

QUOTE OF THE DAY

NEVER LET THE FEAR OF STRIKING OUT KEEP YOU FROM PLAYING THE GAME
BABE RUTH

News in brief

Sputnik V less effective against Delta variant

◆ Russia's Sputnik V vaccine against COVID-19 has been shown to be less effective against the highly contagious Delta variant, TASS news agency reported on Tuesday, citing the vaccine's developers.



China to pause squid fishing in Pacific, Atlantic breeding grounds

◆ China has announced a temporary ban on its fishing fleet -- the world's biggest -- from catching squid in parts of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans after overfishing pushed populations to the brink of collapse. China reels in as much as 70 percent of the global squid catch, and its vessels sail as far as West Africa and Latin America to satiate the growing appetite for seafood in the country. But Chinese vessels will suspend

operations in major global squid spawning grounds in the southwest Atlantic near Argentina from Thursday until September 30, and parts of the Pacific from September to November, the agriculture ministry said Monday.

An American father-son duo told a Tokyo court Tuesday

Ghosn accomplices tell court they 'regret' escape role



they now "regret" their role in helping former Nissan chief Carlos Ghosn jump bail and flee Japan, local media reported. Former special forces operative Michael Taylor and his son Peter face up to three years in prison for their part in helping smuggle Ghosn onto a private jet in an audio equipment case so he could fly to Lebanon, which has no extradition agreement with Japan. Local media said the two Americans, who have admitted the allegations against them, bowed deeply in court after offering contrition. Michael Taylor said Ghosn and his wife Carole had claimed that disappearing while on bail was "not a crime" in Japan, national broadcaster NHK reported.



The judge in the trial of deposed Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday rejected a motion to dismiss evidence central to a case that could see her jailed for up to two years for incitement, her legal team said.

Myanmar judge denies motion to dismiss evidence against Suu Kyi

Nobel Peace laureate Suu Kyi, 76, has been held in detention since the military overthrew her elected civilian government on Feb. 1. She is accused of a series of offences ranging from bribery and violating coronavirus protocols to illegally possessing two-way radios and incitement to commit crimes against the state - allegations her lawyers reject. Her legal team

held in detention since the military overthrew her elected civilian government on Feb. 1. She is accused of a series of offences ranging from bribery and violating coronavirus protocols to illegally possessing two-way radios and incitement to commit crimes against the state - allegations her lawyers reject. Her legal team head Khin Maung Zaw told Reuters the prosecution had entered evidence he believed was inadmissible, but the judge allowed it. The evidence includes letters the prosecution says were issued by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party in the days after the coup which were widely shared on social media. One urged embassies not to recognise the junta, among several documents that Khin Maung Zaw said were signed by neither Suu Kyi nor her co-defendants, ousted President Win Myint and former Naypyitaw mayor Myo Aung.

Biden says he hopes to meet with Israel's new prime minister soon



Biden meets with Israel's President Reuven Rivlin at the White House in Washington

Reuters | Washington

US President Joe Biden, in a meeting on Monday with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, said his commitment to Israel is "iron-clad" and he looks forward to meeting with new Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett soon.

Biden, in his first meeting as president with a top Israeli official, also said Iran would not come to possess a nuclear weapon under his watch.

"My commitment to Israel is ... iron-clad," Biden told Rivlin at the start of their meeting in the Oval Office. He said the two officials would discuss a range of topics, including Iran. "What I can say to you is that Iran will never get a nuclear weapon on my watch," Biden said.

Biden also underscored his support for Israel's agreement to normalise relations with other countries in the Middle East, and said Israel was making headway in Africa as well.

US troops come under fire in Syria after strikes against Iran-backed militias

Reuters | Washington

US troops came under rocket fire in Syria on Monday, but escaped injury, in apparent retaliation for weekend US air strikes against Iran-aligned militia in Syria and Iraq.

A US military spokesman said US forces had responded to the multiple rockets by firing back at the positions in self-defence.

"There are no (US) injuries

and damage is being assessed," Colonel Wayne Marotto said, referring to the rocket attack. He did not say who was responsible for the attack on US troops.

Sources in Deir al Zor, in eastern Syria, said an Iranian-backed militia group had fired a few artillery rounds in the vicinity of al Omar oil field, which is controlled by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces.

Five Indian drugmakers to jointly start trial of Merck & Co's COVID-19 drug

Reuters

Five Indian generic drugmakers, including Cipla and Dr Reddy's Laboratories, said yesterday they would jointly conduct a clinical trial of Merck & Co's anti-viral drug to treat mild COVID-19 in non-hospitalised patients in India.

Between March and April, each of these companies, which also include Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, Torrent Pharmaceuticals and privately held Emcure Pharmaceuticals, partnered with Merck to expand production of the drug, molnupiravir.

The partnership gives the companies license to supply molnupiravir to India and more than 100 low- and middle-income countries following approvals or emergency authorization by local regulatory agencies, Merck said in late April.

Yesterday, the Indian companies said they will jointly sponsor, supervise and monitor the clinical trial in the country, expected to take place



between June and September this year in 1,200 patients.

They will then independently approach regulatory authorities for approval to manufacture and supply the drug in India.

Molnupiravir is an antiviral therapy Merck is developing with Ridgeback Biotherapeutics for the treatment of non-hospitalized COVID-19 patients.

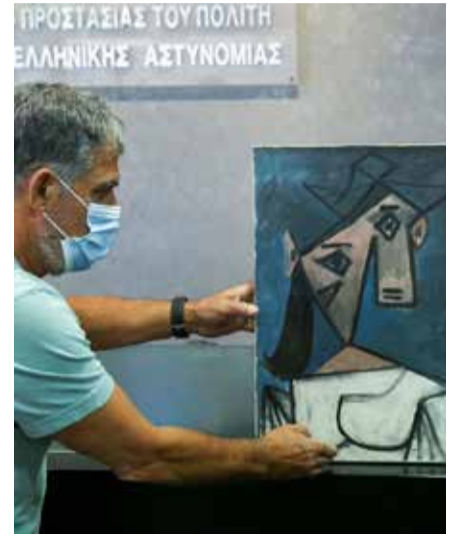
Coronavirus cases in India have declined from a devastating peak in April and May. However, health experts have said that the country should brace for a third wave by October.

Greece recovers Picasso, Mondrian

Reuters | Athens

Greece has recovered works of art by Pablo Picasso and Piet Mondrian, stolen from its National Gallery in 2012, authorities said yesterday.

Thieves broke into the gallery and snatched Picasso's 1939 painting "Woman's Head", donated by the Spanish artist in 1949, and Dutch painter Mondrian's "Mill" dated 1905.



To mislead the guard, the thieves had activated the gallery's alarm system sev-

The paintings "Woman's Head" by Pablo Picasso and National Gallery in 2012, are displayed during a pro-Citizen Protection in Athens, Greece,

UN backs probe into 1988 killing

● Javid Rehman, UN expert on Iran, criticises conduct of election

● Urges independent inquiry into alleged 1988 killing of thousands

● Tells Reuters probe must establish role of President-elect Raisi

● Iran has never acknowledged the mass executions in Khomeini era

Reuters | Geneva

The UN investigator on human rights in Iran has called for an independent inquiry into allegations of state-ordered executions of thousands of political prisoners in 1988 and the role played by President-elect Ebrahim Raisi as Tehran deputy prosecutor.

Javid Rehman, in an interview with Reuters on Monday, said that over the years his office has gathered testimonies and evidence. It was ready to share them if the United Nations Human Rights Council or other body sets up an impartial investigation.

He said he was concerned at



Iran's President-elect Ebrahim Raisi speaks

Raisi succeeds Hassan Rouhani on Aug. 3, having secured victory this month in an election marked by voter apathy over economic hardships and political restrictions.

reports that some "mass graves" are being destroyed as part of a continuing cover-up.

"I think it is time and it's very important now that Mr. Raisi is the president (-elect) that we start investigating what happened in 1988 and the role of individuals," Rehman said from London, where



Iran has never acknowledged that mass executions took place under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the revolutionary leader who died in 1989.



Few images are as stark as one of an executioner lined up on a dirt field banned from Iran by Khomeini, which meant it denied representation in Khomeini's government. One image, with bodies crumpled on the ground, was picked up by the news service UPI. The following year, Firing Squad in Iran was a photograph. (Courtesy of 100photos.time.co)

COVID-19 Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	Total deaths	Global tally
1 USA	34,511,668	619,595	182,288,885
2 India	30,316,897	397,668	
3 Brazil	18,448,402	514,202	Deaths
4 France	5,770,530	111,012	3,947,726
5 Russia	5,493,557	134,545	Recovered:
6 Turkey	5,414,310	49,634	166,839,554
7 UK	4,755,078	128,103	New cases
8 Argentina	4,423,636	93,142	+100,706
9 Italy	4,258,456	127,500	New deaths
10 Colombia	4,187,194	105,326	+1,964
11 Spain	3,792,642	80,789	
12 Germany	3,734,812	91,336	
13 Iran	3,192,809	84,127	
14 Poland	2,879,811	75,005	

Figures as of closing

Middle East

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases
Egypt	280,770		16,125		210,482	54,163
Saudi Arabia	486,106	+1,567	7,804	+15	466,578	11,724
UAE	631,160	+2,184	1,807	+5	609,711	19,642
Kuwait	353,133		1,943		332,678	18,512
Oman	266,536	+2,234	3,056	+43	233,287	30,193
Qatar	221,810		588		219,478	1,744