

News in brief

South Korea's ruling party cements presidential win with local vote success

◆ South Korean President



Yoon Suk-yeol's ruling party emerged victorious in local elections, vote counts showed yesterday, giving a boost to him and his plan to steer the economy into recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. Tens of millions of South Koreans went to the polls on Wednesday to elect 17 metropolitan and provincial chiefs, as well as seven members of the national assembly. Yoon's People Power Party (PPP) cemented its power in

important regions in what was seen as an early test of the president who took office last month after winning a March election by a margin of just 0.7%.

◆ Tunisia's president sacked 57 judges on Wednesday, accusing them of corruption and protecting terrorists in a purge of the judiciary that comes as he seeks to remake the political system after consolidating one-man rule.

Tunisian president purges judges after instituting one-man rule



In a televised address President Kais Saied said he had "given opportunity after opportunity and warning after warning to the judiciary to purify itself". Hours later the official gazette published a decree announcing the dismissals. Among those sacked was Youssef Bouzaker, the former head of the Supreme Judicial Council whose members Saied replaced this year as he moved to take control of the judiciary..

◆ Canada's military has accused Chinese warplanes of harassing its patrol aircraft as they monitor North Korea sanction evasions, sometimes forcing Canadian planes to divert from their flight paths.

Canada says Chinese warplanes harassed its patrol aircraft on North Korea sanctions mission



On several occasions from April 26 to May 26, aircraft of the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) approached a Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) CP-140 Aurora long-range patrol aircraft, the Canadian Armed Forces said in a statement on Wednesday.

◆ Flights in Nepal will be cleared to fly only if there is favourable weather forecast throughout their route, according to new regulations announced in the wake of a recent crash that killed 22 people, officials said yesterday.

Nepal tightens flight rules after crash that killed 22



Aviation companies have raised concerns about how to implement the new regulations, citing the country's limited weather forecasting infrastructure. Authorities say flight permits will now only be issued after the aircraft's operator submits a flight plan with weather information for the destination and the entire route of the flight, according to a Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal notice issued on Tuesday.

Twelve arrested after climate activists disrupt Queen Elizabeth's military parade

Reuters | London

Climate change protesters caused a disturbance at a military parade in London at the start of celebrations for Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee yesterday, running out in front of marching soldiers before they were arrested.

The activists ran out from behind barriers where tens of thousands of people had gathered on The Mall, the grand boulevard that leads to Buck-



Police officers detain a protester who tried to disrupt the ceremony

ingham Palace, and lay down in front of a marching band, television footage showed.

One of the people appeared to hold up a banner, before police dragged the protesters away. One of the protesters wore a gold crown on his head.

"Today we have made 12 arrests for obstruction of the highway. This follows an incident this morning where people attempted to enter the ceremo-

nial route on The Mall," police said on Twitter.

"Thank you to the crowd who showed their support by clapping our officers who returned to their post after dealing with the incident swiftly."

The Animal Rebellion group, which says it uses "non-violent civil disobedience to help the transition to a plant-based food system", said its activists were involved.

Queen Elizabeth used to take part in the parade herself on horseback until 1986 - five years after a man had fired six blank shots at her as she rode by, managing to control her startled horse in the process. She was unharmed and the man was arrested

Ukraine's Zelenskiy eyes 'inflection point' as Russia tightens grip on key target

Reuters | Kyiv

Russia tightened its grip on a key target in a battle for control of Ukraine's eastern Donbas region while President Volodymyr Zelenskiy pleaded for more Western arms to help Ukraine reach a battlefield "inflection point" and prevail in the war.

Zelenskiy told Luxembourg's parliament via videolink yesterday that Russian forces now occupied about a fifth Ukrainian territory, with battle lines now stretching more than 1,000 km (620 miles).

As the invasion heads for its 100th day on Friday, Russia says Washington is adding "fuel to the fire" with a new \$700 million weapons package for Ukraine that will include advanced rocket systems with a range of up to 80 km.

But separately addressing a forum in Slovakia, Zelenskiy called for more weapons supplies to "ensure an inflection point in this confrontation," in Ukraine's favour.

U.S. President Joe Biden hopes extending Ukraine's artillery reach will help push Moscow to negotiate an end to a war in which thousands have been killed, cities and towns flattened and more than 6 million people forced to flee the country.

His administration said it had Ukraine's assurances it would not use the rocket systems to hit targets inside Russia.

"Ukraine is fighting an exclusively defensive war, and we always state this," the country's deputy defence minister Hanna Malyar told a briefing, when asked whether Kyiv made such a promise.

While Moscow denies targeting civilians it says it regards Ukrainian infrastructure transport used to bring in Western arms as a legitimate target. But it downplayed the effect those supplies will have on what it



A view shows a military vehicle destroyed during Ukraine-Russia conflict in the town of Rubizhne in the Luhansk region

Ukraine needs weapons to liberate Ukrainian territory that Russia has temporarily occupied. We are not fighting on Russian territory, we are interested in our sovereignty and territorial integrity

ANDRIY YERMAK, ZELENSKIY'S CHIEF OF STAFF

calls its "special military operation" to disarm Ukraine and rid it of ultra-nationalists the Kremlin says threaten Russian security.

"Pumping (Western) weapons into Ukraine does not change all the parameters of the special operation," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"Its goals will be achieved, but this will bring more suffering to Ukraine," Peskov said in response to a question whether U.S. plans to sell Ukraine drones that can be armed with missiles could change the nature of the conflict.

Four Russian missiles hit railway infrastructure targets in two places in the western Lviv region bordering Poland late on Wednesday, injuring five

people and causing significant damage, its governor said yesterday.

Donbas city in focus

Russian forces, backed by heavy artillery, control most of the eastern industrial city of Sievierodonetsk - now largely in ruins - after days of fierce fighting in which they have taken losses, Britain's defence ministry said in its daily intelligence report.

Ukraine's armed forces general staff said that besides its assault on the city, Russian troops were also attacking other parts of the east and northeast.

The capture of Sievierodonetsk and its smaller twin Lysychansk would give Russian forces control of all of Luhansk, one of two provinces along with Donetsk in the Donbas claimed by Moscow on behalf of separatists.

Seizing Luhansk would fulfil one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's stated aims and further shift battlefield momentum in Russia's favour after its forces were pushed back from the capital Kyiv and from northern Ukraine.

Moscow's forces were also attempting to advance south towards the Ukraine-held cities of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, in Donetsk province, provincial governor Pavlo Kyrylenko said.

Oklahoma target

Authorities identify gunman

● Shooter also dead, apparently from a self-inflicted wound

AP | Tulsa

A man who blamed his surgeon for ongoing pain after a recent back surgery bought an AR-style rifle hours before opening fire at a Tulsa medical office, killing the surgeon and three other people before fatally shooting himself, police said yesterday.

Tulsa Police Chief Wendell Franklin says the gunman had recently undergone back surgery and had called a clinic repeatedly complaining of pain.

Franklin says the doctor who performed the surgery, Dr. Preston Phillips, was killed Wednesday, along with another doctor, a receptionist and a patient.

"We also have a letter on the suspect, which made it clear that he came in with the intent to kill Dr. Phillips and anyone who got in his way," Franklin said. "He blamed Dr. Phillips for the ongoing pain following the surgery."

Dr. Cliff Robertson, president and CEO of Saint Francis Health System, called Phillips "the consummate gentleman" and "a man that we should all strive to emu-

Afghan Taliban laur

AP | Kabul

Afghanistan's Taliban rulers have begun a campaign to eradicate poppy cultivation, aiming to wipe out the country's massive production of opium and heroin, even as farmers fear their livelihoods will be ruined at a time of growing poverty.

On a recent day in Washir district in southern Helmand province, armed Taliban fighters stood guard as a tractor tore up a field of poppies. The field's owner stood nearby, watching.

The Taliban, who took power in Afghanistan more than nine months ago, issued an edict in early April banning poppy cultivation throughout the country.

Those violating the ban "will be arrested and tried according to Sharia laws in relevant courts," the Taliban deputy interior minister for counternarcotics, Mullah Abdul Haq Akhund, told The Associated Press in Helmand's provincial capital, Lashkar Gah.

Afghanistan is the world's biggest opium producer and a major source for heroin in Europe and Asia. Production spiralled over the past 20 years despite billions of dollars spent by the US trying to stop poppy cultivation.

But the ban will likely strike a heavy blow to millions of impoverished farmers and day laborers who rely on proceeds from the crop to survive. The ban comes

COVID-19: Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths
1 USA	86,146,955	1,032,410
2 India	43,165,738	524,641
3 Brazil	31,060,017	666,848
4 France	29,570,762	148,426
5 Germany	26,461,808	139,604
6 UK	22,305,893	178,749
7 Russia	18,339,776	379,285
8 S. Korea	18,129,313	24,212
9 Italy	17,457,950	166,835
10 Turkey	15,072,747	98,965
11 Spain	12,360,256	106,493
12 Vietnam	10,720,426	43,079
13 Argentina	9,230,573	128,889
14 Japan	8,872,937	30,653

Global tally

533,786,925

Deaths

6,316,510

Recovered:

504,728,180

New cases

+381,477

New deaths

+823

Middle East

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	515,645		24,613		442,182	48,850
Saudi Arabia	769,423	+775	9,151	+2	753,407	6,865
UAE	909,222	+575	2,305		892,687	14,230
Kuwait	633,225		2,555		630,034	636
Oman	389,473		4,260		384,669	544
Qatar	369,305	+256	677		366,902	1,726