

1349

Between 100 and 3,000 Jews are killed in Black Death riots in Erfurt, Germany

1804

Napoleonic Code adopted in France, stresses clearly written and accessible law

1871

Journalist Henry Morton Stanley begins his famous expedition to Africa



1975

Ethiopia abolishes its monarchy after 3,000 years

2014

Russia formally annexes Crimea amid international condemnation

# to discuss at Xi talks

Talks with Xi Jinping

a “constructive role” in ending the conflict.

But Kyiv yesterday reiterated calls for Russia to withdraw its forces from Ukraine.

“We expect Beijing to use its influence on Moscow to make it put an end to the aggressive war against Ukraine,” Ukrainian foreign ministry spokesman Oleg Nikolenko said.

A day before Xi’s arrival, Putin went to the Russian-held Ukrainian city of Mariupol -- his first visit to territory captured from Kyiv since Moscow’s forces pushed across the border in February 2022.

Xi’s visit also comes just days after the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Putin on the accusation of unlawfully deporting Ukrainian children.

Beijing said yesterday the ICC should avoid what it called “politicisation and double standards” and respect the principle of immunity for heads of state.

The court should “uphold an

objective and impartial stance” and “respect the immunity of heads of state from jurisdiction under international law”, foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told a regular briefing.

Russia said it opened a criminal probe into ICC prosecutor Karim Khan, saying he had accused “a person known to be innocent” and was planning “an attack on a representative of a foreign state enjoying international protection”.

Beijing and Moscow have drawn closer in recent years under a partnership that has served as a diplomatic bulwark against the West.

China has lambasted what it sees as a US-led pressure campaign against Russia as Moscow’s military effort in Ukraine drags on, instead calling for what it calls “impartial” mediation of the conflict.

“No single country should dictate the international order,” Xi wrote in a Russian newspaper article published yesterday.

## North Korea’s Kim leads ‘nuclear counterattack’ simulation drill



North Korea’s leader Kim Jong Un (centre R) and his daughter (centre L) walking together as they attend a warhead missile launch exercise

AFP | Seoul

The drills were the fourth show of force from Pyongyang in a week and came during Freedom Shield, the biggest US-South Korea military exercise in five years

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un led two days of military drills “simulating a nuclear counterattack”, including the launch of a ballistic missile, state media reported yesterday.

Kim expressed satisfaction over the weekend drills, which were held to “let relevant units get familiar with the procedures and processes for implementing their tactical nuclear attack missions”, said the report by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

The drills were the fourth show of force from Pyongyang in a week and came during Freedom Shield, the biggest US-South Korea military exercise in five years.

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

The weekend drills in North Korea were divided into exercises simulating the shift to a nuclear counterattack posture and a drill for “launching a tactical ballistic missile tipped with a mock nuclear warhead”, KCNA said.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said Sunday that the short-range ballistic missile flew 800 kilometres (500 miles) before landing in the East Sea, also known as the Sea of Japan.

They branded it a “serious provocation” that violated United Nations sanctions.

## Japan PM says India ‘indispensable’ in ensuring free Indo-Pacific

AFP | London

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida yesterday called India vital to ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific after talks with his counterpart touching on shared concerns about China.

Speaking in New Delhi after meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Kishida laid out plans for billions of dollars in investments in infrastructure and other sectors across the region.

“I have described Japan’s plan to develop a free and open Indo-Pacific. To achieve this, India is an indispensable partner,” Kishida said.

“Japan will strengthen coordination with the US, Australia, UK, Canada, Europe and elsewhere. Of course, India is indispensable.”

India, Japan, the United States and Australia make up the Quad alliance, which positions itself as a bulwark against China’s growing assertiveness in the Asia-Pacific region under President Xi Jinping.

India’s relations with China nosedived after 20 Indian troops died in clashes with Chinese soldiers in 2020 on their disputed Himalayan frontier.

In December Japan, officially pacifist since 1945, revamped its defence policy after warning that China, with which it has a fraught history, posed the “greatest security challenge ever”.

Japan is also boosting military spending and is carrying



Japan’s Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (L) shakes hands with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi after attending a joint media briefing

I have described Japan’s plan to develop a free and open Indo-Pacific. To achieve this, India is an indispensable partner. Japan will strengthen coordination with the US, Australia, UK, Canada, Europe and elsewhere. Of course, India is indispensable

FUMIO KISHIDA

out more joint exercises with other countries, including India, which has also deepened defence cooperation with Western nations.

Quad summit

In June, Kishida had said Japan would help train 800 maritime security personnel and provide at least \$2 billion to other countries to buy patrol boats and build up infra-

structure as part of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy.

Kishida said yesterday that FOIP’s scope would expand to include new areas like climate change, cybersecurity and food security.

It would also direct public and private capital worth \$75 billion towards Indo-Pacific infrastructure by 2030.

Kishida’s visit came less than a fortnight after Modi hosted his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese for talks that also covered worries about China.

Albanese, who is also forging closer ties with the United States and Britain under the separate so-called AUKUS alliance, is due to host all Quad leaders in May.

The Quad members deny hostile intentions and stress that they are not a military alliance, but China has described the grouping as an attempt to encircle it.

## Thai PM dissolves parliament, calls election

AFP | Bangkok

Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha dissolved the country’s parliament yesterday, setting up a general election in May as the former coup leader seeks to extend army-backed rule.

The vote pits unpopular former army chief Prayut, who came to power in a 2014 putsch, against the daughter of billionaire former PM Thaksin Shinawatra, whose shadow still looms over the kingdom’s political scene despite more than a decade in exile.

The main opposition Pheu



Thailand’s Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha speaks to press

Thai group, fronted by Paetongtarn Shinawatra, is polling strongly but Thailand’s junta-scripted 2017 constitution will make it hard for the party to secure the top job.

The election is the second since the 2014 coup and the first since the country was rocked by massive youth-led pro-democracy protests in Bangkok in 2020

A statement in the official Royal Gazette published yesterday announced the dissolution, and the Election Commission will confirm the date of the poll later, with May 7 or 14 tipped as the most likely.

## Kuwait desert oil spill sparks ‘state of emergency’: company

AFP | Kuwait City

The Kuwait Oil Company declared a “state of emergency” yesterday following an oil spill on land.

The emergency followed an “oil leak in the west of the country”, the state-owned company said in a statement, as video posted by Kuwaiti media showed a gushing pipe surrounded by a large slick of oil.

“No injuries have occurred as a result of the leak and production has not been affected,” company spokesman Qusai Al-Amer was quoted as saying, adding that no toxic fumes had been reported.

The leak “occurred on land



Screenshot from a video posted by Kuwaiti media shows a gushing pipe surrounded by a large slick of oil

but not in a residential area”, he later said.

Teams have been dispatched

to determine the source of the leak and contain the incident, Al-Amer said, declining to give the exact location or the extent of the spill.

Kuwait’s Al Rai newspaper released a video on Twitter showing a pipe spewing large amounts of oil onto barren land.

Kuwait is a major oil-producing country where nearly 90 percent of government revenues come from oil.

The key member within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is currently producing about 2.7 million barrels per day.

The Kuwait Oil Company has previously reported oil leaks in its fields in 2020 and 2016.



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



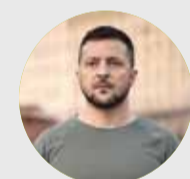
The climate time-bomb is ticking but the latest @IPCC\_CH report shows that we have the knowledge & resources to tackle the climate crisis. We need to #ActNow to ensure a livable planet in the future. @antoniogeterres

02



A story of catastrophic loss and touching solidarity. When the earthquakes struck, the world mobilised to support the people in Türkiye and Syria. We now need to support the survivors to rebuild their lives. I invite all nations to contribute @vonderleyen

03



When the Ukrainian people defend themselves, when the power of the UN Charter and the power of justice are restored on our land, this will guarantee peace for many other parts of the world as well. @ZelenskyyUA

04



I had the honor of celebrating Women’s History Month alongside a phenomenal group of trailblazers. Together, they are fearlessly using their voices to inspire and empower people everywhere. @VP

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