

THAI ELECTION

MPs to vote on new PM next week

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thai lawmakers will vote for a new premier next week, the House Speaker said yesterday, after a court rejected a bid by election winner Move Forward to challenge parliament's blocking of its candidate.

The Constitutional Court dismissed the petition by allies of the party on a technicality, arguing its prime ministerial candidate, Pita Limjaroenrat, who was twice thwarted by parliament, was not among the complainants.

Thailand has been under a caretaker administration since March and parliament has been deadlocked for weeks over the formation of the next government, after the anti-establishment Move Forward met fierce resistance from conservative lawmakers allied with the royalist military.



Members of Royal National Lifeboat Institution help migrants to disembark from a lifeboat on the beach at Dungeness, on the southeast coast of England, yesterday, after being picked up at sea while crossing the English Channel from France.

PHOTO: REUTERS

US soldier wants refuge from racism in US

Says N Korea

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korea has concluded that US soldier Travis King wants refuge there or elsewhere because of "inhuman maltreatment and racial discrimination" in the US and the military, state media said yesterday.

It was the North's first public acknowledgement of the army private's crossing from South Korea on July 18 while on a civilian tour of the Joint Security Area (JSA) on the heavily fortified border between the neighbours.

US officials have said they believe King crossed border intentionally, and have declined so far to classify him as a prisoner of war.

North Korean investigators have also concluded that King crossed deliberately and illegally, with the intent to stay in the North or in a third country, state news agency KCNA said.

"During the investigation, Travis King confessed that he had decided to come over to the DPRK as he harbored ill feeling against inhuman maltreatment and racial discrimination within the US Army," KCNA said.

RECORD MELT

2023 set to be another bad year for Swiss glaciers

AFP, Geneva

A leading Swiss glaciologist warned yesterday that 2023 was looking "not good" for the country's glaciers, a year after they suffered a record melt.

"Still more than a month to go in the melting season. How are Swiss glaciers doing at the moment? Not good!" glaciology professor Matthias Huss, head of Glacier Monitoring in Switzerland (GLAMOS), said on the platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

The warning comes after the Swiss glaciers faced a "disastrous year" in 2022, as "all ice melt records were smashed," according to a study published by the Cryospheric Commission (CC) of the Swiss Academy of Sciences last September.

Huss said he was very curious to see the final measurements for the year in mid-September, stressing that the situation so far a "not as extreme as in 2022".

But, he cautioned, "we are still on track for the second-most negative year in history".

"Despite a rather cool period in the last weeks, all glaciers are clearly below the average of the last 10 years," he said, "And a new heat wave is unfolding now."

According to the UN's World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the past eight years have been the warmest on record.

The United Nation agency predicts it is likely that global temperatures will temporarily rise beyond the Paris Agreement threshold of 1.5C above the pre-industrial levels for at least one of the next five years.

In the European Alps, glaciers melted to a record degree last year due to low winter snowfall, Saharan dust settling on the surface in March and then heatwaves between May and early September.

The situation was particularly dramatic in Switzerland, with the glaciers seeing three cubic kilometres of ice -- three trillion litres of water -- melt away, according to the CC report.

That was equivalent to over six percent of their ice volume. Up until then, a two-percent loss in a single year had been considered extreme, it said.

IRAN OIL TANKER THREAT

US beefs up Gulf deployment

3,000 US Marines, sailors arrive in Red Sea on board the USS Bataan, USS Carter Hall warships

AFP, Manama

As Iranian seizures threaten oil tankers plying the Gulf, the United States is raising its military presence -- a move long demanded by Gulf Arab states who accused Washington of retreating from the region.

Three thousand additional US personnel on troop-landing warships have already passed through the Red Sea, and US-led maritime forces are warning ships against approaching Iranian waters.

The moves follow a spate of capture and attempted capture of ships in and around the Strait of Hormuz, the U-shaped gateway to the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea that carries a fifth of world oil output.

"There is a heightened threat, a heightened risk to regional mariners in terms of seizures" by Iran in the strait, said Commander Tim Hawkins, spokesman for the US Navy's Fifth Fleet.

"Right now, our focus is on... increasing our presence in and near the Strait of Hormuz to ensure security and stability in a very critical waterway," Hawkins told AFP at the US Naval base in Bahrain.

The attacks on tankers came at a time of troubled relations between Washington and its wealthy Gulf allies, who have long relied on US protection for their oil assets and chafed at a perceived military drawdown.

The US military says Iran has either seized or attempted to take nearly 20 internationally flagged ships in the region in the past two years.

Most recently, Washington said its forces blocked two attempts by Iran to seize commercial tankers in international waters off Oman on July 5. In April and early May, Iran seized two tankers within a week in regional waters.

On Saturday, a US-led naval coalition issued an advisory for commercial ships to "transit as far away" from Iran's waters as possible in what Hawkins called a "prudent step" in light of recent seizures.

Less than a week earlier, 3,000 US Marines and sailors arrived in the Red Sea on board the USS Bataan and USS Carter Hall warships, which can ferry troops ashore by aircraft and landing craft.

Washington had already promised fighter jets and said it deployed A-10 Warthog warplanes.

The buildup, according to Hawkins, affords Washington "more robust forces where needed".

They are in addition to the more than 30,000 US troops already in the Middle East.

Although Washington has previously sent troop reinforcements to the Gulf, including in 2019 as a response to Iran tensions, the US is now considering unprecedented measures.

It is preparing to put Marines and Navy personnel aboard commercial tankers transiting the Gulf as an added layer of defence, a US official told AFP in early August.

Hawkins said that although no formal announcement has been made about manning tankers, "we have sailors, we have Marines that are trained here in the region to carry out whatever mission they are tasked with".

But at the same time, the United States military buildup coincides with the first deal between President Joe Biden's administration and Iran's clerical leadership.

The delicate agreement would see Iran free five American prisoners in exchange for the unblocking of Iranian funds frozen in South Korea under US sanctions.



Hawaii wildfire toll climbs to 106

Makeshift morgue expanded to deal with the tragedy

AFP, Kahului

The number of people known to have died in the horrific wildfire that levelled a Hawaiian town reached 106 on Tuesday, authorities said, as a makeshift morgue was expanded to deal with the tragedy.

State governor Josh Green has repeatedly warned that the final toll from last week's inferno in Lahaina -- already the deadliest US wildfire in over a century -- would grow significantly, urging Hawaiians to gird for a number that could be two or three times its present level.

Maui County officials updated the death toll to 106 on Tuesday, with Green saying earlier that over a quarter of the disaster zone had been searched by dogs trained to sniff for bodies.

Refrigerated containers were being pressed into use as makeshift morgues at the Maui Police Forensic Facility on Tuesday, an AFP journalist observed, as the largely rural island struggled to cope with the sheer number of dead.

Green warned against any attempt at a land grab in the devastated remains of Lahaina, as locals fret that deep-pocketed developers might take advantage of people's desperation and try to buy up plots that can be turned into luxury housing or more lucrative short-term rentals.

"Our goal is to have a local commitment -- forever -- to this community, as we rebuild," he said.

17 troops killed in new Niger attack

20 others hurt

AFP, Niamey

Seventeen troops died in a jihadist ambush in Niger, the government said, in a reminder of the nation's deep security crisis as its military rulers face off against neighbours determined to reverse last month's coup.

An army detachment was "the victim of a terrorist ambush near the town of Koutougou" in the Tillaberi region near Burkina Faso on Tuesday, said a defence ministry statement published later that day.

It added that another 20 soldiers had been wounded, six seriously, with all the casualties evacuated to the capital Niamey.

More than 100 assailants, who were travelling on motorbikes, were "neutralised" during their retreat, the army said.

A jihadist insurgency has plagued Africa's Sahel region for more than a decade, breaking out in northern Mali in 2012 before spreading to neighbouring Niger and Burkina Faso in 2015.

The so-called "three borders" area between the three countries is regularly the scene of attacks by rebels affiliated with the Islamic State group and Al Qaeda.

The unrest across the region has killed thousands of troops, police officers and civilians.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Roads and Highways Department
Office of the Additional Chief Engineer
Road Zone, Sylhet
Sarak Bhaban, Tupkhana, Sylhet
☎ 0821-726766
E-mail: acesylrhd@gmail.com

Memo No. 35.01.9162.010.07.0000.23-3106 Date: 14/08/2023

Corrigendum No. 01 (One)

Tender Package No.: e-GP/18/PMP-Road Major/ACE/SZ/MOU/2022-23(Re-Tender)
Tender ID No.: 860458
Name of Work: Periodic Maintenance Providing DBSWC including Strengthening work at Ch. 1+410km(Rhd Inspection Banglu) to Ch. 1+530 Km & Ch. 1+720 Km (Juri old Thana) to 4+500 Km (Lathitila) of Juri- Lathitila Road (R-262), DBSWC work at Ch. 0+000km (Borolekha) to Ch. 17+000Km (Latu) of Barlekha-Shahbazpur Latu Road (Z-2815) & DBSWC work at Ch. 0+000km (Shahbazpur) to Ch.8+000km (Daulatpur) Sign-Signal, KM post, RCC Pallsiding etc. of Shahbazpur-Daulatpur Road (Z-2816) under Road Division, Moulvibazar of Road Zone Sylhet during the year 2022-2023

This is to notify for all concerned that as per ITT Clause No. 12 of e-GP Tender documents for procurement of works (National), the following amendments have been made into the tender notice of Tender ID No. 860458 as follows.

16. Financial Criteria

Sl No.	Description	Old Value	New Value
1	16.1(d) Tender Capacity	The minimum capacity shall be: Tk. 1900.00 lakh Assessed Tender Capacity = (A*N*1.5-B) Where A= Maximum value of Works performed in any one year during last five years N= Completion time of the proposed work in years B= Value of Existing commitments and works to be completed during the next N years	The minimum capacity shall be: Tk. 1200.00 lakh Assessed Tender Capacity = (A*N*1.5-B) Where A= Maximum value of works performed in any one year during last five years. N= Completion time of the proposed work in years B= Value of Existing commitments and works to be completed during the next N years

This will be a part and parcel of tender document. All other terms and conditions of tender issued as per this office Memo No. 35.01.9162.010.07.860458.23-3026 dated 08-08-2023 will remain unchanged.

Md. Fazole Rabbe
ID No. 005379
Additional Chief Engineer (CC) RHD
Road Zone, Sylhet

GD-1242

Russian probe enters Moon orbit

AFP, Moscow

Moscow's Luna-25 lander was successfully placed in the Moon's orbit yesterday, the first such Russian mission in almost 50 years, space agency Roscosmos announced.

With the lunar launch, Moscow's first since 1976, Russia is seeking to restart and rebuild on the Soviet Union's pioneering space programme.

"For the first time in Russia's contemporary history, an automatic station was placed in lunar orbit at 12:03 pm Moscow time," a Roscosmos spokesperson told AFP.

The probe will orbit 100 kilometres above the Moon's surface, before a planned landing Monday. "All the 'Luna-25' systems are operating normally, and communication with it is stable," the spokesperson said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Netrokona

Memo No. 37.07.7200.008.07.002(02).22-758 Date: 16/08/2023

e-Tender Notice No. 2023-2024/02

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following works under EED Netrokona as mentioned below:

SL. No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tendering method	Tender ID	Last date and time of selling documents	Tender closing date/time	Tender opening date/time
1	WD-04/TMED/7016	Construction of Single Story Academic Building With 4-Storeied Foundation Including Sanitary, Water Supply & Electrification Works at Rajghat D. U. Alim Madrasa under Kendua Upazila Netrokona District.	OTM	862488	30/08/2023 15:00	31/08/2023 13:00	31/08/2023 13:00
2	WD-05/TMED/7016	Construction of Single Storey Academic Building With 4-Storeied Foundation including Sanitary, Water Supply & Electrification Works at Alhaz Atik Ambia Dakhil Madrasa under Kendua Upazila Netrokona District.	OTM	862489	30/08/2023 15:00	31/08/2023 13:00	31/08/2023 13:00

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be acceptable in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Montzurul Alam Sharif
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Netrokona
Email: ee_net@eedmoe.gov.bd

GD-1240