

1368

In a coronation ceremony, Zhu Yuanzhang ascends to the throne of China as the Hongwu Emperor, initiating Ming Dynasty rule over China that would last for three centuries

1556

Shaanxi Earthquake, the deadliest ever recorded, kills 830,000 in Shaanxi Province, China



1973

US President Richard Nixon announces an accord has been reached to end Vietnam War

2020

China locks down the city of Wuhan and its 9 million people, in a belated but ultimately successful effort to control the city's COVID-19 epidemic

ay fighting between rd forces in Syria

reak repelled by Kurdish-led forces in northeastern Syria



Islamic State group fighters, who were arrested by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces after they attacked Gweiran Prison, in Hassakeh, northeast Syria

forces have encircled the prison and are battling to retake full control of surrounding neighbourhoods, which jihadists have used as a launching pad for their attacks.

The Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) yesterday said it was continuing "operations to keep security in Hassakeh city and the perimeter of the Ghwayran prison," with the help of coalition allies and Kurdish internal security forces.

It said yesterday's clashes centred mostly in neighbourhoods north of Ghwayran, where it carried out raids and "killed a number of IS fighters that had attacked the jail."

The jihadist group said in a statement released on Friday by its Amaq news agency that its attack on the jail aimed to "free

the prisoners".

'Fat target'

IS has carried out regular attacks against Kurdish and government targets in Syria since the rump of its once-sprawling proto-state was overrun in March 2019.

Most of their guerrilla attacks have been against military targets and oil installations in remote areas, but the Hassakeh prison break could mark a new phase in the group's resurgence.

It was not immediately clear whether the prison break was part of a centrally coordinated operation -- timed to coincide with an attack on a military base in neighbouring Iraq -- or the action of a local IS cell.

Analyst Nicholas Heras of the Newlines Institute in Washington said the jihadist group targeted

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the prison to bolster its numbers.

The Islamic State group "wants to move beyond being the terrorist and criminal network that it has devolved into, and to do that it needs more fighters," he said.

"Prison breaks represent the best opportunity for ISIS to regain its strength in arms, and Ghwayran prison is a nice fat target for ISIS because its overcrowded," he said, using another acronym for IS.

The prospect of a repeat of the attack remains very real, said Colin Clarke, research director at the New York-based Soufan Center think-tank.

"The SDF needs a comprehensive strategy to deal with this threat," he said.

The Kurdish authorities have long warned they do not have the capacity to hold, let alone put on trial, the thousands of IS fighters captured in years of operations.

Fire in residential building kills six, injures 15 in Mumbai

AP | Mumbai

A major fire in a 19-story residential building killed at least six people and injured 15 others yesterday in Mumbai, India's financial and entertainment capital, officials said.

The fire was caused by a short-circuit in an air conditioner in one of the apartments, Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar said.

Residents said the fire started on the 15th floor and a big column of black smoke soon enveloped the building. More than 90 people escaped the building on their own or helped by neighbors, they said.

Ganesh Purnaik, a spokesman for the city government, said the fire left six people dead and 15 hospitalized with injuries.

Four of the injured were in critical condition, said police



Smoke raises after a fire in Mumbai

officer Saurabh Tripathi.

Nearly two dozen fire engines extinguished the blaze and controlled the smoke after a two-hour effort, media reports said. Firefighters rushed the injured to two nearby hospitals.

Pednekar said some of the injured needed oxygen support because they had inhaled smoke.

Southern Japan earthquake injures 13, no tsunami warning

Reuters | Tokyo

An earthquake with a magnitude of 6.6 jolted southwestern Japan early yesterday morning, injuring 13 people, the authorities and local media said.

No tsunami warning was issued after the quake struck with an epicentre 45 km (30 miles) deep at 1:08 a.m. (1608 GMT on Friday) off the coast of Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands, the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) said.

The quake caused shaking in Oita and Miyazaki prefectures that measured 5+ on Japan's seismic intensity scale, which has a maximum of 7, the agency said.



A collapsed gate to the residential house caused by an earthquake is seen in Oita, southern Japan

Thirteen people were injured in nearby regions, including two people in their 80s who were seriously hurt, the Yomiuri newspaper reported, citing local authorities.

Multiple reports of damage to buildings, water pipes and roads have been confirmed, said public broadcaster NHK.

Commends reduced dose COVID vaccine for under 12s



A child is held by her mother as she gets the the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine

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Increase in booster dose coverage for high risk priority groups will usually yield greater reduction in severe disease and deaths than use of equivalent vaccine to increase primary vaccination coverage

SAGE CHAIRMAN ALEJANDRO CRAVIOTO

Union.

The WHO's vaccine director, Kate O'Brien, said no safety concerns were raised for application of Pfizer's vaccine in 5 to 11 years old in clinical trials.

The panel also recommended that booster doses of Pfizer's vaccine should be administered 4 months to 6 months after the completion of the primary series, in high-priority groups like older adults and health workers.

Pakistani convicted murderer takes top school score, wins scholarship

Reuters | Karachi

A Pakistani inmate serving a life sentence for murder in an overcrowded Karachi prison has won a scholarship for further study after taking one of the highest scores in the city's higher secondary school exams last year.

Syed Naeem Shah, 35, scored the highest in the general high school exams among private candidates - that is, among non-traditional students - last year in Pakistan's largest city, winning a scholarship for further studies from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP).

"What I have achieved while languishing in jail is not possible if one does not have conviction," Shah told Reuters in an interview in Central Prison Karachi, built by the British in 1899 in the port city in south-eastern Pakistan.

Speaking in a classroom inside the prison grounds, Shah said he enjoyed school as a child but that his family could not af-



Inmate Syed Naeem Shah outside his classroom in the Central Prison, Karachi

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What I have achieved while languishing in jail is not possible if one does not have conviction

SYED NAEEM SHAH

ford to continue his education. In jail, older inmates who were also taking classes motivated him and helped him prepare for exams. Shah is one of 1,200 inmates studying in Central Prison Karachi, but his suc-

cess is unparalleled, said Saeed Soomro, deputy superintendent of the prison.

"His results are (also) tantamount to our success," Soomro said, in giving him the opportunity to study and providing him with books and materials.

Shah was sentenced to life - 25 years in Pakistan - in 2018 for the shooting and killing of another man in a personal disagreement in 2010. Years spent as a prisoner on trial, plus time off for academic achievements, good behaviour and blood donations, leaves him with about six years to serve.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



We need to go into emergency mode to bring peace to a world that sees too little of it. The @UN will always stand with and protect those caught up in fighting & work to build stronger, more resilient & peaceful communities.

@antonioguerres

02



The UN has a terrible record of tracking aid funds (e.g., Syria), but donor governments can set up an independent monitoring mechanism to ensure that humanitarian assistance actually reaches the many Afghans who urgently need it.

@KenRoTh

03



The American people should not have to fight tooth-and-nail against wealthy and powerful corporate interests for decent wages, health care, pensions and safe working conditions.

@BernieSanders

04



Canada's support for Ukraine's sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity is unwavering and unequivocal. That's why, as they face unwarranted Russian aggression, we're providing a loan that will help support their economic resilience and their governance reforms.

@JustinTrudeau

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