

News in brief

◆ **The Iranian and Russian** presidents discussed Tehran's nuclear programme yesterday as European powers threaten to reimpose sanctions on Tehran over the moribund 2015 deal. Britain, France and Germany have threatened to trigger a "snapback mechanism" to reintroduce UN sanctions that were lifted under the agreement unless Iran agrees to curb its uranium enrichment and restore cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) inspectors. Iran will hold talks with the European trio in Geneva on Tuesday, Iranian state media reported. Russia's Vladimir Putin held a phone call with Iran's Masoud Pezeshkian, the Kremlin said Monday, in which the pair "touched on the situation around Iran's nuclear programme".



Russia, Iran discuss nuclear programme ahead of European talks

◆ **France summons US ambassador over antisemitism claims**

Gaza. In a letter to French President Emmanuel Macron, Kushner, who is the father of US President Donald Trump's son-in-law, expressed his "deep concern over the dramatic rise of antisemitism in France" and the French government's "lack of sufficient action" to confront it. France on Sunday evening said "the allegations from the ambassador are unacceptable" and added that Kushner's letter, which was released to the media, violated international law.

◆ **Syria's interim president**, Ahmed al-Sharaa, will speak at the United Nations General Assembly next month, a foreign ministry official told AFP yesterday, the first Syrian leader to do so in decades. Sharaa "will take part in the United Nations General Assembly in New York where he will deliver a speech", the official said, requesting anonymity as they were not authorised to brief the media. Sharaa took power in December after his Islamist group led a coalition of forces that toppled longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad after nearly 14 years of gruelling civil war. "He will be the first Syrian president to speak at the United Nations since former president Nureddin al-Atassi (in 1967), and the first Syrian president ever to take part in the General Assembly's high-level week," scheduled for September 22-30, the official added.

Syria president to speak at UN General Assembly: official



SPOTLIGHT

US studio unearths fossilized dinosaur game 'Turok'

AFP | Paris, France

Everything old is new again, especially for gamers at the Gamescom trade fair, who got a preview of upcoming video game "Turok: Origins" -- a third-person shooter pitting the player against dinosaurs and aliens.

The original arrow-twanging Turok was a character in 1950s comic books, who made his way to Nintendo 64 consoles in a series of successful games in the late 1990s and then to other consoles in the 2000s.

After that, its eponymous native American adventurer was largely forgotten -- until US studio Saber Interactive dug him up for "Turok: Origins" and developed him into a game that looks like a blend of the "Jurassic Park" and "Predator" movie franchises.

When Universal Studios -- producer of the "Jurassic Park" movies -- tapped Saber in 2020 to develop its Turok intellectual property (IP), the gaming company was "shocked", its studio head, Jesus Iglesias, told AFP.

"It's been sleeping for a long time," he noted.

But Saber -- founded in Russia but now based in Florida in the United States -- had a track record of reviving some memorable but neglected titles.

"Saber Interactive is known for taking, from time to time, some dead IPs and rebooting them, like we did with (Warhammer 40,000's) 'Space Ma-



Gamer wait at the Reanimal video game of the Tarsier Studios

'Turok' reboot

The result is "Turok: Origins", part of which was presented at Gamescom in Germany, one of the biggest gaming trade shows in the world, which ended on Sunday after welcoming more than 357,000 visitors.

The game, which Iglesias said had 250 people working on it at the peak of its development, offers single-player and multi-player modes to tackle AI-controlled enemies.

Whereas the original run of Turok was reminiscent of early-stage Lara Croft in a prehistoric setting, the "Origins" reboot promises a fluid, fast-moving and more cinematic experience, as demanded from today's players.

"We are being respectful with the originals, especially with Turok 1 and Turok 2, and also adding some elements that help to make the universe a little bit more consistent," Iglesias said.

Israel offers 'phased' withdrawal if Lebanon **disarms Hezbollah**

Lebanese army has been deploying in the country's south

◆ **Israel has continued to strike Lebanon**

◆ **Army occupy five areas of the south**

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday said Israel was ready to back Lebanon's efforts to disarm Hezbollah and offered "a phased" pullout of its troops if Beirut followed through with plans to seize the group's weapons.

Following the war between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah last year, the Lebanese army has been deploying in the country's south and dismantling the mili-

tant group's infrastructure there.

Lebanon has been grappling with the thorny issue of disarming Hezbollah, with the cabinet this month tasking the army with developing a plan to do so by the end of the year.

Despite the November ceasefire that ended the war, Israel has continued to strike Lebanon, saying it will do so until Hezbollah is disarmed.

Israeli forces also continue to occupy five areas of the south that they deem strategic.

"Israel stands ready to support Lebanon in its efforts to disarm Hezbollah and to work together towards a more secure and stable future for both nations," said Netanyahu, according to a statement released by his office.

Israel also acknowledged "the significant step taken by the Leb-

anese government", according to the statement.

If the Lebanese government follows through with the plan, Netanyahu said Israel was prepared to "engage in reciprocal measures, including a phased reduction of IDF (military) presence in coordination with the US-led security mechanism".

'First step'

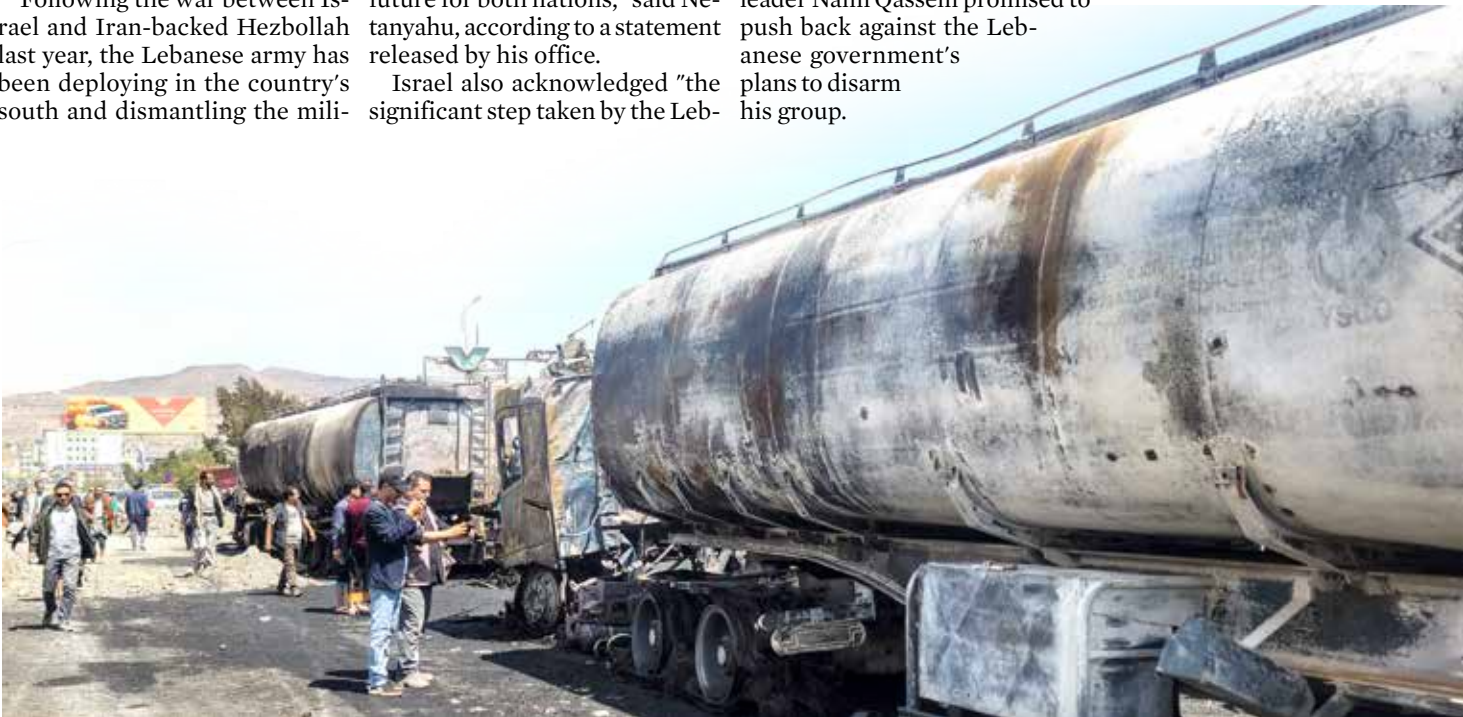
Later on Monday the Israeli military said in a statement it had "eliminated" a Hezbollah member in southern Lebanon and would "continue to operate to remove threats posed to the citizens of Israel".

Earlier this month, Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem promised to push back against the Lebanese government's plans to disarm his group.

Last week, US envoy Tom Barack called on Israel to honour commitments under a ceasefire that ended its war with Hezbollah.



Hezbollah is the only faction that kept its weapons after Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war



People stand next to a destroyed fuel truck at the site of an Israeli airstrike that targeted an oil company facility the previous day in Yemen's Huthi-held capital Sanaa

Five journalists among **20 killed** in Israeli strikes on Gaza hospital

AFP | Gaza City, Palestinian Territories

Gaza's civil defence agency said five journalists were among at least 20 people killed Monday when Israeli strikes hit a hospital in the south, with Reuters, the Associated Press and Al Jazeera mourning their slain contributors.

The ongoing war in Gaza has been one of the deadliest for journalists, with around 200 media workers killed over the course of the nearly two-year Israeli assault, according to media watchdogs.

Civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal said "the toll so far is 20 martyrs, including five journalists and one member of the civil defence", after strikes hit Khan Yunis's Nasser Hospital -- a large medical complex that has been targeted several times by Israel since the start of the war.

In a statement, the Israeli military said its troops on Monday



A journalist holds the blood-covered camera belonging to Palestinian photojournalist Mariam Dagga, a journalist who freelanced for AP since the start of the war and who was killed in an Israeli strike on Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, during her funeral

"carried out a strike in the area of Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis".

"The Chief of the General Staff instructed to conduct an initial inquiry as soon as possible," it said, adding it "regrets any harm to uninvolved individuals and

does not target journalists as such".

The civil defence's Bassal said an Israeli explosive drone targeted a building at the hospital, followed by an air strike as the wounded were being evacuated.



Mariam Dagga

Reuters reported that video journalist Hussam al-Masri -- a contractor who was working for the agency -- was operating a live feed at the hospital, "which suddenly shut down at the moment of the initial strike".