

1322

Robert the Bruce of Scotland defeats King Edward II of England at Byland, forcing Edward to accept Scotland's independence

1884

George Eastman patents paper-strip photographic film

1933

Nazi Germany announces its withdrawal from the League of Nations



1982

US President Reagan proclaims a war on drugs

Abraham Accords will ease Palestinian issue



Upon the arrival of Israeli and U.S. support

be setting up two new working groups at the meeting, US officials said, with one group focusing on religious coexistence and the other on water and energy issues. "These working groups will seek to realise that promise to link up to important US partners in the region and find new ways to solve old problems together, in Israel and the UAE but also across the region," one of the US officials said.



The leaders of Israel, the UAE and Bahrain signed the Abraham Accords at the White House last September. The following month, Israel and Sudan announced they would normalize relations, and Morocco established diplomatic ties with Israel in December, after US President Joe Biden defeated his predecessor Donald Trump in the election.

precisely how Washington aimed to use the normalisation agreements as a tool to make progress on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. "Biden administration has started out with a clear commitment to the two-state solution. We continue on with that commitment. We seek to advance as we can, when we can, as best we can," one of the US officials said. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, a nationalist atop a cross-partisan coalition, opposes Palestinian statehood. The three countries will also

Tension over Beirut blast probe nudges Lebanon into new crisis

Reuters | Beirut



A view shows the grain silo that was damaged during last year's Beirut port blast, during sunset in Beirut, Lebanon,

Growing tension over a judicial probe into last year's Beirut port blast threatens to push Lebanon into yet another political crisis, testing Prime Minister Najib Mikati's new government as it struggles to dig the country out of economic collapse. More than a year since the explosion ripped through Beirut, killing more than 200 people, Judge Tarek Bitar's efforts to hold senior officials to account for suspected negligence are facing mounting political pushback. Ministers aligned with the politicians Bitar has sought to question were expected to press the demand for his removal at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, after the subject disrupted a stormy session on Tuesday. But the session was postponed until a framework as to how best to tackle the row over Bitar would be agreed, an official source told Reuters. It is a big distraction that risks undermining Mikati, who took office last month after more than a year of squabbling over cabinet seats as Lebanon sank deeper into one of the world's worst economic depressions, analysts say. The row has also underlined the major sway of the heavily armed, Iran-backed

U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price on Tuesday accused Hezbollah of threatening Lebanon's judiciary, and being more concerned with its own and Iran's interests than with those of the Lebanese people.

Shi'ite group Hezbollah, which has called for Bitar to be replaced, accusing him of conducting a politicised probe picking on certain people. The most senior politician Bitar has sought to question, former finance minister Ali Hassan Khalil, said all options

were open for political escalation when asked during an interview on Tuesday whether some ministers could quit. Khalil is the right-hand man of Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri - the most senior Shi'ite in the state - and a close Hezbollah ally. Khalil told al-Mayadeen TV the path of the probe threatened to push Lebanon "towards civil strife". Mikati has previously said Lebanon could not bear the loss of a second judge after the first investigator was removed in February when a court accepted a complaint questioning his impartiality.

What is necessary" after attacks by Syrian Kurdish YPG militia

guided missile attack on Sunday launched by the YPG, which Turkey says is a terrorist group. On Monday, shells believed to have been fired from a YPG-controlled area further east exploded in two areas of Karkamis in southern Turkey, Ankara said. Speaking at a news conference

in Ankara, Cavusoglu said the United States and Russia had not kept their promises to ensure the YPG withdraw from the Syrian border area. "In the latest attacks... both Russia and the US have a responsibility as they did not keep their promises," Cavusoglu said. "Since



Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu

they are not keeping their promises, we will do what is necessary for our security," he said. Turkey controls swathes of territory in north Syria with allied Syrian rebels, after carrying out three separate cross-border offensive into the region against Islamic State and the YPG. Ankara

has been infuriated by the U.S. support for the YPG and demands its NATO ally ceases its backing. In separate agreements with Moscow and Washington in 2019, Turkey halted its offensive in northeast Syria in exchange for the withdrawal of YPG militants 30 km south of its border.

Life for murdering cobra



Sooraj Kumar and his wife Uthra

covered at her parents' house, the 28-year-old husband obtained a cobra from a snake handler and threw it at his sleeping wife. Its poisonous bite killed the 25-year-old woman. Sooraj pleaded not guilty but police said his phone records showed he was in touch with snake handlers and had watched snake videos on the internet before the killing in March last year in Kollam in the southern state of Kerala. Sooraj stayed in the room with Uthra after the cobra bit her and went about his morning routine

the next day when alerted by the woman's mother, said prosecutors. "The mode of execution and the diabolic plan of the accused to murder Uthra, his wife who was bedridden, makes it (the case) fall into the category of rarest of rare," said the public prosecutor, who had sought the death penalty. Snake handler Vava Suresh said it was possible that Sooraj had "inflicted pain on the reptile to provoke it to bite", the Hindustan Times newspaper quoted him as saying. Uthra was from an affluent family but her husband, a bank worker, was not well off. The dead woman's parents became suspicious after Sooraj tried to take control of her property after the death. Their marriage involved a big dowry including a new car and 500,000 rupees (around \$20,000). According to media reports, Sooraj's family was charged with conspiracy after some of Uthra's gold was found buried near Sooraj's home days after the murder.

Countries call for urgent action on biodiversity with 'Kunming Declaration'

Declaration urges countries to take rapid action on species loss

China's willingness to protect 30% of its land still in question

Declaration marred by wrangling over language

Reuters | Kunming, China



Chinese President Xi Jinping delivers a speech addressing the COP15 biodiversity summit in Kunming

More than 100 countries pledged yesterday to put the protection of habitats at the heart of their government decision-making but they stopped short of committing to specific targets to curb mass extinctions. Chinese Environment Minister Huang Runqiu told delegates to a UN Biodiversity Conference in the city of Kunming that the declaration they adopted was a document of political will not a binding international agreement.

The Kunming Declaration calls for "urgent and integrated action" to reflect biodiversity considerations in all sectors of the global economy but crucial issues - like funding conservation in poorer countries and committing to biodiversity-friendly supply chains - have been left to discuss later. With plant and animal species loss now at the fastest rate in 10 million years, politicians, scientists and experts have been trying to lay the groundwork for a new pact on saving bio-

diversity. In a previous agreement signed in Aichi, Japan, in 2010, governments agreed on 20 targets to try to slow biodiversity loss and protect habitats by 2020, but none of those targets was met. At the heart of efforts to save nature is a call by the United Nations for countries to protect and conserve 30% of their territory by 2030 - a target known as '30 by 30,' which the conference acknowledged though it was not clear to what extent host China backed it. A first draft of the declaration, released in August, included political slogans associated with Chinese President Xi Jinping, which caused tension and underlined what some critics said was China's inexperience in shepherding international agreements through to conclusion. After feedback from more than 40 countries, Xi's slogan "lucid waters and lush mountains" was removed from the text, though the Chinese concept of "ecological civilisation" was retained.



TOP
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TWEETS

01



Canada is welcoming 40,000 refugees and we're urging others to step up their support to safely resettle refugees, too. More on Canada's response and the steps we're taking to support people in Afghanistan here: <http://bit.ly/3DyRv65> @JustinTrudeau

02



Educating girls doesn't just improve lives, it transforms societies. The UK is a leading supporter of girls' education and I will always campaign to give every girl around the world 12 years of quality education. @BorisJohnson

03



Many refugees and displaced people flee from unspeakable violence. This can leave deep scars - not only on their bodies but also on their soul and minds. This is why it is vital that they receive professional psychosocial care. @FilippoGrandi

04



Over a million species of plants & animals are at risk of extinction. We must urgently reverse this destruction & build the world we want. #COP15 is our chance to call a ceasefire in our war on nature. @antonioGutierrez

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