

WORLD

Greenland firm faces criticism for glacier ice export

By **EARLE GALE** in London
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A company in Greenland has started exporting ancient glacier ice to high-end bars in Dubai, in a venture that has attracted interest from wealthy cocktail drinkers — and criticism from environmentalists, who say it sends wrong signals about sustainability.

Arctic Ice, which harvests frozen water from fjords around the 2-million-square-kilometer autonomous Danish territory, has recently shipped its first 20-metric-ton batch of ancient ice to the United Arab Emirates, The Guardian reported.

The company, which was founded in 2022, was shocked by the wave of negative publicity that greeted the arrival of the 100,000-year-old pure Arctic ice in the sun-drenched monarchy, the paper said. Negative online comments suggested the enterprise should not be exploiting ancient ice flows that are already being devastated by the effects of global warming. Remarks included such things as “Shouldn’t you be worrying about the effects of global warming, rather than selling glacier water?” and “What is this dystopia?”

Malik V Rasmussen, co-founder of Arctic Ice, said people in Greenland, which is an overseas territory member of the European Union, have been using glacial ice in their drinks for generations because of the fact that it is readily available and has been compressed slowly without bubbles over millennia and therefore melts more slowly than quickly frozen ice.

While several entrepreneurs have tried to export glacial ice in the past, Rasmussen said his venture has become the first to do so successfully. And he insists that his enterprise is not damaging to the environment.

“Helping Greenland in its green transition is actually what I believe I was brought into this world to do,” Rasmussen told The Guardian.

“We do have that agenda running through the company, but we may not have communicated it well enough yet.”

He said the ice the company ships is harvested from fjords around Greenland after having broken off glaciers connected to the Greenland ice sheet. He said the ice would have floated off and melted into the ocean eventually if it had not been intercepted. He insisted the refrigerated cargo ships used to export the ice would have traveled to Greenland anyway, carrying supplies, but would have left more or less empty because of the nation’s lack of exports, so the shipping out of ice would not create a large carbon footprint.



Palestinians stand in a queue to fill bottles and jerrycans with water in Rafah on Monday. ABED RAHIM KHATIB / AP

Blinken rallies amid fears of wider conflict

AL ULA, Saudi Arabia / JERUSALEM — Top US diplomat Antony Blinken met Israeli leaders on Tuesday, a day after he met leaders in four key Arab nations and Türkiye, on a mission aimed at preventing the Israel-Hamas conflict from spreading into a regional war.

On his fourth trip to the region since October in a so far largely fruitless quest to tamp down the violence, Blinken said he would share what he had heard in two days of talks with the Arab nations.

Blinken arrived in Tel Aviv late on Monday, saying he would press Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government “on the absolute imperative to do more to protect civilians and to do more to make sure that humanitarian assistance is getting into the hands of those who need it.”

Before arriving in Tel Aviv, he said Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Türkiye would consider participating in and contributing to “day after” scenarios for the Palestinian territory, which

has been devastated by three months of deadly Israeli bombardment.

Arab states have been highly critical of Israel’s actions, arguing that the fighting must end before any discussions can begin.

In the latest sign that the conflict may be spreading, Israel killed a top commander of Hezbollah in south Lebanon on Monday, sources familiar with the group’s operations said.

Earlier in the day, Hezbollah announced the killing of a “commander” for the first time since October, naming him as Wissam Hassan Tawil.

High-ranking commander

A security official in Lebanon, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Tawil “had a leading role in managing Hezbollah’s operations in the south”, and was killed there by an Israeli strike.

The Israeli military said it struck Hezbollah “military sites” in Lebanon on Monday, but did not immediately comment on Tawil’s death.

This was the second high-profile killing in Lebanon this month, follow-

ing a strike on a Hezbollah stronghold in Beirut that resulted in the death of Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Arouri.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant told The Wall Street Journal his country was determined to end Hamas’ rule of Gaza and deter other Iran-backed adversaries.

The Israeli offensive has killed more than 23,000 Palestinians, and destroyed much of Gaza, creating a worsening humanitarian crisis.

The United Nations humanitarian office said the intensifying Israeli offensive in central and southern Gaza has had “devastating consequences”, driving up civilian casualties, severely curtailing aid operations in the central region and risking the closure of three major hospitals.

Almost the entire population of 2.3 million depends on the trucks coming across the border for their survival. One in four Palestinians in Gaza is starving, and the rest face crisis levels of hunger, according to the UN.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Samba prelude

Performers participate in the first technical rehearsal for the carnival parade at the Sambadrome in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Sunday.

CLAUDIA MARTINI / XINHUA



Briefly

ECUADOR
Emergency declared amid prison crisis

Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa decreed on Monday a state of emergency, imposing a curfew for 60 days, due to the “serious internal commotion” in several prisons. The president said the measure is based on the “factual situation” of violence and criminality which is affecting the country. The decree came after reports on Sun-

day of the alleged escape of Jose Adolfo Macias Villamar, alias “Fito”, the country’s main drug trafficker and leader of the organized crime group Los Choneros.

RUSSIA
Moscow vows to halt shelling of Belgorod

Russia on Tuesday said its military would do everything possible to stop the Ukrainian shelling of Belgorod, a

border town where hundreds were evacuated after fatal bombardments. The pledge came as Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu said Russian forces were dictating the course of fighting on the front line, which has barely shifted in about a year despite fierce fighting. Belgorod has suffered an uptick in fatal shelling attacks in recent weeks that prompted city officials to evacuate hundreds.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Iraq seeks to end presence of US military

Government’s decision will push for more stability in region, experts say

By **JAN YUMUL** in Hong Kong
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The Iraqi government’s decision to end the presence of US-led troops on its soil is a push for more stability, say analysts.

It has widely been reported that the Iraqi government has started the process of removing the US-led international military coalition, citing the office of Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani.

Al-Sudani’s statement came on Friday, a day after a US strike killed a militia leader in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, drawing anger among Iran-aligned groups that have demanded the end of foreign forces’ presence in Iraq.

According to a report by the US Department of Defense on Thursday, US forces in Iraq conducted a “self-defense strike”, which “killed Mushtaq Jawad Kazim al-Jawari”, citing him as a leader of the Harakat al-Nujaba “terrorist group”. Further, it said Al-Jawari, also known as Abu Taqwa, “was actively involved in planning and carrying out attacks against American personnel”.

Abu Taqwa, along with another member of Harakat al-Nujaba, were both killed in a strike that took place around noon, on Thursday, in Iraq, said Pentagon Press Secretary Major General Pat Ryder during a briefing on Thursday.

A statement released by the Iraqi prime minister’s media office’s verified Facebook page on Thursday called the strike a “blatant aggression and violation of Iraq’s sovereignty and security”, as a drone “carried out an act no different from terrorist activities” by targeting one of the security headquarters in the Iraqi capital Baghdad, which resulted in casualties “and is unequivocally condemned”.

“The Iraqi Armed Forces hold the Global Coalition Forces responsible for this unwarranted attack on an Iraqi security entity that is operating within the powers authorized by the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. This action undermines the previously established understandings between the Iraqi Armed Forces and the Global Coalition Forces,”

Yehia Rasool, spokesperson for the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces, said in the statement. “We view this action as a dangerous escalation and assault on Iraq, diverging from the spirit and the text of the mandate and the mission for which the Global Coalition was established in Iraq,” he added.

Mhd Nor Shakr, an international relations scholar at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim Univer-

sitesi, noted that the main goal of the presence of the forces, estimated at 2,500, was to fight the Islamic State, which appeared in 2014.

“After the defeat of the IS, the American presence became a burden on Iraq, and on the government,” Shakr told China Daily.

The US Department of Defense noted that currently it has a military presence in Iraq as part of Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve, or known as the CJTF-OIR mission, which was “to advise, assist and enable partnered forces in the defeat of ISIS within designated areas of Iraq and Syria”.

Violation of sovereignty

Following the assassination of a second-line leader in the Al-Nujaba militia, one of the armed factions under the umbrella of the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq, the assassination was carried out by US forces with a drone. Accordingly, the Iraqi government asked Washington to withdraw its forces as Iraq considered the killing a violation of the country’s sovereignty, Shakr said.

Bilgay Duman, Iraq Studies coordinator at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies in Türkiye, told China Daily that al-Sudani seems to be strategically positioning himself to manage immediate challenges, lessen the pressure, and “buy time”. This, he said, is particularly relevant in the context of the ongoing debates about the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq, a topic that is “not new”.

Duman said even under al-Sudani’s predecessor, Mustafa al-Kadhimi, the same issues were at the forefront during the “Strategic Dialogue” meetings with the US since July 2021 and they established the US-Iraq Higher Coordinating Committee in February 2023.

“These meetings may pick up pace soon, but a quick withdrawal of US troops seems unlikely,” said Duman.

Moreover, he said, al-Sudani’s government, which has been in power for a year, “has brought a certain degree of stability, something relatively new compared to previous periods”.

At the same time, Duman adds, Iraq is trying to position itself as a “balancing force” in the Middle East. Yet, ongoing regional conflicts “are making this difficult, often spilling over into Iraqi territory”, creating challenges for al-Sudani’s administration, he said.

International Education Column

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