

Mayflower Pilgrims come ashore in Plymouth Bay, traditionally thought to be at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts

French King Louis XVI goes on trial, accused of high treason and crimes against the state



Iconic painting the "Mona Lisa" is recovered two years after it was stolen from the Louvre Museum in Paris

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is established by resolution 57(I) of the UN General Assembly

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Two years ago, we pledged to build a Global Alliance to counter migrant smuggling. And in this time, the EU has overhauled its migration policy

@vonderleyen

02



When we protect the most vulnerable, refuse to look away, speak up for institutions that speak up for us, we keep human rights alive. Our rights should never take second place to profit or power. Let's unite to protect them, for the dignity & freedom of all.

@antonioгутеррес

03



I am deeply saddened by the news of the renewed conflict along the border between #Thailand and #Cambodia, which has claimed civilian lives and forced thousands of people to flee their homes.

@Pontifex

04



We continue to communicate with all our partners on a daily basis, virtually 24/7, to identify doable and realistic steps to bring the war to an end. Everything must be reliable and dignified for Ukraine.

@ZelenskyyUa

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

Gone in 30 seconds!

Louvre thieves escaped with 30 seconds to spare

● Only one of two security cameras was working near the site

● Police were initially sent to the wrong place

● Robbers left only 30 seconds before police and private security guards arrived

AFP | Paris, France

The thieves who stole priceless crown jewels from the Louvre in October escaped with just 30 seconds to spare due to avoidable security failures at the Paris museum, a damning investigation revealed yesterday.

The probe, ordered by the culture ministry after the embarrassing daylight heist, revealed that only one of two security cameras was working near the site where the thieves broke in on the morning of Sunday October 19.

Agents in the security headquarters also did not have enough screens to follow the images in real-time, while a lack of coordination meant police were initially sent to the wrong place once the alarm



Visitors, seen from the Sully wing, queuing in the Cour Napoleon by the pyramid designed by Chinese-US architect Ieoh Ming Pei, to enter the Louvre Museum in Paris

was raised, the report unveiled at the French Senate's Culture Commission, stated.

"It highlights an overall failure of the museum, as well as its supervisory authority, to address security issues," the head of the commission, Laurent Lafon, said at the start of a hearing.

One of the most startling revelations was that the robbers left only 30 seconds before police and private security guards arrived on the scene.

"Give or take 30 seconds, the Securitas (private security) guards or the police officers in a car could have prevented the thieves from escaping," the head of the investigation, Noel Corbin, told senators.

He said that measures such as a modern security camera system, more resistant glass in the door cut open with angle grinders, or better internal coordination could have prevented the loss of the crown jewels -- worth an estimated \$102 million -- which have still not been found.

Security risks were highlighted in several reports commissioned by management of the Louvre, including a 2019 audit by the jewellery company Van Cleef & Arpels.

The evaluation said the balcony used by the thieves was a weak point in security and could be reached by using an extendable ladder -- exactly what transpired in the heist.

Joy in Egypt after beloved spicy staple koshary makes UNESCO list

AFP | Cairo, Egypt

UNESCO recognised yesterday Egypt's favourite daily dish as intangible cultural heritage, to the delight of Egyptians digging into the spicy staple at every corner.

"We grew up eating koshary in plastic bags. It's a heritage we grew up with," Emad Yassin told AFP during the lunch rush of a popular downtown Cairo joint, Koshary Abou Tarek.

The budget-friendly, carb-loaded bowl of noodles, rice, lentils and fried onions doused in a blazing hot sauce is a culinary staple in the Arab world's most populous country.

Irina, a Spanish tourist who had stopped in for a bite, said the UNESCO nod was a good call.

"It's a really good decision because when you're eating koshary, you can feel and taste the country here, all the mixes of flavours," she said.

Behind her and in corner shops across the country,



mountains of noodles, rice and lentils are piled high in adjoining pots. With choreographed precision, vendors ladle scoop, after scoop, after scoop at lightning speed.

They pour tomato sauce all over, sprinkle fried onions, then leave it to each customer to season to taste: blazing hot sauce, tangy garlic-vinegar drizzle.

The humble meal has been passed down in many forms -- varying by region -- for centuries. It was first recorded, by British writer Richard Burton in 1866, as a winter breakfast in the eastern city of Suez.

At that point only lentils and rice, it wasn't until the mid-20th century that noodles were

added to even further "cut costs after the price of rice skyrocketed", food archaeologist and archaeobotanist Mennat-Allah El Dorry told AFP.



Koshary became Egypt's national comfort food by accident -- it's a blend of Italian pasta, Indian rice and lentils, and Levantine fried onions, all mixed together by street vendors in the late 1800s. The British Army in Egypt also contributed to its popularity, as soldiers often mixed leftover ingredients into one bowl for a quick meal.

'Shopaholic' author Sophie Kinsella dies aged 55

AFP | London, United Kingdom

British author Sophie Kinsella, who penned the popular "Shopaholic" series, has died aged 55 after being diagnosed with brain cancer, her family announced yesterday.

Madeleine Sophie Wickham, who wrote under the pen name Sophie Kinsella, revealed last year that she was receiving chemotherapy and radiotherapy for glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer.

"We are heartbroken to announce the passing this morning of our beloved Sophie," her family said on Instagram.

"Sophie counted herself truly blessed -- to have such wonderful family and friends, and to have had the extraordinary success of her writing career," her family said.

She published over 30 books which have sold some 50 million copies and have been translated into over 40 languages, according to a biography on her website.

Her lighthearted writing style won fans for its humour and relatability, giving an insight into the romances, careers and financial concerns of young women.

Kinsella preferred the terms "romantic comedy" or "wit lit" over "chick lit" to describe her work.

The first two books from her "Shopaholic" series were adapted for the 2009 romantic comedy film "Confessions



Writer Sophie Kinsella

of a Shopaholic" starring Isla Fisher.

They tell the stories of Becky Bloomwood, a financial journalist who is a serial shopper and hopeless when it comes to her own finances.

"I was really excited, it felt like a new voice," Kinsella said of penning the series in 2000.

"I thought it was my side project. But having discovered comedy, it's addictive," she told The Times newspaper in 2024.

Daughter of Venezuela's Machado picks up Nobel peace prize in her absence



Ana Corina Sosa (R), daughter of Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, receives the Nobel Peace Prize for her mother from the Chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee Jorgen Watne Frydnes (L) at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony at Oslo City Hall in Oslo, Norway.

AFP | Oslo, Norway

Venezuela's opposition leader Maria Corina Machado yesterday urged her compatriots to fight for freedom against "state terrorism", as she said she was coming out of hiding to travel to Norway after being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in her absence.

Machado, who won the Nobel for challenging President Nicolas Maduro's grip on power, has not been seen in public for months after threats to her life.

Her daughter accepted the prize on her behalf in the Norwegian capital, Oslo, and delivered her blistering acceptance speech, slamming the country's leader for crimes against the Venezuelan people.

"What we Venezuelans can offer the world is the lesson forged through this long and difficult journey: that to have democracy, we must be willing to fight for freedom," said Ana Corina Sosa Machado.

In a call with the chair of the Nobel Committee, Jorgen Watne Frydnes, published just before the ceremony, Machado said she was "very sad and very sorry" that she would not make it in time but was on her way to Oslo.

Frydnes, for his part, urged Maduro to accept his 2024 election defeat and resign.

"Lay the foundation for a peaceful transition to democracy. Because that is the will of the Venezuelan people," he added in a speech, to applause.