

## Number of migrants reaching EU sharply rises

AFP, Warsaw

The number of migrants arriving in the European Union rose by 86 percent between January and July compared to the same period last year, the European border agency Frontex said Friday.

In July alone, the number increased by 63 percent year on year to 34,570, according to a news release publishing the preliminary data.

Overall, 155,090 migrants arrived in the EU from January to July, it said.

More than 14,866 irregular entries, "nearly three times more" than in July last year, were recorded via the Western Balkan route, which continues to be "the most active".



Taliban fighters fire into the air to disperse Afghan women protesters in Kabul yesterday. Taliban fighters beat women protesters and fired into the air as they violently dispersed a rare rally in the Afghan capital, days ahead of the first anniversary of the hardline Islamists' return to power.

PHOTO: AFP

## Sri Lanka allows Chinese ship in India expresses concern

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's government yesterday granted permission for a controversial Chinese research vessel to visit the island despite neighbouring India's concerns that it could spy on New Delhi's military installations, officials said.

The Yuan Wang 5 is described as a research and survey vessel by international shipping and analytics sites, but according to Indian media it is a dual-use spy ship.

New Delhi is suspicious of Beijing's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean and influence in Sri Lanka.

The Yuan Wang 5 was originally due to call at Sri Lanka's Chinese-run Hambantota port on August 11, only for Colombo to ask Beijing to indefinitely defer the visit following India's objections.

But Sri Lanka's harbour master said he had received foreign ministry clearance for the ship to call at Hambantota from August 16 to 22. The Indian government has expressed concern that the ship could spy on its activities, and had lodged a complaint with Colombo.

## CHINA-TAIWAN TENSIONS

# US to conduct air, sea transits in Taiwan Strait: White House

AGENCIES

The United States will boost trade with Taiwan in response to China's "provocative" behaviour, the White House said Friday, as it insisted on the right of air and sea passage through the tense strait.

A new trade plan will be unveiled within days, while US forces will transit the Taiwan Strait in the next few weeks, said Kurt Campbell, White House coordinator for Asia-Pacific issues and an adviser to President Joe Biden.

The statement came after Beijing raged at last week's trip by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, launching its largest-ever military drills around the self-ruled island.

Taiwan has accused China of using the visit by Pelosi, the highest-ranking elected American official to visit in decades, as an excuse to kickstart drills.

Campbell said Pelosi's visit was "consistent" with Washington's existing policy and that China had "overreacted."

Beijing used the pretext to "launch an intensified pressure campaign against Taiwan to try to change the status quo, jeopardizing peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and in the broader region," he said.

"China has overreacted and its actions continue to be provocative, destabilizing and unprecedented." In response to China's drills,

the United States is reasserting its involvement in the area, while reiterating its policy of "strategic ambiguity" — diplomatically recognizing China while simultaneously supporting Taiwan's self-rule.

Campbell said that the United States would also reassert its right to use international air and sea space between Taiwan and China.

US forces "will continue to fly, sail and operate where international law allows, consistent with our long-standing commitment to freedom of navigation."

"That includes conducting standard air and maritime transits through the Taiwan Strait in the next few weeks," he told reporters.

## MONTENEGRO SHOOTING 11 people dead, six injured

AFP, Podgorica

A shooter killed at least 11 people including two children in a mass shooting in Montenegro's central city of Cetinje on Friday, officials said, in one of the deadliest violent incidents to rock the Adriatic nation. A police officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, also confirmed the figure to AFP. The incident took place in Cetinje, around 36 kilometres (22 miles) west of the capital Podgorica, after the shooter was involved in a family dispute, according to public broadcaster RTCG. The shooter was believed to have been killed by a local resident, according to Nastic, dispelling earlier reports that said the gunman had been shot by police. Six people were also wounded in the attack, with three in a critical condition, according to Ljiljana Radulovic — the director of the central hospital in Podgorica, told reporters. In the shooting's wake, Prime Minister Dritan Abazovic called on the country to offer support to the families of the victims, saying the incident was unprecedented in Montenegro's recent history. "I invite all the citizens of Montenegro to be with the families of the innocent victims," the prime minister wrote in a post on Telegram.

## CLIMATE CHANGE, DRUG PRICES US lawmakers pass Biden bill

AFP, Washington

US lawmakers on Friday adopted President Joe Biden's sprawling climate, tax and health care plan — a major win for the veteran Democrat that includes the biggest ever American investment in the battle against global warming. Passage in the House of Representatives along strict party lines came after approval of the bill in the Senate by a razor-thin margin, with Vice President Kamala Harris casting the tie-breaking vote. Biden quickly hailed the adoption of his plan, which includes a \$370 billion investment aimed at bringing about a 40 percent drop in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The vote is a clear victory for Biden on one of his top policy priorities less than three months before November's crucial midterm elections.



A man with a dog looks at a crater following a missile strike on the second largest Ukrainian city of Kharkiv yesterday, amid the Russian military invasion of Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

## HIGH TEMPERATURES

# Broad swathe of China bakes

REUTERS, Shenzhen

Several regions of China including the major southwestern city of Chongqing baked in temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) yesterday, while the country's national observatory continued its red alert for extreme heat.

In Zhejiang, home to many factories and exporters, a meteorological official said that the eastern province has broken its previous record for high temperature days this year, with 31 days above 35C and 16 days above 38C.

Along with Chongqing, which saw temperatures up to 42.1C yesterday, Hubei, Hunan, Shandong, Anhui, Xinjiang, Jiangxi and Fujian were among the provinces and regions where temperatures exceeded 35C.

A thunderstorm appeared to have helped spare Shanghai from breaking its 40.9C record yesterday, though residents

of the commercial hub of 25 million still expressed fatigue from the ongoing heatwave.

"It's like being in a steamer, it's really hot," said 70-year old resident Shen Fengming. "Even if you don't walk around outside, you'll still end up sweating."

"I went to our port and walked around," said 45-year-old Huang Yi, who works at a container port. "It was just an hour, but my clothes and pants were all wet. Compared to years before, the temperature this year is particularly high."

Yesterday, Shanghai's meteorological observatory reported that the city has seen 40 days with temperatures exceeding 40C this year.

Last week China's weather bureau warned that the country's average ground temperatures had risen much more quickly than the global average over the past 70 years.



## ANTI-NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

# India sacks employees in Kashmir

REUTERS, Srinagar

Indian administered Kashmir yesterday sacked four government employees, citing their involvement in activities "prejudicial to the interests of the security of the state". One of those dismissed is the son of the leader of a militant group fighting against India in the disputed Himalayan territory.

India and Pakistan each rule part of Kashmir and claim it in full.

Also dismissed were two professors at Kashmir University that the administration claims were radicalising students to advance Pakistan's agenda, and a woman working in rural development that the administration says was funding anti-India activities.

"They have been found involved in activities prejudicial to the interests of the security of the state," senior government officials said, adding that all four employees were dismissed immediately.

India blames Pakistan for stoking unrest in Muslim-majority Kashmir and has stepped up pressure on Pakistan in recent years. Pakistan has denied giving material help to Kashmiri separatists but has pledged to provide continued diplomatic and moral support.

In the past year, Indian administered Kashmir has terminated the contracts of at least 30 government employees for alleged militancy links under a law which enables it to sack employees without an inquiry.

Meanwhile, a migrant labourer from Bihar was shot dead by terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipore, police said on Friday, reports NDTV online.

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Admission Fall 2022	Last Date of Application 24 August 2022	Admission Test 26 August 2022
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