

News in brief

◆ **Ukraine received a** US-made Patriot air defence system from Israel a month ago, with two more expected in coming months, President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday. Kyiv is scrambling to beef up its air defences to repel daily Russian barrages of drones and missiles, especially ahead of winter, with heating infrastructure a frequent target of the attacks. “The Israeli (Patriot) system is operating in Ukraine. It has been operating for a month. We will receive two Patriot systems in the fall,” Zelensky told journalists during a briefing. Zelensky spoke following his return from New York, where he addressed the United Nations and met with US President Donald Trump and other senior US officials. After Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, Israel adopted a neutral position by not sanctioning Russia, unlike the Western allies. But its ties with Moscow cooled as Russia drifted closer to Iran, which the West says supplies drones that attack Ukraine, and as the Kremlin condemned Israel’s war in Gaza.



Ukraine says received Patriot system from Israel

◆ **Italy seizes over 150 tonnes of counterfeit cigarettes**

◆ **More than 150 tonnes** of counterfeit cigarettes were seized from the largest illegal factory ever discovered in Italy, customs police said in a statement yesterday. An underground bunker housed the 1,600-square-metre (17,000 square feet) factory near the town of Cassino southeast of Rome, which produced more than seven million cigarettes a day -- around 2.7 billion a year -- the police estimated. The illegal factory was accessed via “a sophisticated hydraulic mechanism that perfectly concealed the bunker where the machines were installed and tonnes of counterfeit cigarettes stored,” the statement said. Officers discovered electric switches concealed in a cardboard box when searching an “almost completely empty” logistics warehouse that “showed no sign of suspicious activity”.

◆ **Unidentified drones** were observed during the night over Denmark’s biggest military base, police said Saturday, the latest in a slew of sightings that Danish officials have called a “hybrid attack”. The mystery drone observations have prompted the closure of several airports across the Scandinavian country since Monday, when the first drones appeared. “I can confirm that we had an incident around 8:15 pm (1815 GMT Friday) that lasted for some hours. One to two drones were observed outside and over the airbase,” duty officer Simon Skelsjaer told AFP, referring to the Karup military base. He said police could not comment on where the drones came from, adding: “We didn’t take them down.” Police were cooperating with the military in their investigation, he said. The Karup base shares its runways with the Midtjylland civilian airport, which was briefly closed though no flights were affected as no commercial flights were scheduled at that hour, Skelsjaer said.

New drone sightings over Denmark’s biggest military base



SPOTLIGHT

Trump targets more opponents after ‘dirty cop’ Comey

Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump called Friday for more of his political opponents to face criminal charges as he cheered the indictment of former FBI director James Comey and branded him a “dirty cop.”

The Republican’s comments step up an extraordinary, undisguised campaign of retribution against those who oppose him that defies decades of norms in US politics.

“Frankly I hope there are others,” Trump told reporters at the White House when asked about Comey’s indictment on Thursday, describing his opponents as “corrupt, radical-left Democrats.”

“It’s not revenge. It’s also about the fact that you can’t let this go on.”

Presidents have historically striven to show clear separation between the White House and the Justice Department. Trump has smashed that precedent, making clear he intends to influence Comey’s case -- and others.

Comey was charged with making false

statements and obstruction of justice in connection with the probe he conducted into whether Trump colluded with Russia to win the 2016 election.

“He’s a dirty cop, he’s always been a dirty cop,” Trump told reporters about Comey.

Asked who would be next for prosecution, Trump said: “It’s not a list, but I think there will be others.”

The charges against the former FBI chief came days after Trump publicly urged Attorney General Pam Bondi to take action against Comey and others he sees as enemies.

They included Leticia James, who as New York’s state prosecutor brought a civil fraud case against Trump, and current California Senator Adam Schiff, who led the prosecution at the president’s first impeachment in 2019.

The New York Times reported Friday that the Trump Justice Department was also seeking information about Fani Willis, the Georgia district attorney who brought an election interference case against Trump.



Sweeping UN sanctions loom for Iran after nuclear talks fail

● **An 11th-hour effort by Iran allies Russia and China to postpone the sanctions until April failed to win enough votes**

● **European powers triggered the “snapback” mechanism a month ago**

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Sweeping UN sanctions loomed for Iran late Saturday for the first time in a decade, after last ditch nuclear talks with Western powers failed to produce a breakthrough.

President Masoud Pezeshkian said the United States had offered Iran only a short reprieve in return for handing over its whole stockpile of enriched uranium, an offer he described as unacceptable.

An 11th-hour effort by Iran allies Russia and China to postpone the sanctions until April failed to win enough votes on the Security Council on Friday, meaning they will go into effect at midnight GMT on Saturday.

Though Iran allowed inspectors back into some of its nuclear facilities, Western governments said they saw insufficient progress to justify delaying sanctions, after a week of high-level diplomacy.

European powers triggered the “snapback” mechanism a month ago, accusing Iran of failing to comply with its obligations under a 2015 deal with major powers that saw the UN sanctions frozen in return for restrictions on its nuclear activities.

Pezeshkian told reporters in

What do the sanctions target?

The sanctions target companies, organizations and individuals that contribute directly or indirectly to Iran’s nuclear program or the development of its ballistic missiles.

Providing necessary equipment, expertise, or funding are all grounds for sanctions.

Swath of the economy affected

The sanctions that will be reinstated include an embargo on conventional weapons with the prohibition of any sale or transfer of arms to Iran.

Imports, exports or transfers of parts and technologies related to the nuclear and ballistic program will be prohibited.

The assets of entities and individuals abroad belonging to Iranian persons or groups linked to the nuclear program will be frozen.

Individuals designated as participating in prohibited nuclear activities may be banned from traveling to UN member states.

UN member states will be required to restrict access to banking and financial facilities that could help Iran’s nuclear or ballistic programs.

Anyone violating the sanctions regime could see their assets frozen worldwide.

The EU had its own sanctions

Separate measures by the European Union could now be imposed alongside the core, global sanctions.

Their goal was to hit the Iranian economy, not only to hamper nuclear activity but also to inflict fiscal pain to force Tehran to comply.

Western nations fear that Iran will acquire nuclear weapons, which Tehran vehemently denies while defending its right to develop a nuclear program for civilian purposes.

The United States already imposes its own sanctions, including ones to prohibit other countries from buying Iranian oil, after President Donald Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal in his first term.

How does ‘snapback’ take effect?

The “snapback” process reactivates UN resolutions, but their practical implementation requires UN member states to update their laws to comply.

It will be down to the EU and Britain to pass legislation so that the sanctions can be enforced, but neither has given details on that process.

How are sanctions enforced?

The UN Security Council resolutions and the associated sanctions are binding -- but are regularly violated.

The big question is whether countries like China and Russia, which consider the triggering of the “snapback” illegal, might decide not to comply.



Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York City

New York that Washington had asked Tehran to relinquish all of its enriched uranium in exchange for a three-month reprieve from sanctions.

The United States “wants us to hand over all our enriched uranium to them, and in return they would give us three months” exemption from sanctions, Pezeshkian told reporters in New York before flying home.

“This is by no means acceptable,” he said.

He previously said France had made a similar proposal, offering only a one-month delay.

“Why would we put ourselves in such a trap and have a noose around our neck each month?” he asked, accusing the United States of pressuring Europeans not to compromise.

Faced with Russian threat, NATO flexes military muscle in North Sea

AFP | Undefined

NATO flexed its muscles in the North Sea this week in a display of military might, as Russia allegedly tested the alliance’s defenses on its eastern flank.

F-18 fighter jets lined up on the world’s largest aircraft carrier, flanked by 20 ships and with some 10,000 military personnel from 13 countries.

US destroyers and French and Danish frigates escorted the giant USS Gerald R. Ford on the high seas as part of NATO’s Neptune

Strike 25-3 exercise.

F-35 and F-18 jets flew overhead in a diamond formation behind an E-2 Hawkeye, in a demonstration of their capabilities and to test their coordination at a time of high tension with Moscow.

One day before the exercise, a Russian reconnaissance aircraft flew three times over the German frigate Hamburg at “very low altitude” in the Baltic Sea on September 21, according to the German defence ministry.

“We consider this behaviour unprofessional and uncooperative,” said a ministry spokesman.

The NATO exercise began the same day that, a few hundred kilometres away, “three or four large drones” flew over Copenhagen Airport, disrupting air traffic.

These “hybrid attacks” could increase, warned Denmark’s Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen.

“We reassure our allies, and with our adversaries or others...

we establish a strategic deterrent as a group, as a team,” said US Rear Admiral Paul Lanzilotta, commander of Carrier Strike Group Twelve, in the vast hangar of the carrier.

France participated in Neptune Strike with its frigate Bretagne, which can carry out anti-submarine and anti-air warfare missions.



F-18E fighter jet take off from aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford