

432

Saint Patrick, aged about 16, is captured by Irish pirates from his home in Great Britain and taken as a slave to Ireland (traditional date)

1861

Italy is unified into a single kingdom under Victor Emmanuel II following the campaigns led by Giuseppe Garibaldi



1905

Albert Einstein finishes his scientific paper detailing his quantum theory of light, a foundation of modern physics

1939

Battle of Nanchang between the Kuomintang and the Japanese breaks out during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)

Western allies push back on Trump call for NATO help to reopen Hormuz



Members of the Iranian Red Crescent and Iranian firefighters searching the rubble of a collapsed building following a reported military strike in an undisclosed location.



Lorries roll along the highway between Riyadh and al-Ahsa, some 200 kilometers east of the Saudi capital

UK 'will not be drawn into the wider war' in Middle East: Starmer

Not NATO's war: Germany

Global oil prices have surged by 40 to 50 percent as Iran attacks shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and launches waves of missile and drone strikes in the Gulf

NATO and other Western allies pushed back yesterday on US President Donald Trump's demand that military alliance members help reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the critical conduit for crude oil Iran has effectively closed.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said London was working with allies to craft a "viable" plan to reopen the strategic waterway but ruled out a NATO mission, while Berlin insisted it was "not NATO's war".

Poland, Spain, Greece and Sweden were among the other European nations to distance themselves from any military

UK PM says any plan to reopen Strait of Hormuz 'won't be' a Nato mission

London, United Kingdom

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said yesterday that a plan the UK is working on with allies to reopen the Strait of Hormuz during the Middle East war would not involve NATO.

involvement in the Strait of Hormuz in the wake of Trump's call.

Japan and Australia voiced similar sentiments earlier Monday, with Canberra saying it

"Let me be clear, that won't be and it's never been envisioned to be a NATO mission," Starmer told reporters.

His comments came after President Donald Trump said NATO faces a "very bad" future if US allies fail to help open the key oil transport route.

would not be sending a navy ship to the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump over the weekend called on countries including China, France, Japan, South Ko-

rea and Britain to send warships to escort tankers through the strait, warning refusing would be "very bad for the future of NATO".

Oil prices jumped after the strait was closed and remained Monday above \$100 per barrel as the Iran war moved into a third week.

In Berlin, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's spokesman said the conflict has "nothing to do with NATO".

"NATO is an alliance for the defence of territory" and "the mandate to deploy NATO is lacking" in the current situation, Stefan Kornelius told reporters.

Meanwhile German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said there would be "no military participation" from his country, but added the country was prepared to support diplomatic efforts "to ensure safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz".

A NATO official noted that members "have already stepped up to provide additional security in the Mediterranean".

"We are aware that individual allies are talking with the US and others on what more they might do, including in the context of security in the Strait of Hormuz," the official told AFP.

Qatar says diplomacy with Iran possible 'if they stop the attacks'

AFP | Doha, Qatar

Diplomatic talks with Iran are only possible if it ceases its attacks, Qatar's foreign ministry spokesman said yesterday, as Tehran presses its missile and drone campaign against Gulf states.

"If they stop the attacks, then we can find a way out with diplomacy. But as long as our countries are being attacked, this is not the time to establish committees, it's the time to take a very principled position (on) protecting our countries and for them to stop attacking us immediately," Qatar's foreign ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari said.

Netanyahu's coffee shop video AI-generated? Grok's deepfake claim sparks buzz

India Today

A fresh video shared by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from a coffee shop to dispel rumours of his death has sparked a buzz online after Grok claimed that the video was AI-generated.

The video was shared after reports of his death in an Iranian attack circulated on the internet. In the video, Netanyahu mocked the reports of his death and quipped, "I am dead for coffee."

He then holds up his hands to the camera and asks viewers if they want to count his fingers. It is a direct reference to social media claims that his recent televised address was generated by AI.

However, Grok claimed that the video is not real and is an AI-generated deepfake clip. The



Netanyahu's new video, released to dispel rumors of his death, instead sparked fresh speculation about his health after Grok claimed the footage was AI-generated.

claim further fuelled speculation about his whereabouts and wellbeing. The Israeli PM appeared to have six fingers in the previous video, sparking speculation about its authenticity.

UAE, Saudi leaders discuss Iran attacks in second call since Mideast war

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Emirati President Mohamed bin Zayed discussed yesterday Iran's retaliatory strikes on the Gulf and expressed solidarity and sympathy in their second call since a public row in late December.

The de facto Saudi ruler and the UAE's president discussed "the continued and blatant Iranian attacks targeting countries in the region," according to a statement published by Emirati news agency WAM.

"Both sides stressed the need for the immediate cessation of military escalation... underscoring the importance of prioritising serious dialogue and diplomatic means," it added.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



People in the Middle East deserve to live without fear, to raise their children without the sound of bombs, to return home without wondering when they have to flee again. The @UN & I will spare no effort in striving for the peaceful future this region so richly deserves.

@antonioгутerres

02



@WHO is increasing its support to countries impacted by the conflict in the Middle East, releasing US\$2 million in emergency funds to support the health responses in #Lebanon, #Iraq and #Syria. These resources are from the WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies, thanks to the support of donors. The funds will help strengthen emergency coordination, trauma care, disease surveillance and ensure access to essential medicines and medical supplies. As casualties rise, so do attacks on health care, which are increasing the burden on the health systems at a time when they are most needed. I urge all parties to choose the brave and life-saving path to peace.

@DrTedros

03



Good meeting with @DrJaisankar today. At the EU-India Summit in January, we concluded our Free Trade Agreement - the mother of all deals - and signed a Security and Defence Partnership. Now we are focused on efficient implementation, to deliver for the people of Europe and India as soon as possible. We also discussed developments in the Middle East and in Ukraine. De-escalation, stability and energy security are our shared objectives.

@vonderleyen

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