

News in brief

◆ Bangladesh police

yesterday stopped protesters from marching towards an Indian diplomatic mission, a day after India's foreign ministry conveyed its concerns over the "deteriorating" security environment in the country. Ties between the two countries have been frosty since former prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled to India following a student-led uprising last year. Dhaka has repeatedly asked for her extradition so that she could stand trial for her alleged crimes, with Delhi responding that it was examining the requests. On Thursday, dozens of demonstrators began marching towards the assistant Indian high commissioner office in Rajshahi district which borders India. Miftahul Jannat, one of the protesters, said the plan was to carry out a sit-in, demanding the "repatriation of all the killers including Sheikh Hasina". The protest was stalled by the police, who said they "listened to their demands and promised to forward them to the authorities".



Protests in Bangladesh as India cites security concerns

Germany to take in more than 500 stranded Afghans from Pakistan

◆ The German government said yesterday it would take in 535 Afghans who had been promised refuge in Germany but have been stuck in limbo in Pakistan. Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt told the RND media network Berlin wanted to complete the processing of the cases "in December, as far as possible" to allow them to enter Germany. The Afghans were accepted under a refugee scheme set up by the previous German government, but have been stuck in Pakistan since conservative Chancellor Friedrich Merz took office in May and froze the programme. Those on the scheme either worked with German armed forces in Afghanistan during the war against the Taliban, or were judged to be at particular risk from the Taliban after its return to power in 2021 -- for example, rights activists and journalists, as well as their families.

◆ Members of ousted Nepali prime minister KP Sharma Oli's political party voted for him to retain leadership of the organisation yesterday, meaning he will oversee its preparations for national elections next year. Members of the Communist Party of Nepal - Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) cast their ballots during a two-day general convention in the capital Kathmandu, which Oli won by a landslide. The 73-year-old political veteran's success comes after he stepped down as prime minister during a September youth-led uprising that toppled his government. Nepal will hold elections in March with a caretaker administration running the country in the meantime. Oli bagged nearly three times more votes than his nearest competitor, Ishwar Pokhrel, securing 1,663 votes compared to Pokhrel's 564. Rajendra Gautam, the head of the party's publicity department, told AFP.

Nepal's ousted PM Oli re-elected as party leader



SPOTLIGHT

Oscars to stream exclusively on YouTube from 2029

AFP | Los Angeles, United States

The Oscars will be shown only on YouTube from 2029, the Academy said Wednesday, in a radical gambit for a movie industry that remains wary of streaming platforms even as viewing habits shift online.



The new five-year deal means Hollywood's most prestigious awards ceremony will be viewable exclusively online for the first time, ending a decades-long relationship with US broadcaster ABC.

The decision will allow the Academy Awards to reach "the largest worldwide audience possible -- which will be beneficial for our Academy members and the film community," said Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences CEO Bill Kramer and President Lynette Howell Taylor in a statement.

The annual Oscars, which celebrate the year's top achievements in film and draw the world's biggest A-list stars, are regularly watched by around 20 million Americans, and millions more globally.

ABC's latest contract to broadcast the show had been due to end in 2028, with the 100th Academy Awards. The Disney-owned channel will continue to air the Oscars up until then.

But the new deal with Google-owned YouTube represents a bold new direction for the show at a time when audiences increasingly watch all types of content online.

Streamers owned by Silicon Valley firms have lured top talent away from traditional Hollywood studios with massive contracts -- despite filmmakers' concerns that they rarely show movies on the big screen in theaters for extended runs. Streamers have also gradually gained wider acceptance at the Academy Awards, where Apple won best picture for "CODA" in 2022.

The SAG Awards, another important Hollywood awards gala which recently rebranded as The Actors Awards, have already moved to Netflix.

Financial terms of the new Oscars deal were not disclosed. Industry website Deadline said "the amount that YouTube was willing to pay didn't make sense for Disney," citing anonymous insiders.

Russian nuclear-capable missile Oreshnik deployed in Belarus

AFP | Moscow, Russia

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said on Thursday that a newly developed Russian hypersonic, nuclear-capable missile known as the "Oreshnik" had been deployed in Belarus.

Russia unveiled the weapon last year after using it to strike the Ukrainian city of Dnipro, in an escalation during the conflict, now marking its fourth anniversary. Moscow had already



deployed tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus in 2023 and said it could station Oreshnik there by the end of

2025. "Oreshnik has been in Belarus since yesterday. And it's going on combat duty," Lukashenko said in his annual speech.

Belarus, a former Soviet republic, is a key Russian ally. Moscow used Belarusian territory to launch its offensive against Ukraine in February 2022.

In August, Minsk said it would practice the deployment of Oreshnik missiles during the joint Zapad-2025 ("West-2025") drills close to the EU and NATO's eastern flank border.

US imposes sanctions on two more ICC judges for investigating Israel
Washington, United States

The United States yesterday imposed sanctions on two more judges of the International Criminal Court to support Israel, whose Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces an arrest warrant from the Hague tribunal.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio in a statement said that the two judges, from Mongolia and Georgia, had voted earlier this week against Israel's challenge before the ICC.



US, Qatar, Turkey, Egypt to hold Gaza talks in Miami on Friday: official
Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump's global envoy Steve Witkoff will meet officials from Qatar, Egypt and Turkey in Miami today to discuss the next phase of the Gaza truce, a White House official told AFP.

Progress has so far been slow in moving to the second stage of October's deal, under which Israel is to withdraw from its positions, an interim authority is to govern Gaza instead of Hamas, and an international stabilization force is to be deployed.

German man jailed for life over carnival car-ramming

He had been suffering from a mental illness



Police have cordoned off the scene of car ramming attack in Mannheim, southwestern Germany on March 3, 2025.

AFP | Berlin, Germany

A German man received a life sentence and was ordered into psychiatric care yesterday for ploughing his car through a carnival market, killing two and injuring several more.

The attack in the southwestern city of Mannheim in March struck as visitors flocked to a pedestrian zone lined with food stalls, rides and games.

The defendant, partially named by German media as Alexander S., 40, was found guilty of two counts of murder and six counts of attempted murder, Joachim Bock, presiding judge at the Mannheim Regional Court, told AFP.

Prosecutors earlier said Alexander S. had been "suffering from a mental illness for many years" and called for him to be placed in a psychiatric facility.

They accused him of driving his black Ford at speeds of up to 80 kilometres per hour (50 mph) through the crowds with the intention of "killing an unspecified number of pedestrians".

Investigations had "not revealed any evidence of a political motive", they said.

An 83-year-old woman and a 54-year-old man were killed in the car rampage.

When a taxi driver blocked the driver's path, Alexander S. allegedly fired a shot into the air from a blank-firing pistol and fled on foot.

As police approached to arrest him, he then shot himself in the mouth with the apparent aim of

suicide, prosecutors said.

The Mannheim attack was one of three car-rammings that shocked Germany in the space of a few months.



In 2025, vehicle-ramming incidents continued to occur worldwide, with at least 14 attacks recorded that year alone, causing 50 or more deaths and injuries in crowded public spaces -- and while some were linked to terrorism, most were driven by a mix of motives including personal grievances and mental health issues.

Sri Lanka arrests three men for burning elephant alive

AFP | Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan police arrested three men yesterday on charges of cruelty to animals after a viral video showed them setting a wild elephant on fire.

Police said the suspects, aged between 42 and 50, were taken into custody in the north-central district of Anuradhapura, about 200 kilometres (125 miles) north of Colombo.

They were placed on remand until De-

cember 24 pending further investigations into the incident, which sparked widespread revulsion after the footage was shared on social media.

Wildlife officials said the animal had first been shot and wounded before being

set alight, and that veterinary surgeons' attempts to save its life failed. Elephants are considered sacred in Sri Lanka and are protected by law, but farmers and residents in remote villages sometimes attack wild elephants that de-



crops. Elephants are protected under Sri Lankan law and poachers can face the death penalty for killing one. However, the country has not carried out an execution since 1976 and the death penalty is automatically commuted to life imprisonment.

Escalating human-elephant conflict has claimed around 400 elephant and 200 human lives annually over the past five years.

Sri Lanka has an estimated 7,000 wild elephants, regarded as a national treasure in part because of their importance in Buddhist culture.