

Trump invites China's Xi to inauguration

Experts call it political theatre

REUTERS, Washington

US President-elect Donald Trump has invited Chinese President Xi Jinping and other foreign leaders to his inauguration next month in Washington, a Trump transition spokesperson said on Thursday, but experts said that Xi was not likely to attend.

Asked if Xi had responded, Karoline Leavitt told Fox News in an interview that was "to be determined". She did not name the other world leaders who were also invited.

"This is an example of President Trump creating an open dialogue with leaders of countries that are not just our allies but our adversaries and our competitors, too," Leavitt added.

It would be unprecedented for a leader of China, a top US geopolitical rival, to attend a US presidential inauguration and China experts said it was highly unlikely that Xi would come to Washington.

"This is diplomatic theater, nothing more. Other heads of state, let alone Xi Jinping, haven't attended US Presidential inaugurations," said Scott Kennedy, a China specialist at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies.



Ukrainian people take shelter inside an underground parking of an apartment building during a massive Russian missile attack across the country, in Lviv, Ukraine yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Russian missiles batter Ukraine's power grid

Kremlin praises Trump's criticism of Ukrainian strikes deep into Russia

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russia launched a large-scale missile attack on Ukrainian energy facilities during the morning rush hour yesterday, Kyiv said, while explosions were heard in the Black Sea port of Odesa and other cities in western Ukraine.

Russian forces have been targeting Ukraine's electricity system for most of the year and it renewed its strike campaign last month, causing lengthy power cuts for millions of

Russian forces advance towards strategic city of Pokrovsk in Ukraine's east

civilians as the war with Russia nears the 34-month mark.

"Russia aims to deprive us of energy. Instead, we must deprive it of the means of terror. I reiterate my call for the urgent delivery of

20 NASAMS, HAWK, or IRIS-T air defense systems," Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha wrote in a post on X.

Around a half of power company Yasn'o's 3.5 million consumers were without power yesterday morning.

The Kremlin had warned it would respond to Kyiv's use of ATACMS missiles and then praised Trump, who said using the weapons to hit deep into Russia was a "foolish" idea.

Russian forces are just 1.5 km (1 mile) outside the Ukrainian city of Pokrovsk.

France's Macron names centrist ally Bayrou as PM

AFP, Paris

President Emmanuel Macron yesterday named centrist leader Francois Bayrou as prime minister, handing him the daunting task of hauling France out of months of political crisis.

Bayrou, the 73-year-old head of the MoDem group which is allied to Macron's party, was appointed nine days after Michel Barnier's government was ousted by parliament in a historic no-confidence vote following a standoff over an austerity budget.

"The President of the Republic has appointed Mr. Francois Bayrou as prime minister and tasked him with forming a government," the French presidency said in a statement, giving no more details.

Bayrou is the sixth prime minister of Macron's mandate after last week's toppling of Barnier, who became France's shortest-serving prime minister and lasted only three months. He is also Macron's fourth prime minister of 2024.

Bayrou now faces an immediate challenge in putting together a cabinet that can survive a no-confidence vote in a deeply divided parliament.



Six rare giant catfish surface in Cambodia

AFP, Phnom Penh

Conservationists in Cambodia yesterday celebrated the discovery of six highly endangered Mekong giant catfish in the Southeast Asian waterway plagued by illegal fishing, habitat loss and plastic waste.

Fishermen smiled alongside officials from Cambodia's Fisheries Administration (CFA) as they held up the two-metre-long creatures - weighing up to 130 kilograms (287 pounds) each - before releasing them back into their river habitat.

The survival of the giant catfish - one of the largest and rarest freshwater fish in the world - underscores the urgent need to protect the river's free-flowing connectivity, a statement by the USAID-funded Wonders of the Mekong conservation group said.

Besides overfishing, the Mekong River Basin has been degraded by upstream dams and climate change, which have had a major impact on water levels in the endangered catfish's aquatic home.

Any drills around Taiwan 'decided by us alone'

Says China's defence ministry

AFP, Beijing

China's defence ministry said yesterday that any drills it may hold around Taiwan "are decided by us alone", as Taipei announced the apparent end of massive military exercises not formally declared by Beijing.

Taiwanese authorities said this week that Beijing was holding its biggest maritime drills in years, deploying dozens of warships and coast guard vessels in an area stretching from near the southern islands of Japan to the South China Sea.

Hsieh Ching-chin, deputy director general of Taiwan's coast guard, said yesterday that the ships had returned to China, adding that Taipei considered the manoeuvres to be "over".

Asked about the alleged drills yesterday, Wu Qian, a spokesman for Beijing's defence ministry, did not confirm whether

they had taken place.

But he said that "whether or not we hold exercises, and when we hold them, are decided by us alone, based on our own needs and the circumstances of our struggle".

"Safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity, the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation, and the common interests of compatriots across the Taiwan Strait are the (military's) sacred duties," Wu said.

"No matter whether it holds exercises, the People's Liberation Army will not be absent or soft-hearted when it comes to striking down (Taiwanese) 'independence' and pushing for unification," he said, referring to the Chinese armed forces.

Any effort by Taipei to achieve independence "will inevitably be strictly punished and are doomed to failure", Wu said.

Advertisement for Chittagong Engineering and Applied Science University (CEASU) featuring a table of departmental seats and various notices regarding admissions and examinations.

Tender notice from the Government of Bangladesh, Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD Road Division, Nilphamari. Details include tender ID 1048376 and closing date 31-Dec-2024.

Tender notice from the Government of Bangladesh, Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD) Road Division, Pirojpur. Details include tender ID 1048901 and closing date 13-January-2025.