



An aircraft drops fire retardant on a ridge during the Walbridge fire, part of the larger LNU Lightning Complex fire as flames continue to spread in Healdsburg, California, on Thursday. A series of massive fires in northern and central California forced more evacuations as they quickly spread Thursday, darkening the skies and dangerously affecting air quality. The blazes, most of which were touched off by a rash of lightning strikes earlier in the week, are concentrated to the north, east and south of San Francisco and are being fed by a grueling heat wave afflicting the state along with low humidity.

PHOTO: AFP

'Siding with the ayatollahs'

Pompeo blasts Europe as US triggers 'snapback' mechanism of nuke deal to reimpose all UN sanctions on Iran

AFP, United Nations

The United States formally began the process Thursday of activating a controversial mechanism aimed at reimposing sanctions on Iran, a move that was immediately rejected by European allies fighting to save the Iranian nuclear deal.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo accused Britain, France and Germany of "siding with the ayatollahs" after they insisted Washington had no legal right to trigger the disputed procedure called "snapback."

Pompeo personally submitted a letter to the president of the UN Security Council and Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in New York, accusing Iran of "significant" non-compliance with the terms of the 2015 historic accord, according to a copy seen by AFP.

It is intended to launch the start of the process to snapback sanctions on Iran that threatens to torpedo



the historic 2015 nuclear accord and threatens to plunge the Security Council into crisis.

It also widens the gulf between the US and almost every other Security Council member on Iran policy, which began when President Donald Trump withdrew from the nuclear agreement in 2018.

The procedure, never before used, comes after the US suffered a humiliating defeat at the Security Council last week when it failed to muster support for a resolution to extend a conventional

arms embargo on Iran.

The snapback aims to restore all international sanctions against Iran that were lifted as part of the nuclear agreement with Tehran in exchange for it agreeing not to develop nuclear weapons.

But it also threatens to sink that historic deal, known officially as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which Britain, France and Germany -- along with Russia and China -- are trying to save.

Britain, France and Germany released a joint statement saying they would not support the action "which is incompatible" with efforts to preserve the JCPOA.

European countries on the Security Council say the US gave up their right as a participant when Trump pulled out of the deal in May 2018 and reimposed American sanctions as part of his "maximum pressure" campaign against the Iranian regime.

Lanka leader vows to scrap reforms curbing his power

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's president has vowed to abolish a controversial constitutional provision restricting his powers as he opened a new parliamentary session following his party's sweeping election victory.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his elder brother, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, campaigned for voters to give their party a two-thirds parliamentary majority in the August 5 poll so they could roll back reforms brought in by the previous administration.

Their Sri Lanka Podujana Party (SLPP) won 145 seats and secured the support of six allies, one seat more than the minimum number needed to change the constitution in the 225-seat legislature.

"The people have given us the mandate we wanted for a constitutional amendment," Rajapaksa said in his address to parliament, adding it would be "our first task".

He also repeated a previous assertion, without giving further details, that he wanted an entirely new constitution to replace the current one introduced in 1978 when Sri Lanka changed to a presidential system.

'No trace' of poison in Navalny

Say Russian doctors, opine 'unstable' patient can't travel

AFP, Omsk

Doctors treating Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny yesterday said there was no evidence to back claims he was poisoned, as aides accused authorities of risking his life by refusing to allow his evacuation to Germany for treatment.

Navalny, a 44-year-old lawyer and anti-corruption campaigner who is among President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critics, was in a coma in intensive care in the Siberian city of Omsk after he lost consciousness while on a flight and his plane made an emergency landing on Thursday.

Aides say they believe he was poisoned and that something was put in his tea at an airport cafe.

Doctors treating him in Omsk said Friday that tests had shown no trace of any poison and that Navalny was in no condition to be moved, despite the arrival of an air ambulance sent to take him to Germany.

"So far no poison has been identified in the blood and urine, there is no trace of its presence," Anatoly Kalinichenko, the deputy head doctor of the hospital, told journalists in Omsk.

Navalny's spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh said the refusal was a ploy to hide the poisoning and put his life at risk.

Foreign leaders including Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron have voiced concern for Navalny, who has faced repeated physical attacks and prosecutions in more than a decade of opposition to Russian authorities.

Navalny lost consciousness shortly after his plane took off on Thursday from Tomsk in Siberia, where he was working to support opposition candidates ahead of regional elections next month. He took a cup of tea before boarding the plane.



COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Residents in Beijing now can go outside without mask

REUTERS, BEIJING

Health authorities in China's capital Beijing have removed a requirement for people to wear masks outdoors, further relaxing rules aimed at preventing the spread of the novel coronavirus after the city reported 13 consecutive days without new cases.

Despite the relaxed guidelines, a large proportion of people continued to wear masks in Beijing yesterday. Some said the mask made them feel safe, while others said social pressures to wear the masks were also a factor.

China has reported no new locally transmitted cases on the mainland for five days after successfully controlling flare ups in the capital, Xinjiang and elsewhere.

Experts say the key to the country's success in controlling the disease has been the strict enforcement of local rules, including wearing masks, mandatory home quarantine and participating in mass testing.

Authorities reported 22 imported cases in the mainland on Aug. 20, and has closed its borders to most non-Chinese citizens. The country has reported a total of 84,917 cases since the outbreak began.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli planes hit Gaza again after rocket fire

Israeli planes launched raids against Gaza late Thursday in response to rocket fire, as mediators sought to broker an end to the latest flare-up. Rockets were fired at Israel but crashed inside the Palestinian enclave, according to witnesses.

Palestinian sources reported light damage but no casualties after the raid in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza. Israel has bombed Gaza almost every night since August 6 in retaliation for the balloons or, less frequently, rocket fire, from across the border. It has also tightened its 13-year blockade of Gaza's two million inhabitants. It has banned Gaza fishermen from going to sea and closed its goods crossing with the territory, prompting the closure of Gaza's sole power plant because of a lack of fuel.

Irish minister resigns for breaching virus restrictions

Ireland's agriculture minister resigned yesterday for breaching government coronavirus guidelines by attending a parliamentary golf society dinner. Prime minister Micheal Martin said he accepted Dara Calleary's resignation after just 37 days in the position, calling it "the right decision" as "people all over the country have made very difficult, personal sacrifices". The Irish Examiner newspaper said Calleary was among 82 people at the Oireachtas (parliament) Golf Society's 50th anniversary dinner held at a County Galway hotel. EU trade commissioner Phil Hogan and swaths of other lawmakers and judges were also said to be in attendance.

Erdogan converts another former church into mosque



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday ordered another ancient Orthodox church that became a mosque and then a popular Istanbul museum to be turned back into a place of Muslim worship. The decision to transform the Kariye Museum into a mosque came just a month after a similarly controversial conversion for the UNESCO World Heritage-recognised Hagia Sophia. The Holy Saviour in Chora was a medieval Byzantine church decorated with 14th-century frescoes of the Last Judgement that remain treasured in the Christian world. It was originally converted into the Kariye Mosque half a century after the 1453 conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks. It became the Kariye Museum after World War II.

SOURCE: REUTERS, AFP



Greenland ice sheet lost half-a-trillion tonnes

AFP, Paris

Greenland's massive ice sheet saw a record net loss of 532 billion tonnes last year, raising red flags about accelerating sea level rise, according to findings released Thursday.

That is equivalent to an additional three million tonnes of water streaming into global oceans every day, or six Olympic pools every second.

Crumbling glaciers and torrents of melt-water slicing through Greenland's two-to-three-kilometre thick ice block were the single biggest source of global sea level rise in 2019, accounted for 40 percent of the total, or 1.5 millimetres, researchers reported in the journal Communications Earth & Environment.

Last year's loss of mass was at least 15 percent above the previous record in 2012, but even more alarming are the long-term trends, they said.

If all of Greenland's ice sheet were to melt, it would lift global oceans by seven metres (23 feet).

Even a more modest rise of a couple of metres would redraw the world's coastlines and render land occupied today by hundreds of millions of people uninhabitable.

A study in the same journal last week concluded that the Greenland's ice sheet has passed a "tipping point", and is now doomed to disintegrate, though on what time scale is unknown.

OUTBREAK OF MORE INFECTIOUS VIRUS STRAIN

Myanmar locks down Rakhine state capital

REUTERS, Bangkok

Myanmar has locked down the state capital of conflict-torn Rakhine state after an outbreak of a coronavirus strain that officials said was more infectious than that previously seen in the country.

Nineteen people have tested positive for the virus in the western region since Monday, health officials said on Friday, the first local transmission in Myanmar in months, bringing the total number of cases to 409.

Myat Htut Nyunt, deputy director at Myanmar's department of medical research, said the type of virus was the same as a mutation detected earlier this week in Malaysia, which has been found in Europe, North America, and parts of Asia and is thought to be more infectious.

"So we would like to inform the people that this kind of virus has a faster rate of transmission," the official said.

The vast majority of the recent cases have been in the town of Sittwe, where officials have issued a stay-at-home order and imposed a curfew.

Tens of thousands of people are living in displacement camps across Rakhine due to fighting between government troops and ethnic insurgents.

Sittwe is also home to camps where about 100,000 Rohingyas have been confined since an outbreak of violence in 2012. Kyaw Hla, a community leader in one camp, said government staff had visited yesterday but conditions there were too poor to follow advice on social distancing and hygiene.



Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director
Bangladesh Railway
Outer Circular Road, Kamalapur, Dhaka-1217

No. PD/DT/JDLP/TENDER/WD2- 1026

Dated: 20.08.2020

Package No. WD2: Design, Supply, Installation and Testing-Commissioning of Computer Based Interlocked Signaling system at 7 (Seven) stations including interlocking of selected level crossings and installation of optical fiber cable based telecommunication system for block operation and CTC interface work (Turnkey Works) in connection with construction of 3rd and 4th Dual Gauge Track in Dhaka-Tongi section and Doubling of Dual Gauge Track in Tongi-Joydebpur section.

Ref:

1. IFT No: PD/DT/JDLP/TENDER/WD2-831 ; Dated 20.02.2020.
2. Corrigendum 1: PD/DT/JDLP/TENDER/WD2-859 ; Dated 08.03.2020.
3. Corrigendum 2: PD/DT/JDLP/TENDER/WD2-884 ; Dated 19.03.2020.
4. Corrigendum 3: PD/DT/JDLP/TENDER/WD2-904 ; Dated 15.04.2020.
5. Corrigendum 4: PD/DT/JDLP/TENDER/WD2-908 ; Dated 05.05.2020.
6. Corrigendum 5: PD/DT/JDLP/TENDER/WD2-920 ; Dated 01.06.2020.
7. Corrigendum 6: PD/DT/JDLP/TENDER/WD2-983 ; Dated 18.07.2020

Corrigendum No.-7 (dated: 18.08.2020)

Sl No. of IFT		Provision as per Corrigendum-06		Provision as per Corrigendum-07	
17.	Tender Last Selling Date	27.08.2020 (during office hours).		20.09.2020 (during office hours).	
18.	Tender Closing Date and Time	Date	Time	Date	Time
		31-08-2020	Up to 12:00 hrs BST	21-09-2020	Up to 12:00 hrs BST
19.	Tender Opening Date and Time	Date	Time	Date	Time
		31-08-2020	At 12:30 hrs BST	21-09-2020	At 12:30 hrs BST

All other Terms and Conditions of the Tender Notice shall remain unchanged.

(Md. Afzal Hossain)
Project Director

Construction of 3rd and 4th Dual Gauge Lines in Dhaka-Tongi section and Doubling of Dual Gauge line in Tongi-Joydebpur section Project.
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GD-1305