

News in brief

◆ EU and Chinese officials

have agreed to meet in Brussels for “urgent” talks on China’s export controls on rare earths, EU trade chief Maros Sefcovic said after speaking to his Chinese counterpart yesterday. The world’s leading producer of the minerals used to make magnets crucial to the auto, electronics and defence industries, China this month announced new controls on the export of rare-earth technologies. “I appreciate today’s constructive discussion during which we agreed to intensify contacts at all levels,” Sefcovic said after a video call with China’s Wang Wentao that lasted nearly two hours. “I invited the Chinese authorities to come to Brussels in the coming days to find urgent solutions. Minister Wang Wentao has accepted this invitation,” Sefcovic told reporters in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France. The European Union says the Chinese restrictions have forced some of the bloc’s companies to halt production and inflicted economic harm.



**EU, China to hold ‘urgent’ talks on rare earth curbs**

◆ Colombia, US vow to improve anti-drug strategy amid Trump-Petro feud

Trump threatened to revoke all aid and impose punishing tariffs on the South American nation. “Representatives from both countries agreed that this is the first step toward resolving the current impasse in bilateral relations and that further meetings will be held with the aim of reaching a prompt solution,” the statement said. Trump, who has launched a lethal naval campaign in the Caribbean against alleged drug traffickers, lashed out on Sunday at leftist Petro, calling him an “illegal drug dealer.”

◆ Colombia’s president met with the top

US diplomat in his country and discussed anti-drug efforts, Bogota said yesterday, after a renewed public feud with counterpart Donald Trump frayed relations between the historic partners. President Gustavo Petro had a “long, frank, and constructive” meeting on Monday with US Charge d’Affaires John McNamara, Colombia’s foreign ministry said in a statement, after

Trump threatened to revoke all aid and impose punishing tariffs on the South American nation. “Representatives from both countries agreed that this is the first step toward resolving the current impasse in bilateral relations and that further meetings will be held with the aim of reaching a prompt solution,” the statement said. Trump, who has launched a lethal naval campaign in the Caribbean against alleged drug traffickers, lashed out on Sunday at leftist Petro, calling him an “illegal drug dealer.”

**Conservative Takaichi named Japan’s first woman PM**



◆ Sanae Takaichi was named Japan’s first woman prime minister Tuesday, with the social conservative saying she wanted “candid discussions” with US President Donald Trump just days ahead of his visit to Tokyo. Japan’s fifth premier in as many years leads a minority government and has a bulging in-tray, not least the scheduled arrival of the US leader next week. But in her first remarks in office, she said her priority was to tackle inflation, a major source of anger among voters, and would soon draft an “economic package” to deal with rising prices. The former heavy metal drummer and Margaret Thatcher admirer became head of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) on October 4, but its coalition collapsed days later.

SPOTLIGHT

Mosquitoes discovered in Iceland for first time

Reykjavik, Iceland

Mosquitoes have been discovered in Iceland in a first for the island nation, which has long been one of the world’s mosquito-free places, a researcher told AFP Monday.



Three *Culiseta annulata* mosquitoes, two females and one male, were sighted around 30 kilometres (20 miles) north of the capital Reykjavik, according to Matthias Alfredsson, an entomologist at the Natural Science Institute of Iceland.

“They were all collected from wine ropes... aimed at attracting moths,” the researcher said in an email, referring to a method of adding sugar to heated wine and dipping ropes or strips of fabric into the solution, which are then hung outside to entice the sweet-toothed insects.

Along with Antarctica, Iceland has long been one of the few places on earth without a mosquito population.

“It is the first record of mosquitoes occurring in the natural environment in Iceland. A single *Aedes nigripes* specimen (arctic mosquito species) was collected many years ago from an airplane at Keflavik airport,” Alfredsson said, adding that “unfortunately, that specimen is lost”.

Their presence could “indicate a recent introduction to

the country, possibly via ships or containers”, he said, but further monitoring in spring would be necessary to determine their further spread.

Rising temperatures, longer summers and milder winters, all brought on by climate change, create a more favourable environment for mosquitoes to thrive.

But Alfredsson did not believe that a warmer climate explained the discovery.

The species “appears to be well adapted to colder climates”, which “allows them to withstand long, harsh winters when temperatures drop below freezing”, he said.

He added that its “diverse breeding habitats... further enhances its ability to persist in Iceland’s challenging environment”.

Trump urged Ukraine to give up land in ‘tense’ talks: Kyiv official

AFP | Kyiv, Ukraine

US President Donald Trump pressured Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky to give up the eastern Donbas region in exchange for peace during “tense” talks last Friday in Washington, a senior Ukrainian official told AFP.

The source added that the talks with Trump were “not easy”, and that diplomatic efforts to end the Russia-Ukraine war felt like they were being “dragged out” and “going in circles”.

Zelensky met Trump at the White House last week, hoping to capitalise on the US leader’s growing frustration with Russian President Vladimir Putin’s reluctance to accept a ceasefire.

But he instead left empty-handed after Trump -- who



Traditional Russian wooden nesting dolls, Matryoshka dolls, depicting Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump are displayed for sale at a gift shop on the touristic Arbat street in downtown Moscow

spoke with Putin the day before -- denied his request for long-

range Tomahawk missiles and pressured him into making a deal.

Hamas says dealt ‘severe blow’ to group it says collaborated with Israel

AFP | Gaza City, Palestinian Territories

Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas said yesterday its so-called Radea security force had “dealt a severe blow” to an armed group in Gaza it accuses of collaborating with Israel.

In a statement, Hamas said its Radea security force carried out an “operation early yesterday morning in the southern Gaza Strip, targeting the fugitive Yasser Abu Shabab”.

Hamas added that it arrested “a number of members” of Abu Shabab’s Popular Forces group during the operation and confiscated “military equipment and tools used in their subversive activities”.

The statement added that the operation was carried out “as part of the ongoing deterrence operation against dens of treason”.

Hamas recently established the Radea unit, whose name translates to “deterrence” and whose purpose it says is to “enforce order”.

Clashes broke out early last week in Gaza City’s Shujai-



Smoke billows following an Israeli strike that targeted a building in the Bureij camp for Palestinian refugees in the central Gaza Strip

ya neighborhood between the Radea force and several armed groups, including that of Yasser Abu Shabab, which Hamas accuses of looting and receiving weapons from Israel.

Abu Shabab’s Popular Forces originally started operating in Gaza’s southern Rafah governorate and was accused of aid looting.

In July, Abu Shabab said his

group was able to move freely in zones under Israeli military control and communicated their operations beforehand.

Since the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip on October 10, the movement has sought to reassert its presence on the ground and reaffirm its control over the devastated Palestinian enclave.

Last week, Hamas’ official television channel broadcast images of what it said was an execution of eight “collaborators”, shot in front of a crowd in a Gaza City street.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Saturday that the war in Gaza would not be over until Hamas disarms as the US-brokered ceasefire deal stipulates.

Hamas has not directly addressed the issue since US President Donald Trump presented the plan two weeks ago.



Israeli authorities themselves acknowledged in June that they had armed Palestinian gangs opposed to Hamas, without directly naming the one led by Abu Shabab.

Erdogan heads to Doha eyeing Qatari Eurofighter jets

AFP | Istanbul, Turkey

Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was due in Doha late yesterday as Ankara sought to acquire some of Qatar’s used Eurofighter Typhoon jets, a Turkish security source told AFP.

Erdogan flew in from Kuwait and was expected to meet Qatar’s Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on Wednesday, according to the Turkish leader’s office.

“Turkey has been trying to negotiate to acquire some of Qatar’s used Eurofighters,” the source told AFP, speaking on condition



of anonymity because they were not authorised to talk to journalists. “In exchange, Turkey has offered access to its new-generation fighter jet, the Kaan, as part of a potential technology transfer arrangement.”

So far “no concrete progress” had been made with the negotiations still ongoing, the source said. Turkey wants to modernise its air force and has in recent years sought to buy 40 new Eurofighter Typhoons built by a four-nation consortium of Germany, Britain, Spain and Italy.