

X

TOP 4 TWEETS

01



During my visit to Cyprus, I heard from many Cypriots. Their message was clear: they want a future defined by cooperation, opportunity & peace. The @UN remains fully committed to supporting a process towards a settlement of the Cyprus issue based on dialogue, respect & good faith.

@antonioguterres

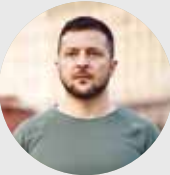
02



No bill became law in the most exceptional republic in human history without Lindsey Graham having a say in it”

@POTUS

03



On the way from Washington, I had a conversation with President Macron. I informed Emmanuel about the details of the meetings in the White House and the U.S. Senate, as well as the prospects that exist in diplomacy right now.

@ZelenskyyUa

04



Greetings to all wildlife enthusiasts on Global Tiger Day. The people of India are proud of the fact that we are home to almost 70% of the global tiger population. India’s tiger conservation efforts are inspired by our centuries-old culture of living in harmony with nature and powered by the collective will of our people.

@narendramodi

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

Palestinian Authority floats launching petrol company to tackle fuel crisis

AFP | Ramallah, Palestinian Territories

Palestinian finance minister Estaphan Salameh yesterday floated a slate of proposals to deal with a severe fuel crisis in the occupied West Bank, including the creation of a public petrol company.

For nearly two weeks, scenes of cars lined up at petrol stations have become ubiquitous throughout the West Bank, as stations struggle to provide the three million litres of fuel that the Palestinian territory consumes daily.

AFP journalists have reported Palestinians filling up water bottles in order to get stranded, out-of-gas cars moving again.

Shared taxis, which effectively serve as the West Bank’s public transportation system, have threatened to stop operations altogether.

“What is being proposed is



The Palestinian owner of a closed gas station sits near his gas pumps 24 November 2000 in Gaza City

a government-owned company that is fully owned by the state,” Salameh told reporters in Ramallah on Wednesday.

Salameh said he had met with Palestinian industry leaders earlier on Wednesday to discuss reforming the Petroleum Authority, the body currently in

charge of regulating the industry as well as purchasing and transporting fuel. By keeping regulation with the Petroleum Authority and creating a new public company in charge of purchasing and transportation, the government could be more agile in future crises, he said.

More than half of England ‘officially in drought’: UK

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Just over half of England has been declared in drought after “record-low rain and exceptionally high temperatures”, the UK government said yesterday.

It follows what is set to be the driest July on record, with just seven percent of expected rainfall nationwide and some parts of southern England seeing just one percent, according to the government’s Environment Agency.

The UK is also currently experiencing its fourth widespread heatwave of 2026.

Describing it as a “flash drought” -- which develops quickly and is caused by a combination of very low rainfall and higher temperatures -- it was the second consecutive summer parts of England were experiencing drought.

“Rivers are running low, farmers are having to harvest crops early, wildfire risk is increasing, and millions of people are living under restrictions on



An aerial photo shows the bed of Woodhead Reservoir is partially revealed by a falling water level, near Glossop, northern England

water use,” the agency said as it made the announcement.

The seven areas declared in drought -- which include London, East Anglia to its northeast, all of southwest England and the West Midlands -- comprises 51.4 percent of the nation.

Representatives from the National Drought Group -- which includes meteorological and

government officials and ministers, regulators, water companies, farmers and others -- convened Tuesday to discuss the situation, the Environment Agency noted.

They reviewed impacts, preparedness plans and drought response actions across England, with the nation’s private water companies being told to prioritise fixing leaks, it added.

BTS pulls out of Grammys after Asian pop category introduction

AFP | Seoul, South Korea

Global K-pop sensation BTS said yesterday they will not submit their music for next year’s Grammy Awards, following the Recording Academy’s introduction of new categories that include the Best Asian Pop Music Performance.

The South Korean megastars had been widely tipped to be in the running for several of the Grammys’ top honours, including Album of the Year, after their comeback album, ARIRANG, became one of this year’s best-selling hits.

“We have decided not to enter the Grammys this year,” BTS

members said in coordinated posts on their individual Instagram accounts.

“We hope that music is heard and loved for what it is, rather than being defined by region or language,” they said.

Despite performing at the Grammys and earning several nominations, including for Best Music Video, the group has never won.

ARIRANG, named after a South Korean folk song, includes extensive English lyrics and explores themes that include Korean identity following the band’s hiatus for mandatory military service.



BTS is the first all-South Korean act to reign over Billboard’s US top singles chart, which they achieved with their 2020 track “Dynamite”, their first hit sung completely in English.

India lower house passes bill raising penalties for exam leaks

AFP | New Delhi, India

India’s lower house of parliament approved a bill on Wednesday that would toughen penalties for leaking exam papers, after youth-led protests calling for sweeping reforms forced the education minister to resign.

The legislation would double the maximum jail term for those involved in leaking exam papers to 10 years, and rais-

es the maximum fine to more than \$1 million.

Lawmakers approved the bill by a voice vote after a raucous, hours-long debate, according to India’s public broadcaster.

It will next be put to a vote in the upper house, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ruling alliance holds a majority. Modi’s cabinet greenlighted the stricter punishments last week.

Russia seeks arrest of Telegram founder Pavel Durov

AFP | Moscow, Russia

Russia announced yesterday that it was seeking the arrest of Telegram founder Pavel Durov over accusations of “complicity in terrorism”, alleging he had let the platform be used for recruitment by Ukraine’s security services.

Russian-born Durov -- a serial tech founder who has lived outside Russia for years and holds French and United Arab Emirates passports -- has frequently clashed with the Russian authorities as Moscow has tightened its grip on the internet.



Pavel Durov

His Telegram messenger is one of the country’s main communications platforms and officials have repeatedly tried to block access or thwart its success in a bid to pressure Durov to hand over user data or push Russians to use an unencrypted state-backed alternative.

US to end prescription subsidies for seniors: media

AFP | New York, United States

US President Donald Trump’s administration plans to end federal subsidies for prescription drug plans offered to residents over 65 as part of its Medicare health insurance programme, the Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday.

The change could leave some 25 million senior citizens facing serious cost increases for prescription drugs, the report said.

Citing anonymous Trump administration officials, the newspaper said \$3.6 billion in federal subsidies paid to stymie increases in Medicare insurance premiums will end this December.

Those on the subsidized plans will learn of their new

premium rates in autumn.

The move could become a political issue ahead of November’s US midterm elections, with prescription drug costs a key concern for many retirees and people living on fixed incomes.

Health policy nonprofit KFF said the average premium for a subsidized plan was around \$36 a month.

A Trump administration official told the Journal that around a quarter of those on the subsidized plan will see their premiums decrease or stay the same in 2027, while another 30% will have a monthly increase of under \$10.

The remaining 45 percent will have a monthly cost increase between \$11 and \$20, the official said.

Crisis-hit Cuba opens pharmacies, gas stations to private firms

AFP | Havana, Cuba

Cuba moved to open crisis-ravaged parts of the state-run economy to private firms yesterday, as the communist government struggles to ease acute shortages resulting from a US energy blockade.

A lengthy decree lifted restrictions on a swath of sectors including petrol distribution, electricity generation, rubbish collection and the manufacture and sale of medicines.

Amid a de-facto US fuel embargo, daily life in Cuba has been upended by rolling blackouts, water cuts and acute shortages of food and medicine.

The reforms seemed designed to target the most affected parts of daily life, and to provide a release valve for

growing political pressure.

With piles of rubbish lining the streets of Havana, private firms will be able to operate waste collection and recycling services.

And with few buses or cars on the roads due to petrol shortages, private firms will also be able to sell fuel as well as import and construct electric vehicles.

“Maybe it will be a good thing because, after all, right now there’s nothing,” said Ana Diago, 66, who retired and then returned to work at a port company.

“This is a critical moment and we have to find some solutions. The reality is that people are without medicines, without food and without many other things, and life has to go on.”