

China Urges Europe to Stop Backing 'Illegal' South China Sea Ruling



A Chinese coast guard ship approaches to the disputed South China Sea on March 23, 2024.

BEIJING (Reuters) - China's foreign ministry on Tuesday urged the European side to stop endorsing the illegal "South China Sea Arbitration Award" on Tuesday, as the head of the Department of European Affairs of the Foreign Ministry has summoned and lodged strong protests, respectively, with the heads of the diplomatic missions of the countries concerned and the EU delegation to China.

Foreign Ministry spokes-

man Lin Jian made the remarks following a joint statement issued on Sunday on the "award" by countries including some European nations, the United States, and the Philippines. The European Union also released a separate statement.

Europe is not a party in the South China Sea and is in no position to make irresponsible remarks on China's legitimate territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests

in the South China Sea, Lin said.

China expressed dissatisfaction and firm opposition over the statements, Lin said.

The "arbitration" is nothing but a stunt pulled by the U.S. and a handful of Western countries for the political purpose of containing China, he said.

China neither accepts nor recognizes the "award", he said, adding that Beijing also opposes and will never accept any claim or action arising from it.

Certain European countries blatantly applied double standards on issues relating to international law, which will only further erode their own credibility on the international stage and is not conducive to enhancing mutual trust between China and the Europe, Lin said.

He urged the European side to act prudently to avoid harming relations and cooperation with China.

Mexico Files Criminal Complaints in U.S. Over Migrant Deaths in Custody



Mexico moved to file criminal complaints in U.S. courts over migrant deaths in immigration custody.

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexico has begun filing criminal complaints with state prosecutors in the United States over the deaths of its citizens in U.S. immigration custody and during enforcement operations, the foreign ministry said on Tuesday.

Mexico's government has

also sent cease-and-desist letters to U.S. detention centers where Mexican nationals have died, the ministry added in a statement.

The filings follow the deaths of at least 14 Mexican nationals in ICE custody and several others during arrest operations, includ-

ing the recent fatal shooting of a Mexican citizen by an ICE agent in Houston.

President Claudia Sheinbaum announced Mexico's intention to escalate its response to the deaths last Friday, as she claimed that the government "cannot turn a blind eye to the Mexicans who have died."

In addition to the measures in the U.S., Mexico's foreign minister also contacted the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding the deaths of Mexican nationals in ICE custody.

Mexico expects the UN office to gather information from U.S. authorities, analyze the events and "refer the case to the relevant special procedures of the Human Rights Council," the statement added.

Record El Niño Threatens to Unleash Floods Across East Africa, Asia

NEW YORK (AP) - A rapidly intensifying El Niño weather pattern is threatening to bring severe flooding, disease and drought to some of the world's most vulnerable communities across East Africa and Asia, a humanitarian organization has warned.

On Monday, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) said Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan were among the countries most at risk, some of which have already been struggling with ongoing humanitarian emergencies.

"We're watching several emergencies converge at once, and the

places least equipped to absorb another shock are the ones in the crosshairs," Bob Kitchen, a senior official for emergencies at the IRC, said.

The U.S. Climate Prediction Center said on July 9 that El Niño is strengthening rapidly, with an 81 percent chance of becoming one of the most powerful events since 1950, likely peaking between October and December.

The UN's weather agency, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), said in early July that El Niño conditions had already developed and were forecast to strengthen rapidly between July and September.

Climate scientist Daniel Swain said on his YouTube channel that ocean temperatures in the equatorial Pacific are already at record levels for this point in the year, calling it "an enormous story of huge consequence for the world".

Communities in El Niño's path are already exhausted by drought, conflict and shrinking aid budgets, leaving little capacity to absorb another shock.

El Niño is a natural shift in Pacific Ocean temperatures that recurs every two to seven years, as the trade winds that normally push warm water westward weaken and the heat spreads back across the ocean.

EU Fails to Pass 21st Russia Sanctions Package



BRUSSELS (Bloomberg) - The European Union has not reached agreement on a 21st sanctions package against Russia, leaving uncertain the future of measures designed to limit Moscow's oil revenue.

The main disagreements centered on restrictions for transporting Russian liquefied natural gas and measures related to Austria's Raiffeisen Bank International AG.

On Monday, EU members also could not agree on freezing the bloc's floating price cap on Russian oil, a key part of the proposed package. Without action by Wednesday's deadline, the cap will likely rise significantly above the current \$44.10 level due to high global fuel prices.

EU ambassadors can revisit the issue at a meeting on Wednesday.

"We really need to take this short-term pain for long-term gain," EU Foreign Policy Chief Kaja Kallas said after meeting.

Foreign ministers had aimed to finalize the sanctions on Monday but could not resolve their differences during weekend negotiations.

Ministers did agree separately to

add 250 new listings targeting banks, crypto operators and tankers allegedly helping Russia bypass existing sanctions. These listings are part of updates made on a rolling basis outside of the main sanctions packages.

Kallas said the 21st package was "quite close" but could not guarantee a decision on the oil price cap by Wednesday.

The EU adopted the floating oil price cap last year to keep the ceiling 15% below the average market rate for Russian Urals crude. The cap resets every six months. European firms cannot provide services like insurance and transportation for oil sold above this threshold.

The system functioned until U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran tightened the oil market and pushed prices higher.

Some countries with large maritime sectors raised concerns about proposed changes to rules for shipping Russian LNG to non-EU countries.

The package also includes a disputed proposal to restrict Russian combatants from entering the EU. Kallas said work would continue on that measure.

Warren Buffett Cuts Off Donations to Gates Foundation Following Epstein Revelations



Billionaire investor Warren Buffett has revealed he is no longer in contact with Bill Gates following renewed scrutiny tied to the case of Jeffrey Epstein.

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Warren Buffett has stopped donating to the Gates Foundation, ending a two-decade philanthropic partnership following revelations about interactions between Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Bill Gates and the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Buffett said on Tuesday he is donating about \$6 billion of Berkshire Hathaway stock, comprising 12 million Class B shares, in his annual mid-year donation to four family foundations overseen by his daughter Susie and sons Howard and Peter.

The 95-year-old Berkshire chairman's announcement did not mention the Gates Foundation, which has received more than \$47 billion of the conglomerate's stock since Buffett said in a 2006 letter he was "irrevocably committing" to donate shares throughout his life.

Gates, 70, has seen his reputation tarnished following the U.S. Department of Justice's release of files about Epstein in February. He has not been accused of any crimes.

He and Buffett had been longtime friends, but Buffett told CNBC in March that he and Gates had not spoken since the release of the Epstein files.

Buffett's donation was more than \$4.5 billion last year. The family foun-

dations received about \$2.8 billion of Berkshire shares in 2025, and more than \$17 billion since 2006.

"Of course, mortality is unpredictable, but my remaining shares will be donated to the four foundations one way or the other by December 31, 2034," Buffett said in a statement.

The Gates Foundation did not respond to requests for comment. Berkshire did not respond to requests for additional comment.

In his 2006 letter, Buffett directed the Gates Foundation to spend his donations, and said it could rely on his pledge to "immediately and permanently expand its activities."

The Justice Department's files included photos of Gates posing with the financier, and with women whose faces were redacted. Emails showed communications between Epstein and the foundation's staff.

Epstein died in a New York City jail in August 2019, one month after being arrested on sex trafficking charges, in what was ruled a suicide.

Last month, Gates told Congress he was introduced to Epstein in 2011, three years after Epstein pleaded guilty in Florida to soliciting a minor for prostitution, and four years after Epstein reached a controversial non-prosecution agreement with federal prosecutors.

News in Brief

BIDDEFORD, Maine (AP) - A federal immigration agent has fatally shot a motorist in Maine, the second time in a week that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers have used deadly force. Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, said Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin told him the agent opened fire after the man tried to use his vehicle as a weapon against agents who were pursuing him for deportation in Biddeford, a coastal city of about 23,000 people roughly 15 miles (24 kilometers) southwest of Portland.

PARIS (AP) - French police have detained 59 people across the country in connection with wildfires, including two suspects linked to the blaze in the Fontainebleau forest in Seine-et-Marne department, southeast of Paris, French Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said on Monday. Speaking on French TV channel France 2, Nunez said the two suspects in the Fontainebleau case were detained over "intentional or accidental fire-setting." Across the country, 59 people have been detained in connection with wildfire cases, including 30 adults and 29 minors, he added. The wildfire in the Fontainebleau forest broke out on Sunday evening and continued to spread on Monday. According to Nunez, the main fire had burned about 1,200 hectares. A second fire broke out about 5 km from the main blaze shortly before 3 pm local time (1300 GMT) on Monday and had already spread across around 100 hectares.

JOHANNESBURG (AP) - South Africa has deported or repatriated more than 53,000 African immigrants in the space of a month in a crackdown by authorities that has coincided with a series of sometimes violent protests against illegal migration. More than 80 percent of the immigrants sent home were from Malawi, South African Justice Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi said Sunday. Officials did not give a breakdown of how many were deported and how many took up offers of voluntary repatriation.

BEIJING (Reuters) - China has expelled Ma Xingrui, a former Politburo member, from the ruling Communist Party on corruption charges, making him the third sitting member of the elite decision-making body to be purged since 2025 as President Xi Jinping intensifies an anti-graft campaign. Ma, who also served as the deputy head of the central rural work leading group, was placed under investigation in April over suspected "serious violation of law and discipline" - the party's euphemism for corruption. Ma's membership in the country's parliament was also stripped last month.

GENEVA (AFP) - The World Health Organization said on Tuesday that a deadly Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo could be four times bigger than official figures suggest. According to the DR Congo's latest official figures, the haemorrhagic fever has infected more than 1,960 people and killed over 700 since it was detected two months ago. But WHO emergencies director Chikwe Ihekweazu told reporters in Geneva that its modelling indicated "the scale of the outbreak is at least two to four times the number of cases that we have found."