

WORLD ECONOMY & POLITICS

BR

US offers 'NATO-like' security to Ukraine, expects Russia to accept

WASHINGTON: The United States said Monday it offered strong, NATO-like security guarantees to Ukraine and voiced confidence that Russia would accept, in what Washington said would be a breakthrough in ending the war.

US officials described hours of talks in Berlin with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as positive and said President Donald Trump would call both the Ukrainian leader and European leaders later Monday to push forward the deal.

The US officials warned Ukraine must also accept the deal, which they said would provide security guarantees in line with NATO's Article Five - which calls for an attack on one ally as an attack on all.

"The basis of that agreement is basically to have really, really strong guarantees to Ukraine and voiced confidence that Russia would accept, in what Washington said would be a breakthrough in ending the war."

"Those guarantees will not be on the table forever. Those guarantees are on the table right now if there's a conclusion that's reached in a good way," he said.

Trump has previously ruled out a formal entry of Ukraine into NATO and sided with Russia in calling Ukraine's aspirations to the alliance a reason for the 2022 invasion by Moscow.

But another US official said Russia would back the deal.

"I think the Ukrainians would tell you, as would the Europeans, that this is the most robust set of security protocols they have ever seen. It is a very, very strong package," the second official said.

"I think hopefully the Russians are going to look at it and say to themselves, 'That's OK because we have no intention - we're going to take them at their word - we have no intention of violating'," he said.

"But violations are going to be addressed with the securities package."

The first official acknowledged that there was no agreement on territory. Trump's business friend and rivaling global negotiator, and Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, AFP.

Doctors in England to strike as 'super flu' surges

LONDON: Doctors in England voted Monday to go ahead with a five-day strike starting this week in the busy Christmas season as a "super flu" outbreak sweeps the country.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer branded the move "irresponsible" and said the doctors had "lost the sympathy" of the public and their colleagues in the state-funded National Health Service (NHS).

So-called resident doctors rejected a new pay offer from the government and will walk out from 7:00 am (0700 GMT) on Wednesday, the British Medical Association (BMA) announced.

The industrial action comes as flu cases in hospitals across England hit a record level for this time of year.

NHS figures published last Thursday showed that the number of cases jumped 55 percent in a week to an average of 2,660 patients in hospital each day the previous week.

The functioning of the NHS is a major political issue in Britain, with Starmer's beleaguered Labour government under pressure to bring down waiting times.

The planned strike from Wednesday will be the 14th walkout by medics since March 2023.

Attempts to reduce patient waiting lists have been affected in part by the repeated industrial action by both resident doctors and consultants.

The resident doctors - those below consultant level - are in dispute with the government over pay and shortage of training opportunities.

The government in 2024 awarded the doctors a 28.9 percent pay rise over the last three years.

But the BMA, which represents resident doctors, is demanding a 36 percent pay rise to achieve pay restoration after years of below-inflation pay deals. -AFP

Israeli army to demolish 25 residential buildings in West Bank camp

TULKAREM (Palestinian Territories): The Israeli army is to demolish 25 residential buildings in the north West Bank's Nur Shams refugee camp later this week, local authorities told AFP.

Abdullah Kamal, governor of the Tulkarem governorate where Nur Shams is located, told AFP the army had announced the planned demolition by the Israeli defence ministry body COGAT.

COGAT, which is in charge of coordinating civilian affairs in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, did not respond to AFP's requests for comment.

Faisal Salama, head of the popular committee for Tulkarem camp, which is near Nur Shams, said the demolition order would affect 25 buildings holding up to 100 families.

"We were informed by the military and civil coordination that the occupation will carry out the demolition of 25 buildings on December 18, Thursday," he told AFP. -AFP

At a general meeting, around 400 employees voted unanimously to launch a strike, which can be renewed, to protest the "deterioration" of working conditions, the CGT and CFTD unions said.

Another general meeting was scheduled to take place Wednesday. The museum is closed on Tuesdays.

"I'm very disappointed, because the Louvre was the main reason for our visit in Paris, because we wanted to see the 'Mona Lisa'," said 37-year-old Minsoo Kim, who had travelled from Seoul with his wife for their honeymoon. -AFP

China urges Gulf nations to seal free trade agreement

BEIJING: China's foreign minister has pressed the Gulf Cooperation Council to conclude long-running talks on a free trade agreement with China, attributing the urgency to rising protectionism and unilateralism as free trade made "under attack", according to a Monday statement from the ministry.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is on a three-nation tour in the Middle East that began in the United Arab Emirates and is expected to end in Jordan. He met GCC Secretary-General Jassem Mohamed Al-Budaiwi in Riyadh on Sunday, when he also met top Saudi officials.

East diplomacy and security, other statements following a meeting between the nations' foreign ministers in Riyadh, said in a time showed.

Wang's meeting with Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud also took place on Sunday in the Saudi capital. A joint statement published by China's official news agency Xinhua did not elaborate on the issues where the two countries would strengthen coordination, but mentioned China's support for Saudi Arabia and Iran enhancing their relations as well as support from both sides for the "comprehensive and just settlement" of the Palestinian issue.

(China) appreciates Saudi Arabia's leading role and efforts to achieve regional and international security and stability," said the statement released on Monday.

Wang told his Saudi counterpart that China regarded Saudi Arabia as a "priority for Middle East diplomacy" and an important partner in global diplomacy, a Chinese foreign ministry statement on Monday said. -Reuters

LOS ANGELES: records.

Filmmaker Rob Reiner, who directed beloved movies like "When Harry Met Sally..." and his wife Time in the Brentwood neighborhood of Los Angeles on Sunday, whom they did not identify. Other information about the victim, Nick Reiner, who was also active in politics, supporting liberal causes. -Reuters

Police said they found two bodies at the Reiners' home at 3:40 p.m. Pacific Time in the Brentwood neighborhood of Los Angeles on Sunday, whom they did not identify. Other information about the victim, Nick Reiner, who was also active in politics, supporting liberal causes. -Reuters

Jail records show their son was arrested on Sunday and later taken to the Los Angeles County Jail. The records showed he was being held on a felony, but did not contain any specific information about the charges. Tributes poured in for Reiner, who was also active in politics, supporting liberal causes. -Reuters

Notice of Reschedule Annual General Meeting

Pursuant to the Notice of AGM published on November 12, 2025 in newspapers and informed to PSX, which was subsequently adjourned due to unforeseen issues, it has now been decided by the Board of Directors of the Company to convene the AGM on January 7, 2026, at the same venue and time.

Since one of the agenda items of the Annual General Meeting is the Election of Directors, and the new date has now been finalized, all members who wish to contest for the position of Director are advised to submit their Consent to Act as Director to the Company Secretary on or before December 24, 2025, at the Company's registered office.

Furthermore, all consents previously submitted for the Election of Directors are hereby declared null and void. Any member who had earlier submitted consent and still wishes to contest is required to resubmit their Consent to Act as Director of the Company.

The share transfer book of the Company will remain closed from December 31, 2025 to January 07, 2026 (both days inclusive) for determining voting rights. Transfers received at M/s. THK Associates (Private) Limited, Plot No. 32-C, Jami Commercial Street 2, D.H.A. Phase VII, Karachi. Tel: (021) 111 000 322, the Share Registrar of the Company by the close of business on December 30, 2025 will be treated in time to attend the meeting.

LYARI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TOWN PLANNING DEPARTMENT

BANGLOW NO. 194-B, BLOCK-B, SMCH SOCIETY SHAHRAH-E-FAISAL, KARACHI

PUBLIC NOTICE

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF LAYOUT PLAN IN RESPECT OF SURVEY NO. 758 LAND MEASURING 01-00 ACRES SITUATED IN DEH LAL BAKHAR MARIPUR DISTRICT KEAMARI, KARACHI

It is hereby informed that Muhammad Yaqoob s/o Muhammad Ibrahim has applied for approval of layout plan for an area of 01-00 acre from Survey No. 758 situated at Deh Lal Bakhari Maripur District-Keamari Karachi which has been forwarded by the office of the Deputy Commissioner Keamari-Karachi vide letter No. DC (Keamari)/K/3681/2025 dated: 02-12-2025. Any person(s) department(s)/organization(s) having objection(s) may submit the same along with documentary evidence in writing within 15 days from the publication of this notice to the Town Planning Department, Lyari Development Authority, Banglow No. 194-B, Block-B, SMCH Society Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi. Objection(s) submitted / received after the specified period shall not be entertained and approval for Layout Plan will be granted on completion of proceedings.

Sd/- Assistant Director (Planning) Lyari Development Authority

INF-KRY No. 4292/25

WORK FOR SINDH JOB PORTAL BY INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Australia to toughen gun laws as it mourns deadly Bondi attack

SYDNEY: Australia's leaders agreed Monday to toughen gun laws after attacks killed 15 people at a Jewish festival on Bondi Beach, the worst mass shooting in decades.

Dozens fled the tourist hotspot in panic as a father and son fired into crowds packing the Sydney beach with them "to strengthen gun the start of Hanukkah on Sunday evening."

A 10-year-old girl, a

Holocaust survivor and a local rabbi were among those killed, while 42 others were rushed to hospital with gunshot wounds and other injuries.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese convened a meeting of the leaders of Australia's states and territories in response Monday, agreeing to reforms that will "strengthen gun laws across the nation."

Albanese's office said they

to improve background checks for firearm owners, but non-nationals from obtaining gun licenses and limit the types of weapons that are legal.

Mass shootings have become rare in Australia since a long gunman killed 35 people in the tourist town of Port Arthur in 1996, which led to sweeping reforms that were long seen as a gold standard world-wide.

Those included a gun buy-back scheme, a national firearms register and a crackdown on the ownership of semi-automatic weapons.

But Sunday's shootings have raised fresh questions on how the father and son - who public broadcaster ABC reported had possible links to the Islamic State group - obtained the weapons.

Police are still unravelling what drove the shootings, although authorities have said it targeted the nation's Jews.

Albanese called it "an act of pure evil, an act of antisemitism, an act of terrorism on our shores."

A string of antisemitic attacks has spread far among

Australia's Jewish communities following the October 7, 2023, Hamas assault on Israel and the ensuing war in Gaza.

The Australian government this year accused Iran of orchestrating a recent wave of antisemitic attacks and expelled Tehran's ambassador nearly four months ago.

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused Iran of "pouring oil on the fire of antisemitism" in the months leading up to the shooting, referring to a letter he sent to Albanese following Canberra's announcement that it would recognise Palestinian statehood in August.

Other world leaders expressed revulsion, with US President Donald Trump condemning the "antisemitic attack."

The gunmen opened fire on an annual celebration that drew more than 1,000 people to the beach to mark the Jewish festival.

They took aim from a raised boardwalk looking over the beach, packed with swimmers cooling off on the steamy summer evening. -AFP

HK media mogul Jimmy Lai convicted of national security charges

HONG KONG: Hong Kong pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai was found guilty on all three charges in his national security trial on Monday, "misleadingly" published rights groups denounced as the death knell for press freedoms in the Chinese financial hub.

Prosecutors said Lai was the mastermind behind two conspiracies to cast foreign countries to take action against Hong Kong and China, and accused him of publishing material that "excited disaffection" against the government.

The 78-year-old, who pleaded not guilty, faces up to life in prison when he is sentenced. He can appeal against the convictions.

"There is no doubt that (Lai) had harboured his resentment and hatred of the PRC," Judge Esther Toh told the court, referring to the People's Republic of China.

She said he had invited the United States "to help bring down" the Chinese govern-

ment, "with the excuse of helping the people of HK."

Lai is a British citizen, and the UK government condemned his "politically motivated convictions" in a statement that called for his release. The media mogul, wearing a light green cardigan and grey jacket, listened impassively as the verdicts were read out.

He nodded to his wife Teresa and his son Lai Shun-jan in the public gallery as he left the court, an AFP reporter saw.

Defence lawyer Robert Pang told reporters that Lai was "in fine spirits" and that they would need to read the 886-page verdict before deciding on their next steps.

Lai's other son Sebastian urged Britain to "do more" to help free his father.

"It's time to put action behind words and make my father's release a pre-condition to closer relationships with China," he told a press conference in London. -AFP

Louvre Museum closed as workers strike

PARIS: The Louvre closed its doors to thousands of disappointed visitors on Monday as staff launched a rolling strike to protest the working conditions at the Paris landmark, two months after a shocking robbery.

Staff assembled outside the museum's world-famous glass pyramid, blocking the main entrance and holding signs, as security agents turned tourists away.

"The Louvre on strike," said a banner. "All together all together, striking staff shouted. 'Who does the Louvre belong to? To us!'"

Workers are demanding

extra staff and measures to tackle overcrowding, adding to the woes of the world's most visited museum just as a rolling strike protest France gears up for the Christmas holidays.

"We are angry," Elise Muller, a security guard, told reporters. "We disagree with the way the Louvre has been managed."

The strike comes nearly two months after the museum was victim of an embarrassing daylight heist that saw crown jewels worth \$102 million stolen.

A notice in the museum's courtyard said the Louvre would remain closed on Monday.

ASKARI GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED
CREDIT OF RIGHT SHARES INTO CDS AND DELIVERY OF PHYSICAL SHARE CERTIFICATES
Shareholders of Askari General Insurance Company Limited (The "Company") are hereby notified that subscribed right shares in respect of 40,000 Right Issue have been credited on December 15, 2025, into their respective accounts maintained with the Central Depository Company of Pakistan limited and they may contact their concerned Brokers/AS/CDS participant in this regard.
Share Certificates of those shareholders, who opted for physical shares are in process and will be ready for delivery from December 15, 2025, and may be collected personally or through an authorized representative or by post from the Company's Share Registrar, THK Associates Private Limited, by surrendering their original paid right letters.

NATIONAL ELECTRIC POWER REGULATORY AUTHORITY (NEPRA)
PUBLICATION OF DRAFT OF THE NATIONAL ELECTRIC POWER REGULATORY AUTHORITY (PROSUMER) REGULATIONS, 2025 FOR ELICITING PUBLIC OPINION
In exercise of the powers conferred by section 47 of the Regulation of Generation, Transmission and Distribution of Electric Power Act, 1997 (X of 1997) (NEPRA Act), the Authority is pleased to publish draft of the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Prosumer) Regulations, 2025 for eliciting public opinion thereon as required under section 47(3) of the NEPRA Act. These Regulations can be accessed through the NEPRA's official website under the 'News' section. Comments might be sent to the Registrar (NEPRA) on the address given below within thirty (30) days of this publication.

Wasiq Anwar Bhinder
Registrar NEPRA
NEPRA Tower, Attark Avenue (East), G-5/1, Islamabad
Phone: 031-2013200 Fax: 031-20202021
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For further information, please visit: www.nepa.org.pk

PAKISTAN AIRPORTS AUTHORITY (PAA)
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR CONSTRUCTION OF RESIDENTIAL & STATE OF THE ART TRAINING FACILITIES AT CATI

Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) invites proposals from reputed consultants duly registered with the Pakistan Engineering Council in Profile Code (1201) Buildings for the "CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR CONSTRUCTION OF RESIDENTIAL & STATE OF THE ART TRAINING FACILITIES AT CATI".

RFP document containing detailed scope, terms and conditions etc. can be downloaded from PPAAR E-PADS portal <http://epprocure.gov.pk>. Proposals prepared in accordance with the instructions in the RFP documents, must be submitted electronically on E-PADS, by 31st December 2025 on or before 11:00 hours, as per conditions guidelines provided by PPAAR from time to time.

The bidding shall be conducted in line with the single stage two envelope procedure, and method of selection will be Quality and Cost Based Selection prescribed under Public Procurement Rules, 2004. Procurement of Consultancy Services Regulations 2010, e-Pak Procurement Regulations, 2023 and any Regulations, Regulatory Guides, Procurement Guidelines or Instructions issued by the PPAAR from time to time, and is open to all potential eligible bidders registered in the EPADS.

PAA reserves the right to withdraw from this process at any stage without any obligation for expenses incurred by the participants.

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