

News in brief

New Zealand PM Ardern backs Five Eyes, open to other alliances

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern expressed support yesterday for its Five Eyes alliance with Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States, but said her country would also consider other economic alliances in the Pacific region. New Zealand has faced increasing pressure from some elements among Western allies over its reluctance to use the Five Eyes intelligence and security alliance to criticise its top trading partner, China.



A shooting in the middle of a feminist march outside the municipal palace in the Mexican city of Guaymas left three people dead, the state's attorney general's office said. The victims included two men and a woman, the office said in a statement on Twitter. The two male victims were bodyguards of the city's mayor, Karla Cordova, while the female victim was a participant in the feminist protest, the Mexican newspaper La Jornada reported..



Turkish police break up 'violence against women' protest



Riot police fired pepper gas to disperse demonstrators who gathered in Istanbul to protest violence against women, some chanting "government resign", nearly five months after Turkey withdrew from a treaty on the issue. The group of several thousand, mostly women, marched to the city centre's Taksim Square, blocked off with barriers amid a heavy police presence. The police fired the gas and scuffled with the protesters after urging the crowd to disperse.



A shallow and strong earthquake of magnitude 6.1 struck the Myanmar-India border region early yesterday, but there were no immediate reports of damage. According to India's National Center for Seismology, the quake was at depth of 12 km, and was about 140 km away of Aizawl in northeastern India. It was felt in Chittagong in Bangladesh and as far away as east Indian city of Kolkata, some 280 miles (450.62 km) from Aizawl, according to witness accounts posted on European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre's (EMSC) website and by users on Twitter.



Ethiopia PM at frontline with army in Afar region



Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is on the frontline with the army fighting rebellious Tigrayan forces in the northeastern Afar region, state-affiliated Fana Broadcasting reported on Friday. Abiy was wearing military fatigues and speaking to the television station in the Afaan Oromo and Amharic languages, according to the broadcast. Reuters could not independently verify exactly where it was filmed.



COVID-19: Countries worst affected					Global tally	
	Country	Total cases	Total deaths			
1	USA	49,005,859	798,551		260,682,363	
2	India	34,555,431	467,468		Deaths	
3	Brazil	22,055,608	613,697		5,203,984	
4	UK	10,070,841	144,593		Recovered:	
5	Russia	9,502,879	270,292		235,538,889	
6	Turkey	8,676,639	75,840		New cases	
7	France	7,516,746	118,777		+405,793	
8	Iran	6,102,056	129,462		New deaths	
9	Germany	5,684,549	101,132		+4,854	
10	Argentina	5,322,127	116,480			
11	Spain	5,121,100	87,931			
12	Colombia	5,057,897	128,290			
13	Italy	4,982,022	133,537			
14	Indonesia	4,255,268	143,796			

Middle East							Figures as of closing
Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases	
Egypt	353,923		20,172		294,354	39,397	
Saudi Arabia	549,642	+24	8,830	+1	538,784	2,028	
UAE	741,790	+70	2,145		736,601	3,044	
Kuwait	413,224		2,465		410,520	239	
Oman	304,519		4,113		299,951	455	
Qatar	242,824	+151	611		240,278	1,935	

Australian police take control of Solomon Islands capital after days of unrest

Reuters | Sydney

A night curfew will be re-imposed in the Solomon Islands capital Honiara after Australian police began taking control of hotspots following three days of violent protests in the South Pacific island nation, witnesses said.

The Ministry of Health said in a statement that city clinics were closed and urged "all Honiara residents involved in arson, rioting, looting to please stop immediately" after its ambulances were stoned.

Tear gas was deployed in Chinatown where looting and the burning of buildings had continued yesterday morning, a resident told Reuters.

A night curfew would begin at 7pm, the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force said in a statement.

Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, who requested help from Australia, blamed foreign countries for stoking the violent protests, but did not name any.

Many of the protesters come from the most populous province Malaita and feel overlooked by the government in Guadalcanal province and oppose its 2019 decision to end diplomatic ties with Taiwan and establish formal links with China.

Malaita premier Daniel Suidani said in a statement this week that Sogavare had "elevated the interest of foreigners above those of Solomon Islanders" and should resign.

"I feel sorry for my people in Malaita because they are fed with false and deliberate lies about the switch," Sogavare told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

"These very countries that are now influencing Malaita are the countries that don't want ties with the People's Republic of China."



Smoke is seen after buildings were set on fire in Chinatown, as Solomon Islanders defied a government-imposed lockdown and protested in the capital, in Honiara

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Australian police were previously deployed to the Solomon Islands in 2003 under a peace keeping mission authorised by a Pacific Island Forum declaration and stayed for a decade

China and Taiwan have been rivals in the South Pacific for decades with some island nations switching allegiances.

China views Taiwan as a ward province with no right to state-to-state ties, which the government in Taipei hotly disputes. Only 15 countries maintain formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan. The last two to ditch Taipei in favour of Beijing were the Solomon Islands and Kiribati in September 2019.

Taiwan Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Joanne Ou said in a statement to Reuters: "We have nothing to do with the unrest".

Solomon Island resident Transform Aqorau said more than a hundred people were yesterday looting shops, before Australian Federal Police officers arrived.

"The scenes here are really chaotic. It is like a war zone," Aqorau told Reuters by telephone yesterday morning.

"There is no public transport and it is a struggle with the heat and the smoke. Buildings are still burning."

He said later Australian police were "taking control of Chinatown".

Neighbouring Papua New Guinea also sent 35 police and security officers to Honiara yesterday.

Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne said Australia was sending 100 police personnel and was "clearly focused on stability in our region".

Australian police were previously deployed to the Solomon Islands in 2003 under a peace keeping mission authorised by a Pacific Island Forum declaration and stayed for a decade.

Severe internal unrest and armed conflict from 1998 to 2003 involved militant groups from Guadalcanal and the neighbouring island of Malaita, and fighting on the outskirts of Honiara.

Death toll in Russian mine tragedy jumps past 50

Reuters | Moscow

A gas leak in a Siberian coal mine killed at least 52 people on Thursday, Russian news agencies said, including six rescuers who were sent down to try to bring out dozens of men in what was one of Russia's worst mining disasters since Soviet times.

The regional Investigative Committee said three people, including the director of the Listvyazhnaya mine and his deputy, had been arrested on suspicion of violating industrial safety rules.

It said miners had suffocated when a ventilation shaft became filled with gas. State television said prosecutors believed there had been a methane explosion.

The dead comprised 11 miners already confirmed killed, 35 who had been reported missing, and the six rescue workers.

Dozens of people were treated in hospital, at least some of them for smoke inhalation. Four were in critical condition.

The coal-producing region of Kemerovo, roughly 3,500 km (2,200 miles) east of Moscow, has suffered fatal mining accidents for years.

The Listvyazhnaya mine is part of SDS-Holding, owned by the privately held Siberian Business Union. The owner had no immediate comment.

Some 285 people were inside the mine when smoke spread through the ventilation shaft, the Emergencies Ministry said.



Members of Russian Emergencies Ministry carry a tent during a rescue operation

The dead comprised 11 miners already confirmed killed, 35 who had been reported missing, and the six rescue workers

Authorities said 239 had made it to the surface.

President Vladimir Putin said he had spoken with the governor and emergency officials, and the Kremlin said he had ordered the emergencies minister to fly to the region to help.

Kemerovo declared three days of mourning.

In 2007, the region was the site of the worst mining accident since the collapse of the Soviet Union when an explosion at the Ulyanovskaya mine claimed the lives of more than 100 people. In 2010, explosions at the region's Rapsadskaya mine killed more than 90 people.

Ukraine backed c

Ukraine President Volo

Ukraine fully prepared for Russia escalation: Zelenskiy

AFP | London

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy yesterday said Ukraine had uncovered a plot to overthrow his government next week, involving individuals from Russia caught on tape talking about roping Ukraine's richest businessman into backing a coup.

The Kremlin denied any role in any coup plot, and the businessman called the president's account an "absolute lie." Zelenskyy himself gave few details and stopped short of saying whether he believed the Kremlin was behind the plot.

But the accusation raised the temperature at a time when Kyiv and its Western allies have already accused Moscow of massing troops near the Ukrainian border for a possible assault, a suggestion Moscow dismisses as false and alarmist.

Speaking at an hours-long news conference, Zelenskyy said Ukrainian intelligence had obtained audio recordings of the plotters talking about involving business magnate Rinat Akhmetov into joining their coup.

"We have challenges not only from the Russian Federation and possible escalation - we have big internal challenges. I received information that a coup d'etat will take place in our country on Dec. 1-2," Zelenskyy said.

Akhmetov said in a statement:

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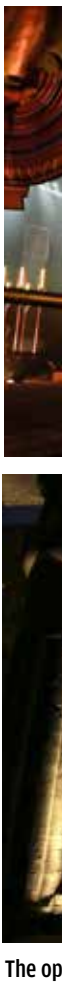
Reuters | Cairo

A restored road connecting two ancient Egyptian temple complexes in Karnak and Luxor was unveiled on Thursday in a lavish ceremony aimed at raising the profile of one of Egypt's top tourist spots.

The procession to reopen the 2.7 km (1.7 mile) road included a reenactment of the ancient Opet festival, where statues of Theban deities were paraded annually during the New Kingdom era in celebration of fertility and the flooding of the Nile.

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi marched along the road at the start of the ceremony. Pharaonic chariots and more than 400 young performers dressed in pharaonic costumes paraded along the avenue.

The 3,400-year-old road linking the ancient centres of Karnak and Luxor, also known as Road of the Rams or the Avenue of the Sphinxes, is lined with hundreds of ram- and human-headed sphinxes, though over the



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