

News in brief

◆ **King Charles III paid** a solemn visit yesterday to the birthplace of independent Kenya, at the start of a trip clouded by calls for an apology over Britain's bloody colonial past. Although the four-day state visit by Charles and Queen Camilla has been billed as an opportunity to look to the future and build on the cordial modern-day ties between London and Nairobi, Buckingham Palace has said the king will address historic "wrongs" during decades of colonial rule. It is the 74-year-old British head of state's first tour of an African and Commonwealth nation since becoming king last year and comes just weeks before Kenya celebrates the 60th anniversary of independence in December. Under rainy skies, Charles and Camilla were given a ceremonial red-carpet welcome by Kenyan President William Ruto, who said on X he was "honoured" to host the royal couple. Later, Charles and Ruto laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in the Uhuru Gardens memorial park.



King Charles visits Kenya as colonial abuses loom large

◆ **US, UK, Canada unveil new sanctions on supporters of Myanmar military**

◆ **The United States, Canada** and Britain took aim yesterday at sources of support to Myanmar's military regime, building on earlier sanctions and targeting its ability to buy weapons. The fresh restrictions come more than two years after a military coup that also launched a violent campaign against democracy activists. "Burma's military regime has repeatedly harmed civilians in air strikes, suppressed pro-democracy movements, destroyed homes and infrastructure, and displaced millions of people" since the coup, said the US Treasury Department, using another name for Myanmar. It added that the latest sanctions target companies and individuals, including government officials, who perpetuate or facilitate violence in the Southeast Asian country.



◆ **Russia yesterday condemned** increased Israeli air strikes on Syria as "unacceptable," saying they risked triggering a spillover of the Israel-Hamas war into a wider regional conflict. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held a call with his Syrian counterpart Tuesday, in which he stressed Russia's opposition to Israel's strikes on Syria, and warned against any actions that could provoke an escalation in the "current explosive situation," Russia's foreign ministry said. Israel's army said it carried out a string of air strikes on military targets inside Syria in recent weeks. Concerns of a wider regional conflict are high after Hamas militants stormed over the Gaza border into southern Israel on October 7, killing some 1,400 people, mostly civilians, and seizing 240 hostages, according to Israeli officials.

◆ **Russia says Israeli air strikes on Syria 'unacceptable'**



SPOTLIGHT

India police charge man over Jehovah's Witnesses bomb blast



Dominic Martin, blast scene
New Delhi, India



Police in India say they have charged a man in connection with a bomb blast at a Jehovah's Witnesses prayer meeting that killed three people. Dozens were also injured in Sunday's explosion at a convention centre where more than 2,000 people had gathered for a three-day meeting. A. Akbar, the police commissioner in the port city of Kochi, told reporters late Monday that suspect Dominic Martin had been charged with several offences, including under India's anti-terror laws. Martin had turned himself in to police after releasing a video message on social media in which he claimed to be a disgruntled former member of the church. Local media reports said Martin, 48, had learned how to make explosives on the inter-

net. Broadcaster NDTV said he had spent around 3,000 rupees (\$36) to make the bombs. He returned to India about two months ago from Dubai, the website The News Minute reported. There are nearly 60,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in India, according to the church's website. Jehovah's Witnesses are members of a US-based Christian evangelical movement and are perhaps best known for knocking on doors around the world, Bible in hand, trying to convert people to their beliefs. The movement, which preaches non-violence and is politically neutral, has a history of persecution, with its activities banned or restricted in several countries. It is a millennial faith, meaning its members believe that the end of the world is near and that God's kingdom will soon rule over the Earth.

Iran says proxies won't 'remain silent' on Israel-Hamas war



A Palestinian man reacts while holding the body of a relative killed following Israeli bombardment

AFP | Doha, Qatar

Iran said yesterday it was "natural" for Tehran-backed groups to attack Israel in light of its war on Hamas, warning of a wider spillover if no ceasefire is reached. The remarks were made by Iran's top diplomat Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in Qatar's capital Doha where he met with Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and his Qatari counterpart to discuss a push for a diplomatic breakthrough. "It is natural that the resistance groups and movements do not remain silent against all these crimes" committed by Israel, Amir-Abdollahian said in remarks relayed by Iran's foreign ministry. "They will not wait for anyone's advice, therefore we need to use the last political opportunities to stop the war," he said after talks with Sheikh Tamim, warning the situation

could "get out of control". Amir-Abdollahian's statement came hours after Tehran-backed Huthi rebels in Yemen claimed responsibility for a drone attack on southern Israel, with the group vowing to continue its attacks. Shortly afterwards, the Israeli military said its forces intercepted a "surface-to-surface missile" fired towards Israeli territory from the area of the Red Sea, saying it was "successfully intercepted" by the 'Arrow' aerial defence system. Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman said the pair had discussed "the dangerous escalation of confrontations in the Gaza Strip and West Bank and the importance of advancing immediate ceasefire efforts", in a post on X, formerly Twitter. "We also stressed the need to intensify regional efforts to prevent the expansion of violence and conflict in the region," he said.

Suspected gunman takes hostages in Japan



Police officers guard the area around a post office where a suspected gunman has taken an unknown number of people hostage in Warabi city, Saitama prefecture

AFP | Saitama, Japan

Police were surrounding a post office in Japan late yesterday as a suspected gunman held at least one person hostage following an apparent shooting at a nearby hospital that wounded two people. TV images showed the suspect, reported to possibly be in his 80s, inside the building with what looked like a gun attached to a cord around his neck in Warabi, outside Tokyo. His motive was unclear but police believe he was also involved in the incident at the hospital and media reports said that a fire in an apartment block may also be linked. "At approximately 2:15 pm today (0515 GMT), a person took hostages and holed up at a post office in Chuo 5-chome

area of Warabi city... The perpetrator is possessing what appears to be a gun," the city authorities said on their website. "Citizens near the scene are urged to follow police instructions and evacuate in accordance with police instructions." Television footage showed a woman in her 20s, believed to have been a hostage, walking out of the post office shortly before 7:30 pm. It was unclear how many people were still being held but earlier it was reported that a 30-year-old woman was inside. Police were talking to the man by telephone, NTV reported. The Yomiuri daily had reported earlier that around 10 post office staff may be inside the building and that the suspect may be carrying kerosene.

The grim accounting

AFP | Jerusalem

A pathologist checks a body in the morgue of the Gaza Strip's Nasser hospital, takes a photo and notes their name and the place where bombs killed the victim. The doctor is adding another name to a long list of "martyrs" in the ongoing war between Hamas and Israel. "Between midnight and noon, 17 martyrs, and five others who died of natural causes, came in," Dr Nahed Abu Taaema, director of the Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis in the south of the Palestinian territory, tells AFP. On his computer, Taaema shows a program in which "martyrs" -- the term Palestinians use to designate those killed in the war with Israel -- are listed under one tab, with other dead grouped separately. "The forensic pathologist writes out a full report, seals it and sends it to the office of patient management, which is responsible for entering the information in a database linked to the ministry of health," he adds. Using the information supplied, employees of the office of patient management fill out a file with



A Palestinian man reacts while holding the details of each "martyr" before adding the information to the computer database. "People who die of natural causes are not taken to the morgue to be examined by pathologists, unless the death seems suspect," Dr Taaema says. On October 26, the health ministry of the Hamas-run government in Gaza published the names of some 7,000 Palestinians killed since the outbreak of war with Israel on October 7. The Palestinian death toll from

Gaza now a thousands

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

The Gaza Strip has become a graveyard for thousands of children, the United Nations said yesterday, fearing more may die of dehydration. Israel has heavily bombarded Gaza since Hamas gunmen stormed across the border on October 7, killing 1,400 people, mostly civilians, and kidnapping at least 240 others, including children, according to Israeli officials. The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said the strikes have killed 8,525 people, mainly civilians and including more than 3,500 children. The UN children's agency UNICEF said there was a risk that the number of child deaths directly from bombardment could be eclipsed. "Our gravest fears about the reported numbers of children killed becoming dozens, then hundreds, and ultimately thousands were realised in just a fortnight," UNICEF spokesman James Elder said. "The numbers are appalling; reportedly more than 3,450 children killed; staggeringly this rises significantly every day. "Gaza has become a graveyard for thousands of children. It's a living hell for everyone else." "There are certainly children who are dying who have been impacted by the bombardment but should have had their lives saved," Elder told reporters in Geneva, via video-link. Without greater humanitarian



Palestinians dig out the body of a child from access into Gaza, "the deaths from the attacks, they could absolutely be the tip of the iceberg". He said the more than one million children living in the Gaza Strip were also suffering from a lack of clean water. "Gaza's water production capacity is a mere five percent of its usual daily output. Child deaths -- particularly infants -- to dehydration are a growing threat," he said. UNICEF is calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, with all access crossings into Gaza opened for the safe, sustained and unimpeded access of human-