

MORE NEWS

Israeli soldiers kill Palestinian in West Bank

Israeli soldiers shot dead a Palestinian who had been throwing incendiary bottles in the West Bank on Thursday night, Israel's army said. "Two suspects who threw incendiary bottles on the tunnel road endangering the lives of drivers were neutralised by soldiers," the Israeli army said in a statement. "One of them was arrested and the other, who was shot, succumbed to his injuries." The shooting took place on the tunnel road between the cities of Jerusalem and Hebron, near the Palestinian town of Beit Jala, in the south of the occupied West Bank. Clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians have increased in recent weeks in the West Bank, in particular during Palestinian protests against Israeli settlement.

Mandela's famous shirts, belongings up for auction

The family of late South African President Nelson Mandela is selling the anti-apartheid leader's personal belongings to help pay for a memorial garden being built in his honor. Among the roughly 100 items are the colorful patterned Madiba shirts he wore on formal occasions, including to meet Britain's Queen Elizabeth in 1998 and 2003. These shirts "brought joy to the great leader" and set him apart from other politicians, said Arlan Ettinger, president of New York-based auction house Guernsey's, which will host a live and online auction on Dec. 11. Gifts from former U.S. President Barack Obama and other heads of state, as well as Mandela's glasses, briefcases, and pants, are also on sale to fund the Nelson Mandela Freedom Garden in Qunu, South Africa where he is buried. He died in 2013 at age 95 at home in Johannesburg.



People lay down flowers and light candles after a deadly attack, in Kongsberg, Norway. The man who killed five people in the bow-and-arrow attack has been handed over to health services, the prosecution said yesterday, fuelling doubts about his mental health.

PHOTO: REUTERS

White House unveils climate finance plan

REUTERS, Washington

The White House published a report on Friday outlining projects to measure and address the risks that climate change poses to Americans and the economy, including programs to better incorporate climate threats into federal lending programs and budgeting processes.

Many of the projects laid out in the report are not new, including mandatory disclosure rules under consideration by the Securities and Exchange Commission to bring more clarity to investors about climate change-related investment risk.

But the report highlights government-wide efforts to address the issues before COP26 Climate Change Conference. The report pledges that the White House will include an assessment of the federal government's climate risk exposure in its annual budget and notes that government agencies will improve federal underwriting and lending program standards to better address the climate-related financial risks to their loan portfolios.

Crisis-hit Lebanon on edge

AFP, Beirut

Lebanon buried the victims of its deadliest sectarian unrest in years yesterday after gunfire gripped central Beirut for hours and revived the ghosts of the civil war.

Seven people were killed and dozens wounded Thursday when violence erupted following a rally by Shiite protesters demanding the removal of the judge investigating last year's devastating Beirut port blast.

The Shia movements Amal and Hezbollah that organised the protest in front of the Justice Palace accused the Lebanese Forces (LF) Christian party of engineering the chaos by aiming sniper fire at the demonstrators.

The front page of the Al-Akhbar daily, which is close to Hezbollah, carried a portrait of LF leader Samir Geagea donning Adolf Hitler's uniform and toothbrush moustache with a headline that read "No doubt". "Samir Geagea, you were the first to know what happened yesterday... because you planned, prepared

and executed... a major crime," the newspaper wrote.

The LF strenuously denied any involvement in Thursday's flare-up and said Hezbollah was "invading" off-limits neighbourhoods when the violence broke out.

DEADLY SECTARIAN FLARE-UP

A heavy army presence was visible on the streets Friday amid fears of an escalation.

On Thursday, Amal and Hezbollah militiamen in their hundreds filled the streets around Tayouneh, a notorious civil war flashpoint near the spot where the April 1975 bus attack often presented as the trigger of the conflict occurred.

As a deluge of bullets riddled residential facades, and gaggles of fighters wearing ammunition vests took over the streets and emptied their magazines haphazardly, civilians

crouched in homes, terrified.

France, the United States, Russia and United Nations appealed for a de-escalation but also insisted on the need to allow the port explosion probe to continue unhindered.

In addition to long-standing animosity between the LF and the Shiite groups, their feud was renewed by the fate of Tarek Bitar, the judge who has led the investigation into the August 4, 2020 port explosion.

What was one of the world's biggest ever non-nuclear explosions and Lebanon's worst peacetime disaster killed 215 people, wounded thousands and flattened swathes of the capital.

The investigation has not yet established who was responsible for the tonnes of ammonium nitrate which had been poorly stored at the port for years nor what exactly started the fire that detonated the fertiliser.

Hezbollah and Amal accuse Bitar of political bias in an investigation which Lebanon's ruling elite as a whole has hampered at every turn for more than a year.

Big Tech to face another bipartisan US antitrust bill

REUTERS, Washington

A bipartisan group of lawmakers, headed by Senators Amy Klobuchar, a Democrat, and Republican Chuck Grassley, plan to introduce a bill that would bar Big Tech platforms, like Amazon and Alphabet's Google, from favoring their products and services.

Amazon, for example, has been accused of using data from third-party sellers to determine what products it would create.

Reuters reported on Wednesday, after reviewing thousands of internal Amazon documents, that the US company's India operations ran a systematic campaign of creating knockoffs and manipulating search results to boost its own private brands in the country, one of the company's largest growth markets.

The latest bill is one of a slew introduced in this Congress aimed at reigning in tech firms, including industry leaders Facebook and Apple. Thus far none have become law although one, a broader measure to increase resources for antitrust enforcers, has passed the Senate.

This bill, which Klobuchar's office said would be introduced early next week, would be a companion to a measure which has passed the House Judiciary Committee. It must pass both houses of Congress to become law.

Klobuchar and Grassley's bill would specifically prohibit platforms from requiring companies operating on their sites to purchase the platform's goods or services and ban them from biasing search results to favor the platform.

Klobuchar is chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee's antitrust subcommittee while Grassley is the top Republican on the full committee.



Former US president Bill Clinton in hospital

Former US president Bill Clinton was in hospital with an infection on Thursday, a spokesman for the 75-year-old said. Doctors said Clinton was responding well at the center in Irvine, California. The infection was not connected to the coronavirus. "On Tuesday evening, President Clinton was admitted to UCI Medical Center to receive treatment for a non-Covid-related infection," the former president's spokesman Angel Urena wrote on Twitter. "He is on the mend, in good spirits, and is incredibly thankful to the doctors, nurses and staff providing him with excellent care." CNN reported that a urinary tract infection had spread to Clinton's bloodstream. Clinton served as America's 42nd president, from 1993 to 2001.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Iran, EU agree nuclear talks 'in days': EU

AFP, Tehran

Iran and the EU agreed Thursday to hold further dialogue in Brussels aimed at resuming talks on a faltering 2015 nuclear deal between the Islamic republic and world powers, Tehran said.

The European Union envoy charged with coordinating talks on reviving the Iran nuclear deal, Enrique Mora, met with Iranian deputy foreign minister Ali Bagheri for several hours, as Western powers lose patience with Tehran over the continued absence of a firm date for resuming talks.

Dialogue on the deal has been stalled since June. "At the end of this meeting, the two parties agreed to continue dialogue on questions of mutual interest in the coming days in Brussels," Iran's foreign ministry said in a statement, which noted that Mora said the EU was "ready to collaborate with Iran and the other parties".

The talks coincided with a visit by EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell to Washington for talks with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who on Wednesday warned of "other options" if diplomacy fails.

At the same time, his visiting Israeli counterpart

reserved the right to use force.

The 2015 nuclear deal, which gave Iran sanctions relief in return for curbs on its nuclear activities, has been on life support since 2018, when then US president Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out.

Trump reimposed crippling sanctions while Iran, which insists its nuclear programme is for civilian purposes only, gradually rolled back its own commitments.

Mora's trip to Tehran came with pressure mounting from EU countries as well as the United States for a swift resumption of talks on Washington's return to the agreement.

Ahead of Thursday's meeting with Mora, Bagheri, in charge of the nuclear file for Iran, tweeted that the "removal of cruel sanctions" would be on the agenda.

US President Joe Biden, who took office in January, has signalled a willingness to return to the nuclear deal.

Talks were held earlier this year in Vienna between Iran and the remaining parties to the agreement -- Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia -- with the US taking part indirectly.

The talks have been on hold since a June election in Iran led to a change of president.



Students and protesters shout slogans during the School Strike 4 Climate protest in Brisbane, Australia, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



OCTOBER 16

1946 - A number of top German Nazis were hanged at Nuremberg after being found guilty of war crimes. They included former foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop.

1951 - Pakistani Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was shot dead while addressing a public meeting in Rawalpindi.

1962 - Cuban Missile Crisis begins as JFK is shown photos confirming the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba.

SOURCE: REUTERS

Only talk but no action 'irritating'

Says Queen Elizabeth on climate; Modi, Xi may skip COP26

AGENCIES

Queen Elizabeth II has taken aim at world leaders who "talk" but "don't do" enough about climate change, in an apparent jibe at those not attending the upcoming COP26 summit.

The 95-year-old monarch was overheard making the remarks on a microphone as she opened the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff on Thursday.

She told Elin Jones, the parliament's presiding officer: "Extraordinary isn't it. I've been hearing all about COP... still don't know who is coming. No idea."

"We only know about people who are not coming... It's really irritating when they talk, but they don't do."

All eyes are on the two-week UN climate summit in Glasgow, which starts on October 31, and whether Xi Jinping, leader of the world's biggest emitter, China, will attend. It is also unclear if Narendra Modi,

prime minister of the world's third-highest emitter of greenhouse gases, India, will be at the conference either.

The queen's comments come after public interventions this week from



both her eldest son and heir, Prince Charles, and her grandson, Prince William.

Long-time environmentalist Charles told the BBC in an interview broadcast Monday he worried world leaders would "just talk", rather than implement "action on the ground". William, in a separate interview

with the broadcaster aired on Thursday, called for more than "clever talk" -- and blasted space tourism.

"We need some of the world's greatest brains and minds fixed on trying to repair this planet, not trying to find the next place to go and live," he added.

Welsh politician Jones told the Queen that she had seen William on the television "saying there's no point going to space, we need to save the Earth".

The queen smiled and replied: "Yes, I read about it."

She, Charles, William and other senior royals are all due to attend events at the upcoming summit.

The gathering will try to persuade major developing economies to do more to cut their carbon emissions, and get the rich world to cough up billions more to help poorer countries adapt to climate change.

US-LED SUMMIT ON RANSOMWARE

Nations vow to combat menace

AFP, Washington

Over two dozen nations resolved Thursday to battle collectively against the global and escalating threat posed by cyber-extortionists, following a Washington-led anti-ransomware summit.

The United States gathered the countries -- with the notable exception of Russia -- to unify and boost efforts to fight a cybercrime that is transnational, on the rise and potentially devastating.

"The threat of ransomware is complex and global in nature and requires a shared response," the joint summit statement said, adding the nations "recognize the need for urgent action, common priorities and complementary efforts."

These attacks involve breaking into an entity's networks to encrypt its data, then demanding a ransom, typically paid via cryptocurrency in exchange for the key to unlock it.

Stronger digital security and offline backups as well as collectively targeting the laundering of the attacks' proceeds were identified as crucial steps in the fight.

"We will consider all national tools available in taking action against those responsible for ransomware operations threatening critical infrastructure and public safety," the statement said.

The nations also resolved to work together in law enforcement operations -- which are challenging because they cross borders and require special skills -- and the use of diplomatic pressure.

Although Moscow denies any responsibility, most recent ransomware attacks against the United States have been blamed on Russian-speaking hacker groups or those operating from Russian territory.

White House officials said Russia was not invited to this "first round" of talks, but that Washington has opened a separate line of communication with Moscow on the sensitive topic.

The United Kingdom, Australia, India, Japan, France, Germany, South Korea, the European Union, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, and others were among the roughly 30 that joined in the virtual gathering that ran from Wednesday to Thursday.