

Blinken seeks progress on Gaza cease-fire-for-hostages deal in meetings with Egyptian mediators

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Cairo on Tuesday for a meeting with Egyptian leaders that U.S. officials said would concentrate on negotiating a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war in exchange for the release of hostages held by the militants.

Blinken's visit also comes amid growing concerns in Egypt about Israel's stated intentions to expand the combat in Gaza to areas on the Egyptian border that are crammed with displaced Palestinians. Israel's defense minister has said Israel's eventual reach to the town of Rafah, on the Egyptian border, where

more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million people have sought refuge and are now living in increasingly miserable conditions. U.N. humanitarian monitors said Tuesday that Israeli evacuation orders now cover two-thirds of Gaza's territory, driving thousands more people every day toward the border areas.



Rain falls over cars stuck by a mudslide, caused by an ongoing rain storm in Studio City, California.

Britain's King Charles diagnosed with cancer: Buckingham Palace

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Britain's King Charles has been diagnosed with a form of cancer and the 75-year-old will postpone public-facing duties while he undergoes treatment, Buckingham Palace said on Monday.

Charles, who became king in September 2022 following the death of his mother Queen Elizabeth, is "wholly positive" about his treatment and looks forward to returning to full public duty as soon as possible, the palace said.

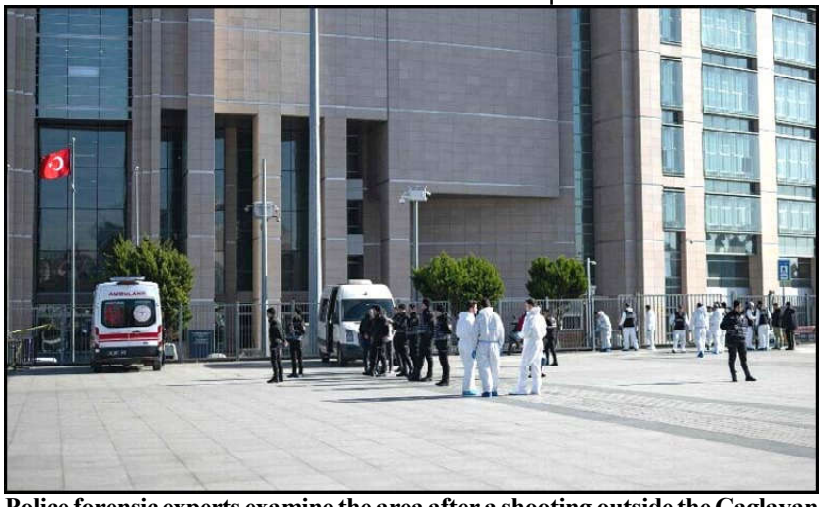
UN chief sets up body to probe Israeli allegations

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General António Guterres established an independent body on Monday to scrutinize allegations regarding neutrality of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

A Russian court orders the arrest of a bestselling writer over his support for Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: A Moscow court ordered the arrest Tuesday of a bestselling detective novelist and dissident on charges of "justifying terrorism," two months after he was pranked by two pro-Kremlin activists into expressing support for Ukraine on a phone call.

Discrediting the Russian military is a criminal offense under a law adopted after Russia sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022. The law is regularly used against Kremlin critics — although it is unlikely that Akunin, who lives in London, will face detention.



Police forensic experts examine the area after a shooting outside the Caglayan courthouse, in Istanbul.



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets with Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani at Lusail Palace, in Doha, Qatar.

Two-state solution only path to peace, Scholz tells Netanyahu

Monitoring Desk
BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a phone call on Monday that a two-state solution with the Palestinians was the only path to lasting peace in the region.

Bank," Scholz said, according to a statement issued by his spokesman. Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin held a telephone conversation with his counterpart from the UAE Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Russia said on Monday.

Over 100 Palestinians martyred by Israeli forces in Gaza

Monitoring Desk
GAZA (Online): More than one hundred Palestinians have been martyred in unabated Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip during the last twenty four hours. According to medical sources, thousands of civilians are buried under the rubble, but the Israeli forces are blocking access of ambulance crews and civil defense teams attempting to reach them.

Police shoot dead two 'terrorists' outside Istanbul court: minister

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Turkish police on Tuesday shot dead a man and a woman belonging to a leftist "terrorist" organisation who attacked a security checkpoint outside Istanbul's main courthouse, injuring six people, officials said.

Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said the assailants were members of the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C) — a fringe leftist group that has staged periodic attacks in Turkey since the 1980s. The group issued no initial claim of responsibility. "While the terrorists who attempted to attack

UK-owned cargo ship damaged in drone attack off Yemen

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI (INP): A British-owned cargo ship was damaged in a drone attack off rebel-held Yemen, a maritime security firm said on Tuesday, the latest in dozens of incidents in the Red Sea.



Farmers drive their tractors as they protest over price pressures, taxes and green regulation, grievances shared by farmers across Europe, in Girona, Spain.

UK trial opens into bitcoin 'inventor' claims

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: The trial of an alleged bitcoin creator opened in London on Monday, seeking to determine whether an Australian computer scientist invented the world's most popular cryptocurrency.

up to keep cryptocurrency technology free from patents, is suing Wright over his claims first made in 2016. The trial at London's High Court, presided over by judge James Mellor, is expected to last until mid-March.

Decades of research samples destroyed in cooler failure

Monitoring Desk
STOCKHOLM: Research samples collected over decades at a prestigious Swedish medical university have been destroyed after a freezer malfunctioned over the Christmas holidays, the university said on Monday.

Thailand confident aid effort will lead to Myanmar crisis dialogue

Monitoring Desk
BANGKOK: A new Thailand-led humanitarian initiative aims to pave the way for talks between warring camps in military-ruled Myanmar, a senior Thai official said, three years after a coup triggered instability and a wave of violence across the country.

people displaced by fighting, said Sihanak Phuangketkeow, Thailand's vice foreign minister. Sihanak said the plan would augment efforts by the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which has tried unsuccessfully to start a peace process between the military and its enemies among ethnic minority armies and an armed resistance movement.

Plan for Europe's huge new particle collider takes shape

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: Europe's CERN laboratory revealed more details on Monday about its plans for a huge new particle accelerator that would dwarf the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), ramping up efforts to uncover the underlying secrets of the universe.

8 dead, 80 injured in India firework factory explosion: officials

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: At least eight people died and 80 were injured on Tuesday in a giant explosion at a firework factory in India that saw balls of flames soar into the sky, officials said.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said reports of the explosion were "very sad news" and said medics at burn units in nearby major hospitals were called to make "necessary preparations". "Ambulances are being rushed to Harda from the surrounding areas, and the army has been contacted to arrange for helicopters," Yadav said in a post on X, formerly Twitter. At least 20 ambulances were at the site, with 50 more being sent to help those injured, he added.

Ukraine's Donetsk region pounded by up to 2,500 Russian strikes daily - governor

Monitoring Desk
DONETSK REGION: Russia is firing between 1,500 and 2,500 shells and rockets at Ukraine's war-ravaged Donetsk region every day and is targeting critical infrastructure to make it harder for people to remain there in winter, its governor told Reuters.

"The enemy's shelling is this dense, this heavy, almost every day." The governor said the Kurakhove power plant, one of the region's few remaining large-scale sources of electricity generation, had been forced to close a week ago due to Russian shelling. He said this was part of a wider campaign. "The enemy is trying to destroy critical infrastructure objects so that people find it difficult to remain in the region in winter."

Taiwan ally Guatemala mulls commercial ties with China, foreign minister says

Monitoring Desk
GUATEMALA CITY: Guatemala is considering reaching out to develop formal trade ties with China, the Central American country's foreign minister told Reuters, although it plans to maintain its existing relations with Taiwan.

Filashkin said the town of Avdiivka, home to the largest coking plant in Europe and the target of a massive Russian assault since October last year, was "95-98% gone." "The enemy dropped about 200 guided aerial bombs on Avdiivka alone over the (last) month. They are totally destroying it," he said. Local authorities say the number of civilians in the town has dwindled to less than 1,000.

Anger at Turkish government spills over at earthquake anniversary vigil

Monitoring Desk
HATAY: More than 10,000 people gathered early on Tuesday to hold a vigil for the one-year anniversary of the devastating earthquakes that hit southeastern Turkey, as some protested what they called government negligence in the aftermath.

hear my voice?" as Health Minister Fahrettin Koca spoke, a slogan referring to calls heard from under the rubble as people waited for days for help to arrive. Residents say many people died not because of the buildings collapsing, but rather from waiting for so long trapped in the rubble in the cold. "After the vigil, people tossed flowers into the Asi River, which runs through the city." Merve Gursel, who lost her aunt, her aunt's husband and her cousins in the earthquake, called out their names as she tossed a carnation into the water for each one. "Nobody was with these people that day. These people's pain is that they could not be rescued. These people's pain is that they could not have their voices heard," she said. "This (the protests) is the echo of people's inner pain. It is an echo of how much people have suffered. There is no way to describe how to make up for the pain here."

