

News in brief

◆ **The EU will deliver aid** worth 140 million euros (\$150 million) to Afghanistan, especially for women and girls, after confirming they would benefit from the assistance. The country's Taliban rulers have imposed harsh restrictions on women since their return to power in 2021 -- effectively squeezing them out of public life. The European Union decided to freeze the funds in December 2022 following a Taliban order to national and international groups to stop their women employees from working. But after six months of monitoring the situation, the European Commission said it decided to release the money after confirming aid is reaching Afghan girls and women. The EU funds will go through United Nations agencies, the World Bank and international non-governmental organisations on the ground, the commission said in a statement. The bloc agreed in February that aid must continue only in sectors and areas where women can work on its delivery or benefit from the assistance. The UN mission to Afghanistan said in July that 24.4 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.



EU releases 140 mn in frozen funds for Afghanistan

◆ **Seventeen American** soldiers stationed in South Korea are being investigated by the local police for "alleged illegal drug behaviour", the United States Forces Korea said yesterday. Two women, a South Korean and a Filipina, involved in the case have been arrested for allegedly smuggling drugs from the United States through military mail, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported. The women also engaged in the use, sale, or distribution of the banned substances, it said. The 17 American soldiers have been referred to prosecutors and could face charges but have not been detained, Yonhap said. South Korean police have seized drug sales proceeds of \$12,850 as well

◆ **South Korea investigates 17 US soldiers for drug crimes**



as 80 ml of synthetic cannabis and other related material from the suspects, according to Yonhap.

◆ **London policeman charged with murder over fatal shooting**



◆ **An officer from** London's scandal-hit Metropolitan Police has been charged with murder following the fatal shooting of a 24-year-old black man whose death sparked protests. The firearms officer had been suspended pending an investigation after the deadly incident last September. He will appear in court in central London on Thursday charged with the murder of Chris Kaba, said a statement by the Independent Office for Police Conduct. Kaba died hours after he was struck by a single gunshot fired into the vehicle he was driving on September 5, 2022, according to the police watchdog.

CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Old Israeli tank stolen from base, found in scrapyard



Police said they were investigating why and how the tank was stolen.

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

A decommissioned Israeli tank was stolen from a military base, only to be found hours later in a nearby scrapyard, police said Wednesday. A report was received from the defence ministry "about a tank stolen from an IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) training base near Elyakim junction," police said. Forces began searching the area in northern Israel and soon enough "found the tank in a scrapyard in the area of Neshet," a nearby town. Police said they were inves-

tigating why and how the tank was stolen. The Israeli army said the tank was a Merkava 2, "decommissioned many years ago". "The tank was stripped of armament, and its systems do not work," the army said in a statement, noting that it was stationary and used for training in a firing zone accessible to hikers. It wasn't the first time an old tank was stolen in Israel in recent months. In February, a tank was stolen from a memorial site, to be used as part of a protest against the government.

India warns on Canada t

● **India's foreign ministry** said it was concerned for the safety of its citizens in Canada

● **The advisory did not name specific cities or locations**

● **Modi expressed "strong concerns about continuing anti-India activities of extremist elements in Canada"**

● **Nijjar was shot dead by two masked assailants**

AFP | New Delhi, India



(FILES) Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (L) and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrive for a meeting at Hyderabad house in New Delhi

India yesterday warned its citizens against visiting parts of Canada, the latest salvo in a diplomatic row over allegations New Delhi was involved in the killing of a Sikh separatist near Vancouver.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has demanded India treat with "utmost seriousness" the bombshell revelation of its probe into the murder. The fallout prompted tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions and a forceful denial from India, which said any suggestion it played a role in the June killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar was "absurd". Without explicitly referring to the row, India's foreign minis-

try said it was concerned for the safety of its citizens in Canada because of "politically-conned hate crimes and criminal violence".

in Canada that have seen such incidents." The advisory did not name specific cities or locations for Indians to avoid.

Nijjar was shot dead by two masked assailants outside the Sikh temple he presided over in Surrey, an outer suburb of Vancouver.

An activist for the creation of a Sikh state known as Khalistan, Nijjar was wanted by Indian authorities for alleged terrorism and conspiracy to commit murder.

He had denied those charges, according to the World Sikh Organization of Canada, a nonprofit organisation that says it defends the interests of Canadian Sikhs.

The Indian government accuses Ottawa of turning a blind eye to the activities of radical Sikh nationalists who advocate the creation of an independent Sikh state to be carved out of northern India.

'Not looking to provoke'

Trudeau, who met with Modi on the sidelines of this month's G20 in New Delhi, said Tuesday that his government did not rush

Charles III welcomed in France for first

AFP | Paris, France

King Charles III on Wednesday embarked on his first state visit to France as monarch, a three-day trip aimed at showing the fundamentals of the cross-Channel alliance remain strong despite a litany of political tensions after Brexit. Charles and his host President Emmanuel Macron were driven down the Champs-Elysees for their talks at the Elysee Palace, escorted by 136 horses of the Republican Guard and standing up with the car roof open to acknowledge the greetings of a few thousand people lining the famed avenue. The trip was initially planned for March and was supposed to have been Charles' first state visit abroad since becoming monarch on the death of his mother Queen Elizabeth II. But it was shelved due to widespread rioting and strikes across France against pension reforms.



(From L) Britain's King Charles III, Britain's Queen Camilla, French president's wife Brigitte Macron, French President Emmanuel Macron arrive at the Elysee Palace in Paris

The original itinerary in the capital Paris and the southwestern city of Bordeaux -- packed with ceremony and pomp in a country which abolished its monarchy in the 1789 revolution and then executed the king -- is largely unchanged.

The king and his wife Queen Camilla were welcomed at Paris Orly airport by Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne, with the visit blessed by pristine autumn clear skies, an AFP correspondent said.

At UN, Zelensky set for first in-person Russia showdown of war

AFP | United Nations, US

Ukraine's president is set to go face to face with Russian officials for the first time since his country was invaded, as the UN Security Council meets yesterday for a potentially dramatic session.

Volodymyr Zelensky flew to New York for the annual UN General Assembly, where he delivered a speech Tuesday in his trademark military fatigues urging the world to stand firm against Russia.

On Wednesday, he will address a special session on the war at the powerful Security Council, where Russia is a permanent member wielding veto



Volodymyr Zelensky

power against any decisions. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov arrived in New York late Tuesday, with official media saying he flew a circuitous route to avoid European airspace. It remains unclear if Moscow's sharp-tongued top diplomat -- himself a former UN ambassador -- will attend the

Security Council session and face Zelensky.

The potential showdown "could create one of those iconic UN moments," said Marti Flacks, an expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Two other permanent members, the United States and France, will be represented by their own top diplomats -- Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna. Albania, a strong supporter of Ukraine, is the current president of the Security Council and has agreed to speaking spots for a massive 60 representatives, according to an agenda seen by AFP.