

'UN lightning rod for propaganda'

Rights chief decries disinfo attacks

A FP, Geneva

The UN rights chief decried yesterday disinformation and other attacks that aim to "undermine the legitimacy" and work of the United Nations and other institutions, describing them as "profoundly destructive".

Speaking at the opening of the UN Human Rights Council's main annual session, Volker Turk slammed widespread "disinformation that targets UN humanitarian organisations, UN peacekeepers and my office".

"The UN has become a lightning rod for manipulative propaganda and a scapegoat for policy failures," he warned.

"This is profoundly destructive of the common good, and it callously betrays the many people whose lives rely on it."

During his opening speech, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stressed that the United Nations was "uniquely equipped to enable states to discuss and resolve pressing global issues".

"This convening power is particularly vital now, when the magnitude of conflict, planetary peril and digital transformation requires urgent solutions," he said.



A displaced Palestinian child stands outside a makeshift tent attached to a school hosting families from other parts of the Gaza Strip in the Rafah refugee camp in southern Gaza yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Israeli strikes on east Lebanon kill 2 Hezbollah members

AFP, Baalbek

Israel struck Hezbollah targets near the city of Baalbek yesterday, killing two group members, security sources said, the first such attack on Lebanon's east since hostilities began after the Gaza invasion. The Israeli army said the strikes targeted Hezbollah air defence systems in retaliation for the Iran-backed group downing one of its drones in south Lebanon earlier yesterday. "Two Hezbollah members were killed in the Israeli strikes near Baalbek," a security official in Lebanon told AFP. Another security source confirmed the toll. Earlier Monday, one of the sources had said Israeli strikes hit a building used by Hezbollah in a Baalbek suburb, and a warehouse near Baalbek belonging to the Shiite Muslim group. Both sources requested anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the press. The Israeli army said it struck Hezbollah "aerial defence" sites in the Bekaa valley in response "to the launch of a surface-to-air missile" which downed the Israeli drone. It was the first Israeli attack on Hezbollah outside Lebanon's south since Israel's attack on Gaza began.

Navalny was close to being freed in prisoner swap Says ally

REUTERS

Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny was close to being freed in a prisoner swap at the time of his death, a close ally said yesterday, repeating an allegation by his family and supporters that President Vladimir Putin had him killed. Speaking on YouTube, Maria Pevchikh said talks about exchanging Navalny and two unnamed US nationals for Vadim Krasikov, a Russian FSB security service hit man in jail in Germany, were in their final stages at the time of his death. "Alexei Navalny could be sitting in this seat right now, right today. That's not a figure of speech, it could and should have happened," said Pevchikh. "Navalny should have been out in the next few days because we got a decision about his exchange. Putin was offered to exchange the killer Vadim Krasikov."

Does Sweden joining make Baltic Sea 'Nato lake'?

AFP, Brussels

Sweden's accession to Nato adds a final puzzle piece to the alliance around the shores of the strategically important Baltic Sea – but Russia still poses a threat above and below water.

After Finland joined last year, Sweden's membership – which looked set to clear the final hurdle yesterday with Hungary's vote on ratification later – means all the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea, except Russia, will be part of the US-led military alliance.

That has led some to label the sea a "Nato lake", with the Western allies now appearing well-placed to strangle Russia's room for manoeuvre in the crucial shipping route if a war with Moscow ever breaks out.

But analysts warn that while Sweden's entry makes it easier for Nato to exert control and reinforce its vulnerable Baltic states, Russia can still menace the region from heavily-armed exclave Kaliningrad and threaten undersea infrastructure.

"If you look at a map then geographically the Baltic Sea is becoming a Nato lake, yes," said Minna Alander a research fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs.

"But there is still work to do for Nato."

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a series of high-profile incidents involving pipelines and cables under the Baltic Sea have given Nato a wake-up call over its vulnerabilities. Nato has bolstered its naval deployments in response and is looking to step up its monitoring capabilities,

but keeping an eye on what's happening beneath the water is a major task.

"It's very difficult to have overall control of a sea as you would control territories on land," said Julian Pawlak, a researcher at Germany's Bundeswehr University in Hamburg.

"What the Nord Stream sabotages have shown, among others, is that it remains hard to be aware exactly what is happening below the surface and on the seabed."

Sweden has long had a close partnership with Nato but its formal membership will allow it to be fully integrated into the alliance's defence plans. Beyond its long Baltic coastline, Sweden brings with it the island of Gotland which would play a central role in helping Nato impose its

will. But just across the water Russia has its own vital outpost – the exclave of Kaliningrad.

Wedge between Poland and Lithuania, Moscow has in recent years turned the region into one of the most militarised in Europe, with nuclear capable missiles stationed there.

Russia's Baltic fleet based in Kaliningrad is a shadow of what it was during the Cold War and the invasion of Ukraine has sapped some of its forces from the region.

But John Deni, a research professor at the US Army War College, said the Kremlin has kept up investments in undersea capabilities and still has the firepower to stage small-scale landings or threaten Nato supply routes.



Farmers protest to denounce their conditions and the European agricultural policy, on the Castellana avenue in Madrid. Spanish farmers and livestock breeders demanding product prices to cover their production costs, and for non-EU imports to face the same regulations they do, resumed protest as EU agriculture ministers met in Brussels yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

25 killed in Tanzania road crash

AFP, Dar Es Salaam

A road crash in northern Tanzania has killed at least 25 people including several foreigners, President Samia Suluhu Hassan said on Sunday.

The accident occurred on Saturday evening when a truck driver lost control of his vehicle on the road linking Arusha and Namanga and collided with three other vehicles, she said in a statement.

The victims included one girl, 10 women and 14 men. Among them were an American, a Kenyan, a South African and a Kenyan national.

At least 21 people were injured in the accident, including people from Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Switzerland, Britain and Mali, the statement said.

One of the vehicles was transporting foreigners it said.

Peace talks without Moscow is absurd

Says Russia, shrugs off latest Western sanctions

REUTERS, Moscow

The Kremlin said yesterday that the idea of holding peace talks without Russia was ridiculous, after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he hoped to hold a spring summit in Switzerland to discuss his peace vision with Kyiv's allies. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters: "We have repeatedly said that this is a strange format, to say the least, because certain peace plans are being implemented without the participation of Russia, which in itself is frivolous and even laughable."

Zelenskyy's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, said on Sunday, however, that a blueprint from the summit in Switzerland could be handed to Russia at a later date.

"There can be a situation in which we together invite representatives of the Russian Federation, where they will be presented with the plan in case whoever is representing the aggressor country at that time will want to genuinely end this

war and return to a just peace," Yermak said.

Meanwhile, Kremlin shrugged off the latest round of Western sanctions against Moscow, saying that Russia's economy had adapted to restrictions and that those imposing sanctions were hurting themselves with any new measures.

"Nothing fundamentally new has been announced, and it is unlikely that anything fundamentally new can be thought up by those who impose these sanctions without harming their own economy," Dmitry Peskov told reporters. Peskov said sanctions were causing indirect harm to the European economy and the interests of US companies.

The United States on Friday imposed extensive sanctions against Russia, targeting more than 500 people and entities to mark the second anniversary of what Moscow calls its "special military operation" in Ukraine and retaliate for the death of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Special Supplement



Canadian Education Thrives in Bangladesh: CISB's Pioneering Journey

Founded in 2005 in the vibrant neighborhood of Banani, Canadian International School Bangladesh began its educational odyssey as a Primary School. As our student community flourished, so did our aspirations, leading to the establishment of two dedicated campuses, each focusing on Primary and High School education. Our commitment to providing an exceptional

education experience has driven us to embrace various enriching opportunities over the years.

In a strategic move reflecting our commitment to academic excellence, we transitioned our Canadian affiliation to the esteemed Education Department of Nova Scotia. This transition has empowered us to integrate the globally recognized Cambridge Curriculum and the prestigious International Baccalaureate Diploma Programs into our academic offerings. This evolution not only broadens the horizons of our students but also ensures that their credentials are highly regarded by renowned institu-

tions worldwide, ranging from Harvard to Oxford.

Graduates of our Canadian program find themselves welcomed into esteemed universities across the globe, while those completing the International Baccalaureate journey enjoy heightened prospects at top-tier institutions. The success of our alumni underscores the effectiveness of our pedagogi-

cal approach, which revolves around 'inquiry learning.' Our educators, skilled in this art, guide students to cultivate indispensable life skills, including self-assurance, critical thinking, and an insatiable appetite for knowledge. At the core of our teaching philosophy is the commitment to instill a love for learning in our younger cohorts. Rooted in the Canadian curriculum, our classrooms deviate from rote memorization, instead prioritizing the harnessing of children's innate curiosity. Each school day is punctuated by play, facilitated by small class sizes and expert guidance, creating an environment where learning

seamlessly blends with joy. Central to our ethos is a departure from the conventional examination-centric model. Emphasizing progression based on age rather than test scores, we alleviate the anxiety associated with failure, fostering an inclusive atmosphere where individual differences are celebrated. Students with diverse needs are not only embraced but also supported on their educational journey by tailored lessons delivered by our multinational teaching staff. Comprising educators from both North America and South Asia, our faculty embodies a commitment to excellence, underscored by the attainment of Nova Scotia Teacher Certification. This amalgamation of diverse perspectives forms a modern educational paradigm, finely tailored to the needs of Bangladeshi youth. Our institution stands poised to catalyze the nation's future success by nurturing well-rounded individuals equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in an ever-evolving global landscape.

In choosing Canadian International School Bangladesh, you're not just selecting an educational institution; you're choosing a transformative experience that shapes the leaders of tomorrow. Join us on this journey of academic excellence and personal growth, where every student is given the tools to thrive in an interconnected world.

seamlessly blends with joy.

Central to our ethos is a departure from the conventional examination-centric model. Emphasizing progression based on age rather than test scores, we alleviate the anxiety associated with failure, fostering an inclusive atmosphere where individual differences are celebrated. Students with diverse needs are not only embraced but also supported on their educational journey by tailored lessons delivered by our multinational teaching staff.

Comprising educators from both North America and South Asia, our faculty embodies a commitment to excellence, underscored by the attainment of Nova Scotia Teacher Certification. This amalgamation of diverse perspectives forms a modern educational paradigm, finely tailored to the needs of Bangladeshi youth. Our institution stands poised to catalyze the nation's future success by nurturing well-rounded individuals equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in an ever-evolving global landscape.

In choosing Canadian International School Bangladesh, you're not just selecting an educational institution; you're choosing a transformative experience that shapes the leaders of tomorrow. Join us on this journey of academic excellence and personal growth, where every student is given the tools to thrive in an interconnected world.

For more information visit www.canadaeducationbd.com

