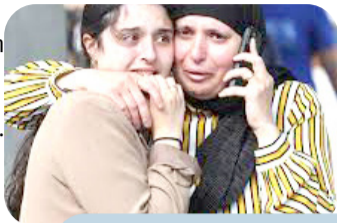


News in brief

◆ **A Danish man suspected** of killing three people in a Copenhagen mall shooting in July has been charged with murder and attempted murder, the prosecution service said yesterday. "The 23-year-old man is accused of killing three people, a 17-year-old boy, a 17-year-old girl and a 46-year-old man", it said in a statement. The man, whose identity has not been disclosed, has also been charged with 12 counts of attempted murder. Arrested outside the Field's shopping centre just after the July 3 shooting, the man, who has a history of mental health illness, has been detained in a closed psychiatric ward. Investigators believe the attack was planned, Danish media have reported.



Suspect in Denmark mall shooting charged with murder

◆ **Bangladesh police** yesterday charged a reporter from a leading newspaper for producing "false news" after an article on high food prices went viral, stoking fears about media freedom. The draconian Digital Security Act under which Shamsuzzaman Shams was charged has been widely used by the government to muzzle journalists and critics, rights groups say. Shams's newspaper Prothom Alo said he was picked up from his home in the industrial town of Savar just outside Dhaka at around 4:00 am (2200 GMT) by plainclothes police. Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan confirmed that the reporter was questioned by police for a "false story" published at the weekend. The reporter was charged with "smearing the image of the government with a false news" and for raising questions on the achievements of Bangladesh, under the Digital Security Act, according to a copy of the case file obtained by AFP.

Bangladesh journalist charged over high food cost article



◆ **The United States** Vice President Kamala Harris announced a more than \$1 billion initiative to improve women's economic empowerment in Africa on Wednesday at the end of the first leg of a three-nation trip to the continent. Harris' office revealed the programme, a mixture of US government funding and private sector commitments, while in Ghana where she was visiting before travelling to Tanzania and Zambia. The tour follows up on a December summit held by President Joe Biden in Washington with African leaders as the US seeks to balance the growing influence of China and Russia on the continent. Harris has already announced \$139 million in development and culture assistance for Ghana and a \$100 million investment in stability and peace-building for coastal West African nations, who face the threat of jihadist violence spilling over from the Sahel.

US VP unveils \$1bn for African women's empowerment



CURIOSER & CURIOSER

Rare pink diamond worth \$35 mn set for auction in New York



A model wears a 10.57 carat vivid pink diamond, with an estimated value of more than \$35 million US dollars

AFP | New York, United States

A rare, vividly rosy-purple diamond, called the Eternal Pink and valued at \$35 million, is set to be auctioned off by Sotheby's as part of its Magnificent Jewels sale in New York in June.

The 10.57-carat stone is being marketed as the most valuable purplish-pink diamond ever brought to auction, with the highest ever pre-auction price per carat estimate, according to Sotheby's.

"Its refined lines combined with the intensity of its color earn it a place as one of the world's most extraordinary gems," Tom Moses, executive vice president and chief laboratory and research officer at the Gemological Institute of America said of the cushion-cut diamond.

According to Sotheby's, the stone, which was mined in Botswana, is "comparable to ultimate masterpieces of art -- far rarer than a Magritte or a Warhol," thanks to its clarity and lack of imperfections.

Pink diamonds are among the rarest and most sought-after gems in the world and considered a major draw for investors.

The record for highest-ever auction price for such a stone is held by the CTF Pink Star, which was sold for \$71.2 million in Hong Kong in 2017.

The Williamson Pink Star diamond, which sold for \$57.7 million in 2022, also in Hong Kong, holds the record for the highest price per carat, at nearly \$5.2 million.

Pomp and paper crowns as Germany

AFP | Berlin, Germany

Charles III has visited Germany 40 times before but the monarch will never have seen anything like Wednesday's welcoming ceremony for his first foreign trip as king at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate.

Spectators lined the sides of the square in front of the Gate, waving German and British flags as a military band marched towards their position ahead of the royals' arrival.

The well-known monument served as backdrop for the first time for the military honours accorded to visiting dignitaries when they visit Germany.

The Gate is the country's most powerful symbol of unity after years of postwar division. For over three decades it stood just behind the Wall which divided the capitalist West from the communist East Germany.



(L to R) German President's wife Elke Buedenbender, Britain's Camilla, Queen Consort German President, Britain's King Charles III and Frank-Walter Steinmeier pose after signing the guest book at the presidential Bellevue Palace in Berlin

The British monarch, accompanied by Queen Consort Camilla, was greeted by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier

at the landmark to cheers from well-wishers, who had been standing in the cold for hours to catch a glimpse of the royal pair. Juergen Edelmann, 52, was

among those who had arrived hours ahead of the ceremony to ensure he got one of the 1,500 available spots on the square.

"It's very special to have the honour to welcome a king to Germany," said Edelmann, who works in communications at a hotel, describing the British monarch as a "friend".

Day out

The entry queue brought Edelmann together with Nico Beetz, 20, who had travelled about 100 kilometres (62 miles) from Prenzlau to Berlin for the spectacle.

"You simply must seize the opportunity. It's not often that a king comes to Berlin or Germany where you can see him so close up."

Anja Wieting, 50, who works at a clothing store, took several days off to drive five hours to Berlin with her daughter Lili, 18, for the

Denmark recovers object near sabotaged Nord Stream pipeline

Copenhagen, Denmark

Denmark has recovered a cylindrical object spotted near the sabotaged Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline that was touted as suspicious by Russia's Vladimir Putin, the Danish Energy Agency announced yesterday, adding it was a "smoke buoy".

The agency said in a statement that the object had been recovered at a depth of 73 metres (239.5 feet) and that a "representative of the owner, Nord Stream 2 AG, was present during the salvage." According to the agency, the recovery was completed on March 28.

"Investigations indicate that



An image released on March 23, 2023 by the Danish Energy Agency shows an unknown object on the seafloor next to the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline

the object is an empty maritime smoke buoy, which is used for visual marking," it said in a statement, adding that "the object does not pose a safety risk."

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who revealed the discovery of the object earlier this month, said experts believe that it could be a signal antenna to activate an explosive in that part of the pipeline.

Nearly six months after the explosions that hit the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines, it is still a mystery who was responsible for the underwater sabotage, despite criminal investigations in the countries bordering the damaged part of the pipeline -- Germany, Sweden and

Denmark. Russian energy giant Gazprom holds a majority stake in the twin pipelines, with the rest owned by German, Dutch and French companies.

German prosecutors said earlier this month that, in January, investigators searched a ship suspected of having transported explosives used in the blasts.

Confirmation of the searches came after the New York Times reported that US officials had seen new intelligence indicating that a "pro-Ukrainian group" was responsible for the sabotage. The Ukrainian government denied involvement in the action, while the Kremlin rejected the Times report as a "diversion".

Scientists have bone to pick with

● **Trinity, which is being sold by an anonymous "private individual", is expected to fetch six to eight million Swiss francs (\$6.5-8.7 million)**

Zurich, Switzerland

A curator gingerly fastens a pointy claw bone with a thin metal wire, completing perhaps the world's biggest construction kit -- reassembling a 67-million-year-old Tyrannosaurus-Rex called Trinity.

The huge skeleton will go under the hammer in a rare auction in Switzerland next month after being sent to Zurich from the United States in nine giant crates.

But palaeontologist Thomas Holtz -- who is against the sale of such specimens -- told AFP that it was "misleading" and "inappropriate... to combine multiple real bones from different individuals to create a single skeleton."



Yolanda Schicker-Siber (L) takes part in the installation of 'Trinity' a Tyrannosaurus-Rex skeleton dating back 67-million years which will be auctioned in Switzerland on April 18, 2023, marking the first such sale in Europe.