

News in brief

Australian ex-soldier arrested over alleged Afghanistan war crime

◆ An Australian former soldier



was arrested yesterday over allegations that he murdered a man while deployed in Afghanistan, part of a long-running investigation into war crimes. The arrest comes more than two years after a damning internal investigation found 39 civilians and prisoners had been "unlawfully killed" by Australian elite special forces. A 41-year-old veteran was expected to be charged with a war crime and could face life in prison if found guilty, Australian Federal Police said. "It will be alleged he murdered an Afghan man while deployed to Afghanistan with the Australian Defense Force," police said in a statement.

◆ The lawyer of an ex-US Marine accused of training China's military yesterday accused Australia of luring him to the country for arrest and eventual extradition to the United States.

Ex-US Marine accused of helping China was lured to Australia: lawyer

Daniel Edmund Duggan was arrested in Australia in October 2022 at the request of the US government, which has accused him of violating an arms embargo by training Chinese military pilots between 2010 and 2012. The 54-year-old was a highly-regarded jet pilot who spent 12 years in the US Marine Corps, reaching the rank of Major and working as a tactical flight instructor.

Tear gas, arrests as Kenya opposition stages protests

◆ Kenyan riot police fired tear gas yesterday to disperse demonstrators gathered in Nairobi for a day of action called by the opposition to protest the country's punishing cost of living crisis, AFP correspondents said.



The government of President William Ruto has vowed to take a tough stance over the demonstrations, which opposition leader Raila Odinga vowed would go ahead despite not receiving police authorisation. Demonstrators also hurled rocks at anti-riot police outside government offices in the capital, while about two dozen people were arrested, including two opposition MPs, correspondents at the scene said. "We will be here until they run out of tear gas," said one protester, Markings Nyamweya, 27.

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Media mogul Murdoch, 92, engaged for fifth time

AFP | New York

Conservative media tycoon Rupert Murdoch will tie the knot for the fifth time, at the age of 92 years, he said yesterday in an interview with his own newspaper, the New York Post.

Murdoch is engaged to Ann Lesley Smith, a 66-year-old former police chaplain in San Francisco and widow of American country singer and media executive Chester Smith.

"I was very nervous. I dreaded falling in love -- but I knew this would be my last. It better be," he told the tabloid. "I'm happy."

Murdoch divorced his fourth wife, model Jerry Hall, last year after six years of marriage.

The Australian Murdoch, whose media empire includes The Wall Street Journal, Fox News and other influential outlets, is worth more than \$20 billion, according to Forbes.

Murdoch met his new fiancée last year at an event he hosted at his vineyard in California and soon enough



Rupert Murdoch



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the pair decided to spend "the second half of our lives together," the tycoon was quoted as saying.

"In perspective, it's not my first rodeo. Getting near 70 means being in the last half," said Smith. "I waited for the right time. Friends are happy for me."

The wedding will take place this summer and the couple plans to split their time between the United States and Britain.

Murdoch, who has six children, was first married to Patricia Booker, an Australian flight attendant, whom he divorced in the late 1960s.

He and his second wife, Anna, a newspaper reporter, were together more than 30 years before divorcing in 1999. His third marriage to Wendi Deng ended in 2013.



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Putin says ready to China's Ukraine plan

Vladimir Putin welcomes China's plan to settle 'acute crisis' in t

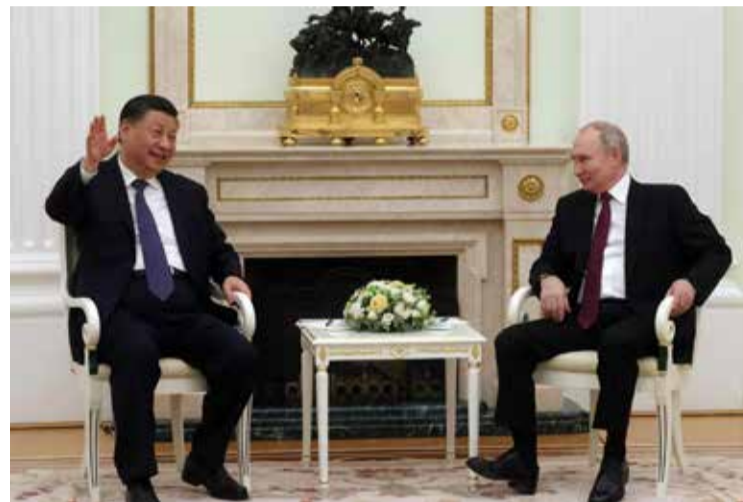
● **Russian president tells Xi 'we are always ready for negotiating'**

AFP | Moscow

President Vladimir Putin told his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping yesterday that Russia was open to discussing China's proposals to end the fighting in Ukraine at the start of high-stakes talks in the Kremlin. "We are always open to negotiations," Putin told Xi, who was on his first visit to Moscow since the start of Russia's military intervention in Ukraine last year.

"We will certainly discuss all these issues, including your initiatives which we treat with respect, of course," Putin said.

The summit between the Russian president and the Chinese leader comes as China seeks to portray itself as a neutral party in the Ukraine conflict.



Russian President Vladimir Putin meets with China's President Xi Jinping at the Kremlin in Moscow

Xi's three-day trip also serves as a show of support for internationally isolated Putin, just days after a war crimes tribunal issued a warrant for his arrest over accusation of unlawfully deporting Ukrainian children.

Shortly after landing at Moscow's Vnukovo Airport, Xi said

his visit would give "new momentum" to Chinese-Russian ties.

He was greeted by Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko on a red carpet as a military brass band played the countries' anthems, Russian state media showed.

During his initial meeting with



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Putin, Xi hailed "close ties" with Russia and the Russian leader said the two countries had "plenty of common objectives and tasks".

The two will continue talks today.

'Constructive role'

The two leaders are due to discuss China's 12-point position paper on the Ukraine conflict, which includes a call for dialogue and respect for all countries' territorial sovereignty.

Putin has welcomed Beijing's statements on Ukraine as being indicative of a willingness to play

Nine Chinese nationals killed in Central African Republic

AFP | Beijing

Nine Chinese mine workers were killed in an attack in the Central African Republic, sparking a rare call yesterday from China's President Xi Jinping for the perpetrators to be "severely" punished.

The attack by "armed men" happened at about 5:00 am near Bambari, said the central town's mayor Abel Matchipata.

Matchipata said that "nine bodies and two wounded" had been counted, adding that the victims were Chinese workers at a site run by the Gold Coast



A soldier stands in front of a destroyed Chinese mining building (file photo)

Group, 25 kilometres (15 miles) from his town.

China's foreign ministry confirmed the toll, and Xi called



Civil conflict has hit the Central African Republic, one of the world's poorest countries, since 2013, when armed groups ousted president Francois Bozize

on authorities in the Central African Republic to "severely punish" those behind the killings.

The president had ordered "an all-out effort to treat the wounded, handle the aftermath in a timely manner, severely punish perpetrators in accordance with the law, and ensure the safety of Chinese citizens", an unnamed China foreign ministry spokesperson said in a statement.

Local authorities did not release further details of the attack, nor was there any claim of responsibility.

UN chief: rich nations must achieve net zero carbon quicker, by 2040

AFP | London

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called on wealthy countries yesterday to move up their goals of achieving carbon neutrality as close as possible to 2040, mostly from 2050 now, in order to "defuse the climate time bomb".

Introducing a capstone report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the impacts and trajectory of global warming, Guterres delivered a blunt assessment of the challenge to prevent climate catastrophe.

"Humanity is on thin ice -- and that ice is melting fast," the United Nations chief said in a video message as the IPCC experts group issued its latest report, which he likened to "a survival guide for humanity."



A polar bear on melting ice floes in Russia's Franz Josef Land archipelago

Guterres said the world still has time to limit average temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) compared to pre-industrial times but this requires "a quantum leap in climate action" by

all countries in all sectors.

"It starts with parties immediately hitting the fast-forward button on their net zero deadlines," Guterres said, but he acknowledged countries have different levels of responsibility

and ability to change course. Rich countries should commit to achieving carbon neutrality as close as possible to 2040, he said, "the limit they should all aim to respect."



This is the moment for all G20 members to come together in a joint effort, pooling their resources and scientific capacities as well as their proven and affordable technologies through the public and private sectors to make carbon neutrality a reality by 2050

ANTONIO GUTERRES