

1873

Sultan Bargash bin Said under British pressure closes the infamous slave market of Zanzibar in modern day Tanzania



1963

State of siege proclaimed in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini arrested

1967

Six-Day War begins between Israel and the neighbouring Arab states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria

1968

Palestinian Sirhan Sirhan shoots Robert F. Kennedy three times, who dies the next day, and wounds 5 others at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, California

India sued over ship wreck as oil spill looms

Accused for oil spill from 'dangerous cargo' that burnt for 13 days



MV X-Press Pearl sinks after burning outside Colombo's harbour

The legal challenge seeking unspecified damages came as foreign experts were deployed to help Sri Lanka contain a potential oil leak from the burnt-out wreck.

Representatives from the International Tankers Owners Pollution Federation (ITOPF) and Oil Spill Response (OSR) were onshore monitoring the ship, the operators of the vessel, X-Press Feeders, said.

"They continue to coordinate with MEPA (the Marine Environment Protection Authority) and the Sri Lankan navy on an established plan to deal with any possible spill of oil and other pollutants," the Singaporean company said.

Its chief executive, Shmuel Yoskovitz, apologised to Sri Lanka for the disaster.

"I'd like to express my deep regrets and apologies to the Sri

Lankan people for the harm this incident has caused to the livelihood and to the environment of Sri Lanka," Yoskovitz told Channel News Asia.

Second dive aborted

Choppy seas and poor visibility prevented navy divers from checking the hull for a second day yesterday, Sri Lanka navy spokesperson Indika de Silva said.

He said a team reached the sinking vessel and made a cursory inspection on Thursday, but could not carry out their mission because of poor visibility.

Meanwhile, the MEPA has readied oil dispersants and skimmers should the vessel leak its 350 tonnes of fuel oil, believed to be still in its tanks, and cause further massive environmental degradation.

An Indian coastguard vessel in the area has equipment to deal

BETTER YOU KNOW

The escape of microplastic granules from the ship's cargo has already forced a fishing ban and prompted concern for the marine environment as well as the local economy

with an oil slick, according to the Sri Lankan navy, which has requested assistance with the operation.

Sri Lanka's Harbour Master Nirmal Silva said yesterday that no oil had leaked 48 hours after the stern submerged.

"Looking at the way the ship burnt, expert opinion is that bunker oil may have burnt out, but we are preparing for the worst-case scenario," Silva said.

The vessel was carrying 81 containers of "dangerous cargo" including acids and lead ingots.

Sri Lankan authorities believe the fire was caused by a nitric acid leak which the crew apparently knew about nine days before the blaze started.

Ports in Qatar and India had refused to offload the leaking nitric acid and the vessel arrived in Sri Lankan waters with the leak.

Putin inks law to ban 'extremists' from elections amid Navalny crackdown



Russian President Vladimir Putin chairs a meeting with leaders of the United Russia party via a video conference
AFP | Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday signed legislation that bars members of "extremist" organisations from running for office, a move allies of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny say aims to sideline them from parliamentary election this year.

Putin's approval of the law comes days before a court will consider outlawing Navalny's anti-corruption foundation and regional campaign groups on the grounds they are extremist.

The law bars members or heads of groups declared extremist from running for seats in the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, or taking part in other elections for periods ranging from three to five years.

The legislation effectively derails campaigns for the parliament announced by some Navalny allies, including Lyubol Sobol, who is being prosecuted over a protest in support of the opposition politician.

The signing by Putin coincides with Navalny's 45th birthday, which is he marking behind bars as he serves a 2.5-year sentence for embezzlement charges that he says are

YOU KNOW WHAT

The law bars members or heads of groups declared extremist from running for seats in the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, or taking part in other elections for periods ranging from three to five years

trumped up.

Navalny's team -- which says the extremism allegations are an attempt to blunt their political opposition at parliamentary election in September -- said sarcastically that the law was "a special birthday greeting from the Kremlin".

In a post on his Instagram account, Navalny said he wasn't bothered by having to celebrate his birthday in jail and that he would celebrate all his missed birthdays once he is released.

S.Korean air force chief resigns over death, sexual abuse of sergeant

Reuters | London

South Korea's air force chief resigned yesterday, apologising and taking responsibility for the death of a member of the force who took her own life, according to her family, after being sexually harassed by a colleague.

Lee Seong-yong offered to step down a day after an air force master sergeant was arrested on charges of molesting and injuring a female colleague of the same rank in March.

The family of the victim said she had suffered mental distress and persistent bullying, and accused the air force of trying to cover up the assault and silence her over the past two months.

President Moon Jae-in immediately accepted Lee's resignation, his press secretary said, making him the shortest serving South Korean air force chief after appointing him in September.

No evidence mystery UFOs are alien spacecraft, report finds: NYTimes

AFP | New York

There is no evidence that unexplained aerial phenomena spotted in recent years by US military personnel are aliens, an upcoming government report quoted by The New York Times Thursday said, but officials still can't explain the mysterious aircraft.

The newspaper, which cited senior administration officials briefed on the findings of the highly anticipated report, said they were able to confirm the unusual vessels were not the product of secret Pentagon technology.

But the review of more than 120 incidents over the past two decades was unable to explain the mysterious movements of the craft, which include unusual acceleration, direction changes and the ability to rapidly submerge.

And while senior officials told the Times the lack of clear findings means that while there's no evidence of alien technology behind the phenomena, it's also impossible to rule out.

One senior official briefed on the report said intelligence and military officials increasingly worry the phenomena could be China or Russia experimenting



A still image from video released by the Department of Defense shows a 2004 encounter near San Diego between two Navy F/A-18F jets and an unknown object

with hypersonic technology.

The upcoming report -- expected to be released to Congress by June 25 -- will have a classified annex, officials told the Times, which will likely fuel speculation

that aliens are actually behind the encounters.

The Pentagon last year released videos taken by US Navy pilots showing in-flight encounters with the unusual aircraft.

YOU KNOW WHAT

Intelligence officials were able to confirm the unusual vessels were not the product of secret Pentagon technology -- but still couldn't explain the mysterious craft

And the mystery was further drummed up by former officials with access to classified intelligence.

"What is true -- and I'm actually being serious here -- is that there's footage and records of objects in the skies that we don't know exactly what they are," former president Barack Obama told "The Late Late Show" last month.

The US military no longer describes them as unidentified flying objects, or UFOs, instead using the term "unidentified aerial phenomena."



TOP 4 TWEETS

01



Reviewed India's vaccination drive including the steps being taken to assist vaccine manufacturers and the need to further reduce vaccine wastage.

@narendramodi

02



This #VolunteersWeek, I want to thank all volunteers who have played a vital role throughout the pandemic -- from supporting the vulnerable during lockdown, to helping rollout the vaccine programme. Your contribution has been invaluable.

@BorisJohnson

03



Corruption betrays people and undermines democracies. It steals trillions of dollars from people everywhere -- usually those most in need. Turning the tide against this crime is essential if we are to achieve the #GlobalGoals, promote peace, and protect human rights.

@antonioguterres

04



"If anything, recent atrocities appear to have increased support for the" Tigray rebels. "One 19-year-old said she was raped by an Ethiopian soldier and is now six months pregnant."

@KenRoth

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