

1619

René Descartes has the dream that inspires his "Meditations on First Philosophy"



1674

Dutch formally cede New Netherlands (New York) to the English

1885

German engineer Gottlieb Daimler unveils the world's first motorcycle

1989

Germans begin demolishing the Berlin Wall

Our 'pauses' in Gaza, US says

poses



Palestinian families fleeing Gaza City and other northern areas, walking along a highway

fire have mounted, as have protests, including one at the weekend which targeted the White House. However, Biden ruled out a longer truce for now.

"None. No possibility," Biden told reporters as he left the White House for a trip to Illinois when asked about the chances of a ceasefire.

He said he was "still optimistic" about freeing hostages -- including the fewer than 10 US citizens held in Gaza. "We're not going to stop until we get them out."

He later confirmed that in a call with Netanyahu that "I've asked for a pause longer than

three days". When asked if he was frustrated with Netanyahu, he said, "it's taken a little longer than I hoped."

The United States has firmly stood by key ally Israel since the attacks, saying that Hamas cannot be allowed to remain in control of Gaza.

But Washington has also been publicly calling on the Israeli military to obey the "laws of war" and avoid civilian casualties, while privately pushing Israel to scale back its offensive and to develop a plan for what comes next.

Biden visited Israel in October in a show of support. During the trip he announced that Egypt had agreed to open the Rafah crossing into southern Gaza to let aid trucks in.

Israel has pressed on with its offensive and has encircled northern Gaza in recent days. It said yesterday it had fought a 10-hour battle that toppled one of the Palestinian group's strongholds.

The army said 50,000 people had fled their homes in the main battle zone of northern Gaza on Wednesday, a sharp increase in numbers from earlier this week, adding to the more than 1.5 million people already seeking safety in the south of the coastal strip.

Italy sends hospital ship to aid Palestinians

AFP | Rome

Italy is sending a hospital ship to the Middle East to aid the Palestinian population, the defence ministry said yesterday.

The navy ship "Vulcano", which is equipped with operating rooms, is carrying 30 medical staff and is heading initially to Cyprus, according to details published by the ministry.

It is expected to arrive "in a couple of days, weather permitting", a defence ministry spokesman told AFP, without confirming how close the ship would get to Gaza.



Italian Navy's "Vulcano" ship

Defence Minister Guido Crosetto said Wednesday the navy ship would be followed "in the next few days" by an army field

hospital -- efforts he said were "a concrete sign of the humanitarian aid our country is sending to the Gaza Strip".

In a comment to the press, cited by AGI news agency, he said he believed "an initiative of this type will be welcomed by Israel as much as by the Palestinians".

"No-one can have anything to say about a humanitarian act".

The ministry is ready to send out other medical personnel once the hospital is up and running, including three anaesthetists, two surgeons and eight critical care nurses, it said in a statement.

Moscow 'shocked' by timeline to evacuate Russians from Gaza

AFP | Moscow

Russia said yesterday it was "shocked" by the Israeli ambassador saying it could take up to two weeks to evacuate Russian citizens from the Gaza Strip.

Israel's envoy to Moscow told Russian state media this week that with 500-600 people leaving each day, and 7,000 waiting to be evacuated, it could take two weeks to get Russian citizens out of Gaza.

"We were truly shocked to hear that statement," Russia's

foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters.

"This logic is unacceptable," she said, adding that Russia had followed all the requested procedures for submitting evacuation lists to the relevant authorities.

More than 500 Russian citizens are awaiting evacuation, Russian state media reported this month, citing Russian diplomats.

"There are a lot of children on the lists for evacuation from Gaza. We are talking about approximately 300 Russian mi-

nors," Zakharova said separately on social media.

"For a month they have been in a blockade," she added.

No Russians have yet been publicly confirmed as having left Gaza since the Rafah checkpoint with Egypt first reopened on November 1 to allow the evacuation of stranded foreigners and dual nationals.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has criticised the West for allegedly stoking tensions in the region and Israel for its conduct in the conflict.

Condemned for attacking Palestinian protests



Protesting garment workers

Rishi Sunak's party to appeal to right-wingers before the next general election.

Sunak has described the planned march in London on Saturday -- a day when Britain honours its war dead -- as "provocative and disrespectful" and has tried to pressure the Metropolitan Police into banning it.

Police have said the march in support of Palestinians under Israeli bombardment following Hamas's October 7 attacks does not meet the legal threshold for requesting a government order to stop it going ahead.

Tensions between London's Met Police and Sunak appeared to ease on Wednesday after an emergency meeting at which the force's chief, Mark Rowley, confirmed the march would not clash with remembrance events for the country's war dead.

But Braverman, writing in The Times daily yesterday, was scathing about the Met's policing of different groups.

Bangladesh police clash with 25,000 protesting garment workers

AFP | Dhaka

Up to 25,000 garment workers clashed with police in Bangladesh yesterday, officials said, as protests rejecting a government-offered pay rise forced the closure of at least 100 factories outside Dhaka.

A government-appointed panel raised wages on Tuesday by 56.25 percent for the South Asian nation's four million garment factory workers, who are seeking a near-tripling of their monthly wage.

Bangladesh's 3,500 garment factories account for around 85 percent of its \$55 billion in annual exports, supplying many of the world's top brands including Levi's, Zara and H&M.

But conditions are dire for many of the sector's four million workers, the vast majority



Bangladeshi security personnel disperse protesting garment workers

of whom are women whose monthly pay starts at 8,300 taka (\$75).

Police said violence broke out in the industrial towns of Gazipur and Ashulia outside the capital after more than 10,000 workers staged protests in factories and along highways to

reject the panel's offer.

"There were 10,000 (protesting) workers at several spots. They threw bricks and stones at our officers and factories, which were open," Mahmud Naser, Ashulia's deputy industrial police chief, said.

"One of our officers was in-

YOU
KNOW WHAT

Bangladesh's 3,500 garment factories account for around 85 percent of its \$55 billion in annual exports, supplying many of the world's top brands including Levi's, Zara and H&M

Republican presidential hopefuls spar as Trump rallies nearby

AFP | Miami

Five Republican presidential candidates clashed on the debate stage Wednesday over Ukraine, China, abortion, and the future path of the party, while saving some of their ire for the absent frontrunner, Donald Trump.

While the challengers appeared united in their support of Israel and its war against Hamas, tensions flared -- including fierce personal attacks -- in the debate barely two months before the all-important first votes



Contenders for the Republican Party nomination take part in the debate

in the White House nomination battle.

The third televised debate occurred a day after Democrats snatched key election victories in conservative and swing

states, particularly over abortion rights, but the perennially thorny issue was not discussed until more than 90 minutes into the two-hour event.

Florida Governor Ron De-

Santis and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy voiced fury about their party's recent political losses, while Trump's onetime UN envoy Nikki Haley, who is enjoying growing momentum in the race, urged Americans to "find consensus" over reproductive rights.

The ex-president, leading in every major Republican nomination poll, snubbed the Miami event and instead held a rally just a few miles away, maintaining his strategy of refusing to debate challengers.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Wheels down in India. At a time of great momentum in the U.S.-India partnership, I look forward to productive discussions with @SecBlinken and our Indian counterparts here in New Delhi.

@SecDef

02



War is a virus that catches every chance to expand. The insupportable situation in #Gaza is a warning: we cannot allow a regional escalation. We need a humanitarian ceasefire. My remarks in Paris today

@UNReliefChief

03



Thank you @EmmanuelMacron for convening this conference on Gaza. The EU is the largest donor to the Palestinian people. We are committed to the humanitarian needs of the civilians in Gaza

@vonderleyen

04



Met with Republic of Korea @FMPark-Jin here in Seoul. The United States is committed to working with the Republic of Korea and other regional partners to continue to support Ukraine and build consensus internationally for a just and lasting peace.

@SecBlinken

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