

Edward of Caernarfon (later Edward I) becomes the first English Prince of Wales



Battle of Debre Tabor: Ras Ali Alula, Regent of the Emperor of Ethiopia defeats warlord Wube Haile Maryam of Semien

Colonial Tasmanian Parliament passes the 1st piece of legislation (the Electoral Act of 1856) anywhere in the world providing for elections by way of a secret ballot

The Maastricht Treaty is signed by 12 countries from the European Community (EC) to create the European Union (EU)

# Biden confuses Macron with dead French president

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Joe Biden confused his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron with France's long-dead former leader Francois Mitterrand, in a speech that went viral in video footage yesterday.

Addressing a campaign event in Las Vegas on Sunday, the 81-year-old US leader described Macron's reaction to a speech at a G7 meeting in 2020.

As well as getting Macron's name wrong, he misstated the country he leads.

"And Mitterrand -- Macron, from Germany -- I mean, from France looked at me and said, said 'You know, what -- why -- how long you back for?'" Biden said, according to a White House transcript.

Mitterrand was French president from 1981 to 1995, and died in 1996.

Video of Biden's mix-up has been viewed thousands of times on X, formerly Twitter, and



Biden, Macron

shared hundreds of times.

Biden has made similar public mistakes in the past, notably in September 2022 when he called on a deceased congresswoman at a conference she helped organize.

"Jackie, are you here? Where's Jackie? I think she was going to be here," he said, referring to Indiana representative Jackie Walorski, who had died a month earlier.

And in April last year, a White House transcript corrected Biden when he confused New Zealand's All Blacks rugby team with the Black and Tans, a British military force notorious for

its involvement in the Irish War of Independence.

The transcript of his speech, given in a pub in Ireland, crossed out "Black and Tans" and inserted "All Blacks".

Biden's predecessor and probable opponent in the November presidential election, Donald Trump, made a similar gaffe last month, confusing his party rival Nikki Haley with former House speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Trump, 77, had falsely said Haley was in charge of security during the violent assault on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, prompting her to question his mental fitness during a campaign speech.

Following Trump's gaffe, Biden also took the opportunity to make a dig at his potential presidential rival.

"I don't agree with Nikki Haley on everything, but we agree on this much: She is not Nancy Pelosi," he had written in a post on X.

# Kyiv says dismantled Russian spy ring

AFP | Kyiv, Ukraine

Ukraine yesterday said it had arrested five former and current intelligence officers it said were secretly working for Russia as part of a powerful spy ring.

Kyiv said the suspects were caught passing information to Russia's FSB security service about Ukrainian military sites, its defensive fortifications, personal data and strategic energy facilities.



Representative picture

"The security service of Ukraine neutralised a powerful agent network run by the FSB's military counterintelligence which was operating in Ukraine," Kyiv's SBU security service said in a statement

Tuesday.

The general prosecutor said the five -- former employees of Ukraine's defence intelligence and its foreign intelligence units as well as a current SBU regional agent -- were arrested on suspicion of treason.

"The suspects passed on intelligence about the Defence Forces and strategically important energy facilities to representatives of the aggressor state's special services," the general prosecutor said.

# Eight dead, 80 injured in India firework factory explosion

AFP | New Delhi, India

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

Footage on Indian television showed a tower of flame after the explosion at the firecracker plant, with dozens of ambulances sent and army helicopters called in to evacuate the wounded.

Senior district police official Rajeshwari Mahobia told AFP there were "eight deaths so far and around 80 injured", at the factory in Harda in Madhya Pradesh state, adding that "the death toll is likely to go up".

Images from the factory site showed a wasteland of blackened and smoking rubble.

Madhya Pradesh 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



Rescue personnel and local residents gather near a firecracker plant following an explosion at Harda district in India's Madhya Pradesh state

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.

Manish Sharma, a surgeon at the Harda district hospital, said the centre had been flooded with a stream of casualties.

"We have eight deaths at our

hospital, a total of 90 people were admitted here so far and we have referred 15 of them to a bigger hospital," Sharma told AFP. "As more people are being rescued from the site, they are being brought here."

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was "distressed by the loss of lives", saying the government would give the families of those killed \$2,400 each in compensation, and \$600 to those injured.



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



Female genital mutilation is a horrific & harmful practice, and an abhorrent human rights violation. Let's redouble efforts & investments to uphold the rights of women & girls everywhere.

@antoniogetherres

02



At the @IndiaEnergyWeek, interacted with top energy sector CEOs. Highlighted the wide range of opportunities India offers in the sector and reiterated our commitment to boosting reforms which will further growth.

@narendramodi

03



Met with Egyptian President El-Sisi in Cairo to discuss our efforts to increase life-saving aid into Gaza and secure the release of all hostages. We also discussed shared regional stability objectives, including halting threats to Red Sea security by the Houthis.

@SecBlinken

04



200 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation. 4 million girls are at risk of this harmful practice each year. On the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, we stand with survivors to hear their voices, to ensure they have the care they need, and to support their efforts to #EndFGM.

@DrTedros

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stance)

# Azerbaijan Prepares for Historic Presidential Elections Covering Entire Territory, Including Karabakh Region

P.Unnikrishnan

TDT | Baku, Azerbaijan



Farid Shafiyev, Chairman of Centre of Analysis of International Relations, in Azerbaijan

In a significant milestone marking the aftermath of the conflict, Azerbaijan is gearing up for its first-ever presidential elections covering the entire territory, including the strategically vital Karabakh region. Farid Shafiyev, the chairman of Analysis of International Relations in Azerbaijan, highlighted the historic nature of this electoral process during a press briefing held in Baku.

"This election holds international importance," Shafiyev emphasised. "For the first time in modern history since 1981, Azerbaijan has regained full control over its entire territory, including areas previously held by separatists. The upcoming presidential elections signify our nation's symbolic and legal milestone."

Two years after restoring control over the entire region, the decision to hold elections stems from Azerbaijan's commitment to stability and development. Shafiyev explained, "During the conflict, we focused on reclaiming control and ensuring security. Now, we are transitioning towards socio-cultural and economic development. Rebuilding the infrastructure and communities devastated by the war is our priority."

While progress has been made in the peace agreement with Armenia, specific points still need to be solved, including amendments to Armenia's constitution regarding residents' rights from the Karabakh region. Shafiyev highlighted discrepancies in Armenia's electoral laws, which permit Karabakh residents to con-

test elections without meeting residency requirements, a clause needs rectification for the peace agreement to be fulfilled.

Addressing concerns about international involvement in the peace process, Shafiyev expressed Azerbaijan's preference for direct negotiations with Armenia without third-party intervention. He criticised Western media for alleged double standards and emphasised the need for Armenia to focus on domestic development rather than lobbying efforts.

"We have good relations with neighbouring countries like Georgia, and Armenia enjoys strong ties with nations like Iran," Shafiyev noted, dispelling notions of religious conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. He cautioned against attempts to portray the conflict along religious lines and called for a nuanced understanding of the geopolitical dynamics.

Journalists from more than thirty countries are in Azerbaijan to witness tomorrow's election process.

# Myanmar's Suu Kyi in 'strong spirits', son tells

AFP | Bangkok, Thailand

ways," Kim Aris said of the letter he received from his mother thanking him for a care package he had sent to her late last year.

Ousted Myanmar democracy figurehead Aung San Suu Kyi is in "strong spirits", her son told AFP yesterday after receiving a letter from her -- their first communication since she was detained in a coup three years ago.

Suu Kyi was detained on the morning of the February 2021 coup that ended a 10-year experiment with democracy and plunged the Southeast Asian nation into bloody turmoil.

The Nobel laureate, 78, has since been jailed for more than 20 years by a junta court following what rights groups say was a sham trial designed to remove her from politics.

"She is in strong spirits as al-

The letter received in early January was "the first real indication I've had... that she's actually alive", he told AFP by phone from London.

"She was sending her love to all the family."

Suu Kyi, who remains hugely popular in Myanmar, has been largely hidden from view since the coup, appearing only in grainy state media photos taken during court proceedings.

Local media reported during her months-long trial that Suu Kyi had suffered dizzy spells, vomiting and at times had been unable to eat because of a tooth infection.