



WINDHOEK (AFP) – Namibia's President Hage Geingob died early Sunday in a hospital in Windhoek, his office said. He was 82. Geingob, who was serving his second term as president and was his country's first prime minister after independence, revealed last month that he was being treated for cancer. Most recently, he took a stand by supporting South Africa's complaint against the Zionist regime under the Genocide Convention and by condemning Namibia's former colonial ruler Germany for rejecting the case. "It is with utmost sadness and regret that I inform you that our beloved Dr. Hage G. Geingob, the President of the Republic of Namibia, has passed on today," read a statement signed by acting president Nangolo Mbumba. "At his side, was his dear wife Madama Monica Geingob and his children." A biopsy following a routine medical check-up in January had revealed "cancerous cells", Geingob's office said at the time. President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa said: "Today, South Africa joins the people of our sister state Namibia in mourning the passing of a leader, patriot and friend of South Africa. "President Geingob was a towering veteran of Namibia's liberation from colonialism and apartheid. He was also greatly influential in the solidarity that the people of Namibia extended to the people of South Africa so that we could be free today."

JAKARTA (Xinhua) – A family of three was killed and 13 others injured in the landslide-blocked highway in Tapanuli, North Sumatra, the National Disaster Management Agency reported on Sunday. Xinhua reported citing the Indonesian National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari that the cliff on the side of the road suddenly fell, hitting multiple vehicles in the middle of a traffic jam on the Tarutung-Sibolga national road on Saturday at 5 p.m. local time. "Those who died were a husband, wife, and a toddler in a car," Muhari said. Seven people were slightly injured and six others were seriously injured. All were taken to nearby medical facilities. The landslide also damaged a house, five minibuses, a logistics truck, and a few motorcycles.

MANILA (Reuters) – The Philippine government is ready to use "authority and forces" against attempts to divide the nation, a security official said Sunday, after former President Rodrigo Duterte threatened to separate some southern islands from the rest of the archipelago. Duterte has called for the independence of his hometown Mindanao from the Philippines as his alliance with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr disintegrated this week over disagreements around efforts to amend the constitution. Marcos said amending the 1987 constitution was meant to ease foreign investments, but Duterte accused him of using constitutional change to stay in power. National security adviser Eduardo Ano said in a statement any attempt to secede "will be met by the government with resolute force", citing "recent calls to separate Mindanao" but without specifically naming Duterte. "The national government will not hesitate to use its authority and forces to quell and stop any and all attempts to dismember the Republic," Ano said.

ROME (AFP) – Convoy of tractors descended on Rome as farmers' protests caused disruptions across Europe. Farmers have expressed anger at what they say are excessively restrictive regulations on agriculture and unfair competition, among other grievances. The movement erupted in France last month and there have also been protests in Germany, Belgium, Poland, Romania, Greece and the Netherlands. Farmers have blocked motorways and disrupted traffic in key cities with convoys of tractors. In Italy, around 150 tractors massed in Orte, about an hour north of Rome. Protesters there called for better pay and conditions and announced their imminent arrival in the Italian capital, an AFP reporter saw. "Italian agriculture has woken up," said protester Felice Antonio Monfeli, adding, "It's historic and the people here are proving it. For the first time in their history, farmers are united under the same flag, that of Italy." The demonstrators have for days been calling for talks with Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's government, without having had a response so far.

LONDON (The Independent) – Ministers have been warned that more families risk falling into poverty if a "lifeline" hardship fund used to help struggling households buy food and heat their homes is not extended. The Local Government Association (LGA) said the UK Government's cost-of-living and COVID-19 support provision, the Household Support Fund, is due to end on March 31. In the past 12 months, the organization said it has provided £820 million in funding for millions of households in England facing financial difficulties. The LGA said ministers had not yet confirmed whether the fund will be extended into 2024/25, leaving town halls "in limbo" over the implications for their budgets. According to a survey undertaken by the LGA, more than eight out of 10 local authorities that responded said financial hardship had increased in their areas over the same period. Almost a fifth of councils said they would have to make redundancies if the Household Support Fund were to end. Two-thirds said there was no additional discretionary funding to replace what would be lost if the fund is not renewed before April.

SOUTH CAROLINA (AP) – United States President Joe Biden won South Carolina's Democratic primary, promising afterwards that he would make Republican rival Donald Trump a loser for a second time in November's election. Biden defeated the other long-shot Democrats on South Carolina's ballot, including Minnesota Congressman Dean Phillips and self-help author Marianne Williamson, notching an overwhelming victory in the state that vaulted him to the White House in 2020. Kicking off his march to the party's nomination, Biden secured a 96.4 percent of the votes in the first Democratic primary of the 2024 presidential race, U.S. media reports said.

Russia: 28 People Killed by Ukrainian Shelling of Lysychansk



Russian rescuers clear rubble of the destroyed bakery hit by alleged Ukrainian shelling in the city of Lysychansk.

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia said on Sunday that Ukraine killed at least 28 people, including nine women and a child, when its armed forces struck a bakery and restaurant in Russian-controlled eastern Ukraine with Western-supplied rockets.

Russian-backed officials said that Ukraine struck the bakery in the city of Lysychansk at about 1230 GMT on Saturday with U.S.-supplied High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS).

Emergency workers worked through the night searching for survivors in the rubble of what remained of the shattered Adriatic Restaurant on Moskovska Street, where Russian officials said a bakery had been set up for civilians.

"The armed forces of Ukraine opened fire on a bakery in Lysychansk," said Leonid Pasechnik, the head of the Luhansk region which is now controlled by Russian forces.

Pasechnik said the bakery was crowded with civilians when it was struck. Russia's emergency ministry said 10 people had been pulled from the rubble alive.

But the ministry said four more people were in an "extremely grave condition" and that it was still searching for people.

Ukraine has not yet commented on the attack. Reuters was un-

able to immediately verify what weapons had been used in the attack.

Russia took control of swathes of eastern Ukraine after President Vladimir Putin ordered an invasion in February 2022, triggering the biggest land war in Europe since World War Two.

Russia now controls around 18% of its neighbor - and considers the land it holds part of Russia.

Russia's foreign ministry condemned the Ukrainian attack, saying the West should think about why its financial support to Kyiv was being used to kill civilians.

"According to preliminary data, the strike was carried out using Western weapons," Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

"EU citizens should know how their taxes are used - they are used to buy deadly weapons systems and send them to the Kyiv regime which uses them to kill civilians."

From the design and color of the wrecked building and a sign matching file imagery of the area, Reuters was able to confirm the location of a video the Russian emergencies ministry shared. It matches a location on Google Maps identified as the Adriatic Restaurant on Moskovska Street, Lysychansk.

South Korea, Russia Hold Tense Security Talks to Remove Tensions

SEOUL (Anadolu) – Russia and South Korea said on Sunday that they discussed regional security and other "pending issues" amid a chasm of differences between the two countries and escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

In a visit to Seoul, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko held talks with his South Korean counterpart Chung Byung-won and "addressed the Ukrainian war and bilateral ties," Yonhap News reported, citing a statement by South Korea's Foreign Ministry. Chung expressed Seoul's "stern stance" on Russia's "growing military cooperation with North Korea" and called for Moscow's "responsible behavior," according to the South Korean news agency.

He also urged Moscow's cooperation to "prevent any infringement on the legitimate rights" of South Korean firms and citizens in Russia.

During his visit, Rudenko also held talks with South Korea's top nuclear envoy, Kim Gunn, as well as Kim Hong-kyun, the country's special envoy for peace and security affairs on the Korean Peninsula.

Kim called on Moscow to "strictly comply with its obli-

gations to UN Security Council resolutions, including the immediate cessation of its military ties with Pyongyang that threatens the security of the Korean Peninsula and Europe."

In a separate statement, the Russian Foreign Ministry said Moscow intends continue developing cooperation with North Korea "in the interests of both countries and their peoples, as well as strengthening peace and stability in the region."

It said that in Seoul, Rudenko exchanged views with officials about the situation on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeastern Asia, as well as on bilateral relations, expressing Moscow's "serious concerns regarding the sharp escalation of tensions in the subregion."

"It was clearly stated that its main source is the irresponsible provocative policy of Washington, which, for its own geopolitical purposes, is trying to encourage regional allies to implement their aggressive plans, fraught with unpredictable consequences, including in the military sphere," it added.

The statement also said that to help calm the situation, the U.S. and its allies should cease military activity and return to jointly searching for a political and diplomatic solution.

Tens of Thousands Protest in Germany Against Far Right



Demonstrators protest against the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party outside the Reichstag building in Berlin, Germany on February 3, 2024, during a rally under the motto 'We are the firewall' called for by international non-profit organisation 'Hand in Hand' to protest against right-wing politics.

BERLIN (AFP) – Tens of thousands of people attended rallies across Germany against the far-right AfD party, the latest wave of such protests over the past three weeks.

Nearly 150,000 people turned out in Berlin according to police, some forming a human chain in front of parliament. Organizers put the figure at 300,000.

Similar protests took place in around 200 other cities.

The wave of mobilization against Alternative for Germany (AfD) was sparked by a January 10 report by investigative outlet Correctiv revealing that AfD members had discussed the expulsion of immigrants and "non-as-

simulated citizens" at a meeting with extremists.

The report sent shock waves across Germany at a time when the AfD is soaring in opinion polls, months ahead of three major regional elections in eastern Germany where their support is strongest.

"All together against racism," the crowd in Berlin shouted. Some held posters that said "Heart instead of hate" or "Racism is not an alternative."

Many people hoping to attend the Berlin rally found the site already packed, and were directed to a nearby park or the riverbanks along the Spree River, AFP journalists saw.

"I don't know if these demonstra-

tions will influence AfD voters," Margret Hurth, a 53-year-old childcare worker, told AFP.

"But it's important to send a signal, because we need more humanity and respect for our differences."

"I came to set an example," said Martin Raue, a university professor who had come from Sweden to attend the rally. "I was born in Germany."

The Berlin rally was organized by the "Hand in Hand" collective, which is made up of 1,800 organizations, including the Fridays for Future climate group.

Around 700 police were deployed for the rally, which ended without incident late in the afternoon.

A similar human chain was also formed around the state assembly building in Potsdam, just southeast of Berlin.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz hailed the demonstrations in a post early Saturday on X, formerly Twitter.

"In small and large cities across the country, numerous citizens are gathering to demonstrate again this weekend against forgetting, against hate and inciting hate. A strong sign for our democracy and our constitution," he wrote.

Markus Soeder, the powerful leader of the conservative CSU party in the opposition, denounced the AfD as "a deeply far-right party" in comments to the Rheinische Post newspaper.

"I'm literally shocked each time I hear their hateful speeches," he added.

Living Hell in Chile as Wildfires Claim Dozens of Lives, Spread to Urban Areas

SANTAIGO (AFP/Reuters) – Firefighters and civilians continue battling the wildfires that are raging Central Chile as death toll hit 51, according to president Boric.

"This was hell. Explosions, cars..." says 61-year-old driver Rodrigo Pulgar who managed to put out fires that began to rush over his house, in El Olivar, Valparaiso region.

43,000 hectares and thousands of houses have been affected in different cities in the region.

Black smoke billowed into the sky over many parts of the Valparaiso region, home to nearly one million inhabitants in central Chile, while firefighters using helicopters and trucks struggled to quell the fires.

Areas around the coastal tourist city of Vina del Mar have been some of the hardest hit and rescue teams were struggling to reach all the affected areas, Chilean authorities said.

The death toll rose when five bodies were found on public roads, and information indicates "we are going to reach much higher figures" in coming hours, said Interior Minister Carolina Toha.

"The condition of Valparaiso is the most delicate," Toha said, saying the country was facing its worst di-



Aerial view of the forest fire that affects the hills of the city of Vina del Mar in the Las Pataguas sector, Chile

saster since a 2010 earthquake that killed about 500.

President Gabriel Boric told the nation in a televised address, "The situation is really very difficult."

Wildfires are not uncommon in Chile over summer months. Last year, on the back of a record heat wave, some 27 people died and more than 400,000 hectares (990,000 acres) were affected.

"The area with fires today is much smaller than last year, (but) at this

time the number of hectares affected is multiplying very rapidly," Toha said.

Between Friday and Saturday the area affected by the wildfires increased to 43,000 hectares (110,000 acres) from 30,000.

Toha said the authorities' greatest concern was that some of the active fires were developing very close to urban areas "with the very high potential to affect people, homes and facilities."

Experts: U.S. Homeless Population Much Higher Than Official Data

WASHINGTON (ABC News) – Thousands of volunteers across the U.S. spent a night in January canvassing their communities to look for people who may be experiencing homelessness, as part of the government's annual Point-in-Time count.

The count is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and its results can be used alongside other factors to determine funding. But those estimates have often not been accurate, some experts told ABC News.

"We only have one day to get a snapshot of the homeless population," said Hannah Anderson with the YWCA, a Point-in-Time count organizer in Snohomish County, Washington, adding, "You can't be accurate when you're counting people for one day."

An ABC News analysis found that methods and resources vary from community to community, producing an inconsistent, piecemeal account that even HUD acknowledges underestimates the number of unhoused people.

"The picture that HUD is getting, and that Congress is getting, and that the public is getting, isn't as clear as it could be and should be," said Eric Tars of the National Homelessness Law Center.

HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge told ABC News in an in-

terview that the count is just a sampling of the country's homelessness crisis.

"It's not an exact science," she said, noting that if methodologies change from year to year, it could cause problems.

"There's no other way at this point for us to count all of the homeless people, so we just do a sample," she added.

Still, Fudge said HUD is considering ways to improve the process, noting that the agency does "believe that there are some better ways to do it."

On Monday, Fudge announced HUD's largest funding award of its kind: \$3.1 billion to homeless services providers across the country that will fund more than 7,000 projects. The recipients entered HUD's funding competition last year with extensive applications that included their Point-in-Time count results, among other metrics.

Homelessness experts and institutions have been raising concerns about the Point-in-Time count for years.

Still, guidance surrounding the count has remained largely the same since it was first implemented in the mid-2000s. At least every other year, each community receiving HUD funding must conduct a Point-in-Time count in January, a time when people may crowd into homes with friends or family as much as possible to escape the cold.