

News in brief

Japan's Kishida calls for constructive relations in talks with China's Li



Li Keqiang yesterday he hoped the two countries could strive toward building a “constructive and stable” relationship, Japan's foreign ministry said yesterday. Li also referred to the importance of Japan-China relations during a brief exchange of views between the two, held on the sidelines of a meeting of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plus China, Japan and South Korea in Cambodia, the ministry said in a statement. In a speech at the ASEAN plus 3 meeting, Kishida reiterated Japan's view that North Korea's recent ballistic missile launches, including one that flew over Japan, were a clear and serious threat to the international community, and unacceptable. He also called for cooperation among the countries in achieving a complete dismantling of North Korea's ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction.

Japanese Prime Minister told Chinese Premier

A British man who worked at the United Kingdom's embassy in Berlin has pleaded guilty to eight offences under the Official Secrets Act relating to passing on information useful to Russia. David Ballantyne Smith, who lived in Potsdam, Germany and was employed as a security guard at the embassy in Berlin, was extradited to the UK from Germany following his arrest by German police in August 2021. The 58-year-old pleaded guilty to eight offences on November 4. Judge Mark Wall lifted restrictions on reporting Smith's pleas on Friday after the prosecution indicated it will not seek a trial on a ninth charge to which Smith pleaded not guilty.

UK embassy guard in Berlin pleads guilty to spying for Russia



Cuba agrees to accept US deportation flights as border crossings rise



the pandemic to accept US deportation flights carrying Cubans caught at the US-Mexico border, three US officials told Reuters, giving US authorities a new but limited tool to deter record numbers of Cuban border crossers. US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has about a dozen Cubans in custody who failed an initial screening for asylum at the border, the officials said, requesting anonymity to discuss the diplomatic situation. The US agency is waiting until it has enough Cuban deportees to fill a plane before sending one to Havana, they said. A third source familiar with the matter said there was not a new formal agreement for regular deportation flights but that Cuba had agreed to accept occasional groups of deportees. Regular deportations of Cubans were halted during the COVID-19 pandemic, though the United States continued to deport a small number of Cubans via commercial airlines, a separate US official said.

Cuba has agreed for the first time since

Donald Trump will announce next week that he is taking another shot at the presidency with a White House run in 2024, his longtime advisor Jason Miller said Friday. The divisive former president, who will be 78 when the next election is held, has been hinting at another presidential run while campaigning for Republican candidates ahead of this week's midterm elections, and has said he will make a “very big announcement” on Tuesday. “President Trump is going to announce on Tuesday that he is running for president,” Miller told former Trump aide Steve Bannon on his popular “War Room” podcast. “It's gonna be a very professional, very buttoned-up announcement,” he added.

Trump to announce 2024 presidential bid Tuesday, top aide confirms



Detained oiltanker in Equatorial Guinea to return to Nigeria

attempting to illegally load crude before leaving its territorial waters is on its way back to the country, a Nigerian Navy spokesman told Reuters. At the request of Nigerian authorities, Equatorial Guinea detained the Heroic Idun, a vessel capable of carrying 2 million barrels of oil, on Aug. 17 for sailing without an identifying flag, fleeing from the Nigerian navy and sailing in Equatorial Guinean waters without prior authorization.

An oil supertanker accused by Nigerian authorities of

Iran indicts 11 over Basij agent's death

Iran basketball team skips anthem

Reuters | Tehran

Iran's hardline judiciary has indicted 11 people over the killing of a Basij security force member during unrest, state media reported yesterday, as authorities sought to quell nine weeks of protests.

News agency IRNA said some of the 10 men and one woman were charged with “corruption on earth”, which can be punishable by death, for crimes that led to the death of a member of the pro-government Basij volunteer militia on Nov. 3 in Karaj near Tehran.

The protests ignited by Mahsa Amini's death in the custody of morality police after her arrest for “inappropriate attire” mark one of the boldest challenges to



A police motorcycle burns during a protest

the Islamic Republic since the 1979 revolution. Woman have played a prominent role, waving and burning headscarves enforced under strict dress codes.

Videos posted on social media purportedly showed the national basketball team refraining from singing the national anthem during a match with China

been detained, it said.

The widely-followed 1500tastvir Twitter account posted a video it said was from overnight protests in the Caspian Sea coastal town of Babolsar, showing petrol bombs thrown at a Basij base which is covered by pro-government banners.

The Iranian government has condemned the protests as riots fomented by adversaries including the United States, and has accused armed separatist groups of perpetrating violence.

UN experts have urged Iran “to stop using the death penalty as a tool to squash protests”, noting that charges carrying the death penalty were brought against eight people in Tehran on Oct. 29.

Iranians from all walks of life have taken part in protests, with opponents of the government heartened by what they have seen as a series of shows of support from Iranian athletes.

At least 21 killed in Egypt minibus crash

AP | Cairo

A bus fell into a canal in Egypt's Nile River Delta region yesterday killing at least 21 people, the country's Health Ministry said.

Dr. Sherif Makeen, a health ministry official, said three children were among the dead.

In a statement, the ministry said the accident happened in Dakahlia province, around 100 kilometers (62 miles) northeast of the capital of Cairo. Other injured passengers were transported to a local hospital.

The head of police investigations in the province, Brig. Mohamed Abdel Hadi, said the driver may have lost control of the vehicle's steering wheel.



A view of the accident site

Democrats await Nevada election result that could seal their US Senate majority



A worker prepares to scan ballots cast during the 2022 US midterm election in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Reuters | Washington

Democrats yesterday were one seat away from majority control of the U.S. Senate next year, as vote-counting in deeply-divided Nevada continued following Tuesday's midterm elections and campaigning kicked off for a Dec. 6 runoff in Georgia.

If incumbent Democratic Senator Catherine Cortez Masto manages to fend off Republican Adam Laxalt in Nevada, her party would then control 50 of the Senate's 100 seats.

A Democratic victory in Georgia next month would then give the party outright majority control of a 51-49 Senate. A Democratic loss in Georgia and a win in Nevada would still put Democrats in charge of a 50-50 Senate, as Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris can break tie votes.

The Senate currently is split 50-50 between Democrats and Republicans. The newly-elected Senate will be sworn in on Jan. 3.

US President Biden slips up on name of ASEAN summit host Cambodia

Reuters | Phnom Penh

US President Joe Biden yesterday referred to Cambodia, which is hosting an international summit led by Southeast Asian leaders, as Colombia.

“Now that we're back together here in Cambodia, I look forward to building even stronger progress than we've already made, and I want to thank the Prime Minister of Colombia for his leadership as ASEAN chair and for hosting all of us,” Biden said while meeting his counterparts in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Phnom Penh.

He was referring to Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia, who is currently chairing the 10-member regional bloc.

The president, who is on a whirlwind trip with stops at the COP27 climate summit in Egypt, ASEAN in Phnom Penh and the G20 summit in Indonesia, made



US President Joe Biden is greeted upon his arrival at the Phnom Penh International Airport

a similar slip-up while speaking to reporters at the White House recently.

The Democratic president, who turns 80 on Nov. 20, this week said he intends to run for re-election in 2024, with a final decision likely early next year.

Biden's occasional verbal stumbles and tendency to meander off script during live appearances have been seized on by his Republican critics as proof he's too old for the job. Supporters call that ageism and say the president, who overcame a childhood stutter, has been ad-libbing in public speeches for decades.

COVID-19: Countries worst affected

| | Country | Total cases | Total deaths | Global tally |
|----|-----------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 | USA | 99,890,506 | 1,100,121 | |
| 2 | India | 44,665,643 | 530,528 | 640,074,923 |
| 3 | France | 37,094,441 | 157,704 | |
| 4 | Germany | 36,033,394 | 155,588 | Deaths |
| 5 | Brazil | 34,949,418 | 688,705 | |
| 6 | S. Korea | 26,145,764 | 29,617 | Recovered: |
| 7 | UK | 23,954,192 | 195,530 | |
| 8 | Italy | 23,823,192 | 179,985 | New cases |
| 9 | Japan | 23,109,816 | 47,512 | |
| 10 | Russia | 21,494,588 | 390,964 | +190,780 |
| 11 | Turkey | 16,976,729 | 101,327 | |
| 12 | Spain | 13,551,539 | 115,357 | New deaths |
| 13 | Vietnam | 11,508,447 | 43,166 | |
| 14 | Australia | 10,479,214 | 15,870 | +385 |

Figures as of closing