

NEWS IN BRIEF

Japan to release contaminated Fukushima water into sea

Japan will release more than 1.3 million tonnes of contaminated water from the destroyed Fukushima nuclear plant into the sea, the government said yesterday...

'The Rock' to run for president!

'Fast & Furious' star Dwayne Johnson, known as 'The Rock', said on Monday that he would run for US President if he felt he had enough support from Americans...

Joshua Wong jailed

Joshua Wong, one of Hong Kong's most prominent democracy activists and among 47 people charged under a national security law, was sentenced to four months in jail yesterday...

Reuters names first woman as editor-in-chief

Reuters has announced Alessandra Galloni, 47, will take over as its new editor-in-chief from next week, becoming the first woman to head the global news agency in its 170-year history...

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



People enjoy their drinks at The Fox on the Hill pub after its reopening, as the coronavirus disease restrictions ease, in London, Britain, yesterday.

Russia calls US 'adversary' Rejects Nato call to end Ukraine build-up

REUTERS, Brussels/Moscow

The United States called on Russia to halt a military build-up on Ukraine's border yesterday as Moscow, in words recalling the Cold War, said its 'adversary' should keep US warships well away from annexed Crimea.

Moscow seized Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and fighting has escalated in recent weeks in eastern Ukraine, where government forces have battled Russian-backed separatists in a seven-year conflict that Kyiv says has killed 14,000 people.

Two US warships are due to arrive in the Black Sea this week. In Brussels for talks with Nato leaders and Ukraine's foreign minister, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington stood firmly behind Ukraine.

Ryabkov's remarks suggest that the diplomatic niceties which the former Cold War enemies have generally sought to observe in recent decades is fraying, and that Russia would robustly push back against what it regards as unacceptable US interference in its sphere of influence.

"We warn the United States that it will be better for them to stay far away from Crimea and our Black Sea coast. It will be for their own good," Ryabkov said, calling the US deployment a provocation.

Russia has regularly accused Nato of destabilising Europe with its troop reinforcements in the Baltics and Poland since the annexation of Crimea. Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said Russia had moved two armies and three paratrooper units to near its western borders in the last three weeks, responding to what it called threatening military action by Nato.

Don't play with fire on Taiwan

China tells US

REUTERS, Beijing

China yesterday told the United States to stop playing with fire over Taiwan and lodged a complaint after Washington issued guidelines that will enable US officials to meet more freely with officials from the island that China claims as its own.

The US State Department's Friday decision to deepen relations with self-ruled Taiwan came amid stepped-up Chinese military activity around the island, including almost daily air force incursions into Taiwan's air defence zone.

China urges the United States "not to play with fire on the Taiwan issue, immediately stop any form of US-Taiwan official contacts, cautiously and appropriately handle the matter, and not send wrong signals to Taiwan independence forces so as not to subversively influence and damage Sino-US relations and peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait", Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said.

'Very bad gamble'

Iran FM warns Israel, US after 'attack' on the Natanz atomic site; Lavrov slams EU sanctions

AFP, Tehran

Iran and Russia united against the United States and Europe yesterday warning on the eve of new nuclear talks that an attack on the Natanz atomic site and new EU sanctions could harm ongoing negotiations.

Iran charged Monday that its arch-enemy Israel had sabotaged its Natanz uranium enrichment plant and vowed it would take "revenge" and expand its nuclear activities.

The latest of a string of incidents to hit Iran's nuclear programme came just days after talks opened in Vienna on bringing the United States back into a troubled 2015 deal that then US president Donald Trump abandoned in 2018.

Israel, which did not claim responsibility for the sabotage, is strongly opposed to US President Joe Biden's efforts to revive the agreement.

After talks with his visiting Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif warned the US it would gain no extra leverage in Vienna through "acts of sabotage" and sanctions.

"The Americans should know that neither sanctions nor acts of sabotage will give them negotiation tools and these acts will only make the situation more difficult for them," Zarif told a joint news conference.

He also hit out at Israel. "If (Israel) thought that they can stop Iran from following up on lifting sanctions from the Iranian people, then they made a very bad gamble."

"What they did in Natanz, they thought it would reduce Iran's leverage" in Vienna talks but "it makes it possible for Iran ... to use any capacity it has at Natanz," he said.

EC BAN ON CAMPAIGNING

Mamata paints in silent protest

NDTV ONLINE

An uncommon calm prevailed around West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday as she sat in her wheelchair at the Gandhi Murti in Kolkata in protest against her being banned from campaigning for 24 hours.

Amid the hullabaloo of the buzzing city, the otherwise feisty leader spent some silent hours practicing her brush strokes. Clad in her trademark white cotton sari with a black border, she also wrapped a black scarf around her neck, seemingly as a mark of protest.

She arrived at Mayo Road, where the Gandhi statue is located, around 11:40 am and began her sit-in. The Trinamool leader was left alone, with not even party colleagues joining her.

Barricaded from the media, a canopy was raised for her dharna in protest against the Election Commission's decision to impose the ban on her from 8:00 pm on April 12 till 8:00 pm on April 13.

A few glances and some head nods are all that she had for media persons standing many feet away.

The poll panel on Monday banned her from campaigning for allegedly making "highly insinuating and provocative remarks laden with the serious potential of the breakdown of law and order and, thereby affecting the election process".

The ban comes in the run up to the fifth phase of Assembly polls in the state on April 17. The Election Commission's move was a "black day for democracy" by her party colleague Derek O'Brien.



in which an explosion had "completely destroyed" the power system that fed the plant's "underground centrifuges".

Quoting another unnamed intelligence source yesterday, it added an "explosive device had been smuggled" into the site and "detonated remotely," taking out primary and backup power.

The White House said the US "was not involved in any manner".

Lavrov blasted the European Union for slapping sanctions on eight Iranian security officials, saying that the blacklisting threatens efforts to restore the deal.

In response to the EU sanctions, Iran said Monday it was suspending cooperation in various fields including "terrorism, drug (trafficking) and refugees".

Pandemic gainers should pay

UN chief pushes tax on world's richest who gained \$5 trillion during crisis; WHO urges halt to sale of live wild mammals in food markets

AGENCIES

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged governments on Monday to consider imposing a "solidarity or wealth tax" on the rich - who made money during the coronavirus pandemic - in a bid to cut extreme inequality.

"We must make sure funds go where they are needed most. Latest reports indicate that there has been a \$5 trillion surge in the wealth of the world's richest in the past year," Guterres told a UN meeting on financing for development.

"I urge governments to consider a solidarity or wealth tax on those who have profited during the pandemic, to reduce extreme inequalities," he said.

Guterres again said the Group of 20 rich nations and big emerging powers should extend debt service suspension into 2022 and to expand it to help both developing and middle-



income economies recover from the pandemic.

"But we need to go beyond debt relief," Guterres said. "We urgently need to strengthen the international debt architecture to end the deadly cycles of debt waves, global debt crises and lost decades."

Guterres also repeated his call for Covid-19 vaccines to be made available to all countries and appealed for more money to fully fund the COVAX vaccine sharing facility.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization called on yesterday for a halt to the sale of live wild

mammals in food markets to prevent the emergence of new diseases such as Covid-19.

The WHO said because traditional markets play a central role in providing food and livelihoods for large populations, banning the sale of live wild mammals could protect the health of market workers and customers alike.

The call came in fresh guidance drawn up in conjunction with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The three agencies said wild animals were the source of most emerging infectious diseases in humans and recommended measures to reduce the potential risk.

Europe passed the grim milestone of one million coronavirus deaths on Monday with coronavirus has already killed more than 2.9 million people and infected nearly 136 million across the world.

Advertisement for 'গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার' (Government of Bangladesh) regarding a public auction of land. It includes contact information for 'ca.sreepur@gmail.com' and details about the auction process.

Advertisement for 'রবীন্দ্র বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, বাংলাদেশ' (Rabindranath Tagore University, Bangladesh) regarding a public auction of land. It includes details about the auction process, contact information, and a list of terms and conditions.