

Russian attack kills three in Kyiv

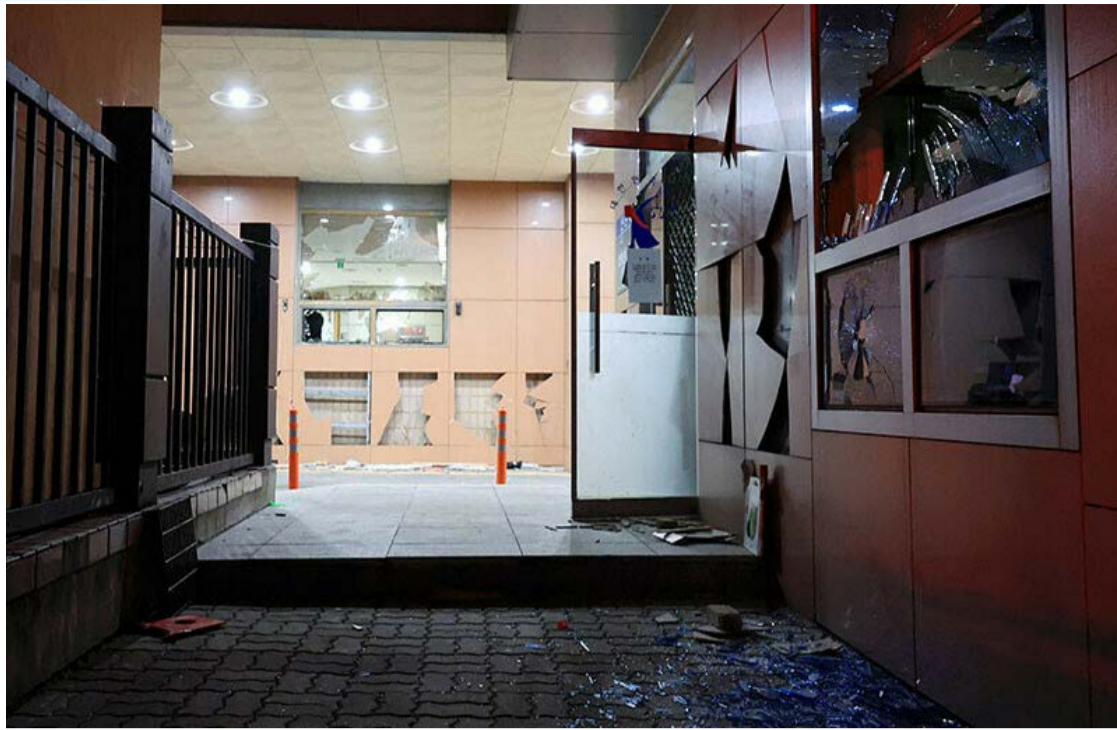
KYIV:(News Desk) A Russian missile strike on the Ukrainian capital killed three people on Saturday, Ukrainian leaders said, in branding it a "heinous" attack, while Moscow called it "retaliation" for bombardments on its territory. Russia frequently targets Kyiv with aerial attacks, but deadly strikes there are rare, as the capital is heavily protected by air defences and better able to fend off attacks than elsewhere in the country. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky called on the world to up its pressure on the Kremlin to force it to end the nearly three-year invasion. Russia's defence ministry said the strike had hit a rocket-maker based in the Ukrainian capital. "The Russian armed forces carried out a group strike with precision-guided weapons against Ukrainian military-industrial facilities, including the Luch Design Bureau that develops and manufactures long-range guided missiles," the Russian defence ministry said. It called the attack "retaliation" for Ukraine's use of US-supplied ATACMS missiles in strikes on Russian territory. At least three people were killed and three wounded, Zelensky said, revising down an earlier toll of four. "Everyone who is helping the Russian state in this war must be put under such pressure that it is felt no less than these strikes. We can only do this in unity with the whole world," Zelensky said on social media. City officials said the victims were two men, aged 43 and 25, and a 41-year-old woman. Agency journalists in Kyiv saw a multi-storey building with windows blown out, debris strewn across the street, flooding, and the charred facade of a damaged McDonald's outlet. Overnight, air raid sirens and the sounds of Ukrainian air defence systems had rung out across the capital.

Trump hints at 90-day reprieve for TikTok as deadline looms

WASHINGTON: (News Desk) US President-elect Donald Trump on Saturday said he would "most likely" give TikTok a 90-day reprieve from a potential ban after he takes office on Monday, as the app with 170 million American users buzzed with nervous anticipation ahead of a shutdown set for Sunday. "The 90-day extension is something that will be most likely done, because it's appropriate," Trump told NBC in an interview. "If I decide to do that, I'll probably announce it on Monday." The Chinese-owned app, which has captivated nearly half of all Americans, powered small businesses and shaped online culture, said it will go dark in the US on Sunday unless President Joe Biden's administration provides assurances to companies such as Apple and Google that they will not face enforcement actions when a ban takes effect. Under a law passed last year and upheld on Friday by a unanimous Supreme Court, the platform has until Sunday to cut ties with its China-based parent ByteDance or shut down its US operation to resolve concerns it poses a threat to national security. The White House dismissed TikTok's Friday comment as a stunt, reiterating on Saturday that it was up to the incoming Trump administration to take action, increasing the likelihood of a shutdown on Sunday. "We see no reason for TikTok or other companies to take actions in the next few days before the Trump administration takes office on Monday," press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement.

Thousands turn out at London pro-Palestinian rally

LONDON: (News Desk) Thousands of pro-Palestinian supporters gathered in central London on Saturday, on the eve of the start of a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, hoping to put "pressure" to ensure the ceasefire holds. "We desperately want to be optimistic" about the truce, Sophie Mason said. "And so we need to be out on the streets in order to make sure the ceasefire holds," said the 50-year-old, who is a regular at the pro-Palestinian demonstrations in the British capital. The ceasefire, which comes into effect on Sunday morning (0630 GMT), involves the release of Israeli prisoners held by Hamas and Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, Israeli withdrawal from densely populated areas of Gaza and an increase in humanitarian aid deliveries to the conflict-stricken region. The London rally took place in Whitehall, site of the main British government offices, after police rejected the route initially proposed by organisers — which the Met police said would have been in the vicinity of a synagogue. Participants held up placards bearing slogans including "Stop arming Israel" or "Gaza, stop the massacre" amid regular chants of "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free". "Obviously, we're delighted there's a cease fire", said Linda Plant, a retiree from London, however, pointing out that Israeli strikes on Gaza have continued since the ceasefire deal was announced. "We need to make pressure to make that ceasefire hold" and for international aid to reach Gaza, said Ben, 36, a workers union member who only shared his first name. For Anisah Qausher, a student, the ceasefire is "too late, I think it's too little". While she hopes it will bring "temporary relief", she believes that "we're gonna need to do a lot more", citing the challenge of rebuilding Gaza.



A general view shows damaged walls at a court after pro-Yoon supporters stormed the building following a decision to extend impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol's detention for up to 20 days, in Seoul on January 19

Biden to sign order to prioritise distressed 'left-behind communities'

Washington (News Desk) Outgoing US President Joe Biden will sign an executive order on Sunday aimed at prioritising government resources to help economically distressed American communities — a day before he leaves the White House. Biden's order targets so-called "Left-Behind Communities" and aims to help incoming President

Donald Trump, who will oversee significant spending on infrastructure, semiconductors, energy, broadband internet and other programs approved during Biden's presidency. By one estimate, 15 percent of the US population — around 50 million Americans — live in a distressed zip code, which is measured by poverty,

unemployment, education, abandoned homes, median income and declines in jobs and businesses. The White House touted a number of programs funded over the last four years including \$54 billion in investments to energy communities — coal, oil and gas, and power plant areas — as well as \$210 million announced last week for six new tech

hubs, \$525m for job training in distressed areas and billions in infrastructure for distressed regions. Biden's order prioritises left-behind communities for economic development funding including those "facing economic distress, undergoing industrial transitions, emerging as innovation hubs, and rebuilding from natural disasters".

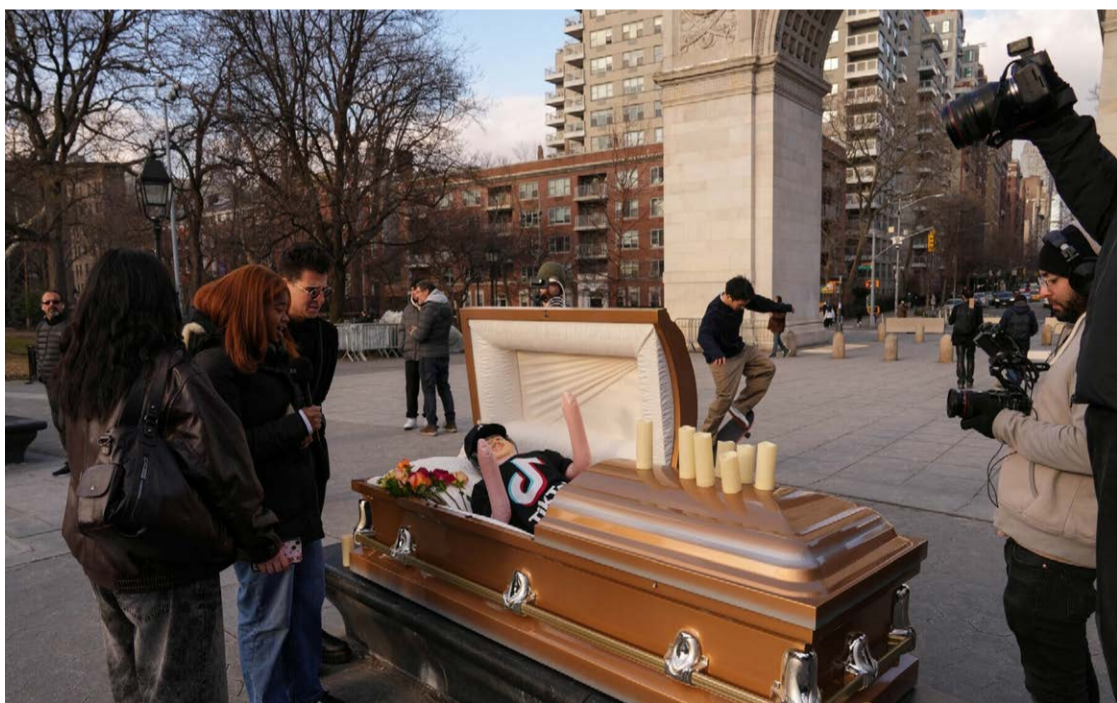
Protesters storm South Korea court after it extends Yoon's detention

Seoul (News Desk) Hundreds of supporters of South Korea's arrested president, Yoon Suk Yeol, stormed a court building early on Sunday after his detention was extended, smashing windows and breaking inside, an attack the country's acting leader called "unimaginable". Yoon on Wednesday became the first sitting South Korean president to be

arrested as he faces allegations of insurrection related to his stunning, short-lived December 3 declaration of martial law that has plunged the country into political turmoil. Shortly after the court announced its decision around 3am local time on Sunday, Yoon's supporters swarmed the building, overwhelming riot police trying to keep them at bay.

Protesters blasted fire extinguishers at lines of police guarding the front entrance, then flooded inside, destroying office equipment, fittings and furniture, footage showed. Police restored order a few hours later, saying they had arrested 46 protesters and vowed to track down others involved. "The government expresses strong regret over the

illegal violence ... which is unimaginable in a democratic society," acting President Choi Sang-mok said in a statement, adding that the authorities would step up safety measures around gatherings. Nine police officers were injured in the chaos, Yonhap news agency reported. Police were not immediately available for comment on the injured officers.



Comic Zach Sage, who posts content on TikTok, interviews people by a coffin with a blow up doll, dressed in TikTok merch, in Washington Square Park in New York City, US

Suspected Bangladeshi arrested in stabbing of Bollywood star Saif Ali Khan

Delhi (News Desk) A man thought to be a citizen of Bangladesh was arrested in India's financial capital Mumbai on Sunday and is considered the prime suspect in the stabbing of Bollywood star Saif Ali Khan, police said. Thursday's attack on Khan, one of India's most bankable stars, shocked the nation's film industry and Mumbai

residents, with many calling for better policing and security. He was out of danger, doctors said, and has left the hospital. "Primary evidence suggests that the accused is a Bangladeshi citizen and after entering India illegally he changed his name," Dixit Gedam, a deputy commissioner of police, told a press conference.

The suspect, arrested on the outskirts of Mumbai, was using the name Vijay Das but is believed to be Mohammad Shariful Islam Shehzad and was working with a house-keeping agency after having come to the city five or six months ago, Gedam said. The police will seek custody of the suspect for further investigation, he added.

Khan, 54, was stabbed six times by an intruder during a burglary attempt at his home. He had surgery after sustaining stab wounds to his spine, neck and hands, doctors said. Police in Mumbai detained a first key suspect in the attack on Friday, while police in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh detained a second person on Saturday.

Missing American journalist's mother in Damascus in search of son

DAMASCUS: (News Desk) The mother of American journalist Austin Tice, who was taken captive during a reporting trip to Syria in August 2012, arrived in Damascus on Saturday to step up the search for her son and said she hopes she can take him home with her. Tice, who worked as a freelance reporter for the Washington Post and McClatchy, was one of the first US journalists to make it into Syria after the outbreak of the civil war. His mother, Debra Tice, drove into the Syrian capital from Lebanon with Nizar Zakka, the head of Hostage Aid Worldwide, an organisation which is searching for Austin and believes he is still in Syria. "It'd be lovely to put my arms around Austin while I'm here. It'd be the best," Debra Tice said in the Syrian capital, which she last visited in 2015 to meet with Syrian authorities about her son, before they stopped granting her visas. The overthrow of Bashar al-Assad's regime in December by Syrian rebels has allowed her to visit again from her home in Texas. "I feel very strongly that Austin's here, and I think he knows I'm here... I'm here," she said. Debra Tice and Zakka are hoping to meet with Syria's new authorities, including the head of its new administration Ahmed al-Sharaa, to push for information about Austin.

Gaza ceasefire begins today after 15 months of war

JERUSALEM: (News Desk) A ceasefire in the Gaza war will begin on Sunday morning, mediator Qatar said after Israel's cabinet voted to approve the truce and prisoner release deal. Since Qatar and the United States, which mediated the deal along with Egypt, announced the agreement on Wednesday, Israeli strikes on Gaza have continued. On Saturday, Gaza's civil defence rescue agency said at least five members of a family were killed when a strike hit their tent in Khan Yunis. Explosions were heard in Jerusalem after air raid sirens blared and the military said a projectile had been launched from Yemen, whose Houthi fighters say they support the Palestinians. The Houthis said they targeted the Israeli defence ministry, before air raid sirens sounded again in southern Israel in the afternoon and the military said it had intercepted a missile launched from Yemen. "As coordinated by the parties to the agreement and the mediators, the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip will begin at 8:30am (0630 GMT) on Sunday," Qatar's foreign ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari said. In more than 15 months of the conflict, there has been only one previous truce, for one week, in November 2023. That deal also saw the release of prisoners from both sides.

Sajid and Abrar demolish West Indies in first Multan Test win

Multan (News Desk) Spinner Sajid Khan took five wickets and Abrar Ahmed another four to guide Pakistan to a 127-run win on the third day of the first Test against the West Indies in Multan on Sunday. Sajid took 5-50 for match figures of 9-115, while leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed snared 4-27 as West Indies were dismissed for 123, falling well short of their victory target of 251. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated the team in a post on X. "Spin to win! Brilliant bowling by Team Pakistan! Congratulations to our cricket team on a spectacular victory. Shabash! [Well done]" he said. "I extend my commendation to Mohsin Naqvi, Chairman PCB, and his entire team for their tireless efforts," he went on to say. Pakistan's spinners took all the wickets in West Indies' second innings, with Noman Ali chipping in with 1-42, as the home side took an early advantage in the two-Test series.

Nunez rides to Liverpool's rescue, Newcastle thrashed by Bournemouth

LONDON: (News Desk) Darwin Nunez struck twice in stoppage time to earn Liverpool a 2-0 win at Brentford and open up a seven-point Premier League lead on Saturday after Bournemouth ran riot in a 4-1 win at Newcastle. The Reds looked set to drop points for the third consecutive league game until the much-maligned Uruguayan doubled his tally of Premier League goals for the season in the dying seconds in west London. Nunez swept home Trent Alexander-Arnold's cross before smashing in a second for a vital twist in the title race. Instead of cutting the gap, Arsenal are now under pressure to keep pace when they host Aston Villa in the 1730GMT kick-off.

Liverpool had been wasteful in front of goal in a 1-1 draw at Nottingham Forest in midweek and Arne Slot's men nearly let another two points slip away. Dominik Szoboszlai smashed a shot off the bar and Cody Gakpo failed to hit the target with a glorious chance to open the scoring before half-time. On a rare quiet day for Mohamed Salah, Slot was forced to turn to Nunez to make an impact off the bench and he duly delivered. The 25-year-old had not scored in the league since November but was in the right place to finish after a neat one-two between Harvey Elliott and Alexander-Arnold. Substitute Elliott was the creator for the second, feeding Nunez to cut inside and fire past Mark Flekken. Bournemouth snapped Newcastle's winning streak in stunning fashion as Justin Kljuvert's hat-trick fired the Cherries up to sixth.

TikTok goes dark for US users as company pins hope on Trump

Washington (News Desk) TikTok stopped working in the United States late on Saturday and disappeared from Apple and Google app stores ahead of a law that takes effect on Sunday requiring the shutdown of the platform used by 170 million Americans. President-elect Donald Trump has said he would "most likely" give TikTok a 90-day reprieve from the ban after he takes office on Monday, a promise TikTok cited in a notice posted to users on the app.

"A law banning TikTok has been enacted in the US. Unfortunately, that means you can't use TikTok for now. We are fortunate that President Trump has indicated that he will work with us on a solution to reinstate TikTok once he takes office. Please stay tuned," the message notified users trying to use the app late on Saturday night. Even if temporary, the unprecedented shutdown of TikTok, owned by China's ByteDance, is set to have a wide-ranging impact on US-China

relations, US domestic politics, the social media marketplace and millions of Americans who depend on the app economically and culturally. The United States has never banned a major social media platform. The law passed overwhelmingly by Congress gives the incoming Trump administration sweeping authority to ban or seek the sale of other Chinese-owned apps. Other apps owned by ByteDance, including video editing app CapCut and

lifestyle social app Lemon8, were also offline and unavailable in US app stores as of late Saturday. "The 90-day extension is something that will be most likely done, because it's appropriate," Trump told NBC. "If I decide to do that, I'll probably announce it on Monday." It was not clear if any US users could still access the app, but it was no longer working for many users, and people seeking to access it through a web application were met with the same message that

TikTok was no longer working. TikTok, which has captivated nearly half of all Americans, powered small businesses and shaped online culture, warned on Friday it would go dark in the US on Sunday unless President Joe Biden's administration provided assurances to companies such as Apple and Google that they will not face enforcement actions when a ban takes effect. Move to alternatives Under the law passed last

year and upheld on Friday by a unanimous Supreme Court, the platform had until Sunday to cut ties with its China-based parent or shut down its US operation to resolve concerns it poses a threat to national security. Biden's White House reiterated on Saturday that it was up to the incoming administration to take action. "We see no reason for TikTok or other companies to take actions in the next few days before the Trump administration takes office on Monday."