

News in brief

◆ **An Afghan aid agency** appealed yesterday for cash for survivors of a deadly earthquake, saying it had no room to store food and had enough tents and money for villagers to meet their particular needs would be most useful now. Afghanistan's most destructive earthquake in decades struck a remote southeastern region near the Pakistani border on Wednesday last week, killing at least 1,000 people, injuring 2,000 and destroying 10,000 homes. Among the dead were 155 children, with nearly 250 children injured and 65 orphaned, the U.N. humanitarian office (OCHA) said.



Afghan agency says earthquake survivors need cash; enough aid for now

"People ask for cash in the areas, they say they've received enough aid," the deputy head of the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), Mullah Noordden Turaby, told a news conference in Kabul.

◆ **US likely to announce this week purchase of missile defense system for Ukraine**

◆ **The United States** is likely to announce this week the purchase of an advanced medium to long range surface-to-air missile defence system for Ukraine, a source familiar with the

matter told Reuters on Sunday. Washington is also expected to announce other security assistance for Ukraine, including additional artillery ammunition and counter-battery radars to address needs expressed by the Ukrainian military, the source added. The weaponry is the latest assistance to be offered to Ukraine by the United States since Russia invaded its eastern European neighbor in February. This month, President Joe Biden agreed to provide Ukraine with \$700 million in military aid, including advanced rocket systems that can strike with precision at long-range targets.

◆ **NATO will increase** the number of its forces at high readiness massively to over 300,000, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said yesterday. "We will transform the NATO response force and increase the number of our high readiness forces to well over 300,000," he told reporters ahead of a NATO summit in Madrid later this week in Madrid. NATO's quick reaction force, the NATO response force, so far has some 40,000 troops.



NATO to massively increase high-readiness forces to 300,000 - Stoltenberg

◆ **France wants sanctions-hit** Iran and Venezuela to return to the oil markets to alleviate a Russian squeeze of energy supplies that has spiked prices, a French presidency official said yesterday. It also wants a planned mechanism to cap the price of oil to be as broad as possible and not be limited to

Russian output. The French official also said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told G7 leaders on Monday morning that the conditions were not right to negotiate with Russia and wanted to be in a position of strength before began any negotiations.



COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	88,794,286	1,040,805	549,102,315
2 India	43,407,046	525,020	
3 Brazil	32,078,638	670,459	
4 France	30,513,713	149,317	6,351,114
5 Germany	27,771,111	140,734	Recovered:
6 UK	22,592,827	179,927	524,151,212
7 Russia	18,421,564	380,943	New cases
8 S. Korea	18,329,448	24,525	+123,816
9 Italy	18,234,242	168,102	New deaths
10 Turkey	15,085,742	98,996	+255
11 Spain	12,681,820	107,799	
12 Vietnam	10,744,085	43,084	
13 Argentina	9,367,172	129,070	
14 Japan	9,253,386	31,126	

Middle East

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	515,645		24,613		442,182	48,850
Saudi Arabia	792,860	+1,076	9,202	+1	773,962	9,696
UAE	940,503	+1,744	2,313	+2	920,873	17,317
Kuwait	641,985		2,555		634,914	4,516
Oman	390,244		4,260		384,669	1,315
Qatar	380,530	+668	679		374,978	4,873

S.Africa says 21 teens likely killed by something the

Reuters | Cape Town

South African authorities investigating 21 teenagers found dead at an east coast tavern over the weekend said yesterday the youths were probably killed by something they ate, drank or smoked, ruling out the earlier-touted possibility of a stampede.

The still unexplained deaths of the teens, some of whom were celebrating the end of school ex-



Forensic personnel investigate after the deaths of patrons found inside the Enyobeni Tavern, in Scenery Park, outside East London in the Eastern Cape province, South Africa.

ams and others a birthday party, have brought an outpouring of grief and shocked a nation accustomed to injuries linked to a binge drinking culture.

"It is either something they ingested which will point to poisoning, whether its food or drinks, or it is something they inhaled," Unathi Binqose, spokesperson for the Eastern Cape's provincial community safety department said by telephone on Monday. He said hookah pipes were visible in

Russia in historic

● **Grace period on \$100 mln interest payment due May 27 ended Sunday**

● **Russia default shows dramatic impact of sanctions-US official**

● **Russian missiles hit crowded shopping mall in central Ukraine - Zelenskyy**

Reuters | London

Russia defaulted on its international bonds for the first time in more than a century, the White House said, as sweeping sanctions have effectively cut the country off from the global financial system, rendering its assets untouchable.

The Kremlin, which has the money to make payments thanks to oil and gas revenues, swiftly rejected the claims, and has accused the West of driving it into an artificial default.

Earlier, some bondholders said they had not received overdue interest on Monday following the

expiry of a key payment deadline on Sunday. Russia has struggled to keep up payments on \$40 billion of outstanding bonds since its invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24.

"This morning's news around the finding of Russia's default, for the first time in more than a century, situates just how strong the actions are that the U.S., along with allies and partners have taken, as well as how dramatic the impact has been on Russia's economy," the U.S. official said on the sidelines of a G7 summit in Germany.

Russia's efforts to avoid what would be its first major default on international bonds since the Bolshevik revolution more than a century ago hit a roadblock in late May when the US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) effectively blocked Moscow from making payments.

"Since March we thought that a Russian default is probably inevitable, and the question was just when," Dennis Hranitzky, head of sovereign litigation at law firm Quinn Emanuel, told Reuters ahead of the Sunday deadline.

"OFAC has intervened to answer that question for us, and the default is now upon us."

Pledging new sanctions, G7 to stand 'for as long as it takes'

Reuters | Schloss Elmau, Germany

The Group of Seven club of wealthy nations yesterday vowed to stand with Ukraine "for as long as it takes", promising to tighten the squeeze on Russia's finances with new sanctions that include a proposal to cap the price of Russian oil.

The announcement came after Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, addressing G7 leaders at their summit in the Bavarian Alps via a video

link, asked for weapons and air defences to gain the upper hand in the war against Russia within months.

The G7 statement aimed to signal that its members were ready to back Ukraine for the long haul, at a time when soaring inflation and energy shortages - fuelled by Russia's invasion - have tested the West's sanctions resolve.

"We will continue to provide financial, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi is one of the five leaders of guest nations joining energy, health, food security and gender equality on the second day of the summit.

Magnificent ancient mosaic found near Tel A

Reuters | Lod, Israel

An exceptionally well-preserved Roman floor mosaic, showing a rich variety of fish, animals, birds and ships, has returned to the site where it was first found in a Tel Aviv suburb after a decade-long tour of some of the world's top museums.

The 1,700 year-old mosaic, from the late Roman period, was discovered in 1996 during highway construction work, but was not put on display until 2009, when sufficient funding to preserve it was donated.

The design of the mosaic was influenced by North African mosaics and lacks any depiction of people, suggesting it may have belonged to a Christian or a Jew who wanted to avoid pagan attributes such as depiction of Roman gods, said archaeologist Amir Gorzalczany from the Israel Antiquities Authority.

The mosaic will now be exhibited at an archaeological centre built where it was found, in Lod.



Workers clean a restored Roman-era mosaic after it was put on display at its original site in Lod, now an Israeli city where an arcl