

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Angry Palestine quits chairing Arab League

Palestine has quit its current chairmanship of Arab League meetings, the Palestinian foreign minister said yesterday, condemning as dishonourable any Arab agreement to establish formal ties with Israel. Palestinians see the accords which the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain signed with Israel in Washington a week ago as betrayal of their cause and a blow to their quest for an independent state in Israeli-occupied territory. Earlier this month, the Palestinians failed to persuade the Arab League to condemn nations breaking ranks and normalising relations with Israel. Palestine was supposed to chair Arab League meetings for the next six months, but Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki told a news conference in the West Bank city of Ramallah that it no longer wanted the position.

## China sentences Xi critic to 18 years for graft

China sentenced a former property executive who once called President Xi Jinping "a clown" to 18 years in prison for graft, a court said yesterday, in what some critics called an especially harsh sentence amid an ongoing clampdown on dissent. Ren Zhiqiang, the former chairman of Huayuan, a state-owned real estate group, was convicted for illegal gains totalling 112 million yuan (\$16.5 million), according to a notice on the website of Beijing No. 2 Intermediate Court. Nicknamed "Cannon Ren" for his outspoken views posted on social media, Ren, 69, was detained in March after referring to Xi as "a clown stripped naked who insisted on continuing being emperor" after a speech the Chinese president made in February about government efforts to battle the coronavirus.

## Death toll from India building collapse jumps to 20



The death toll from an apartment block collapse in western India climbed to 20 yesterday, with more bodies likely to be recovered, officials said, as rescuers searched for survivors. Emergency workers from the National Disaster Response Force have pulled 20 survivors -- including two boys aged four and seven -- from the rubble of the building in Bhiwandi, near Mumbai. An NDRF spokesman told reporters that recovery teams, aided by sniffer dogs, also retrieved 20 bodies buried under layers of brick and concrete when the three-storey block came crashing down before dawn on Monday. The cause of the accident was not immediately clear, but building collapses are common during India's June-September monsoon season, with old and rickety structures buckling after days of non-stop rain.

## Trump calls Scandinavian MPs who nominated him for Nobel

US President Donald Trump has telephoned two Scandinavian MPs to thank them for nominating him for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize, the two lawmakers said yesterday. "I was on my way to the stable with my daughter, when President @realDonaldTrump called and thanked me for the nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize," Magnus Jacobsson, a Swedish member of parliament for the Christian Democrats, wrote on Twitter. Norwegian MP Christian Tybring-Gjedde, of the right-wing populist anti-immigration Progress Party, meanwhile told AFP he had also received a call from Trump on Monday. However, most Nobel experts do not believe Trump has much chance of taking home the prize.

## NY police officer charged with spying for China

US authorities have charged a New York police officer with espionage, accusing him of gathering information about the city's Tibetan community for the Chinese government. The officer, who worked at a station in the Queens section of the city, was directed by members of the Chinese consulate in New York and received tens of thousands of dollars, according to the indictment released Monday. Born in China, the man had been granted political asylum in the US, claiming he was tortured by Chinese authorities because of his Tibetan ethnicity. The investigation allegedly revealed that both of his parents were members of the Chinese Communist Party.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Rescuers work to save a pod of whales stranded on a beach in Macquarie Harbour on the rugged west coast of Tasmania, yesterday. Rescuers faced a race against time to save nearly 200 whales stuck in the remote Australian harbour, hoping to prevent the toll of 90 dead from rising further after managing to free "a small number" of the stranded mammals. Officials said at least 25 of the mammals had been freed so far.

PHOTO: AFP

## World can't afford 'Great Fracture'

Warns Guterres, urges US, China to 'avoid Cold War' as Trump, Xi clash at UN

AFP, United Nations

UN chief yesterday warned against a new "Cold War" between US and China as the leaders of the world's most advanced economies delivered their speeches at UN.

Xi Jinping yesterday warned against the perils of a "clash of civilizations" after Donald Trump angrily cast blame on China over the coronavirus pandemic and urged UN to hold it accountable.

At a General Assembly held almost entirely virtually due to Covid-19, Trump delivered a speech in full election campaign mode, even using his loaded term "China virus."

"We must hold accountable the nations which unleashed this plague onto the world -- China," Trump said in a previous recorded address to the General Assembly, where each nation was represented by a single, masked delegate.

"Those who attack America's exceptional environmental record while ignoring China's rampant pollution are not interested in the environment. They only want to punish America. And I will not stand for it," he said.

Trump renewed his criticism of China's role in spreading Covid-19 accusing it and World Health Organization of suppressing news when cases first emerged late last year in Wuhan.

In his virtual address, Xi told the United Nations General Assembly that Beijing has "no intention to fight either a cold war or a hot one with any

## LEADERS' SPEECHES AT UNGA

Trump says UN must 'hold China accountable' for Covid-19  
Xi warns against 'clash of civilizations'

Bolsonaro says Brazil victim of 'brutal disinformation' on Amazon

Erdogan urges dialogue on east Mediterranean, not 'harassment'

-- each with its own trade and financial rules and internet and artificial intelligence capacities."

The Trump administration has launched a global campaign against the influence of China, pushing back on its claims in the South China Sea and warning nations of the risks of accepting its lavish infrastructure spending.

China has been increasingly assertive, with some experts saying that it sees an opportunity at a time that the world is preoccupied with Covid-19.

Guterres also criticized the nationalist approach to the coronavirus, without naming Trump or other world leaders. "Populism and nationalism have failed. Those approaches to contain the virus have often made things manifestly worse."

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro used his address to accuse his nation's media of spreading panic. He also downplayed the destruction of the Amazon rainforest claiming Brazil was the target of a "brutal" and "shady" international campaign to discredit it.

In his speech, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called for "sincere" dialogue to settle the growing row with Greece over Ankara's energy search in the eastern Mediterranean, rejecting any "harassment" by the West over the issue.

Despite the Covid-19 curbs, UN is scheduled to hold a number of virtual meetings on the pandemic as well as climate change, biodiversity and political turbulence both in Libya and Lebanon.

UNILATERAL 'UN SANCTIONS'  
Russia vows Iran support after Trump threat

AGENCIES

Russia yesterday said it will develop military cooperation with Tehran after a United Nations arms embargo on Iran expires next month, despite US efforts to block arms deals.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said earlier this month that Washington would prevent Iran from purchasing Chinese tanks and Russian air defence systems as the UN arms embargo expiration approaches.

The announcement comes a day after US President Donald Trump said that he was imposing sanctions on Iranians for violating a UN arms embargo and demanded enforcement by US allies.

"New opportunities will emerge in our cooperation with Iran after the special regime imposed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231 expires on October 18," Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, told the Interfax news agency.

He said any agreements with Iran would have "nothing to do with the unlawful and illegal actions of the US administration, which is trying to intimidate the entire world".

The Trump administration says it is "snapping back" virtually all UN sanctions on Iran lifted under a 2015 nuclear accord with Tehran negotiated by former president Barack Obama.

Trump's defiant move on Monday came on the very day that the United Nations was celebrating its 75th anniversary with



a virtual summit full of calls for greater international cooperation.

The Trump administration said it was imposing sanctions on 27 individuals and entities under a UN resolution including Iran's defense ministry, its Atomic Energy Organization.

"My actions today send a clear message to the Iranian regime and those in the international community who refuse to stand up to Iran," Trump said in a statement.

Trump pulled out of the deal with fanfare in 2018, but Pompeo argues that the United States is still a "participant" in the deal -- with the right to impose sanctions for violations.

The legal argument has been rejected by almost the entire UN Security Council, with European allies of the United States saying the priority is to salvage a peaceful solution to Iran's nuclear programme.



A rocket launches from a S-400 missile system at the Ashuluk military base in Southern Russia yesterday during the "Caucasus-2020" military drills gathering China, Iran, Pakistan and Myanmar troops, along with ex-Soviet Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus. Up to 250 tanks and around 450 infantry combat vehicles and armoured personnel carriers will take part in the September 21 to 26 land and naval exercises that will involve 80,000 people including support staff.

PHOTO: AFP

## Arctic sea ice 2nd lowest on record

REUTERS, Arctic Ocean

Warming in the Arctic shrank the ice covering the polar ocean this year to its second-lowest extent in four decades, scientists announced Monday, yet another sign of how climate change is rapidly transforming the region.

Satellites recorded this year's sea ice minimum at 3.74 million square kilometers on Sept 15, only the second time the ice has been measured below 4 million square kilometers in 40 years of record keeping, said researchers at the National Snow and Ice Data Center.

The record low of 3.41 million square kilometers, reached in 2012 after a late-season cyclonic storm broke up the remaining ice, is not much below what researchers see today.

This year's decline was especially fast between Aug 31 and Sept 5, thanks to pulses of warm air coming off a heat wave in Siberia, according to the NSIDC. The rate of ice loss during those six days was faster than during any other year on record. Another team of scientists found in July that the Siberian heat wave would have been all but impossible without human-caused climate change.

As the Arctic sea ice vanishes, it leaves patches of dark water open. Those dark waters absorb solar radiation rather than reflecting it back out of the atmosphere, a process that amplifies warming and helps to explain why Arctic temperatures have risen more than twice as fast as the rest of the world over the last 30 years.

The loss of sea ice also threatens Arctic wildlife, from polar bears and seals to plankton and algae.

## EU tells UK to 'stop the games' on Brexit

AFP, Brussels

Senior EU and British officials will hold urgent talks next week on the Brexit withdrawal agreement, which has been threatened by London's attempt to override parts of the treaty, Brussels said yesterday.

EU Commission vice-president Maros Sefcovic said he would meet senior British minister Michel Gove in Brussels on Monday, just ahead of Brussels' end-of-the-month deadline for London to drop a bill designed to rewrite the deal.

And an EU official confirmed that Brussels' chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier would be in London today for informal talks with his British opposite number David Frost.

"But please, dear friends in London: Stop the games. Time is running out," Germany's European affairs minister Michael Roth warned as he met colleagues in Brussels ahead of a summit of EU leaders on Thursday.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government is pushing ahead with legislation designed to override parts of

the treaty, an act which it admits breaks international law, and Brussels is furiously defending the deal.

"The so-called Internal Market Bill worries us extremely, because it violates the guiding principles of the withdrawal agreement, and this is totally unacceptable for us," Roth said.

Sefcovic said he would meet Gove as joint chair of the EU-UK Joint Coordination Committee overseeing the divorce agreement. However, "we will not be renegotiating, but we are dedicated to its full and timely implementation -- nothing more and nothing less."

Johnson has set a mid-October deadline for success or failure, and EU officials say the deal must

be done by the end of the month if it is to be passed into law by the end of the year.

Britain left the European Union on January 31, and will leave the bloc's single market and customs union at the end of the year. Experts fear economic chaos if no new trade deal can be agreed by then.



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Memo No. 25.36.2600.130.00.000.00.422	Date: 20/09/2020
<b>Corrigendum Notice</b>	
This is to inform all concerned that the following correction have been made in the "Invitation for Tender", this office Memo No. 25.36.2600.130.00.000.00.347 Date: 03/09/2020, for the work (1) Double-base whole body sculpture of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to represent his 7th March Speech of 1971 & (2) Sculpture replication Surrender ceremony of Pakistan Army at the Ramna Race Course Ground in Dhaka (the capital of Bangladesh) on 16th December 1971.	
Sl. No.	To be replaced as
1.	Throughout the notice and tender document Silver jubilee celebration will be considered as Golden jubilee celebration.
2.	In tender notice, the support of Department of Sculpture, University of Dhaka will be deemed as deleted.
3.	Number 6 & 7 Jurors will not be considered any more.
4.	In page 5 of registration period will be 06/09/2020-10/09/2020 between 10.00am to 5.00pm instead of 06/09/2020-11/09/2020 between 10.00am to 5.00pm.
5.	In page 6 of timeline section: receiving queries through email will be 13/09/2020-14/09/2020 instead of 12/09/2020-16/09/2020.
6.	In page 6 of timeline section: reply to queries by email will be 16/09/2020 instead of 20/09/2020.
7.	In page 7 of submission address: time will be 09:00am to 12:00pm instead of 09:00am to 11:00am.
All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged. This corrigendum will be a part and parcel of the said tender.	
 <b>Mohammad Showkat Ullah</b> Executive Engineer City PWD Division, Dhaka	
GD-1506	