

WORLD

Briefly

DPRK
Pyongyang dismisses arms supply claims

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea said on Tuesday that claims by the United States that Pyongyang is supplying artillery ammunition to Moscow were groundless, state media KCNA reported. The rebuke comes amid heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula after a spate of weapons tests from Pyongyang last week, as the US and the Republic of Korea conducted their biggest-ever air force exercise.

UNITED NATIONS
3 dead after raft sinks off Yemeni coast

A raft carrying African migrants seeking a better life in the Gulf Arab states sank in waters off Yemen late last month, leaving three dead and 28 others missing, the United Nations said on Monday. The UN's migration agency said that the overcrowded vessel carrying around 30 East African migrants departed eastern Djibouti for Yemen's west coast on Oct 30. Witnesses said the small raft was soon overpowered by "high tides and rocky waters" and quickly sank.

SOUTH AMERICA
Neighbors resume flights after 2 years

Venezuela and Colombia resumed direct flights on Monday as relations between the two South American neighbors pick up. The flight on Monday by Turpial Airlines from the Venezuelan capital Caracas to the Colombian capital Bogota is the first one in two years since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in 2020. Venezuela severed political and diplomatic ties with Colombia on Feb 23, 2019, after the neighboring nation, under US pressure, recognized Venezuela's opposition leader Juan Guaido as interim president.

AGENCIES—XINHUA



Residents queue up for free food handed out at a stand in Kyiv on Monday. ED RAM / GETTY IMAGES

Russia, US on path to nuclear talks

By REN QI in Moscow
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Russia and the United States are discussing resuming negotiations on arms control in the coming weeks in what would be the first face-to-face contact with senior officials from both sides since the conflict in Ukraine began in February, a Russian newspaper reported on Tuesday. The talks relating to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or New START, could take place in an unnamed Middle East country, instead of their traditional venue of Geneva, in late November or early December, Russia's Kommersant business daily said.

The newspaper, citing three unnamed sources in the report, said that Moscow no longer saw Switzerland as sufficiently neutral after it imposed sanctions on Russia over its special military operation in Ukraine.

According to Kommersant, Washington is expected to raise the resumption of on-site inspections under New START.

The last remaining arms reduction pact between the Cold War foes, New START is one of the few areas where Moscow and Washington have said they were open to cooperation despite tensions over the Ukraine crisis.

Moscow formally suspended physical inspections by the US in August after President Joe Biden called on Russia to demonstrate its commitment to limiting nuclear weapons.

Guarded optimism

The guarded optimism over arms control talks came as Ukraine on Monday received its first delivery of NASAMS air defense systems from the US and Aspide units from Spain, according to Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov.

"NASAMS and Aspide air defense systems arrived in Ukraine!" Reznikov said in a tweet on Monday.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky asked the leaders of the Group of Seven nations for more help with air defense last week fol-

lowing a wave of Russian airstrikes on energy infrastructure.

NASAMS is a short- to medium-range surface-to-air missile defense system developed jointly by Kongsberg of Norway and Raytheon of the US, and the Aspide system made by Italy was provided to Kyiv by Spain.

Air Force spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat said the newly arrived Western air defense systems will help deal with the threat of Iranian ballistic missiles reportedly being purchased by Russia.

The Russian government has not responded to the shipments of new weaponry for Ukraine. However, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stressed on Monday that Russia is "open to" negotiations with Ukraine but that now is not the right time.

Zelensky said he was open to talks with Russia, but only "genuine" negotiations that would restore Ukraine's borders, grant it compensation for Russian attacks and punish those responsible for crimes.

CIIE ties pave way for growth at Belgian port

By CHEN WEIHUA

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The China International Import Expo, or CIIE, has helped the Port of Antwerp-Bruges to expand its business relations, the port's top executive said.

Tom Hautekiet, the chief commercial officer of the port, said there is a friendship between the cities of Antwerp and Shanghai, as well as between the ports of Antwerp-Bruges and Shanghai.

"These are the perfect platforms to show the importance of that relations, not only by doing business, but by just being there and to recognize that relationship is extremely important," he said of the port's participation in CIIE.

The Belgian port has been participating in every CIIE since it began in 2018 and it has a booth at the expo's fifth edition, which opened in Shanghai on Saturday.

Hautekiet described the past CIIEs as "successful". He said the CIIE has helped his company better understand China and Chinese companies to better understand his company, and that the Port of Antwerp-Bruges can be the gateway for Chinese companies to Europe.

"So I think we have strengthened the relations," he said.

China is now the Belgian port's largest trade partner in terms of container traffic with 1.7 million TEUs (20-foot equivalent units), and the third-largest trade partner in terms of cargo volume with 19 million metric tons.

COSCO Shipping, its major customer, invested in two container terminals in the Port of Antwerp and Port of Zeebrugge long before they merged in May. Two other Chinese companies, Sinopec and China Merchants Group, also hold stakes in the port.

Besides Shanghai, Hautekiet said the Port of Antwerp-Bruges is

exploring business opportunities with other Chinese cities and ports such as Dalian, Tianjin, Qingdao, Ningbo, Xiamen and Shenzhen.

He is confident that trade relations between China and Europe, which he said has been growing naturally in the past years, will grow further.

"These are always the best relations. Nothing is forced. It feels natural from both sides. These are the strongest relations you can have," he said.

Largest trade partner

China was the European Union's largest trade partner last year with bilateral trade hitting \$828 billion, up 27.5 percent from the previous year. The EU was China's second-largest trade partner behind ASEAN.

Hautekiet stressed that such trade relations will continue to grow despite the difficult geopolitical situation in the world today.

"I do feel that the economic rela-

tions between China and Europe, and China and Belgium in particular, will continue. I don't think there is reason to question that," he said.

On the much-hyped talk by some European politicians about dependency on China, Hautekiet said there is a huge gap between the political situation and economic reality.

"I do see very strong and positive relations, which we will and which we want to continue, and we want to grow," he said, adding that he is not a politician but one that is responsible for the commercialization of the port.

Having visited China many times, Hautekiet was impressed by the country's rapid development, including its ports. China now boasts many of the world's top container ports.

"I am not so surprised that once the decision is taken for China to develop a massive port, we all know the speed at which it can happen in China," he said.

UK's Sunak sees hope on boats action

'Confidence' on tackling migrant flows follows meeting with France's Macron

By JULIAN SHEA in London
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Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and France's President Emmanuel Macron have had their first face-to-face talks, at the COP 27 climate summit in Egypt, as the two countries try to improve relations strained by the issue of people smuggling across the English Channel.

During the summer Conservative Party leadership race, Sunak's predecessor Liz Truss infamously said "the jury was out" on whether France was a friend of the United Kingdom, and that she would judge Macron on "deeds not words", prompting much criticism.

Macron replied that Britain was "a friendly, strong and allied nation, regardless of its leaders, and sometimes in spite of its leaders", and when Sunak replaced Truss in Downing Street, Macron was one of the first world leaders he spoke to.

Since Britain left the European Union, the number of people crossing the Channel in small boats to arrive on its shores has risen dramatically, causing a political storm and also raising concerns about the health and safety of those attempting to cross, both on their way and also when they arrive.

The Manston immigration center in Kent, in southern England, has been filled way over capacity, with reports of outbreaks of serious disease, and counterterrorism police say the firebombing of another migrant center, in the port town of Dover, "meets the threshold for a terrorist incident".

Although Sunak did not come away with any firm agreements over the next course of action, he said he would "get a grip of this situation" and hoped to make a major

announcement on progress before Christmas.

Before boarding his flight home, Sunak said the talks had given him "renewed confidence and optimism" over the issue, despite the lack of a clear timetable for what to do next.



Working together with our European partners, we can make a difference, grip this challenge of illegal migration and stop people coming illegally."

Rishi Sunak, Britain's prime minister

"Working together with our European partners, we can make a difference, grip this challenge of illegal migration and stop people coming illegally," he told reporters.

A statement issued by Macron's office backed up the optimistic tone, saying the pair had "agreed to remain in contact to advance coordination between their two countries in the face of the challenge of irregular migration".

In addition to their immigration discussion, Sunak and Macron also pledged to pursue what has been called "ambitious cooperation" in the field of nuclear energy, to deal with the threat posed by reduced fuel supplies caused by the conflict in Ukraine.

The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported that this could result in French state-owned energy company EDF taking joint control of the proposed new Sizewell C plant in Suffolk, in the east of England.



French President Emmanuel Macron (left) shakes hands with British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on Monday. STEFAN ROUSSEAU / REUTERS

International Education Column

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