutierrez

02



My deepest gratitude to you Prime Minister @sanchezcastejon for #Spain's solidarity, leadership and commitment to provide critical care and support to the passengers of the MV Hondius cruise ship in the Canary Islands. @WHO will continue working closely with your government to ensure a strong, coordinated and effective #hantavirus response. Together, we protect health and save lives.

@DrTedros

03



Congratulations to @magyarpeterMP on becoming Prime Minister of Hungary. This Europe Day, our hearts are in Budapest. The hope and promise of renewal is a powerful signal in these challenging times. We have important work ahead of us. For Hungary and for Europe, we are moving forward together.

@vonderleyen

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