

Herostratus sets fire to the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus, one of the Seven Wonders of the World

An earthquake on Crete followed by a tsunami around the Eastern Mediterranean allegedly destroys Alexandria



First Battle of Bull Run [Battle of First Manassas], the first major battle of the US Civil War, is fought near Manassas, Virginia, and ends in a Confederate victory

After 13 years, the 4,607-mile Trans-Siberian Railway is completed

## EU fines AliExpress 550 mn euros over illegal products

AFP | Brussels, Belgium

The EU yesterday slapped a 550-million-euro (\$630 million) fine on online retailer AliExpress for allowing the sale of illegal products, including unsafe toys and cosmetics.

The European Union said AliExpress also did not do enough to stop the sale of counterfeit products and that when the platform detected illegal goods were on sale, many remained online for several weeks.

The EU found some of the products sold on the platform did not meet the bloc's strict

environmental and safety standards during its investigation into AliExpress launched in March 2024.

"Risks must be identified and addressed systematically to ensure consumers can safely shop online. Today, we are holding AliExpress to this standard and request it to take action," EU tech chief Henna Virkkunen said in a statement.



## Greece to ban children from scooters after accidents

AFP | Athens, Greece

Greece will toughen rules on electric stand-up scooters this week, a minister said Monday after recurring accidents mainly involving youths

s p a r k e d calls for action.

"Scooters for kids... are now going to b e



banned under a bill that will be voted on tomorrow," deputy transport minister Giorgos Kotsiras told Skai TV.

Kotsiras said the bill provisions would include a ban on users under the age of 17, increased fines for unsafe riding and compulsory accident insurance.

"Based on statistics, we had seen that among our fellow citizens under the age of 17 there are increased rates of accidents," Kotsiras said.

## EU suspects cement additive makers of price-fixing

AFP | Brussels, Belgium

The European Commission on Monday accused several manufacturers of additives for cement and concrete -- including Mexican giant Cemex and a subsidiary of French group Saint-Gobain -- of colluding to charge customers higher prices for their products.

The chemical additives are commonly used in the construction sector to improve the properties of concrete, cement, and other mortars.

The EU Commission --

which carried out surprise inspections in the sector in 2023 -- accuses manufacturers and professional organisations in France, Germany, and Spain of forming a cartel to raise their prices in a coordinated manner in 2021 and 2022, in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

If the suspicions are confirmed, Brussels could impose heavy fines -- up to 10 percent of global annual turnover -- on the companies involved.

They will, however, have an opportunity to defend themselves.

## Rubio open to Russia, China meets on Philippines visit

AFP | Joint Base Andrews, United States

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Sunday he was open to meeting with his Chinese and Russian counterparts this week while in the Philippines for a meeting of Southeast Asian foreign ministers.

Rubio's attendance at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) gathering in Manila comes as the United States seeks to counter China's growing regional influence and days after President Donald Trump accused Beijing of meddling in US elections.

"We'd be open to meeting with them," Rubio told reporters when asked if meetings with Chinese Foreign Minis-

ter Wang Yi or Russia's Sergei Lavrov were in the works.

"I would never tell you guys in a press conference what we would raise in meetings like that. Those are delicate matters," he added.

Rubio met Wang on the sidelines of the ASEAN gathering in Kuala Lumpur l a s t year. The two also spoke by telephone following Trump's visit to China in the spring.



# Trump says new Air Force One to be 'maxed out'

AFP | Joint Base Andrews, United States

US President Donald Trump said Sunday his new Qatari-gifted Air Force One jet needed to be sent off for a month to be "maxed out," after reports of security concerns on a trip to Turkey.

Trump took his first flight on the retrofitted Boeing 747-8 plane on July 1, but questions swirled after he took an older jet home from a NATO meeting in Ankara on July 10.

The New York Times reported that the new plane lacked the same security countermeasures, including anti-missile defenses. Its reporters were then subpoenaed by the Trump ad-

ministration.

"It has a lot of capability, but as I understand it, in about a month or so, they're going to send it to have it be maxed out," Trump told reporters when asked why he was still flying on a plane without full defensive capabilities.

"So they're going to be sending it, and they'll have it be maxed out. It'll take about a month."

Trump, who was speaking after flying back to Washington from the World Cup final in New Jersey, did not give details about how the plane would be "maxed out."

The 80-year-old Republican has previously played down any suggestion of problems with the

new aircraft.

He originally said he had sent the plane on ahead from the Turkey summit to an airbase in Britain so that service members could see it.

Qatar's royal family donated the luxury airliner last year after Trump complained about the state of the two aging jets that have served as the US presidential plane since 1990.

The aircraft features a new Trump-designed livery in red, white and navy blue, in a change from the previous white and light blue livery.

Two brand new Boeing Air Force Ones are due to be delivered later this decade after a series of delays and cost overruns.



Members of the media make their way to board Air Force One at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland

## More than 100 missing as deadly flooding hits Afghanistan

AFP | Kabul, Afghanistan

More than 100 people are missing after deadly flooding hit Afghanistan's Nuristan province yesterday, disaster officials and the governor's office said.

Twenty bodies have been recovered and more than 80 people injured, Afghanistan's disaster agency ANDMA said.

The casualties were reported in the provincial capital Parun and other areas of Nuristan, which borders Pakistan, ANDMA said on X.

In Parun, the mayor and government employees were among the missing, the governor's office said.

"Nine dead bodies are recovered," said Feraidon Samim, spokesman for the Nuristan governor.

Both he and the disaster



A river flowing past houses at the Eshtiwi village in Afghanistan's Parun district.

agency said more than 100 remained missing.

AFP journalists who visited the remote northeastern area last month said a market, shops and other buildings were located near the riverside in Parun.

Ashiquallah Safi, head of Shpoul, an NGO in the town,

told AFP the flood had "completely destroyed the municipality" as well as hotels and dozens of shops.

Residents were searching the area without equipment, he said, after floodwaters left big boulders in the town.

## India says four nationals killed in attack on ship in Ukraine

AFP | New Delhi, India

India said yesterday that four of its nationals were killed in attacks the day before on a commercial ship near the Ukrainian port in Odesa and another was critically injured.

A foreign ministry statement condemned the strike, saying the MV Golden Leo "was attacked while departing the port

of Odesa" and had five Indians among its crew of 17.

"As per information available, four Indian nationals have tragically lost their lives, while one is hospitalized in a critical condition," the statement said.

Ukraine's navy said Sunday that Russian missile strikes on the Golden Leo, a Turkish-owned cargo ship carrying grain, had killed five peo-

ple on board, while another five crew members were missing.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga said the crew had included citizens of Syria and India.

"A Ukrainian maritime pilot was killed, as well as four crew members, eight crew members were evacuated and five still remain missing," he said.



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Extend my congratulations to @AndyBurnham on his appointment as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. In the face of the challenges that unite us, I hope that we will deepen our relationship in service of our peoples and by giving new momentum to the partnership between the United Kingdom and the European Union.  
@EmmanuelMacron

02



Louise Haigh has been appointed as First Secretary of State, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office  
@10DowningStreet

03



I was happy to speak with Andy Burnham @andyburnham and congratulate him on taking office as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. I truly appreciate that the support for Ukraine and our people will remain steadfast.  
@ZelenskyyUa

04



Mandela firmly believed that our common humanity could triumph over the forces of hatred, division, discrimination & injustice. Let's re-commit to the timeless principles that defined Madiba's life: freedom, justice, equality, solidarity, reconciliation, compassion & peace.  
@antoniguterres

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