

588 BC

Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon lays siege to Jerusalem under Zedekiah's reign. The siege lasts until July 23, 586 BC

1559

Elizabeth I crowned Queen of England in Westminster Abbey



1902

Abdulaziz Ibn Saud leads 40 men over the walls of Riyadh and takes the city, marking the beginning of the Third Saudi State

2001

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# North Korea fires two missiles

Third suspected missile in just over a week, warns of strong tensions push



A test launch of a hypersonic missile on January 11 in North Korea

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**It could fit in their ongoing winter exercises, while sending a message to the United States through action following the state media statement**

**KIM DONG-YUP, A FORMER SOUTH KOREA NAVY OFFICER**

launch.

In contrast to yesterday's tests, each of those earlier launches involved a single missile which were fired from Jagang Province, neighbouring North Pyongan.

Kim Dong-yup, a former South Korea Navy officer who teaches at Seoul's Kyungnam University, said North Korea could have fired previously deployed SRBMs such as the KN-23 or KN-24.

"It could fit in their ongoing winter exercises, while sending a message to the United States through action following the state media statement," he said.

North Korea defended the missile tests as its legitimate right to



**North Korea insists its military modernisation and missile tests are necessary for self-defence**

olutions that ban North Korea's missile and nuclear weapons development.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the United States had made clear it had no hostile intent toward North Korea and was willing to engage in talks without preconditions, but that the tests were "profoundly destabilising."

The North Korean foreign ministry said that while Washington may talk of diplomacy and dialogue, its actions show "it is still engrossed in its policy for isolating and stifling" North Korea.

"The US is intentionally escalating the situation even with the activation of independent sanctions, not content with referring the DPRK's just activity to the UN Security Council," the statement said.

Kim Dong-yup pointed to remarks last year by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that Pyongyang will approach Washington "on the principle of answering force with toughness, and good faith in kind."

"A eye for eye, tooth for a tooth," Kim Dong-yup said. "North Korea might be saying they'll go their own way without being intimidated."

self-defence and said the United States was intentionally escalating the situation by imposing new sanctions, state media reported earlier yesterday, citing the foreign ministry.

North Korea's recent development of a "new-type weapon" was just part of its efforts to modernize its national defence capability, and did not target any specific country or harm the security of neighbouring countries, the foreign ministry said in a statement on the KCNA state news agency.

The statement warned of an unspecified "stronger and certain reaction" if the United States adopts a confrontational stance.

**'Profoundly destabilising'**

The administration of US President Joe Biden on Wednesday imposed its first sanctions over North Korea's weapons programs following a series of North Korean missile launches.

It also called on the United Nations Security Council to take action against several North Korean individuals and entities accused of violating security council res-

## Elephants dying from eating plastic waste in Sri Lankan dump



Wild elephants scavenge for food at an open landfill in Pallakkadu village in Sri Lanka

Reuters | Colombo

Conservationists and veterinarians are warning that plastic waste in an open landfill in eastern Sri Lanka is killing elephants in the region, after two more were found dead over the weekend.

Around 20 elephants have died over the last eight years after consuming plastic trash in the dump in Pallakkadu village in Ampara district, about 210 kilometers (130 miles) east of the capital, Colombo.

Examinations of the dead animals showed they had swallowed large amounts of nondegradable plastic that is found in the garbage dump, wildlife veterinarian Nihal Pushpakumara said.

"Polythene, food wrappers, plastic, other non-digestibles and water were the only things we could see in the post mortems. The normal food that elephants eat and digest was not evident," he said.

Elephants are revered in Sri Lanka but are also endangered. Their numbers have dwindled from about 14,000 in the 19th century to 6,000 in 2011, according to the country's first elephant census.

They are increasingly vul-

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**WILDLIFE VETERINARIAN NIHAL PUSHPAKUMARA**

nerable because of the loss and degradation of their natural habitat. Many venture closer to human settlements in search of food, and some are killed by poachers or farmers angry over damage to their crops.

Hungry elephants seek out the waste in the landfill, consuming plastic as well as sharp objects that damage their digestive systems, Pushpakumara said.

"The elephants then stop eating and become too weak to keep their heavy frames upright. When that happens, they can't consume food or water, which quickens their death," he said.

## Acquits bishop, nuns



Bishop Franco Mulakkal greets the media as he leaves a court in Kottayam

present in the court in Kottayam, a southern Indian city. Supporters cheered and chanted "Praise the Lord" as he left the court.

The prosecution, representing the nun, will appeal the verdict, said lawyer Sandhya Raju.

Police charged Mulakkal with rape, illegal confinement and intimidation of the nun. She said she went to police only after complaining repeatedly to church authorities. Eventually, a group of fellow nuns launched unprecedented public protests to demand Mulakkal's arrest in 2018. He was detained but released on bail after a few weeks.

## Ethiopia lashes out at WHO chief for Tigray war remarks



**Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**  
Reuters | Addis Ababa

Ethiopia has asked the UN health agency to investigate its chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus for "harmful misinformation" and "misconduct", accusing him of backing rebels in his native war-torn Tigray region.

Tedros -- the highest-profile Tigrayan abroad -- this week described conditions in the Ethiopian region as "hell" and said the government was preventing medicines and other life-saving aid from reaching locals.

Addis Ababa said his comments threatened the World Health Organization's integrity.

## Bald ambitions: South Korea politician pledges funding for hair loss

AFP | Seoul

People with hair loss in South Korea should have their treatments covered by the state to prevent "discrimination", the ruling party's presidential candidate pledged yesterday, in what critics called a bald bid to pull ahead in neck-and-neck polls.

Democratic Party candidate Lee Jae-myung said he will expand government health insurance to cover treatments, potentially including expensive hair transplants, if he wins in the March presidential election.

"I will expand universal health insurance to hair loss treatment drugs... and will also consider covering hair transplant for serious cases of hair loss," he said in a Facebook post that garnered hundreds of likes in minutes.

Lee, a human rights lawyer turned politician, said people with hair loss issues face "daily discriminatory encounters... across age and gender groups."

In a short, tongue-in-cheek



**Democratic Party candidate Lee Jae-myung speaks during a press conference**

video posted online yesterday, Lee, who does not appear to have hair loss issues, is seen sweeping a hand over his neat black mane while promising to keep hair on every voter's head.

Many Koreans are using ineffective and potentially harmful over-the-counter remedies because expensive "cosmetic" hair loss treatments are currently excluded from insurance coverage, Lee said, explaining his new campaign pledge.

The issue affects up to one in five South Koreans, his campaign said, without giving de-

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**I will expand universal health insurance to hair loss treatment drugs... and will also consider covering hair transplant for serious cases of hair loss**

**LEE JAE-MYUNG**

tails on how much they expected fulfilling the promise to cost the state.

The offer -- which was first mooted last week -- has prompted widespread public debate, with many voters coming out in favour.

"Hair loss is a disease. I fully endorse his pledge," one supporter wrote on Daum, the country's second-largest online portal.

But some critics have decried the "populist" move as a potential drain on the health service.

"Should we cover Viagra prescriptions as well? It's not your money after all," a critic wrote on Daum.



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TWEETS

01



The 1.5°C global heating goal is receding, not getting closer. We must accelerate the energy transition in emerging economies—particularly those dependent on coal. That's why I'm calling for targeted coal phase-out coalitions & a just transition from fossil fuels.

@antonioguterres

02



We are glad to recommend two new drugs for #COVID19, providing yet more options for treating the disease. However, the global impact of these new medicines depends on how widely available and affordable they will be.

@DrTedros

03



A small, but important signal of justice for the hundreds of thousands of victims of Assad's torture state. The perpetrators & the regime should know they will be pursued for the rest of their lives. The European Union is no safe haven for them. #KoblentzTrial

@guyverhofstadt

04



If you haven't gotten vaccinated - do it. Your personal choice impacts our hospitals, our country, all of us.

@POTUS

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