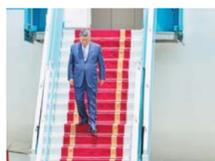




Supporters of Prez Daniel Noboa celebrate early returns showing him in the lead in the presidential election runoff in Olon, Ecuador



Chinese President Xi Jinping arrives for a two-day state visit, at Hanoi's Noi Bai International Airport, Vietnam



Police investigate Gov. Josh Shapiro's residence after someone set fire to the building on in Harrisburg city, Pennsylvania



Sikh pilgrims arrive to attend a ceremony to mark the Vaisakhi festival at the shrine of Gurdwara Janam Asthan in Nankana Sahib, west of Lahore, Pakistan

allovertheworld



One of the 200 pilgrims called "Pablitos, also known as Pabluchas or Ukukus, representing mythological creatures half divine half human, climbs the base of the Ausangate glacier, on May 27, 1991, outside Cusco, the ancient Inca capital. The Pablitos spend the night on top of the glacier, at an altitude of 5,000 m, dancing and singing, as part of a religious festival in honor of Cristo de Colloyruti, an Inca deity known as the "Lord of the Snows". Listed as an intangible cultural heritage site since November 27, 2011, the Qoylluriti pilgrimage is the most important Quechua and Aymara pilgrimage, with over 50,000 participants each year gathering for these festivities organized by the Confraternity of the Lord of Qoylluriti

Tensions flare as Algeria expels 12 French officials

PARIS: Fresh tensions flared between France and Algeria on Monday as the French foreign minister said its former colony had ordered 12 French officials to leave in 48 hours. The announcement was linked to the arrest of three Algerian nationals in France, Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said. For decades, ties between France and Algeria have gone through diplomatic upheavals, and Monday's announcement comes at a delicate time in relations and underscores the difficulties in repairing ties. "I am asking Algerian authorities to abandon these expulsion measures," Barrot said, adding: "If the decision to send back our officials is maintained, we will have no other choice but to respond immediately." The 12 include some members of the French interior ministry, a diplomatic source told AFP.

Spain economy minister heads to US as EU seeks tariff deal

MADRID: Spanish Economy Minister Carlos Cuerdo will travel to Washington for talks on Tuesday with US officials, he said Monday as the European Union races to reach a deal on tariffs. His visit will come following European Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic's visit to Washington on Monday, where he will be holding discussions with the US on the bloc's behalf to avoid an all-out trade war after President Trump imposed massive tariffs. Cuerdo told a group of foreign journalists he would meet with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Tuesday as well as World Bank President Ajay Banga and "numerous US business leaders" to "strengthen" bilateral ties.

Hungary to amend constitution for 15th time under Orban

BUDAPEST: Hungarian lawmakers on Monday are set to approve the country's 15th constitutional amendment in as many years, the latest step to strengthen the "illiberal" brand of democracy championed by longtime nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Since the constitution's initial overhaul in 2011, a year after Orban returned to power - which introduced references to God, Christianity and what the ruling party calls a traditional family - the government has adopted further changes to enshrine an ultra-conservative notion of society in fundamental law. AFP takes a look at the newest measures to be adopted, which range from LGBTQ rights to stripping citizenships of dual or multiple nationals.

French hospital staff, relatives sue ministers over work-related suicides

PARIS: French healthcare workers and relatives of colleagues who killed themselves have filed a legal complaint against two ministers over "deadly working conditions" in public hospitals that they say are causing suicides, their lawyer said Monday. France's public hospitals have been forced to drastically slash spending in recent decades, and doctors and nurses have long complained of insufficient staffing and low pay. Nineteen plaintiffs have now accused Health Minister Catherine Vautrin and Higher Education Minister Elisabeth Borne of allowing "totally illegal and deadly working conditions" for workers and staff in training at hospitals across France, according to the complaint seen by AFP.

EU sanctions Iran prison officials over 'hostage' policy

LUXEMBOURG: The EU on Monday imposed sanctions on seven Iranian prison and judicial officials over the detention of nationals from the bloc. The move - spearheaded by France - also saw Iran's Shiraz prison and a court in the same city added to the blacklist. "We are today adopting a package of sanctions against those responsible for the state hostage policy," French foreign minister Jean-Noel Barrot said at an EU meeting in Luxembourg.

China imposes visa restrictions on US officials over Tibet dispute

PTI, BEIJING: China on Monday slapped visa restrictions against US personnel who have acted "egregiously" on Tibet-related issues in retaliation to additional visa curbs imposed by Washington on Chinese officials.

Tibet affairs are purely China's internal affairs, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told a media briefing here.

"In accordance with the Law on Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China and the Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law of the People's Republic of China, China decided to impose visa restrictions on US personnel who have acted egregiously on the Xizang (Tibet)-related issues," Lin told a media briefing.

China refers to Tibet as Xizang.

The statement said the decision was in accordance with the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018, under which Chinese officials could be denied US visas if they were complicit in denying American government officials, journalists, independent observers and tourists access to the region, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported

The restrictions were in response to similar restrictions imposed by Washington on Chinese officials.

In a statement issued on March 31, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Washington would impose additional visa restrictions on Chinese officials "determined to be substantially involved in the formulation or execution of policies related to access for foreigners" to Tibetan areas.

The statement said the decision was in accordance

with the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018, under which Chinese officials could be denied US visas if they were complicit in denying American government officials, journalists, independent observers and tourists access to the region, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

It said Chinese authorities had long "refused to afford US diplomats, journalists, and other international observers access to the Tibet autonomous re-

gion and other Tibetan areas of China", while "China's diplomats and journalists enjoy broad access in the United States".

The US has issued similar restrictions on Chinese officials earlier.

Reacting to the US statement, Lin said "We welcome friends from foreign countries to visit, travel and do business in China's Xizang region."

"At the same time, we oppose any country or individual using human rights, religion and culture as a false pretext to meddle in Xizang affairs," he said.

"China opposes interference and sabotage by people with ill motives who would use visits to Xizang as an opportunity to engage in such activities," he added.

US airstrikes in Yemen kill 7, report Houthis

AP, DUBAI: Suspected US airstrikes around Yemen's rebel-held capital killed at least seven people and wounded 29 overnight, the Houthis said on Monday as they also claimed shooting down another American MQ-9 Reaper drone. Since its start nearly a month ago, the intense campaign of US airstrikes under President Donald Trump targeting the rebels over their attacks on shipping in Mideast waters - related to the Israel-Hamas war - has killed over 120 people, according to casualty figures released Monday by the Houthis' Health Ministry.

Footage aired by the Houthis' al-Masirah satellite news channel showed fire-fighters spraying water on a raging fire they described as being sparked by the airstrikes. Rubble littered a street as rescuers carried one person away from

the site, which the rebels claimed was a ceramics factory in the Bani Matar neighbourhood of Sanaa, the capital. The Associated Press could not independently verify what was struck.

The US military's Central Command, which oversees American military operations, did not acknowledge the strikes. That follows a pattern for the command, which now has authorisation from the White House to conduct strikes at will in the campaign that began March 15.

The American military also hasn't been providing any information on targets hit. The White House has said over 200 strikes have been conducted so far.

Houthis claim another American drone shot down

The Houthis separately claimed Sunday night they shot down an MQ-9 Reaper drone over Yemen's Hajjah governorate.

China warns UK over British Steel takeover

AP, LONDON: China has warned the UK government to treat the Chinese owners of British Steel fairly or risk undermining investor confidence in the country, two days after British authorities took control of the company. China's Foreign Ministry made the comment on Monday as government-appointed managers raced to prevent British Steel from shutting down the last two blast furnaces in Britain that make so-called virgin steel from raw materials. Parliament on Saturday passed legislation authorizing the government to take control of the company and its Scunthorpe steelworks from Jingye Group, which has owned British Steel since 2020. Jingye still owns the company but British authorities have taken control

of day-to-day operations.

"We hope the British government treats Chinese enterprises investing and operating in the UK fairly and justly, protects their legitimate rights and interests, and avoids politicising and over-securing economic and trade cooperation, so as not to affect the confidence of Chinese enterprises in investing and cooperating in the UK," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said during the weekly press conference in Beijing.

The UK government on Monday installed a new executive team at British Steel with the aim of ensuring "consistent and professional leadership" of the Scunthorpe works in northeastern England, British Steel said in a statement.

Ex-B'desh PM Sheikh Hasina's niece, UK MP Tulip Siddiq, denies corruption allegations

PTI, LONDON: Labour Party MP Tulip Siddiq, the niece of Bangladesh's deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, has denied any wrongdoing after reports emerged of an arrest warrant issued by Dhaka's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). Siddiq resigned as UK treasury minister in January this year, saying her family connections were becoming a "distraction" for the work of Prime Minister Keir Starmer-led government.

Her spokesperson in a statement over the weekend said the allegations of corruption against Siddiq were "completely false" and her lawyers had dealt with that.

"The ACC has made various allegations against Ms Siddiq through the media in the last few months. The allegations are completely false and have been dealt

DEPOSED PM ACCUSES BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT OF UNDERMINING SECULARISM

PTI, NEW DELHI: Bangladesh's deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina has said that anti-independence forces have illegally seized power and were actively trying to destroy the country's secular culture as she urged people to drive the usurpers out. "Today, anti-liberation forces have illegally seized power in Bangladesh. They are actively trying to destroy Bengali culture," the 77-year-old self-exiled ousted premier said in a statement on the occasion of Bengali New Year - Pohela Boishakh. Hasina left Bangladesh in August last year after her nearly 16-year-long Awami League government was toppled in a student-led uprising. Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, who was in a protracted row with the Hasina regime for obscure reasons, assumed the charge of an interim government.

with in writing by Ms Siddiq's lawyers," the spokesperson said.

"The ACC has not responded to Ms Siddiq or put any allegations to her directly or through her lawyers. Ms Siddiq knows nothing about a hearing in

SMART AVIATION



A pilot in a Hexa battery-powered aircraft shows his hands not on the joystick as he takes off during its demonstration at the Expo 2025 in Osaka, western Japan

India-born doctor, family dies in New York plane crash

PTI, NEW YORK: An India-born doctor and members of her family died in a plane crash in upstate New York over the weekend while heading to the Catskills Mountains for a birthday celebration. Dr Joy Saini, a renowned urogynecologist, her husband Dr Michael Groff, a neuroscientist, their daughter Karena Groff, a former MIT soccer player and the 2022 NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) woman of the year, and son Jared Groff, a paralegal, died when the twin-engine plane crashed, according to media reports.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said in a statement that on April 12 about 12:06 pm, a Mitsubishi MU-2B-40, N635TA, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Craryville, New York.

The family boarded Groff's private plane at Westchester County Airport in White Plains, New York.

NTSB said its investigators are collecting evidence and interviewing witnesses.

The victims included Jared Groff's partner Alexia Couyutas Duarte, who had planned to attend Harvard Law School later this year, and Karena Groff's boyfriend James Santoro who was an MIT graduate.

According to media reports, the family was headed to the Catskills for a birthday celebration and the Passover holiday.

Shortly before the crash, the pilot had radioed air traffic control at Columbia County Airport to say he had missed the initial approach and requested a new approach plan.

Thunberg, activists push ahead with Sweden climate lawsuit

AFP, STOCKHOLM: Climate activists including Greta Thunberg said Monday they plan to refile a lawsuit against the Swedish state for alleged climate inaction, two months after the Supreme Court threw out their case.

The Supreme Court said in February the complaint filed against the state - brought by an individual, with 300 other people joining it as a class action lawsuit under the name Aurora - was inadmissible, noting the "very high requirements for individuals to have the right to bring such a claim" against a state. But it said that "an associ-

ation that meets certain requirements may have the right to bring a climate lawsuit".

Aurora has therefore asked the Nacka district court where it first filed the lawsuit to reconsider it by switching the plaintiff to an association.

"If the court concludes that this is not possible, Aurora will sue the state again," it said in a statement.

"One way or another, Aurora is continuing to bring the issue of the Swedish state's legal obligations in the climate crisis to Swedish courts."

The first of its kind in the Scandinavian country, Aurora's lawsuit demand-



Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg attends a climate demonstration called by youth-led organization Auroras before submitting its lawsuit against the state for their lack of climate work, in Stockholm

ed that Sweden take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to within the lim-

its of what is "technically and economically feasible". Both the Swedish Climate

Policy Council and the Environmental Protection Agency have for the past year warned that the Swedish right-wing government's policies will lead to an increase in emissions, and said the country was not on track to meet its climate goals and EU commitments.

Swedish Climate Minister Romina Pourmokhtari has said she is "not particularly worried" by the reports.

"If rich, high-emitting, resourceful powers like the Swedish state act immediately to fundamentally change our economic systems, we have a chance to get out of these planetary crises and build a sustaina-

ble and just world. We cannot let the state squander that chance," Aurora spokeswoman Ida Edling said.

In a landmark April 2024 decision, Europe's top rights court, the European Court of Human Rights, ruled that Switzerland was not doing enough to tackle climate change, the first country ever to be condemned by an international tribunal for not taking sufficient action to curb global warming.

In December 2019, the Dutch supreme court ordered the government to slash greenhouse gases by at least 25 percent by 2020 in another landmark case brought by an environmental group.