

News in brief

UN rights envoy warns that Myanmar's election will be a 'fraud'



The United Nations human rights expert on Myanmar said yesterday that an election planned by the country's junta will be a "fraud" and warned other countries against offering assistance that would help legitimise it. The junta declared a state of emergency after seizing power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in a coup in February last year, and has tentatively planned for elections by August 2023. "What is very important is that countries in the world don't fall into the trap of trying to provide technical assistance or support for what is going to clearly be a fraud. If you do that, you are actually making things worse," said Andrews, saying this would give the polls a "mirage of legitimacy".

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan yesterday said sorry in a contempt of court case and promised not to hurt the dignity of the judiciary, the court said, a concession that could avoid his disqualification from politics.

Former Pakistan PM Khan apologises to avert court case



The charges are related to a speech by Khan in which he allegedly threatened police and a female judge last month after one of his close aides was denied bail in a sedition case. "He stated that he realized during the proceedings that he may have crossed a red line," the court said in a short order seen by Reuters. Khan had previously denied being threatening. The high court had been expected to indict Khan, a move that could have led to his exclusion from politics if convicted.

Fugitive in massive Navy bribery case caught in Venezuela



A Malaysian defense contractor nicknamed "Fat Leonard" who orchestrated one of the largest bribery scandals in US military history has been arrested in Venezuela after fleeing before his sentencing, authorities said. The international manhunt for Leonard Glenn Francis ended with his arrest by Venezuelan authorities Tuesday morning at the Caracas airport as he was about to board an airplane for another country, the U.S. Marshals Service said. Interpol Venezuela Director General Carlos Garate Rondon said in a statement posted on Instagram that Francis came to Venezuela from Mexico. Rondon said he was headed to Russia.

North Korea may be preparing to launch a new

Imagery shows N.Korea may soon launch new missile submarine

submarine believed to be capable of firing ballistic missiles, a U.S.-based think tank reported yesterday, citing commercial satellite imagery. Images of the Sinpo South Shipyard, on the east coast of the country, from Sept. 18 revealed six barges and vessels gathered around the construction hall quay, said 38 North, which monitors North Korea. "While barges and a dry dock have been occasionally observed around the submarine launch quay at the main construction hall, the presence of six vessels and barges in this area has not been observed before," said the report, which concluded that the activity suggests preparations to launch a submarine.



COVID-19: Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	97,721,719	1,080,356	618,878,256
2 India	44,553,042	528,429	
3 France	35,050,133	154,854	
4 Brazil	34,651,742	685,656	6,535,328
5 Germany	32,854,286	149,275	
6 S. Korea	24,535,940	28,009	Recovered: 598,759,340
7 UK	23,585,305	189,484	
8 Italy	22,241,369	176,775	New cases +304,905
9 Japan	20,840,785	44,071	
10 Russia	20,641,559	386,447	New deaths +662
11 Turkey	16,852,382	101,068	
12 Spain	13,393,196	113,845	
13 Vietnam	11,467,619	43,146	
14 Australia	10,164,301	14,820	

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	515,645		24,613		442,182	48,850
Saudi Arabia	815,609	+80	9,337	+2	802,840	3,432
UAE	1,024,457	+372	2,342		1,003,764	18,351
Kuwait	658,520		2,563		655,316	641
Oman	397,993		4,260		384,669	9,064
Qatar	445,027	+853	682		437,976	6,369

Israeli PM Lapid backs two-state solution with Palestinians

Reuters | United Nations



Prime Minister of Israel Yair Lapid addresses the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid called yesterday for a two-state solution to decades of Israeli-Palestinian conflict and reasserted that Israel would do "whatever it takes" to stop Iran from developing a nuclear bomb.

His mention of a two-state solution, the first by an Israeli leader in years at the United Nations General Assembly, echoed U.S. President Joe Biden's support in Israel in August for the long-dormant proposal.

"An agreement with the Palestinians, based on two states for two peoples, is the right thing for Israel's security, for Israel's economy and for the future of our children," Lapid said.

He added any agreement would be conditioned on a peaceful Palestinian state that would not threaten Israel.

Lapid spoke less than six weeks before a Nov. 1 election that could return to power the right-wing former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a longstanding opponent of the two-state solution.

Israel captured East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza - areas that Palestinians seek for an independent state - in a 1967 Middle East war. US-sponsored Israeli-Palestinian peace talks collapsed in 2014.

In his speech, Lapid again denounced Iran and voiced Israel's determination to prevent its longtime foe from gaining a nuclear weapon.

"The only way to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon is to put a credible military threat on the table," he said. "We have capabilities and we are not afraid to use them."

Widely believed to have the Middle East's only nuclear weapons, Israel regards Iran

YOU KNOW WHAT

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YAIR LAPID

as an existential threat. Tehran denies trying to develop a nuclear weapon.

Palestinians, US react

Efforts to reach a two-state Israeli-Palestinian deal have long been stalled.

Palestinians and rights groups say Israel has entrenched its control of the occupied Palestinian territories through its military rule over millions of Palestinians and persistent settlement construction.

Wasel Abu Youssef, a senior

member of the Palestine Liberation Organization, told Reuters that Lapid's words "mean nothing."

"Whoever wants a two-state solution must implement it on the ground," he said, by respecting previously reached agreements, stopping settlement expansion and recognising East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

US Ambassador to Israel Tom Nides called Lapid's speech "courageous" for supporting the two-state solution.

Lapid praised efforts by Middle Eastern countries to normalise relations and cooperate with Israel. He urged Muslim countries, from Indonesia to Saudi Arabia, to make peace with it.

China's former justice minister faces life in prison for bribery

Reuters | Beijing



A videograb shows former Chinese justice minister Fu Zhenghua is escorted by court police as he attends a court session in Changchun

China's former justice minister faces life in prison after a court handed him a suspended death sentence yesterday for taking bribes and "bending the law".

Fu Zhenghua's death sentence will be commuted to life imprisonment after a two-year reprieve, the Intermediate People's

Court in the city of Changchun said in a statement.

The high-profile sentencing -- part of a sweeping anti-graft campaign -- comes just three weeks before a key political meeting where President Xi Jinping is expected to secure an unprecedented third term.

The court said former politician Fu had abused his power while in a range of senior positions from 2005 to 2021.

"(He is) deprived of political rights for life and all personal property should be confiscated," it added.

Fu, 67, had accepted bribes

worth over 117 million yuan (\$16.5 million), the court said.

Between 2014 and 2015, when Fu was head of the Beijing Public Security Bureau, the court said he hid evidence of suspected crimes committed by his brother, Fu Weihua, and failed to handle the case in accordance with the law.

During his tenure as Beijing's top cop, Fu is thought to have led the corruption investigation into Zhou Yongkang, the former security chief who was jailed in 2015 in one of the anti-graft campaign's most high-profile cases.

BETTER YOU KNOW

Fu Zhenghua pleaded guilty to abusing his powers in roles including minister and chief of police for the Chinese capital, Beijing, in 2005-21 to hide crimes by his brother and others

No letup strikes

Explosion hits a crowd in regions effectively annexed

Russian forces fired nine missiles at Zaporizhzhia, hitting a hotel and a power station, killing one, says the regional governor

AP | Kyiv

Russian and Ukrainian forces exchanged missile and artillery barrages yesterday as both sides refused to concede ground despite recent military setbacks for Moscow and the toll on the invaded country after almost seven months of war.

Russian missile strikes in the southern city of Zaporizhzhia left one person dead and five wounded, Ukrainian officials said. Officials in the separatist-controlled city of Donetsk said Ukrainian shelling killed at least six people.

While the hostilities continued, the two sides did manage to agree on a major prisoner swap. At the same time, Russian President Vladimir Putin began calling up reserve troops to supplement his forces in Ukraine.

Kyrylo Tymoshenko, the deputy of the Ukrainian president's office, said a hotel in Zaporizhzhia was struck and rescuers were trying to free people trapped in rubble.

The governor of the Zaporizhzhia region, Oleksandr Starukh, said Russian forces had targeted infrastructure and damaged

University of Cambridge

Reuters | London

Britain's University of Cambridge said yesterday it had benefited from the proceeds of slavery over its history, and promised to expand scholarships for Black students and fund more research into the murderous trade.

The acknowledgement comes as a string of leading institutions - from the Bank of England to the Church of England - have been re-evaluating the central role that slavery had in enriching Britain and how they benefited from its injustices.

Cambridge said an investigation it commissioned had found no evidence that the university itself ever owned slaves or plantations directly. But the findings showed it had received "significant benefits" from slavery.

Those came from university benefactors who had made their money from the slave trade, the university's investments in companies that participated in it, and fees from plantation-owning families, according to the investigation's report.

Researchers found that fellows from Cambridge colleges were involved with the East India Company, while investors in the Royal