

News in brief

N. Korea flag disrupts S. Korea church livestream in 'hacking incident'

◆ One of South Korea's largest megachurches said yesterday its YouTube worship service was briefly hacked during a live broadcast to display the North Korean flag, with a government agency saying it was checking the details. The incident occurred early Wednesday morning, when the livestream of the service by the Onnuri Church was abruptly filled with the North Korean flag, accompanied by what appeared to be Pyongyang's propaganda music. The flag was displayed for about 20 seconds, a church official told AFP, adding that the incident had been reported to the police.

American R&B singer Chris Brown yesterday pleaded not guilty in a UK court to a charge stemming from an alleged London nightclub brawl in 2023.

Brown, 36, in a navy blue three-piece suit and tie and wearing glasses, stood in the dock as the charge was put to him, replying: "Not guilty, ma'am." The singer, who is on £5 million (\$6.7 million) bail, made no comment as he arrived earlier to find a large group of photographers gathered outside the central London court.

Philippine Navy seizes \$175 million meth haul at sea

◆ The Philippine Navy seized an illegal drug shipment worth 10 billion pesos (\$175 million) yesterday in one of the country's biggest narcotics hauls on record, officials said. A pair of naval gunboats intercepted a fishing vessel carrying 1.5 tonnes of methamphetamine hydrochloride off the coast of main island Luzon just before dawn, Commodore Edward de Sagon told a press conference. Four people, including one foreigner, were arrested in the joint operation with the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, according to de Sagon..

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

UK MPs vote in favour of assisted dying bill in historic step

Campaigners for a change in the law on assisted dying celebrate outside The Palace of Westminster

AFP | London

Britain's parliament took a historic step towards allowing euthanasia yesterday when MPs backed contentious legislation that would introduce assisted dying for terminally ill people.

Lawmakers in the lower House of Commons chamber voted 314 in favour to 291 to send the proposal to the upper House of Lords for further scrutiny following four hours of emotional debate.

The outcome sparked celebrations among supporters gathered outside parliament who say legalised euthanasia will give people with an incurable illness dignity and choice at the end of their lives.

But opponents attending a neighbouring counter-protest said they feared vulnerable people could be coerced into dying and urged lawmakers to focus on improving palliative care instead.

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill would allow assisted suicide in England and Wales for adults who

have been given less than six months to live.

They would have to be able to administer the life-ending substance themselves, and any patient's wish to die would have to be signed off by two doctors and a panel of experts.

A change in the law would see Britain emulate several other countries in Europe and elsewhere that allow some form of assisted dying, including Belgium and the Netherlands.

Labour MP Kim Leadbeater, who proposed the legislation, told yesterday's so-called third reading debate that a law change would "offer a compassionate and safe choice" for terminally ill people.

She said maintaining the status quo would mean more "heartbreaking stories" of "pain and trauma, suicide attempts, PTSD, lonely trips to Switzerland, (and) police investigations".

But Vicky Foxcroft, also of Labour, said the proposal did not include adequate safeguards for disabled people.

US steps up sanctions as Mideast attacks flare

United States issues new sanctions targeting Iran's defense industry and Huthi rebels

- Sanctions target defense industry machinery
- Aim to disrupt missile, drone programs

AFP | Washington

The United States issued new Iran-related sanctions yesterday, taking aim at the procurement of machinery for the country's defense industry at a time when war is flaring in the Middle East.

The US Treasury Department said it was targeting an individual and eight entities over their roles in the sourcing and transshipment of "sensitive machinery for Iran's defence industry."

"The United States remains resolved to disrupt any effort by Iran to procure the sensitive, dual-use technology, components, and machinery that underpin the regime's ballistic missile, unmanned aerial vehicle, and asymmetric weapons programs," said Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent in a statement.

He added that Treasury would continue to target Iran's ability to make and proliferate such weapons, "which threaten regional stability and global security."

The action comes as conflict is heating up in the Middle East. Iran has been firing daily missile salvos at Israel for the past week, since a wide-ranging Israeli at-



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visits the site of the Weizmann Institute of Science, which was hit by an Iranian missile barrage, in the central city of Rehovot

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The new US sanctions specifically targeted Hong Kong-based Unico Shipping Co., whose vessel was found carrying sensitive machinery intended for Iran's defense industry

tack on the Islamic Republic's nuclear installations and military bases triggered war.

The Treasury's latest targets included Iranian firm Towse Sanaye Nim Resanaye Tarashe and Hong Kong-based Unico Shipping Co, whose vessel was carrying machinery for a designated company.

In a separate statement, the Treasury Department said it imposed sanctions directed at Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi rebels as well -- on four individuals, 12 entities and two vessels that imported oil and other illicit goods in support of the group.

"The Houthis rely on a series of front companies and trusted facilitators to clandestinely generate revenue, procure weapons components, and advance their reign of terror in partnership with the Iranian regime," said US Deputy Treasury Secretary Michael Faulkender.

He said the latest move was the department's "most significant to date against the group."

In a separate statement, State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce added that Washington seeks to deprive the Huthis of "resources they need to carry out their reckless and destabilizing actions."

Iranian foreign minister says Israel attack 'betrayal' of diplomacy with US

AFP | Geneva

Iran's foreign minister yesterday condemned the Israeli attacks against the Islamic republic as a "betrayal" of diplomatic efforts with the US, saying Tehran and Washington had been due to craft a "promising agreement" on the Iranian nuclear programme.

"We were attacked in the midst of an ongoing diplomatic process," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva ahead of a crunch meeting with European foreign ministers.

Araghchi, making his first trip abroad since the strikes began, denounced Israel's attack as an "outrageous act of aggression".

US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff had planned to meet Araghchi in Oman on June 15 but the meeting was cancelled after Israel began the strikes days before.

"We were supposed to meet with the Americans on 15 June



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi addressing the 59th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva

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We were supposed to meet with the Americans on 15 June to craft a very promising agreement for peaceful resolution of the issues fabricated over our peaceful nuclear programme. It was a betrayal of diplomacy and unprecedented blow to the foundations of international law

ABBAS ARAGHCHI

having.

Araghchi described the attacks by Israel as an "unjust war imposed on my people" that had killed "hundreds".

Pointing to the risk of radiation after strikes on atomic plants, he said: "Attacks on nuclear facilities are grave war crimes."