

1565

Compromise of the Nobles in Habsburg Netherlands closes against inquisition

1814

Treaty of Ghent signed, ending the War of 1812 between the United States, the United Kingdom and their allies

1936

1st radioactive isotope medicine administered in Berkeley, California



1943

US President FDR appoints General Eisenhower Supreme Commander of the Allied forces

# Weeks, WHO official says

countries," he said.

## LESS SEVERE COVID?

Some studies suggest Omicron causes less severe disease than the Delta variant that is dominant in most countries, but scientists are still debating this point.

Kluge said it would likely be three to four weeks before the question was answered.

While the coronavirus could not be eliminated, it could be stabilised, allowing hospitals to handle more cancer and cardio-vascular diseases.

Controlling the virus would come through vaccines, boosters, doubling the number of people wearing masks indoors, ventilation and use of new COVID-19 drugs.

Kluge said the good news from history was that every pandemic had ended.

"This virus has surprised us



A South African study published on Wednesday suggested that those infected with Omicron were significantly less likely to end up in hospital than those with Delta, although the authors said some of that was probably due to high levels of immunity in the population.

more than once so I would say I don't know when it will finish, but I think that we are on track that our lives will normalise next year, particularly if - we don't know - if Omicron would be less severe," he said.

"The key issue is how do we

survive the winter, how do we leave no one behind."

Not enough data available WHO's technical lead on COVID-19, Maria van Kerkhove, said, in a briefing with media, "We do have some data suggesting that rates of hospitalisation are lower."

But she cautioned against drawing conclusions from the early data because "we have not seen this variant circulate long enough in populations around the world, certainly in vulnerable populations".

She said the data on the new variant, first identified in southern Africa and Hong Kong in November, was still "messy" as countries reported its arrival and spread. "We have been asking people to be cautious, we have been asking countries to be cautious, and to really think, especially as these holidays are coming up."

# Security of year

ment concerning US-Russia relations and that foreign policy aides to Putin and US President Joe Biden had agreed to further work.

Moscow wanted to discuss a second document it had presented, a draft agreement between Russia and NATO countries, after the first meeting, but also in January, Lavrov said.

Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley spoke with his Russian counterpart earlier today and they discussed "regional security-related issues of concern," the US military said.

"The phone call is a continuation of communication between both leaders to ensure risk reduction and operational de-confliction. In accordance with past practice, both have agreed to keep the specific details of their conversation private," the military added.

NATO on Tuesday said it would seek meaningful discussions with Moscow early next year to address tensions.

The NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was created in 2002 to facilitate consultation between the Western military alliance and Moscow, but relations are strained and it last convened in July 2019.

# Sudan's PM Hamdok intends to resign

Reuters | Khartoum

Sudan Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok has told a group of national political and intellectual figures that he intends to resign in the coming hours, two sources close to Hamdok told Reuters on Tuesday.

Hamdok was reinstated on Nov. 21 following a coup a month earlier that saw the military take power and end a transitional partnership with political parties.

While several political forces took part in drafting the agreement, according to the sources, it has faced widespread criticism from parties and the general public.

On Saturday, hundreds of thousands of people marched on the presidential palace rejecting both military rule and Hamdok's decision to return, which he had said he took to preserve gains made during the transition and to end bloodshed.

Some 47 people have died in crackdowns on protests against military rule, including two as a result of Saturday's protest. The United Nations said on Tuesday that it had received reports of rape or gang



Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok

rape of 13 women and girls.

Sources close to Hamdok had said previously he would only remain in office if he had political support and if the agreement was enforced.

It called on the military to release political detainees, protect freedom of expression and allow Hamdok to independently appoint a new cabinet. In a statement over the weekend, Hamdok said Sudan was inching towards "the abyss," blaming political intransigence and lack of consensus on a new political agreement. The group Hamdok spoke to on Tuesday called on him to stay in his position but he insisted he would leave, the sources added.

# Winners elated, sellers frustrated

A local handball team in the Basque town of Basauri, just outside Bilbao, handed out some 120 tickets that each scooped the second prize worth 1.25 million euros, though most of them will be split among many owners.

often favouring particular vendors or numbers.

"You never expect it," said Javier Monino whose recently-acquired kiosk in Madrid's Atocha train station sold tickets worth more than 500 million euros in prizes.

"You always think you might sell it, then it happens," he said, before spraying champagne outside his concession.

But not everyone was in high spirits. Some sellers walked off the job in protest at the 4% commission they get on Christmas tickets, compared with 6% on other draws, leaving them struggling to make ends meet, they say.

It's been 17 years that we've received the same commission," said Natalia de la Fuente, 31, the daughter of a lottery seller.

"Prices go up, taxes go up and the commissions remain the same ... This is impossible."

She joined dozens of chanting protesters outside Madrid's Teatro Real, where the draw takes place.

Inside, pairs of schoolchildren picked the winning numbers and sang them out to an enthusiastic crowd sporting extravagant costumes, ranging from Santa's elves to the pope.

## WIDE ANGLE

# Is the Greeting Card Dying?

JOEL INDRUPATI



"There's an old Christmas card in an old dusty trunk And it brings back sweet memories dear to me Tho it's faded and worn, it's as precious as the morn When I found it 'neath our first Christmas tree."

As this song of Jim Reeves softly played in a shopping mall in Bahrain, it brought back memories of my own childhood. When Christmas cards were, really, an important thing.

The thrill was not only in receiving them by post but also in going to greeting card shops and choosing the cards. Finding the right card for the right person was a special art.

The pictures, designs, and, most importantly, the wordings were important. Especially, if you wanted to wish your faraway friends, your displaced family, or that special someone!

With postal networks terribly busy at that time, you had to even plan your mailing effectively, if you wanted your loved ones to receive the cards in time.

This new digital age now, with its Internet browsing, email communication and social media sharing, has given us the convenience of speed, choice, and creativity. But it has also - sadly - killed the charm and romance of 'the greeting card.'

Beautiful hand-written, personal lines used to evoke a special sense of joy and elation.

I might sound incredibly old fashioned. But I ask myself, what do the new age iconoclasts, these young ones on mobile phones, know what they have missed?

*The survival of greeting card companies like American Greetings and Hallmark can be attributed only to their technological adaptability. Their willingness to offer digital options to their customers.*

that "a study by the Royal Mail has found that 72 percent of people who celebrate Christmas would prefer to receive printed cards".

However, "Holiday cards are having a moment, thanks to their popularity with millennials" according to Patrick Priore, Paper Source's chief product officer. He says that 2021 holiday card sales are up 14 percent compared with 2019, in the USA (Washington Post, 8 Dec 2021).

But I doubt if it will stay. It is more like a pandemic aberration than a serious trend.

The big question is who would still prefer to go, buy, and post greeting cards?

The tradition of exchanging greeting cards seems to be on its deathbed. It is in the decline stage of its product life cycle.

We should accept the inevitable. Like all good things, at least, these cards did not end. They just evolved into different forms on digital platforms.

The survival of greeting card companies like American Greetings and Hallmark can be attributed only to their technological adaptability. Their willingness to offer digital options to their customers.

Today, we can create our own computer animations. Our own personalised cards; with templates of Christmas pictures and customizable videos, like those on JibJab.com.

But then, a printed card, with handwritten words, is simply irreplaceable.

My feelings are like Jim Reeves', who sings, "Guess I'm always sentimental 'round this time Pardon me if a tear falls among my Christmas cheer It's the memory of an old Christmas card..."

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Daily Tribune)



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



It has been an honour to visit Lebanon once again - but it grieves me to see the people of this beautiful country suffering so much. Political leaders must work together to implement reforms that respond to the demands of the people & give hope for a better future.

@antoniogeterres

02



The first tranche of 1M COVID-19 vaccine doses arrived in Afghanistan today, adding to the 3.3M the U.S. previously provided via #COVAX. We are committed to supporting the humanitarian needs of the Afghan people, which includes providing safe and effective vaccines to save lives.

@SecBlinken

03



President Kovind witnessed the operational demonstration by the Southern Naval Command in Kochi. The event displayed the combat capability of ships and aircraft of the navy and showcased naval prowess and operations.

@rashtrapatibhv

04



The UAE today represents an important economic depth for the African continent, and relations with them have made very rapid progress in recent years.

@HShkMohd

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