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Vietnam appoints new acting foreign minister

Hanoi: Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh on Saturday presided over a ceremony in the capital Hanoi to officially appoint Le Hoai Trung as acting minister of foreign affairs, according to the Vietnam News Agency. Trung was transferred from his post as chief of the Party Central Committee's Office to assume responsibilities at the foreign ministry, the report added.

Rainstorm, flash floods kill 5

Kabul: Heavy rains and flash floods have claimed five lives and injured eight others in the eastern Afghanistan Nangarhar province, reported the state-run Bakhtar news agency on Saturday. Citing Mawalwi Sediqullah Qureshi, the provincial director for Information and Culture, the state-owned news agency added that the rainstorms, which triggered flooding in Rodat, Haska Mina and Chaparhar districts on Friday, have killed five people and injured eight others. Thousands of acres of farmland, as well as parts of roads and several water canals, have also been destroyed due to flooding, the official news agency added, quoting the official.

1 killed, 2 injured after truck crashes into house

Manila: A woman was killed and two others were injured after a dump truck carrying sand crashed into a roadside house in Laguna province, southeast of Manila, local authorities said Saturday. The municipal disaster risk reduction and management office said the crash occurred on a descending part of the road in Mabitac town on Friday, killing the woman at the scene. The injured, also members of the household, were rushed to a local hospital for treatment. Surveillance footage of the accident, posted on social media, showed the driver was jumping off the truck moments before the crash.

Portugal: Teen admits to starting several wildfires

Lisbon, Portugal: A 14-year-old boy admitted deliberately starting several wildfires in Portugal by riding to forest areas on a scooter and using matches to start a blaze in an interview with police, EuroNews reported. Officers believe he may have been responsible for blazes in Seixões, Ardeção and Arnozela. "The minor may have acted out of anger and frustration, given his poor school performance and the obvious precariousness of his social relationships," the national criminal police, the Policia Judiciaria, said in a statement, adding that they hadn't ruled out the boy acting as part of a group, as per EuroNews.

Earthquake of magnitude 5.2 occurs near northern Kuril Islands

Kuril Islands: An earthquake of magnitude 5.2 occurred in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of the northern Kuril Islands. This was announced on August 30 by Elena Semenova, head of the Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk seismic station. "An earthquake of magnitude 5.2 occurred in the Pacific Ocean ... on August 30. The epicentre was located 94 kilometres east of the city of Severo-Kurilsk on Paramushir Island," she told RIA Novosti. According to her, the source of the seismic event, recorded at 09:58 (01:58 Moscow time), lay at a depth of 25 km, and residents of Severo-Kurilsk could feel its tremors. Semenova clarified that the tsunami threat had not been announced.

Three dead as Indonesian protesters set fire to regional parliament building

Makassar, Indonesia: Three people died and five were injured in Indonesia after protesters set fire to a regional parliament building, authorities said on Saturday, as demonstrations pose the first major test to President Prabowo Subianto's government. The Southeast Asian nation's disaster management agency, in a statement, did not give the causes of the deaths in the Friday evening fire in Makassar, the capital of South Sulawesi province.

PM Modi gifts Ramen Bowl, Pashmina Shawl to Japanese counterpart and his wife

Tokyo (UNI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented thoughtful gifts to Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and his spouse, Yoshiko Ishiba, highlighting India's rich cultural heritage.

PM Shigeru Ishiba received an exquisite set of Ramen Bowls with silver Chopsticks, a unique fusion of Indian artistry and Japanese culinary traditions. The vintage set includes a large moonstone bowl from Andhra Pradesh, accompanied by four smaller bowls and a pair of silver chopsticks.

Drawing inspiration from Japan's donburi and soba rituals, this piece is a celebration of both countries' craftsmanship.

The moonstone symbolizes love, balance, and protection. The base of the main bowl is crafted from Makrana marble, inlaid with semi-precious stones in the intricate



'parchin kari' style of Rajasthan, a testament to India's time-honored traditions.

PM Modi also gifted a luxurious Pashmina shawl to Yoshiko Ishiba, a symbol of the timeless craftsman-

ship of Kashmir. Made from the fine wool of the Changthangi goat, native to Ladakh, this shawl is prized for its remarkable softness, warmth, and lightness.

Handwoven by Kashmiri artisans,

Sri Lanka pledges incentives to boost exports, value-added products

Colombo (UNI)

Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake has stated that incentives will be introduced to encourage export diversification and the development of value-added products, the President's Media Division said Saturday.

The president said the government should support industries rather than hinder them, and stressed the importance of consulting with relevant sectors during the regulation drafting process while allowing sufficient time for implementation.

Dissanayake made these remarks on Friday at the Presidential Secretariat during the 2026 pre-budget discussion with private sector repre-



sentatives from the agriculture, food and beverage sectors, according to the department.

The meeting focused on providing facilities for farmers, exports, tax concessions, recycling, and the legal

framework affecting the sector.

Extensive discussion was also held on ensuring a continuous supply of quality agricultural and food products to consumers, as well as the challenges faced by businesses, with participants sharing their views and proposals.

The president pointed to the lack of a systematic approach for distributing products to consumers, emphasizing the need for stronger cooperation between the government and the private sector to address these challenges.

Dissanayake further explained that the government is focusing on securing full private sector support to expand markets for agricultural produce, dairy, and livestock.

Iran says eight arrested for suspected links to Israel's Mossad spy agency

Tehran: Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Saturday they had arrested eight people suspected of trying to transmit the coordinates of sensitive sites and details about senior military figures to Israel's Mossad, Iranian state media reported.

They are accused of having provided the information to the Mossad spy agency during Israel's air war on Iran in June, when it attacked Iranian nuclear facilities and killed top military commanders as well as civilians in the worst blow to the Islamic Republic since the 1980s war with Iraq.

Iran retaliated with barrages of missiles on Israeli military sites, infrastructure and cities.

The United States entered the war on June 22 with strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities.

Ukraine rejects EU proposal for creating buffer zone between Ukraine-Russia troops

Brussels/Kyiv (UNI)

In the hopes of a possible resolution, European leaders have been floating around the proposal to establish a 40 km buffer zone between Russian and Ukrainian forces as part of a potential peace deal, though Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has rejected the idea, deeming it unrealistic, not in synch with realities of modern warfare, and tantamount to ceding territory which Kyiv has time and again refused to agree to.

"Only those who do not understand the technological state of today's war propose a buffer zone," he told reporters on Friday, stressing that drones already create a "dead zone" of some 10km where heavy artillery cannot operate.

He warned that any arrangement



forcing Ukraine to withdraw would amount to territorial concessions "If Russia wants greater distance, they can retreat deeper into the tem-

porarily occupied territories," reports BBC.

Five European diplomats told reporters that the plan — one of several under discussion for either a ceasefire or postwar settlement — would require a significant international peacekeeping force to patrol the strip of land.

As per the proposal, estimates of the peace forces would range from 4,000 to 60,000 troops, with French and British units to form the backbone of any deployment, though it was also questioned whether Moscow would agree to the deployment of NATO troops near Russia.

The buffer zone proposal comes amid mounting pressure on Western leaders to find a path to end the war, now entering its fourth year.

Putin advocates reforms in UN, IMF to reflect modern realities

Moscow/Beijing: Russian President Vladimir Putin, ahead of the upcoming SCO summit in the Chinese city of Tianjin, lauded Moscow-Beijing ties across all sectors including finance, culture, education, sports, politics, while reiterating both nations' continued advocacy for reforms in the UN, and other global entities such as the World Bank and IMF to better reflect modern political realities and ensure broader representation for the developing world.

"Russia and China support reform of the UN so that it fully restores its authority and reflects modern realities. In particular, we advocate for making the Security Council more democratic by including states from Asia, Africa, and Latin America," Putin said in a handwritten interview to the Chinese media agency Xinhua, one day ahead of his visit to the county, reports state media TASS.

Italy's PM Meloni 'disgusted'

Rome (UNI)

Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni has voiced outrage over a porn site that allegedly featured doctored images of herself and other high-profile women, alongside sexist and offensive captions and commentary.

The forum, known as Phica — a name based on a slang term "figa" for the word "vagina" in Italian — was shut down by its own managers on Thursday, following a widespread backlash.

The site, which had hundreds of thousands of subscribers at the time of its closure, blamed users for breaking its rules, reports CNN.

Subscribers of the adult forum allegedly harvested images of women from social media websites or public sources, before doctoring them and posting them along with misogynistic descriptions.

Apart from Georgia Meloni, the site also allegedly featured images of her sister Arianna, who is a prominent politician within the Brothers of

Ursula Von Der Leyer calls Putin 'predator', urges greater militarisation of EU

Brussels: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has intensified her criticism of Russia, calling President Vladimir Putin a "predator" as she urged for greater militarisation of the bloc.

Speaking in Riga alongside Latvian Prime Minister Evika Silina at the start of a tour of what she called the EU's "frontline states," von der Leyen warned that Europe's security hinges on protecting its eastern borders.

Her trip includes visits to Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania, countries bordering Russia or Belarus, reports The Guardian.

"The risks your country and the other Baltic States warned us about have unfortunately materialised. Russia's brutal war against Ukraine is now in its fourth year. Putin is a predator. His proxies have long targeted our societies with hybrid attacks, cyber operations, and the weaponisation of migrants," she said.

Thailand's cabinet appoints Deputy PM as acting PM

Bangkok (UNI)

Thailand's cabinet on Saturday appointed Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai to serve as acting prime minister, following a constitutional court ruling that terminated Paetongtarn Shinawatra's premiership.

Minister to the Prime Minister's Office Chusak Sirinil announced the appointment following a special cabinet meeting, which also appointed Prommin Lertsuridej as PM's Secretary General.

Chusak said that the cabinet approved a strict framework for its operations during this transitional pe-



riod to ensure stability without exceeding its mandate.

The move was a constitutional requirement following the court's ruling, that the existing cabinet continue to govern in a caretaker capacity until a new administration takes office.

The Secretariat of the House of Representatives has issued a notice to members of the parliament to convene from Sept. 3 to 5.

The lower house of the parliament is set to vote for the new prime minister based on the list of candidates submitted before the May 2023 general election.

Israeli army says killed Gaza's most senior IS figure

Jerusalem: The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) said in a statement on Friday that it had killed a senior member of the Islamic State (IS) group in the Gaza Strip over the past week.

The IDF identified the man as Muhammad Abd al-Aziz Abu Zubaida, who served as head of the Palestine District of the IS in the Gaza Strip — the most senior position within the group in the territory.

According to the IDF statement, Abu Zubaida was targeted in an airstrike carried out under intelligence guidance.

He was allegedly responsible for setting policy, planning operations, and overseeing IS activities in the West Bank, Gaza, and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.

UK blocks Israeli govt from major London arms expo



London (UNI)

The British government has barred Israeli officials from attending a major arms fair in London next month, citing Israel's escalation of its military campaign in Gaza.

"The Israeli Government's decision to further escalate its military operation in Gaza is wrong. As a result, we can confirm that no Israeli delegation will be invited to attend

DSEI UK 2025," a government spokesperson told CNN.

Israel has previously commanded a large presence at the Defence and Security Equipment International exhibition, which brings together governments, militaries and the arms industry for a four-day conference in the UK capital every other year.

Israel's defense ministry slammed the British government's decision.

"These restrictions amount to a deliberate and regrettable act of discrimination against Israel's representatives," a spokesperson said, confirming that Israel will withdraw from the exhibition.

The spokesperson said the decision "plays into the hands of extremists" and "introduces political considerations wholly inappropriate for a professional defense industry exhibition."

Israel declares Gaza City 'dangerous combat zone'

Jerusalem (UNI)

Israel's military declared Gaza City a "dangerous combat zone" ahead of a major assault, as it recovered the body of one hostage and the remains of another in Gaza on Friday.

Israel said there will no longer be "tactical pauses" of military activity in Gaza City, reports CNN.

The pauses began a month ago as international outrage grew over the worsening humanitarian crisis and starvation in the battered enclave. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said at the time that the 10-hour pauses were for "humanitarian purposes."

But when the Israeli security cabinet approved the takeover and occupation of Gaza City earlier this month, they made clear there would

As it recovers remains of 2 hostages



be no aid distribution sites within the city itself, forcing people to leave in search of food.

Israel has already begun pounding the outskirts of Gaza City, strik-

ing neighborhoods on the edge of the densely packed area ahead of an assault on the center of the city. The attacks on adjacent neighborhoods have forced Palestinians to flee deeper inside Gaza City, according to Dr. Munir al-Bursh, the Director-General of the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

Further north, the Hamad Hospital said on Friday that it received 11 bodies of people who "were shot by the Israeli occupation army in the northern Gaza Strip" as they waited for aid. Another 100 people were injured in the gunfire, the hospital said.

"The Israeli occupation continues to target residential blocks through

airstrikes, quadcopter attacks, and the detonation of explosive robots in neighborhoods," said Faris Afaneh, the director of ambulance and emergency services in northern Gaza.

The attacks have killed and injured Palestinians, and forced people to evacuate in "this massive and unprecedented campaign", Afaneh said. There had been multiple Israeli strikes in the neighborhoods around Gaza City, he added.

On Thursday, Israeli drones dropped leaflets over several areas in and around Gaza City, warning residents of Gaza City and Jabalya area to evacuate immediately south from Wadi Gaza for their safety, as the Israeli army was expanding its operations towards the West.

Global cholera situation continues to deteriorate: WHO

Geneva: The World Health Organisation (WHO) said that the global cholera situation continues to deteriorate, driven by conflict and poverty, posing a significant public health challenge across multiple WHO regions.

In a report, WHO noted that between 1st January and 17th August 2025, a total of 409,222 cholera/Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) cases and 4,738 deaths were reported globally, from 31 countries, with six of the 31 countries reporting case fatality rates above 1 per cent, indicating serious gaps in case management and delayed access to care.