

News in brief

◆ Myanmar's military rulers pledged on Sunday to cooperate "as much as possible" with a peace plan agreed with ASEAN, despite a stern rebuke of the regional bloc for excluding the country's top commander from a summit this week. In an announcement in state media on Sunday, the junta said it upholds the principal of peaceful coexistence with other countries and would cooperate with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in following a five-point "consensus" agreed in April, a plan backed by the West and China. ASEAN foreign ministers decided on Oct. 15 to sideline Min Aung Hlaing, leader of a Feb. 1 Myanmar coup, for his failure to implement that plan, which included ending hostilities, initiating dialogue, allowing humanitarian support and granting a special envoy full access in the country.



Myanmar says it's committed to ASEAN peace

◆ Melbourne, the world's most locked-down city that emerged from its latest spate of COVID-19 restrictions on Friday, will see more curbs eased next week when Victoria state reaches an 80% full vaccination rate, officials said yesterday. Home to about five million people, Melbourne endured 262 days, or nearly nine months, of stay-at-home restrictions during six lockdowns since March 2020, longer than the 234-day continuous lockdown in Buenos Aires.



Melbourne, the world's most locked-down city...

◆ Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Spain would speed up aid to the hard-hit agriculture and fishing industries on the island of La Palma, where part of the volcano's cone collapsed on Saturday and red hot lava continued to flow over a month after the eruption began. Lava has covered almost 900 hectares of land, destroying over 2,000 buildings and many banana plantations. More than 7,000 people have had to leave their homes since the eruption started on Sept. 19.

Spain vows to speed up aid to volcano-hit La Palma



◆ President Tayyip Erdogan's political opponents said his call to expel the ambassadors of 10 Western allies was an attempt to distract attention from Turkey's economic difficulties, while diplomats hoped the expulsions might yet be averted. On Saturday Erdogan said he ordered the envoys to be declared 'persona non grata' for seeking philanthropist Osman Kavala's release from prison. Kemal Kilicdaroglu, leader of the main opposition CHP, said Erdogan was "rapidly dragging the country to a precipice". "The reason for these moves is not to protect national interests but to create artificial reasons for the ruining of the economy," he said on Twitter.



Erdogan's critics say demand for expulsions is distraction from economy woes

Israel, UAE sign 'green corridor' agreement



A security man takes temperature of a woman amid the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) at Dubai International Airport Reuters

Israel and the United Arab Emirates have signed a "green corridor" agreement allowing passengers vaccinated against the novel coronavirus to travel freely between the two countries, the Israeli consulate in Dubai said on Twitter yesterday.

Libyan elections commission to start registering candidates in Nov



Emad Al-Sayah, Chairman of Libya's High National Election Commission Reuters | Tripoli

Registration for candidates in Libya's presidential and parliamentary elections should open in November, the head of the electoral commission said yesterday.

Elections are a key step in a UN-backed process to end a decade of violence by creating a new political leadership whose legitimacy is widely accepted.

But wrangling over the constitutional basis for elections, the rules governing them and questions over their credibility have threatened to unravel the peace process in recent months.

The first round of the presidential election is due to be held on Dec. 24. A second round, along with a parliamentary election, will then be held at a later date, said the commission head, Emad al-Sayah.

He said the registration process should open by mid-November, after technical and logistical preparations were complete.

But the complexities of the political patchwork resulting from divisions between eastern and western Libya mean there are still hurdles to overcome.

Although parliament has issued a law enabling the presidential election to be held on Dec. 24, it has also issued another law saying the parliamentary election will happen separately, at a later date. Other political institutions have rejected parliament's proposals.

'Vibrant' cinematographer re...

Reuters | Albuquerque

The crew was setting up a difficult shot during filming on the New Mexico set of "Rust", and the movie's cinematographer, Halyna Hutchins, wasn't quite satisfied.

She turned to Lane Luper, a member of the camera crew, who suggested some adjustments that she found worked perfectly. That kind of collaborative spirit, Luper said at a candlelight vigil on Saturday, was what made Hutchins such a joy to work with.

"Her photography was beautiful, and every day, everybody on the camera team was proud to be there for her, because we

were proud of what we were creating - what she was creating," he told the crowd, two days after Hutchins was killed in an accident when actor Alec Baldwin fired a prop gun on set.

Luper said he would have been lucky to work with her again. "And I don't get to. And it sucks," he said, breaking into tears.

While organisers emphasized that the vigil in Albuquerque, New Mexico, was to honor Hutchins' memory, rather than focus on her death, some in the crowd held signs that read "Safety on Set," a reminder that the circumstances surrounding Thursday's shooting remain murky.

Details have emerged suggest-



The entrance to the film set of "Rust" is seen in Albuquerque, N.M., where Hollywood actor Alec Baldwin fatally shot director when he discharged a prop gun on set.

The production was troubled before the accident. Several crew members walked off the set at

US Palestinian mission in Jerusalem may not...

◆ US Secretary of State Antony Blinken this month reiterated Washington's plan to reopen the consulate

Reuters | Jerusalem

Israel's deputy foreign minister said yesterday that the Biden administration may shelve its plan to reopen a US diplomatic mission for Palestinians in Jerusalem after Israel voiced opposition to such a move.

The Jerusalem consulate was subsumed into the US Embassy that was moved to the contested city from Tel Aviv in 2018 by the administration of former Presi-



An American flag flutters at the premises of the former United States Consulate General in Jerusalem

dent Donald Trump - a reversal of US policy hailed by Israel and condemned by Palestinians. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken this month reiterated Washington's plan to reopen the

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	46,294,927	756,215	244,321,481
2 India	34,188,229	454,728	
3 Brazil	21,723,559	605,569	
4 UK	8,773,674	139,533	4,962,546
5 Russia	8,241,643	230,600	Recovered: 221,338,615
6 Turkey	7,827,013	68,917	
7 France	7,120,863	117,463	New cases +232,636
8 Iran	5,860,844	125,223	
9 Argentina	5,279,818	115,823	New deaths +3,730
10 Spain	4,997,732	87,132	
11 Colombia	4,989,681	127,032	
12 Italy	4,741,185	131,826	
13 Germany	4,469,304	95,794	
14 Indonesia	4,240,019	143,205	

Middle East

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	323,733		18,242		273,154	32,337
Saudi Arabia	548,252	+47	8,778	+2	537,282	2,192
UAE	739,284	+94	2,130	+1	733,250	3,904
Kuwait	412,506		2,460		409,568	478
Oman	304,163	+18	4,110	+1	299,540	513
Qatar	238,518	+82	609	+1	236,906	1,003

More than 260 Houthis killed in strikes near Marib, coalition says

France24

The Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen said yesterday it had killed more than 260 Houthi rebels in the past three days near the strategic city of Marib.

"Thirty-six military vehicles were destroyed and more than 264" rebel fighters were killed in strikes in the past 72 hours in



A Yemeni government fighter fires a vehicle-mounted weapon at a frontline position during fighting against Houthi rebels in Marib, Yemen

al-Jawba, some 50 kilometres (30 miles) south of Marib, and in al-Kassara, 30 kilometres to the northwest, the coalition said, as quoted by the Saudi Press Agency.

The Iran-backed Houthi rebels rarely comment on losses and AFP could not independently verify the toll.

The coalition has for the past two weeks reported almost daily strikes around Marib, the internationally recognised government's last bastion in oil-rich northern Yemen.

It says it has killed hundreds of Houthi rebels in the fighting.

The Houthis began a major push to seize Marib in February and have renewed their offensive since September after a lull.



The Yemeni civil war began in 2014 when the Houthis seized the capital Sanaa, 120 kilometres west of Marib, prompting Saudi-led forces to intervene to prop up the government the following year.