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US supports 2-state solution in Middle East

New York

US President Joe Biden's administration supports a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians and will overturn several Trump administration decisions, the acting US envoy to the United Nations assured the Security Council yesterday.

The Palestinians want a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with east Jerusalem as its capital, all territory captured by Israel in 1967.

However, under a failed peace proposal by former President Donald Trump, Washington would have recognised Jewish settlements in occupied territory as part of Israel.

Conte quits as Italy's Premier

Rome

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte handed in his resignation to the head of state yesterday, hoping he would be given an opportunity to put together a new coalition and rebuild his parliamentary majority.

The deepening political crisis is playing out against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed more than 85,000 Italians – the second highest death toll in Europe after Britain and the sixth highest in the world.

Conte lost his absolute majority in the upper house Senate last week when a junior partner, the Italia Viva party headed by former premier Matteo Renzi, quit in a row over the government's handling of the coronavirus crisis and economic recession.

BAHRAIN COVID-19

TOTAL TESTED

2647934

ACTIVE CASES

3313

DEATHS

370

DISCHARGED

97006

NEW CASES

459

CRITICAL

21

210 fils (includes VAT)



27

SPORTS

Ahli edge past Hala in overtime

Defending champions end game with decisive 7-3 run to claim eighth win in Zain Bahrain Basketball League | P 12

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HRH Prince Salman hails strategic Bahrain-US defence partnership

His Royal Highness receives Commander of US Central Command

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, yesterday received the Commander of the United States Central Command, General Kenneth F McKenzie, at Riffa Palace.

During the meeting, HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister stressed that continued defence coordination and collaboration represents a cornerstone of the strategic partnership be-



HRH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister with General McKenzie

tween Bahrain and the US.

His Royal Highness noted the role of the US in promoting international peace and stability, and reiterated Bahrain's commitment to work with allies such as the US to further strengthen bilateral relations and safeguard

regional security.

Finance and National Economy Minister Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa and Bahrain

Defence Force Chief-of-Staff Lieutenant-General Dhiyab bin Saqr Al Nuaimi were also in attendance.

His Royal Highness reiterated Bahrain's commitment to work with allies such as the US to further strengthen bilateral relations and safeguard regional security.

'It's hard to compute the sorrow'

Prime Minister Johnson 'deeply sorry' as UK COVID deaths surpass 100,000, with many more to come

Government battles to speed up vaccination delivery and keep variants of the virus at bay

London

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson says he is "deeply sorry" after the UK became the first country in Europe to pass 100,000 coronavirus-related deaths.

The latest figures showed a further 1,631 Britons had died within 28 days of a positive COVID-19 test, taking the total death toll from the pandemic to 100,162 people, while another 20,089 new cases were also recorded yesterday.

Johnson, speaking during a press conference at Downing Street, offered his "deepest con-



Johnson ... feeling the strain of COVID death surge

dolences" to those who had lost a loved one to the virus.

"It's hard to compute the sorrow contained in that grim statistic," he said.

"The years of life lost, the family gatherings not attended and for so many relatives the missed chance even to say goodbye."

I am deeply sorry for every life that has been lost and of course, as Prime Minister, I take full responsibility for everything the Government has done

PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON

"I am deeply sorry for every life that has been lost and of course, as Prime Minister, I take full responsibility for everything the Government has done," he said.

"We truly did everything we could and continue to do everything we can to minimise loss of life and to minimise suffering during a very, very difficult stage in a very, very difficult crisis for our country."

England has borne the brunt of the four nations that make up the UK, with over 88,000 COVID-19 deaths, and remains in a national lockdown which includes the closures of non-essential shops, restaurants, pubs and schools to most pupils.

The government has faced criticism for its management of the pandemic from experts who said that it waited too long to impose lockdowns and failed to get sufficient stocks of protective equipment for health workers.

Wildlife trafficking

Dozens of smuggled chameleons found in suitcase

Berlin

Austrian authorities stopped a man at the Vienna airport as he tried to smuggle 74 protected chameleons from Africa into the country.

They said in a statement that a 56-year-old man, who was not further identified, had hidden the animals in socks and empty ice cream boxes when he was caught at customs control in Vienna. He had travelled to Austria from Tanzania via Ethiopia.

"It quickly emerged that the suitcase contained living creatures which, while they would have been well camouflaged



A chameleon hidden in a sock

in a natural environment, ultimately did not outwit the X-ray machine," authorities said in a statement.

The chameleons were taken to the Austrian capital's Schoenbrunn Zoo, which said that three of the animals did not survive.

All the animals were from the Usambara Mountains in Tanzania and ranged in age from one week old to adult animals.

On the black market they would sell for about 37,000 euros (\$44,970), officials said.

The man who smuggled the animals into Austria has to pay a fine of up to 6,000 euros, the Austrian finance ministry said in a statement. "The vital work undertaken by customs also regularly assists in ending the suffering of animals and putting a stop to unscrupulous wildlife traffickers," said Austrian Finance Minister Gernot Blumel.

Iran threatens to block inspections

Tehran

Iran threatened yesterday to block short-notice inspections of its nuclear facilities by the United Nations atomic agency as it presses Washington to reverse economic sanctions imposed on Tehran. Former US President Donald Trump pulled Washington out of Iran's 2015 nuclear pact with world powers in 2018 and reimposed US sanctions that had been lifted under it.

President Joe Biden said the US will rejoin the pact if Tehran resumes strict compliance.