

News in brief

**Picasso's 'Woman with a Watch' fetches \$139 mn at NY auction**

◆ One of Pablo Picasso's masterpieces,

"Woman with a Watch," was sold at auction Wednesday night for \$139.3 million by Sotheby's in New York, the second-highest price ever achieved for the artist. In a jam-packed room at the venerable auction house, it only took a few minutes of telephone bidding for the 1932 painting depicting one of the Spanish artist's companions and muses, the French painter Marie-Therese Walter, to be sold. "Femme a la montre" had been valued at over \$120 million before going on the block, according to Sotheby's.



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◆ Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa announced yesterday the postponement of his journey around the Moon on a SpaceX rocket, a voyage that boasts an artist-filled crew.

**Japanese billionaire's lunar SpaceX voyage postponed**

"We were planning for our lunar orbital mission 'dearMoon' to take place in 2023, but seems like it will take a little longer," Maezawa said. "We're not sure when the flight will be," the entrepreneur said on X, formerly Twitter. The crew on the mission announced in 2018 would be travelling on SpaceX's Starship rocket, which is still under development and will be the most powerful rocket ever built when complete.



◆ Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak hospitalized in Mexico: media

◆ Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak has been hospitalized in Mexico

City, where he was scheduled to speak at a business forum. Mexican and US media reported.



Wozniak, 73, was slated to speak at the World Business Forum on Wednesday afternoon, but was taken to a hospital after fainting, CNN reported, citing an unnamed source from the forum's organizers. Details of his health status were not included in the report. According to Mexican media, including the Televisa network and the El Universal newspaper, Wozniak had a stroke and was in a private hospital where his condition was "stable."

SPOTLIGHT



**Miss Universe owner files for bankruptcy in Thailand**

AFP | Bangkok

The Thai media company that owns the Miss Universe beauty pageant brand said yesterday it has filed for bankruptcy while it tries to resolve a "liquidity problem".

JKN Global Group made the announcement in a statement to the Thai Stock Exchange two months after it missed a deadline to repay bonds worth around \$12 million.

The company, owned by media mogul and transgender rights campaigner Anne Jakapong Jakrajutatip, bought the pageant -- previously owned by former US president Donald Trump -- in 2022 for \$20 million.

JKN's statement said its board of directors agreed on Tuesday to submit a business rehabilitation plan to the kingdom's bankruptcy court.

"Submitting the rehabilitation petition will effectively solve the Company's liquidity problem under legal mecha-



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and provide fair protection to all stakeholders," the statement said.

Operations will continue under the plan, it added.

JKN's share price has dropped by nearly 80 percent over the past 12 months, standing at 0.77 baht yesterday.

# Israel to begin four-hour

Israel agrees to daily four-hour military pauses in northern Gaza for humanitarian purp

● Pauses will allow humanitarian aid to get into the area and allow civilians to flee the fighting

AFP | Washington

Israel has agreed to daily four-hour military pauses in northern Gaza for humanitarian purposes, the White House said yesterday, even as President Joe Biden said there was no chance

of a full ceasefire.

Biden has been pressing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for longer breaks in the fighting after more than a month of war sparked by the October 7 attacks by Hamas.

White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said the pauses were "significant steps forward" as heavy fighting took hold of Gaza City in the north of the Gaza strip.

"Israel will begin to implement four-hour pauses in areas of northern Gaza each day, with an announcement to be made

three hours beforehand," Kirby told reporters.

"We've been told by the Israelis that there will be no military operations in these areas over the duration of the pause (and) that this process is starting today."

The pauses would allow humanitarian aid to get into the area and allow civilians to flee the fighting, he said.

Israel had also opened up "humanitarian corridors" for the past few days that had already allowed "many thousands" of people to leave the worst-hit area of north Gaza to the south, Kirby added.



Bottles of water are handed out as Palestinians of northern Gaza towards the south

"We would like to see pauses continue for as long as humanitarian assistance is needed," he said.

Fighting has raged since gunmen from Hamas poured over the Gaza border with Israel and, according to Israeli officials.

Vowing to destroy Hamas, Israel retaliated with an aerial bombing and ground offensive that the health ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip says has killed more than 10,500 people, many of them children.

'No possibility'

International calls for a cease-

**Gaza-Egypt border reopens for wounded, foreign nationals**

AFP | Cairo

The Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt reopened yesterday to allow a limited number of wounded people and foreign passport holders to flee the war, a Palestinian official said.

The vast majority of Gaza's 2.4 million residents are unable to escape the conflict, which erupted between the territory's Hamas rulers and Israel on October 7.

The crossing's media director on the Palestinian side said

Rafah "reopened to transfer the wounded, for foreign nationals to leave and aid trucks to enter".

An AFP photographer on the Egyptian side saw people on stretchers being transferred into ambulances, as well as children and adults walking across the border.

Crossings were suspended for the second time on Wednesday due to Israel refusing to approve the list of wounded people to be evacuated, which had been sent by the Hamas government to Egypt.

The route was previously shut

on November 3 and 4 for the same reason.

More than 2,000 people with foreign passports have entered Egypt this month, according to the Palestinian crossings authority. Over the same period, 107 wounded, 13 people with cancer and 90 patient companions have been able to leave Gaza.

The health ministry warned yesterday the evacuations were happening too slowly.

"A large number of the serious cases must leave urgently, before they lose their lives while waiting," a ministry statement said.

**Armed rebellion risks break-up of Myanmar: junta-backed president**

AFP | Yangon

Myanmar's junta-backed president said the country is at risk of breaking apart if the military cannot crush a joint offensive by ethnic armed groups along the border with China, state media reported yesterday.

Fighting has raged for almost two weeks across northern Shan state near the China border, posing what analysts say is the biggest military challenge to the junta since it seized power in 2021.

"If the government does not effectively manage the incidents happening in the border region, the country will be split into various parts," Myint Swe



Myint Swe

said Wednesday, according to the Global New Light of Myanmar.

The Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army and the Arakan Army say they have seized dozens of military outposts and blocked vital trade routes to China.

The junta has admitted to losing control of a key trade hub, but had not commented on the progress of the fighting for days.

Myint Swe made the remarks at a meeting of the National Defence and Security Council, attended by junta chief Min Aung Hlaing and other top military officials.

Myint Swe was vice president under the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi that the military ousted in 2021.

He was later appointed acting president by the junta.

"Stability can be restored to some extent due to the sacrifice of the lives" of junta troops, he said, without giving details.

**UK minister condemns policing of pro-Pale**



Protesters take part in a protest inside Ch

AFP | London

British interior minister Suella Braverman sparked outrage yesterday for accusing police of double standards before a politically charged pro-Palestinian rally on Armistice Day, the latest incendiary rhetoric from the hardline Conservative.

Braverman, 43, suggested that officers "play favourites" when policing protests, claiming they largely ignored "pro-Palestinian mobs" during massive recent demonstrations against the Israel-Hamas war.

The comments, seen as red meat to the right wing of the Tory party, come after she described the rallies calling for a ceasefire in Gaza as "hate marches" and claimed some people were homeless as a "lifestyle choice".

Her words have heightened speculation she is positioning herself for a future Tory leadership contest or that they are a deliberate play by Prime Minister

**Philippines to launch five coast guard patrol ships with Japan aid**

AFP | Manila

The Philippines is to launch five coast guard vessels worth half a billion dollars through a Japanese government loan, a senior official said yesterday, to improve its patrol capability in disputed waters of the South China Sea.

Manila announced the project after a visit by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who pledged in a speech that Japan would "continue to contribute to the enhancement of the Philippines' security capabilities".

The Philippines has been upgrading its maritime security assets and boosting ties with allies to counteract



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (2nd L) receives a gift from Philippine coast guard commandant Admiral Ronnie Gavan (2nd R)

China's aggressive actions in the South China Sea, including areas disputed by the two neighbours.

Economic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan told re-

porters the five 97-metre (318-foot) vessels will be delivered between 2027 and 2028, with funding worth 29.3 billion pesos (\$525 million) loaned from Tokyo.