

News in brief

◆ **Yesterday, Ecuadorian and Peruvian officials collaborated to evaluate the aftermath of a powerful earthquake that rattled the area, resulting in a minimum of 15 fatalities and several hundred injuries. The quake, measuring 6.8 magnitude, occurred at noon on Saturday in the Guayas province of Ecuador and caused tremors in various parts of both countries' northern border towns. By midnight on Saturday, the Ecuadorian government had confirmed 12 fatalities in El Oro province and two in Azuay province, with over 440 reported injuries.**



Ecuador, Peru authorities assess damage after earthquake that killed at least 15

◆ **New Hampshire Governor**

Chris Sununu expressed yesterday that the possibility of charging former President Donald Trump for his alleged involvement in covering up hush money payments to a porn star during his 2016 campaign is generating sympathy for the Republican leader. Despite Trump's supporters storming the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, to try to overturn his 2020 presidential election defeat, he took to social media on Saturday to announce that he expected to be arrested on Tuesday. In his post, Trump cited leaks from the Manhattan district attorney's office and urged people to protest but did not address the possible charges. "It's building a lot of sympathy for the former president," Sununu told CNN's "State of the Union" program, citing conversations he had with people who were not "big Trump supporters" but felt that he was being unfairly targeted. Trump is seeking the 2024 Republican nomination, while Sununu, a relatively moderate member of the party, is considering a run. A spokesperson for Trump denied that he had received any arrest notifications, and Trump did not provide evidence of any leaks from the Manhattan district attorney's office.

Possibility of Trump's arrest builds sympathy among his supporters



◆ **A white tiger cub**, believed to be a victim of the illegal wildlife trade, was found abandoned in a rubbish bin at an Athens zoo, and Greek veterinarians are working to save it. According to Reuters, the three-month-old cub was discovered under a garbage bin in the parking lot of the Attica Zoological Park by a cleaner on February 28th, and the zoo founder, Jean-Jacques Lesueur, stated that it was the first time an animal of this kind had been dumped outside the zoo. The zoo's security camera footage shows a vehicle arriving at the bins before midnight on the previous night, and authorities are attempting to trace the license plates. The cub's back leg was found to have a metal pin inserted during an X-ray, and if it survives, it will be relocated to a sanctuary as the zoo has no other animals of its kind. International wildlife and animal welfare organizations have already reached out to the zoo to offer assistance. The cub is in a serious condition, and caring for tigers is challenging due to their size, diet, and aggressiveness, according to the zoo's head keeper for cats, Andrea Cerny.



Athens zoo fights to save tiger cub found in garbage

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

WWII naval mine destroyed in Croatia bay



Representative picture. (Courtesy of the Washington Post)

Zagreb, Croatia

Experts yesterday destroyed a large World War II naval mine found by chance in a northern Croatian port, prompting hundreds of residents to be evacuated, officials said.

The 150-kilo (330-pound) mine, laid by German forces more than 80 years ago during WWII, was uncovered during construction work at the Rijeka port in June.

The explosive device had not been noticed earlier as it was partially buried in the muddy seabed at a depth of about 50 metres (164 feet), officials have previously said.

Traffic was halted and some 500 residents of the area where the mine was found were evacuated for safety reasons ahead of the operation, conducted by special police divers helped by the army, according to an AFP photographer.

The mine was towed from the port to the Rijeka bay where it was successfully destroyed, according to local civil protection official Hinko Mance.

Assad in UAE for second po

● **Sheikh Mohamed greeted Assad and his wife Asma in the capital**

● **Assad praised the UAE's role in strengthening relations**

AFP | Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad met yesterday with Emirati leaders in Abu Dhabi, his second Gulf visit since last month's earthquake in his country prompted renewed efforts to bring Damascus back into the Arab fold. The trip -- Assad's second to



Sheikh Mohamed welcomes the Syrian President (Courtesy of WAM)

the United Arab Emirates in as many years -- comes after a visit to Oman last month, his only official engagements in Arab coun-

tries since the start of Syria's war in 2011.

The UAE's president, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan,

greeted Assad and his wife Asma in the capital, the official news agency WAM said, before high-level meetings at the presi-

Kuwait reinstates old parliament after annulling 2022 vote

AFP | Kuwait City, Kuwait

Kuwait's constitutional court yesterday nullified last year's legislative elections and ruled to reinstate the previous parliament, state media said. The ruling was made due to discrepancies in the decree dissolving the previous parliament, the official KUNA news agency said.

The September polls saw opposition members take a parliamentary majority with 28 out of 50 seats.

"The Kuwaiti Constitutional Court issued a verdict on Sunday annulling the results of the 2022 National Assembly elections," KUNA said.

It also ruled to reinstate the parliament that was elected in 2020 but dissolved following orders by the crown prince in June, KUNA said.

"The dissolved council, from the date of issuance of this ruling... will regain its constitutional authority, as though it was never dissolved," president of the Constitutional Court Mohammad bin Naji told lawyers and journalists.

Marzouq al-Ghanim returns as parliament speaker, a position he had held since 2013 but lost in last year's poll. He replaces Ahmed al-Saadoun.

Lawyer Nawaf al-Yassin said Sunday's ruling followed several electoral appeals.

"The appeals relate to the invalidity of the electoral process, the decrees calling for elections, and the decree dissolving the previous National Assembly," he told AFP.

In January, Kuwait's government resigned three months after it was sworn in due to disputes with lawmakers. It was the sixth government in just three years.



Firefighters extinguish a bus which met with an accident in Madaripur

19 killed in Bangladesh bus crash

Dhaka, Bangladesh

At least 19 people were killed and up to 25 were injured yesterday in Bangladesh after a bus smashed through a highway fence and plunged into a roadside ditch, according to police.

Police said they suspected the driver lost control at 8:00 am (0200 GMT) and hit the railing of a recently built major expressway, sending the bus tumbling 30 feet (nine metres) into the ditch.

"The death toll has risen to 19. At least 12 people were critically injured. They have been sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in the capital," local police chief Masud Alam

Police said they suspected the driver lost control at 8:00 am (0200 GMT) and hit the railing of a recently built major expressway, sending the bus tumbling 30 feet (nine metres) into the ditch.

told AFP after the crash in the southern district of Shibchar.

Road accidents are frequent in Bangladesh due to old and badly maintained vehicles and roads, as well as poorly trained drivers.

According to the Bangladeshi passengers' welfare association, a record 9,951 people were killed in road accidents in Bangladesh last year.

Putin v trip to c

● **Russia marks the ninth anniversary of the peninsula's annexation**

● **Putin took a tour of the city and was seen driving a car**

● **The visit triggered an angry reaction from Ukraine**

● **Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters the visit was "spontaneous"**

Kyiv, Ukraine

Russian President Vladimir Putin made a surprise trip to Mariupol, the Kremlin said yesterday, his first visit to territory captured from Ukraine since the start of Moscow's invasion.

Just hours after Putin visited Crimea to mark the ninth anniversary of the peninsula's annexation, video distributed by the Kremlin showed him landing by helicopter in Mariupol, the port city that Moscow captured after a long siege last spring.

North Korea fires ballistic missile: Yon

Seoul, South Korea

North Korea fired a ballistic missile yesterday, Yonhap news agency reported, the latest launch to come as South Korea and the United States stage major military drills.

"North Korea fires ballistic missile towards the East Sea," Yonhap reported, citing Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff and referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan.

After a record-breaking year of weapons tests and growing nuclear threats from Pyongyang, Seoul



People watch a television showing a news broadcast with file footage of a North Korean missile test, at a railway station in Seoul

and Washington have ramped up security cooperation, and on March 13 kicked off their largest joint military drills in five years.

Known as Freedom Shield, the drills run for 10 days.

North Korea views all such exercises as rehearsals for invasion and has repeatedly warned it would take "overwhelming" action in response.

Sunday's launch also comes just days after Pyongyang test-fired its largest and most powerful missile, a Hwasong-17 -- its second ICBM test this year.

The North's state media de-