

News in brief

◆ **Brazilian President** Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who turns 80 next week, confirmed Thursday he will run for a fourth term in office in 2026 elections. “I’m about to turn 80 years old, but you can be sure I have the same energy I had when I was 30. And I will run for a fourth term in Brazil,” Lula said at a joint press conference with his Indonesian counterpart Prabowo Subianto in Jakarta. Lula is on a state visit to Indonesia as he seeks to expand ties in a country Brazil sees as a fellow rising economic power with similar perspectives on global issues. “I’m telling you this because we’re still going to see each other many times,” Lula told Subianto. Lula had hinted in recent months at a fourth-term run, without confirming he would be a candidate.



**Brazil’s Lula says will seek a fourth term in 2026 elections**

◆ **Turkey is in talks** with its other countries over its potential participation in an international Gaza peacekeeping mission with its military “ready” if needed, a defence ministry source said Thursday. “We are continuing contact with our counterparts regarding our participation in the task force to be established in Gaza,” the source said. The task force will operate as part of the US-led Civil-Military Coordination Centre (CMCC) for monitoring the ceasefire, which is based in the southern Israeli town of Kiryat Gat and was inaugurated on Tuesday by US Vice President JD Vance. “The CMCC has been established to facilitate the formation of the Gaza task force. Under this structure, an International Stabilisation Force (ISF) will be set up that will be in charge of monitoring the ceasefire and preventing conflict,” the source said. “For now, nothing is confirmed about the level of Turkey’s participation in such structures but it will probably be confirmed next week.”

**Turkey in talks over Gaza task force role: defence source**

◆ **The Colombian** government has asked the United States to stop attacking vessels in the Pacific and the Caribbean as part of an operation that Washington says is targeting drug smuggling. US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth on Wednesday announced strikes on two alleged drug-running boats in the Pacific that left five people dead. The strikes, which Hegseth said were carried out in international waters, bring the total number of such US attacks to at least nine, with 37 people dead, according to US figures. “Colombia calls on the US government to cease these attacks and urges it to respect the norms dictated by international law,” the foreign ministry said in a statement Wednesday evening. The government of leftist President Gustavo Petro, who has been embroiled in a war of words with Trump, “rejects the destruction by the United States of a vessel allegedly related to drug trafficking in the Pacific Ocean,” the statement added.

**Colombia calls for US to stop deadly boat attacks**



SPOTLIGHT

India plans tightening AI rules to stem deepfake surge

AFP | New Delhi, India

India has proposed sweeping new regulations to govern artificial intelligence, aiming to curb a surge in misinformation and deepfake videos in the world’s most populous nation.

The Ministry of Information Technology announced the proposed amendments, citing “the growing misuse of technologies used for the creation or generation of synthetic media”.

“Recent incidents of deepfake audio, videos and synthetic media going viral on social platforms have demonstrated the potential of generative AI to create convincing falsehoods,” a briefing note from the ministry issued late Wednesday read.

“Such content can be weaponised to spread misinformation, damage reputations, manipulate or influence elections, or commit financial fraud,” it added.

The government has already launched an online portal called Sahyog -- meaning “cooperate” in Hindi -- aimed at automating the process of sending government notices to content intermediaries such as X and Facebook.

“These proposed amendments provide a clear legal basis for labelling, traceability, and accountability,” it added,

saying it would “strengthen the due diligence obligations” of social media intermediaries.

Major AI firms looking to court users in the world’s fifth-largest economy have made a flurry of announcements about expansion this year.

This month, US startup Anthropic said it plans to open an office in India, with its chief executive Dario Amodei meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

OpenAI has said it will open an India office, with its chief Sam Altman noting that ChatGPT usage in the country had grown fourfold over the past year.

AI firm Perplexity also announced a major partnership in July with Indian telecom giant Airtel.



**India has more than 900 million internet users, according to the Internet and Mobile Association of India. China has more internet users, but India is more open to US tech companies.**

Israeli minister regrets ‘unfortunate’ remarks about Saudi Arabia

He had earlier told Saudi Arabia it could “keep riding camels”

◆ **Opposition leader Yair Lapid** had swiftly denounced the comments

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Israel’s far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich yesterday expressed regret for what he called his “unfortunate” remarks about Saudi Arabia.

He had earlier told Saudi Arabia it could “keep riding camels” if it tried to demand an independent Palestinian state in return for normalising relations with Israel.

“My statement regarding Saudi Arabia was unfortunate, and I regret any offence it may have caused,” Smotrich said in a video statement he posted on X. But he said that he also expected Saudis not to offend Israel.

*“Keep riding camels on the sand in the Saudi desert; we’ll keep truly developing -- with an economy, a society, a state and all the great and wonderful things we know how to do”, Smotrich said, prompting sharp responses in Israel.*

He had earlier told Saudi Arabia it could “keep riding camels” if it tried to demand an independent Palestinian state in return for normalising relations with Israel.

“I’m also not willing to accept hypocrisy. Just as I don’t intend to offend the Saudis, I expect from them not to offend me, or rather, offend us,” he said.

“And anyone who denies the living and very deep connection we have to the regions of our homeland in Judea and Samaria, offends us,” he added, using the Israeli Biblical term for the occupied West Bank.

Smotrich, who lives in a West Bank settlement, is an outspoken supporter of annexing the Palestinian territory, which has been occupied by Israel since 1967.

Earlier on Thursday, he had told a conference in Israel that, “if Saudi Arabia tells us normalisation in exchange for a Palestinian state, friends, no thank you”.

“Keep riding camels on the sand in the Saudi desert; we’ll keep truly developing -- with an economy, a society, a state and all the great and wonderful things we know how to do”, Smotrich said, prompting sharp responses in Israel.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid had swiftly denounced the comments.

“To our friends in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, Smotrich does not represent the State of Israel”, Lapid posted on X in Arabic, later calling for him to apologise.

Former defence minister Benny Gantz, another opposition figure, said that Smotrich’s comments “indicate ignorance, and a lack of internalisation of his responsibility as a senior minister in the government and cabinet”. Saudi Arabia’s own normalisation talks with Israel were frozen after Hamas’s October 2023 attack sparked the Gaza war.

Trump says would pull US support if Israel annexes West Bank

AFP | Washington, United States

President Donald Trump said Israel would lose its crucial backing from the United States if it annexes the occupied West Bank, in a Time magazine interview published yesterday.

Trump’s comments, which Time said were made by telephone on October 15, were published as both Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned against any annexation.

“It won’t happen. It won’t happen because I gave my word to the Arab countries. And you can’t do that now. We’ve had great Arab support,” Trump said when asked what the consequences would be for Israel if it did so.

“Israel would lose all of its support from the United States if that happened.”

Trump also told Time that he believed Saudi Arabia would join the Abraham Accords, which normalize relations between Israel and Arab states, by the end of the year.

“Yes, I do. I do,” he said when asked if he thought Riyadh would join in that timeframe.

“See they had a problem. They had a Gaza problem and they had an Iran problem. Now they don’t have those two problems,” he said, referring to Israel’s war in Gaza and Iran’s nuclear program, which US airstrikes targeted earlier this year.

Trump then said that he would be “making a decision” on whether Israel should release high-profile Palestinian prisoner Marwan Barghouti as part of peace moves.

Barghouti -- from Hamas’s rival, the Fatah movement -- was among the Palestinian prisoners Hamas wanted to see released as part of the Gaza deal, according to Egyptian state-linked media.



Palestinian first responders douse the flames on a car reportedly set alight by Israeli settlers attempting to disrupt people harvesting olives near the occupied West Bank village of Turmos Ayya near Ramallah



A Palestinian farmer carries a bag of olives after his harvest was disrupted by Israeli settlers and halted by Israeli security forces in Sa’ir village, near the Israeli occupied West Bank city of Hebron

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Trump has dispatched a stream of top officials to Israel in recent days to shore up the fragile Gaza

ceasefire he brokered earlier this month.

But as Vance wrapped up his three-day visit and Rubio arrived, Israeli lawmakers advanced two bills paving the way for West Bank annexation.

Vance said it was a “very stupid

political stunt and I personally take some insult to it.”

As Rubio left Washington he warned Israel against annexing the West Bank, saying steps taken by parliament and settler violence threatened the Gaza truce.