

1512

Spanish Crown issues the Laws of Burgos, governing the conduct of settlers with regard to native Indians in the New World

1657

Flushing Remonstrance petition is signed in the Dutch colony of New Netherland, protesting the ban on Quaker worship and asserting the right to religious freedom



International Monetary Fund and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development are formally established with the signing of articles of agreement by member countries, ratifying Bretton Woods Conference findings based on ideas of economists Harry Dexter White and John Maynard Keynes [1]

1945

X

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TWEETS

01



Too many leaders today view human rights as the problem. We know human rights are the solution. They are the foundation of peace. They are the engine of progress. And they are the path out of conflict & chaos to security & hope.

@antonioguterres

02



Evidence-based scientific innovation is driving better health outcomes around the world. New medicines and vaccines are saving lives from diseases once thought to be among the most daunting.

@DrTedros

03



In a turbulent world that moves ever faster, Christmas offers us a rare pause moment to breathe, slow down, and remember what truly matters.

@vonderleyen

04



It is important if we succeed in organizing what we discussed today with President Trump's envoys. Some documents, as I see it, are nearly ready, and some documents are fully prepared.

@ZelenskyyUa

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stance)

Shook the whole town

Nigerians surprised by US strikes



A missile launch from a naval vessel as President Donald Trump says US forces conducted "powerful and deadly" strikes against Islamic State militants in northwestern Nigeria

● The Department of Defense's US Africa Command, using an acronym for the Islamic State group, said "multiple ISIS terrorists" were killed in an attack in the northwestern state of Sokoto.

AFP | Kano, Nigeria

Nigerians across Sokoto state awoke to loud blasts Thursday night, worried their village was being attacked by one of the multiple armed groups that plague northwest Nigeria.

They were in fact strikes by the United States, in a Christmas Day bombardment targeting militants in several places.

AFP reached three villagers by phone in the Sokoto countryside.

The attack was a surprise to some around Jabo town, who said that their area was sometimes a target of armed "bandit" gangs and jihadists, but was not a stronghold for the groups.

"We heard a loud explosion which shook the whole town and everyone was scared," said Haruna Kallah from Jabo, some 100 kilometres south of Sokoto city near the Niger border.

Nigeria and the US have been locked in a dispute over what President Donald Trump has characterised as the mass killing of Christians in the country's armed conflicts.

The Nigerian government and independent analysts reject Washington's framing, noting the west African country faces interlinked security crises that

Nigeria signals more strikes likely in 'joint' US operations

AFP | Lagos, Nigeria

Nigeria yesterday signalled more strikes against jihadist groups were expected after a Christmas Day bombardment by US forces against militants in the north of the country, which it said was a joint operation with its military.

The west African country faces multiple interlinked security crises in its north, where jihadists have been waging an insurgency in the northeast since 2009 and armed "bandit" gangs raid villages and stage kidnappings in the northwest.

The US strikes come after Abuja and Washington were locked in a diplomatic dispute over what Trump char-

acterised as the mass killing of Christians amid Nigeria's myriad armed conflicts.

Nigeria's military said in a statement that its forces, in conjunction with the United States "conducted precision strike operations against identified foreign ISIS-linked elements" in northwest Nigeria.

Washington's framing of the violence as amounting to Christian "persecution" is rejected by the Nigerian government.

"It's Nigeria that provided the intelligence," the country's foreign minister, Yusuf Tuggar, told broadcaster Channels TV, saying he was on the phone with US State Secretary Marco Rubio ahead of the bombardment.

Ayuba Abdulkarim, another Jabo resident, said: "There was a huge explosion and everyone was terrified and thought the town was under attack from Lakurawa.

"Luckily no one was hurt, but fragments from the bomb caused damage to walls and roofs of nearby homes."

Tukur Shehu, resident of Tangaza, a neighbouring district, said two strikes targeted Warriya and Alkassim villages -- known to house Lakurawa camps, from where they launch attacks and keep hostages.

US special forces sneaked into Tangaza district in October 2020 and rescued Philip Walton, a US citizen kidnapped from his home in southern Ni-

China's high-speed rail network passes 50,000km mark

AFP | Beijing, China

China's sprawling high-speed rail network passed 50,000 kilometres (31,000 miles) in total operating distance with the opening of a new line on Friday, state media reported.

The country has the world's largest rail network -- one-fifth longer than the circumference of the earth.

The trip begins in the city of Xi'an -- home to China's famed Terracotta Warriors -- and ends in Yan'an to its north, state broadcaster CCTV said. Both cities are in northern China's Shaanxi province.

Some homes were demolished and displaced residents would receive 5,000 yuan (\$700) per household to relocate, local authorities said in 2020 when construction began.

China's rail network has expanded by around 32 percent compared to 2020, state-



Representative image

owned China Railway added Friday in a statement.

The Xi'an-Yan'an line spans a total of 299 kilometres and the shortest trip takes 68 minutes, CCTV said.

The C9309 train runs at 350 kilometres (217 miles) per hour, outpacing Japan's Shinkansen, which has a top speed of 320 kilometres (200 miles) per hour.

Beijing has also been financing railways in other Asian countries under its Belt and Road Initiative, which funds infrastructure projects globally, but a number of plans have been stalled or mired in controversy.

Israel announces recognition of Somaliland as 'sovereign state'



a general view of the city of Hargeisa, capital and largest city of the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland.

Jerusalem, Undefined

Israel yesterday formally recognised Somaliland as an "independent and sovereign state" and signed an agreement to establish diplomatic ties between the two countries, the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

"The prime minister announced today the official recognition of the Republic of Somaliland as an independent and sovereign state," his office said, making Israel the first country to officially recognise Somaliland as a country.

"The declaration is in the spirit of the Abraham Ac-

cords," Netanyahu's office said, referring to several agreements between Israel and Arab countries brokered by US President Donald Trump during his first presidency.

The president of Somaliland, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi, hailed the recognition move, saying it marked the beginning of a "strategic partnership".

"This is a historic moment as we warmly welcome... the Prime Minister of the State of Israel's recognition of the Republic of Somaliland and affirm Somaliland's readiness to join the Abraham Accords," normalising relations with Israel, he posted on X.

Palestinian kills two in stabbing and ramming attack, Israeli police say

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

A Palestinian killed two people in a stabbing and car-ramming attack in northern Israel yesterday, triggering the defence minister to threaten a crackdown on the assailant's village in the occupied West Bank.

The attack came a day after an Israeli military reservist dressed in civilian clothes rammed his vehicle into a Palestinian man in the West Bank, where violence has surged

since the war in Gaza began.

The Gaza war, sparked by Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, also set off several attacks by Palestinians inside Israel that have left dozens dead.

"Preliminary investigation indicates this was a rolling terror attack that began in the city of Beit Shean, where a pedestrian was run over," Israeli police said in a statement about Friday's attack, adding that the victim was a 68-year-old man.