

News in brief

◆ **Fine particle air pollution** led to 238,000 premature deaths in the European Union in 2020, the bloc's environmental watchdog said Thursday, a slight rise from the previous year. At the same time, the overall rate for EU countries in 2020 was 45 percent lower than in 2005, the agency said, noting that "if this rate of decline is maintained, the EU will reach [its] zero pollution action plan target before 2030." Across the 27-nation bloc that year, "exposure to concentrations of fine particulate matter above the 2021 World Health Organization guideline level resulted in 238,000 premature deaths," the European Environment Agency said in a new report.



**Air pollution killed 238,000 Europeans prematurely in 2020: EU watchdog**

◆ **The US Transportation Security Administration (TSA)** said it screened 2.56 million air passengers on Sunday, the highest number since December 2019 and the busiest day since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number was, however, below the 2.88 million screened on the same day in 2019 at the end of the busy US Thanksgiving travel period. US airlines reported very few cancellations over the holiday travel period, including 177 on Sunday and 36 yesterday. US Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said

**US screened 2.56 million air passengers Sunday, highest since 2019**



cancellations over the holiday travel period, including 177 on Sunday and 36 yesterday. US Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said Saturday on Twitter that Friday "went well for air travel on-time performance, with cancellation and delay rates at 0.4% and 0.3%, respectively."

◆ **Monkeypox is to be renamed mpox**, the World Health Organization announced yesterday, in a bid to avoid stigmatisation stemming from the existing name. Monkeypox received its name because the virus was originally identified in monkeys kept for research in Denmark in 1958, but the disease is found in a number of animals, and most frequently in rodents. A surge in monkeypox infections has been reported since early May among men who have sex with men, outside the African countries where it has long been endemic. "When the outbreak of monkeypox expanded earlier this year, racist and stigmatising language online, in other settings and in some communities was observed and reported to WHO," the UN health agency said in a statement.



**Monkeypox to be renamed mpox: WHO**

◆ **Police yesterday** stopped and searched people at the sites of weekend protests in Shanghai and Beijing, after crowds there and in other Chinese cities demonstrated against stringent COVID-19 measures disrupting lives three years into the pandemic. From the streets of several Chinese cities to dozens of university campuses, protesters made a show of civil disobedience unprecedented since leader Xi Jinping assumed power a decade ago. During his tenure, Xi has overseen the quashing of dissent and expansion of a high-tech social surveillance system that has made protest more difficult, and riskier. There was no sign of new protests yesterday in Beijing or Shanghai, but dozens of police were in the areas where the demonstrations took place. Police have been asking people for their phones to check if they had virtual private networks (VPNs) and the Telegram app, which has been used by weekend protesters, residents and social media users said. VPNs are illegal for most people in China, while the Telegram app is blocked from China's internet.

**China tightens security after rare protests**

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Potatoes can help you lose weight, scientists say

Daily Mail

Those looking to lose weight have long been told to avoid carb-heavy foods.

But though it may seem counter-intuitive, scientists now believe starchy potatoes could be the secret to shedding pounds.

This is because, at meal-times, people tend to eat the same weight of food in order to feel full, regardless of how many calories the meal contains. According to researchers, those who add potatoes - which are carb-rich and dense - to their plate become full faster, therefore preventing them from trying to fill up on more calorific foods after.

Potatoes contain around 80 calories per 100g - more than twice as much as other vegetables, such as carrots and broccoli.

But they also contain up to half the calories of bread, pasta and rice, when eaten in the same quantities.

But researchers were quick to point out that the

method of cooking and preparing the potatoes is important - and that eating chips and crisps should be avoided, since frying lowers the nutritional value.

Study co-author Professor Candida Rebello, a dietitian at Pennington Biomedical Research Centre in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in the US, said: "People tend to eat the same weight of food regardless of calorie content in order to feel full."

"By eating foods with a heavier weight that are low in calories, you can easily reduce the number of calories you consume."

"The key aspect of our study is that we did not reduce the portion size of meals but lowered their caloric content by including potatoes."

"Each participant's meal was tailored to their personalised calorific needs, yet by replacing some meat content with potato, participants found themselves fuller, quicker, and often did not even finish their meal."

"In effect, you can lose weight with little effort."



# US weighs sending 100 strike weapon to Ukraine

● **US and allied military inventories are shrinking, and Ukraine faces an increasing need for more sophisticated weapons**

● **GLSDB could be delivered as early as spring 2023**

Reuters | Washington



A M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) takes part in a military exercise near Liepaja, Latvia

The Pentagon is considering a Boeing proposal to supply Ukraine with cheap, small precision bombs fitted onto abundantly available rockets, allowing Kyiv to strike far behind Russian lines as the West struggles to meet the demand for more arms.

US and allied military inventories are shrinking, and Ukraine faces an increasing need for more sophisticated weapons as the war drags on. Boeing's proposed system, dubbed Ground-Launched Small Diameter Bomb (GLSDB), is one of about a half-dozen plans for getting new munitions into production for Ukraine and America's Eastern European al-

lies, industry sources said.

Although the United States has rebuffed requests for the 185-mile (297km) range ATACMS missile, the GLSDB's 94-mile (150km) range would allow Ukraine to hit valuable military targets that have been out of reach and help it continue pressing its counterattacks by disrupting Russian rear areas.

GLSDB could be delivered as early as spring 2023, according to a document reviewed by Reuters and three people familiar with

the plan. It combines the GBU-39 Small Diameter Bomb (SDB) with the M26 rocket motor, both of which are common in U.S. inventories.

Doug Bush, the US Army's chief weapons buyer, told reporters at the Pentagon last week the Army was also looking at accelerating production of 155-millimeter artillery shells - currently only manufactured at government facilities - by allowing defence contractors to build them.

The invasion of Ukraine drove up demand for American-made weapons and ammunition, while US allies in Eastern Europe are "putting a lot of orders," in for a range of arms as they supply Ukraine, Bush added.

"It's about getting quantity at a cheap cost," said Tom Karako, a weapons and security expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He said falling US inventories help explain the rush to get more arms now,

# Turkish forces nearly ready for Syria ground

Reuters | Oncupinar, Turkey

● **Turkey previously launched incursions against YPG**

● **Russia, US voiced concern about potential offensive**

Turkey's army needs just a few days to be ready for a ground incursion into northern Syria and such a decision may come at a cabinet meeting yesterday, Turkish officials said, as Turkish forces bombarded a Kurdish militia across the border.

Howitzers fired daily from Tur-

key have struck Kurdish YPG targets for a week, while warplanes have carried out airstrikes.

The escalation comes after a deadly bomb attack in Istanbul two weeks ago that Ankara blamed on the YPG militia. The YPG has denied involvement in the bombing and has responded at times to the cross-border attacks



President Tayyip Erdogan with mortar shelling. "The Turkish Armed Forces needs just a few days to become

# Food of the future: London air raid shelter to undergo

Reuters | London

In an underground World War Two air raid shelter where London tube trains can be heard rattling overhead, aromatic coriander leaves tilt towards the pink glow of LED bulbs - a vision of how farms could look in the future.

Zero Carbon Farms grows herbs and salads in Clapham, south London, a densely populated area with no room for conventional agriculture. But 30 metres below ground there is a kilometre of tunnels, and technology has made farming here a reality.

Seven years after its first harvest, the company will soon double its growing space, responding to strong demand for its pea shoots, rocket and watercress from major British retailers like Marks & Spencer (MKS.L) and local restaurants.

Buyers like the freshness of the produce, which can make it onto a diner's plate within two hours of harvesting, as well as its arrival into the city without racking up



Zero Carbon Farm's business development director Olivia O'Brien inspects herbs and micro-greens that grow at a disused World War Two bunker using hydroponic technology and LED lighting, powered by renewable energy, in London



An employee harvests herbs and micro-greens that are grown in a disused World War Two bunker using hydroponic technology and LED lighting, powered by renewable energy, in London, Britain

emissions by air or from a long journey.

"The future is very, very bright for this industry and I think that what really is going to be the fundamental pivot point is the right application of technology," said the farm's head grower Tommaso Vermeir. Vertical farming, the name given to the production of crops in a series of stacked levels, often in a controlled environment, is a fast-growing industry with billions of dollars being pumped

into projects across the globe.

It is seen as part of the solution to the food security challenge posed by population expansion at a time when climate change and geopolitics threaten supply.

But growing by artificial light is more energy intensive than conventional farming and the high costs of production have been a challenge for vertical farms across the world.

"What makes this industry so exciting and challenging is that no

one's quite cracked it," said Zero Carbon Farm's business development director Olivia O'Brien.

INBUILT INSULATION

The farm's subterranean location provides inbuilt insulation from the cold. The company has what it calls "virtual private wiring" bringing in energy from renewable sources.

Energy prices have soared this year but Vermeir said an arrangement with supplier Octopus