

Adam Smith publishes the influential economics book "The Wealth of Nations"



Russian Bolshevik Party becomes the Communist Party

US Congress is called into special session by President Franklin D Roosevelt, beginning its "100 days"

Soviet flight Sputnik 9 carries and returns from orbit a dog named Chernushka (Blackie), frogs and a guinea pig

Bakhmut says'

OWN

armed forces were resolved to stay in Bakhmut.

"Of course, we have to think about the lives of our military. But we have to do whatever we can whilst we're getting weapons, supplies, and our army is getting ready for the counter-offensive."

Zelensky on Wednesday hosted UN chief Antonio Guterres in Kyiv as he makes his third visit to Ukraine since Russia's invasion.

In a statement following the talks, Guterres underscored the importance of extending an expiring deal that has allowed Ukraine to export its grain.

"I want to underscore the critical importance of the rollover of the Black Sea Grain Initiative from 18 March," Guterres said.

EU defence ministers were meeting in Stockholm to discuss a plan to rush one billion euros worth of ammunition to Ukraine as pressure mounts on Kyiv's allies to bolster supplies to the war effort.

WHO regional chief Kasai ousted over bullying claims



Geneva, Switzerland

The World Health Organization has terminated the contract of its powerful Western Pacific regional director Takeshi Kasai following staff accusations of abusive and racist behaviour, a diplomatic source said yesterday.

The WHO executive board called a two-day, closed-door special session at its Geneva headquarters to discuss the case of Japanese doctor Kasai, who was suspended after allegations first surfaced in January 2022.

"The regional director's appointment has been terminated", the source told AFP.

A WHO letter said the decision was made "after careful consideration".

The WHO said the executive board meeting was scheduled to consider "the recommendation of the regional committee", which was held in the Western Pacific headquarters in Manila last week -- also in private.

While the WHO did not say what that recommendation was, another diplomatic source told AFP that the Manila meeting had called for Kasai to be dismissed.

"Up to the 11th hour they were giving him the option to resign," but Kasai refused, one source said.

"The vote was very close, 13-11... There were a lot of phone calls behind the scenes," the source said, adding that Japan had tried to block a report on an investigation into the case from being published.

Headquartered in the Philippines' capital, the WHO's Western Pacific region covers almost 1.9 billion people across 37 territories.

Four dead in Syria drone strike

AFP | Beirut

A drone strike killed four people in government-held eastern Syria yesterday in an area controlled by Iran-backed factions, a war monitor said.

"Four people were killed and eight wounded in a drone strike near a weapons factory belonging to Iran-backed groups and near a truck loaded with weapons," Rami Abdel Rahman of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights told AFP.

There was no immediate word on who carried out the strike in the eastern city of Deir Ezzor or whether the dead were fighters or civilians.

The strike targeted a part of the city that is home to residences of top Iranian commanders and senior officers of Lebanon's Hezbollah movement as well as an Iranian hospital to treat cholera patients, Abdel Rahman said.

Pro-Iran factions aligned with the Syrian government, including Hezbollah, are heavily deployed south and west of the Euphrates River which bisects Deir Ezzor province.

Israel has carried out re-



Aftermath of drone strike reveals destruction and wreckage of vehicles

peated air and missile strikes against government forces and their Iran-backed allies. A US-led coalition has also carried out strikes.

State media said a land mine planted by "terrorists" exploded in the same neighborhood, causing casualties.

"A number of citizens were killed and wounded when a land mine planted by terrorists exploded in the Al-Hamidiya neighborhood of Deir Ezzor," state news agency SANA reported. SANA published photographs of the aftermath of the blast which showed extensive damage to a building and

a truck. Wednesday's attack followed a series of unclaimed drone strikes on January 30 that targeted a suspected Iranian weapons convoy in the province and killed 11 people, including a pro-Iranian commander, the Observatory said at the time.

The conflict in Syria started in 2011 with the brutal repression of peaceful protests and escalated to pull in foreign powers and global jihadists.

The war has killed nearly half a million people and forced around half of the country's pre-war population from their homes.

France makes new arrests in two million euro German heist

AFP | Paris, France

French police investigating the armed robbery of over 2 million euros from a money transporter in Germany have arrested eight more people, sources close to the investigation said Wednesday.

The eight, detained on Tuesday and Wednesday, include the suspected brains of the operation, identified only as Gemal D., 58, who is known to police, the sources said.

Early in January, a team of five or more heavily armed people used explosives to attack an armoured money transporter in Sarrelouis in Germany close to the French border.

One of the transporter's guards and a policeman were injured in the attack, which also involved gunfire.

The attackers fled in several vehicles and fired shots at German police during a car chase, a document seen by AFP said.

Gemal D. and three others were arrested in the southwestern region of Pyrenees-Orien-



Representative picture courtesy of NBC News

tales, and the others in northern France and the Paris region, they said. All were being questioned by anti-gang investigators.

One source said everybody connected to the robbery was now under arrest.

Ten other suspects have already been apprehended for their part in the heist.

Within hours of the attack, five suspects were arrested near Paris, including two well-known figures in the French gang underworld, a source said. Abdelkrim Lho, 56, and Loic

Deliere, 45, both have convictions for an attack on an armoured money transport in 2000 in which a guard was killed.

Five others, one of them a woman, were apprehended later in January and in February.

The robbers got away with 2.1 million euros (\$2.2 million), according to a German police estimate, of which 860,000 euros were recovered during the first waves of arrests.

The rest of the money is still missing.

Assets

"He indicated the possibility of the existence of another daughter, whose recognition will depend on a DNA test, which could not be carried out (on Pele) due to the pandemic and the state of his health," said Kignel.

According to Kignel, the woman in question is a Brazilian national and she has taken legal steps to be recognized as Pele's daughter.

Slavery still exists in Brazil

Debt slavery

in 2022, official statistics show.

Last year's figure was the highest since 2013, when there 2,808.

And the trend appears to continue: late last month, Brazilians were shocked by news of a police operation that freed 207 people from slave-like conditions at three vineyards in the seemingly idyllic southern region of Bento Gonçalves, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, a picturesque area known for its sparkling wines.

The government said the vineyard workers had been recruited 3,000 kilometers (more than 1,850 miles) away, in the northeastern state of Bahia -- home to the largest black population in Brazil.

Authorities were alerted after a group of them escaped. They told harrowing stories of supervisors using electrical shocks to wake them at dawn and beating them

The number of workers freed from slave-like conditions in Brazil has more than doubled in two years, from 936 in 2020 to 2,075 in 2022

with clubs and broomsticks.

"The only good Bahian is a dead Bahian," workers remembered being told.

Forced to sleep in an overcrowded shed, the workers were

served food that had been left to rot in the sun, they said.

To avoid starving, they had to buy additional food from the farm store at exorbitant prices, forcing them into debt that their employers then used to justify not paying their wages.

The vineyards involved said they repudiated the use of slave labor, and blamed the company that recruited the workers.

"This isn't an isolated case. It's

the product of an economic model that kills," says Andrei Thomaz Oss-Emer of the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), a Catholic organization that fights for rural workers' rights.

"A lot of companies in the food and beverage sector use this hiring model, where they bring in third-party firms that employ workers in demeaning conditions, to the point that it is essentially slavery," he told AFP.



TOP
4
TWEETS

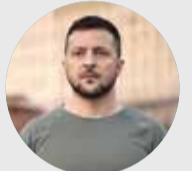
01



Women and girls everywhere are demanding their rights - and their words reverberate around the world. Investing in women and girls is the surest way to uplift all people, all communities and all countries.

@antonioguterres

02



Russia is kidnapping four children. It is the largest state-sponsored kidnapping of children. With this forced deportation, tries to erase the family & national identity of young Ukrainians. It is the genocide of a nation. Everyone who organized it will be held to account.

@ZelenskyyUA

03



India eagerly awaits your arrival! Looking forward to productive deliberations to further the India-Australia friendship.

@narendramodi

04



Last year the @Lionesses changed the game and changed our country. On #IWD2023 I am pleased to say from now on every girl will have the opportunity to do the same sports as boys in school - with a minimum of 2 hours of PE. So future generations can bring it home.

@RishiSunak

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