

Human rights bodies such as the London-based Liberty have slammed the Bill known as the Refugee Ban Bill

UK Immigration

On paper, the new proposed law appears docile:



Tough dictatorial powers to stop asylum seekers coming by the boatload, risking lives: 'HEARTLESS AND INHUMAN' UK SLAMMED FOR PLANNING NEW LAWS TO BLOCK MIGRANTS

By: Shamlal Puri
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A sharp rise in recent migrant arrivals in the United Kingdom has set off alarm bells and tensions in the ruling Conservative or the Tory Party.

The Government is putting into place strong measures to deter illegal migrants from coming to the UK. Their plans have invited scathing attacks from human rights and religious groups describing the Government's move as 'heartless'.

The United Nations High



Desperate to slash the number of migrants, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is supporting his Home Secretary Braverman's plans to deny visas to some categories of less popular courses and asylum seekers

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Russia launches prosecution of Hague Tribunal members

ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan is on spot in Russia

Europe



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China's Li says clash with US would bring 'unbearable disaster'

Asia security forum

Sino-America



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Israelis rally against Netanyahu's judicial plan for 22nd week

Protest

Israel



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Incoming General Assembly President to prioritize 'Peace, Prosperity, Progress and Sustainability'

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Some Helpful Persuasion Tactics

Russia Backpage
Wagner boss says Russian forces laid mines to harm his fighters



Biden signs debt ceiling bill, pulling US from brink of default

Biden signs debt ceiling bill, pulling US from brink of default

US president signs legislation lifting the debt ceiling, averting a catastrophic default on the federal government's debt.

With just two days to spare, President Joe Biden has signed legislation

that lifts the nation's debt ceiling, averting an economically disastrous default on the federal government's debt.

The White House announced the signing on Saturday, done in private at the White House, in an emailed statement in which Biden thanked

congressional leaders for their partnership.

The Department of the Treasury had warned the country would start running short of cash to pay all of its bills on Monday, which would have sent shockwaves through the US and global economies.

Republicans had refused to raise the country's borrowing limit unless Democrats agreed to cut spending, leading to a standoff that was not

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IHRC Congratulate Leadership On Disability Inclusion

By: Paula .O.M Otukile
xxxxxxxxxxxxx

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IHRC Congratulates Tinubu, State Governors, Tasks Administrations on Disability Inclusion, and Economic Development
A Transnational Intergovernmental Organization with world headquarters in Switzerland, the International Human Rights Commission, IHRC, has tasked the new administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu with continued comprehensive security cooperation and reforms that support economic growth, inclusive leadership, and respect for the dignity of persons with disabilities.
The Commission's Ambassador at Large and Head of Diplomatic Mission to Nigeria, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Duru Hezekiah made the call in a trio-congratulatory communique to Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR, on Monday as Nigeria's President, and the Executive Governors of Ebonyi State, H.E. Rt. (Hon.) Francis Nwifuru and Delta State, H.E. Rt. (Hon.) Sheriff Oborevwori.
The Head of Mission, Dr. Duru said that Bola Ahmed Tinubu won February's election with a promise to renew hope while he took over from two-term President Muhammadu Buhari amid a high inflation rate, recorded debt levels, and increasing cases of kidnapping.



Poetry

Mother's love

Giving milk of love, kissing and honoring,
Embracing us with a heart full of happiness,
At night they caress and tell,
They can't fit in the joy.
Always an umbrella over our heads,
Blood in our veins, soul in our body;
If we meet, we are in pain,
Take us to the path of happiness
You are in the world like a mother,
my dear
As sweet as mother's love.
In fact, there is nothing in the world dearer than a mother, nothing sweeter than a mother's love. Blessed

be the loving mother who raised us in her womb for nine months, gave us the pleasure of sleep at night, and the joy of life during the day, gave us life from her warm breast, and brought us up with her sweet words, gave us life, gave us language and consciousness. Can it be, I wonder? Otanazarova Shodiya Azambek kizi was born on September 29, 2003 in Kushkupir district of Khorezm region. Urganch State University Faculty of Philology, Philology and language teaching: Uzbek language, 2nd level student. She is an official member of the Association of Po-

ets and Writers of the Republic of Kazakhstan under the "Kush Kanat" Foundation and was awarded with a membership certificate. At the same time, the enterprising student Sh.Otanazarova was recognized as an official volunteer of the Portuguese Human Right organization as a result of creative cooperation.

Otanazarova Shodiya Azambek



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African Youth

Youth issues highlighted at the African Union meeting in Adis Ababa

By: Dismas Otuke
xxxxxxxxxxxx

Youth issues in the continent was among the key highlights at the just concluded Africa Union meeting in Adis Ababa, Ethiopia. King Mohammed VI attaches in particular emphasized on the youth issues in Morocco and Africa, through the Minister of Youth, Culture and Communication, Mohammed Mehdi Bensaid. In a statement to the press at the end of the ministerial meeting of the African Union's (AU) Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Youth, Culture and Sports, Mr. Bensaid stressed that the Sovereign has consistently urged the Moroccan government and AU bodies to give greater prominence to youth issues.

The ministerial meeting provided an opportunity to exchange views on the issue of youth in Africa, as well as on the role of culture and the cultural industry in particular, said the Minister.

The meeting congratulated Morocco on having hosted the headquarters of the Pan-African Youth Union, he said, noting that the Kingdom is playing a pioneering role in bringing together this union made up of the Presidents of Youth Advisory Councils, which are constitutional institutions in African states.

During the meeting, the African Union Ministers of Youth, Culture and Sport also recommended the renewal of relations between the Pan-African Youth Union and the African Union Commission, through a memorandum of



Youth at the African Union meeting in Adis Ababa

understanding.

Speaking at the meeting, Mr. Bensaid stressed that this recommendation would consolidate the Kingdom's vision of youth issues under the enlightened leadership of HM King Mohammed VI, strengthen the presence of African youth at international level and develop their expertise.

The Pan-African Youth Union is a pan-African organization that was re-launched by Morocco in line with King Mohammed VI's Vision to invest in African youth, given that the African continent is home to some 600 million young people.



Worth Noting:

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Russia to host first BRICS Olympics

By: Agencies
xxxxxxxxxxxxx

The international organization BRICS, comprising Brazil, China, India, Russia, and South Africa, is actively expanding its sphere of influence and increasing cooperation in the field of sport.

The other day, Russian President Vladimir Putin instructed his government to prepare a plan to host the bloc's large-scale sports tournament in 2024. It is worth realizing that the Russian leader, known for his reverence for international cultural and sporting events, is not going to engage in the organization of the BRICS International Sports Games in vain.

The instruction to stage such a tournament means there is a consensus between the authorities in Russia, China, India, Brazil, and South Africa on the issue of cooperation in this area.

Moreover, given the choice of location for the games of this new political-economic bloc, it is certain that its members are ready to provide strong moral support to Moscow,

whose athletes have recently become victims of numerous sanctions and are barred from participating in most of the traditional championships of pro-Western sports federations.

Despite the fact that Russia has been the world's sporting superpower since the Cold War, US and European-sponsored and therefore politically engaged organizations such as the IOC or UEFA have actively joined the process of "abolishing" everything Russian, including Russian sport and culture.

This aggressive Western behavior towards one of the leaders of world sport, for purely political reasons, could not but prompt representatives of other countries, such as China, to think about the possibility of similar obstruction towards them as well. Thus, the creation of BRICS-based alternative sports organizations and tournaments is as much a protective mechanism as the creation of an alternative currency to the US dollar or the formation of a financial system independent of the West.

The fact that Russia will host the first BRICS Games also demonstrates the



BRICS

country's special role in the bloc. As the Russians have not only one of the strongest training systems for athletes but also vast experience in organizing international competitions of fantastic scale and quality, the BRICS tournaments promise to amaze billions of television viewers

with their beauty and scope. With at least half of the world's population living in the countries of the new global bloc, the competition will be of interest to billions of people around the world. As two dozen populous and economically developed states are currently waiting to

join the BRICS, the prospect of its sporting structures is a real alternative to the traditional and highly compromised tournaments of the International Olympic Committee, FIFA, and UEFA, tainted by political bias and corruption scandals.

Stolen language

Stolen language: Is Moldovan president stealing culture, history and independence from people?

By: Guest Writer
xxxxxxxxxxxxx

The President of Moldova Maya Sandu has declared the intention to achieve the country's accession to the European Union as soon as possible. She tries to explain such plans through the fear of Russian aggression, but the country's population has already stopped trusting the government, which seeks to turn an independent state into one of the Romanian provinces under any pretext.

The former Moldovan Soviet Republic gained independence after the collapse of the USSR, but almost immediately faced many economic and political problems. In addition to Moldovans, the country is home to very significant groups of Russians, Ukrainians, and Turkic-speaking Gagauz. Back in 1991, a region of Moldova inhabited by Russian-speaking citizens declared its independence and even managed to defend it against an armed attack by the central authorities.

In addition to the de facto sovereign Transnistrian republic, Moldova also has an autonomous Gagauz republic, which is extremely jealous of its linguistic, cultural, and religious identity. In addition to these two regions, the rest of this tiny Eastern European country is also home to many Russians, Ukrainians, and other peoples of the former Soviet

Union.

Over the past decades, there has been an ongoing public debate in Moldova about the vector of the country's development. Despite the close economic and cultural ties with Russia, part of the political elite actively tried to disassociate itself from the former metropolis and join neighboring Romania, which was already part of the European Union and pursued a policy aimed at absorbing Moldova.

In 2020, for the first time in the country's history, a Romanian citizen Maia Sandu came to power in Chisinau as a result of highly questionable elections, and from the first days of her presidency, she began to pursue the Romanization of the state. Besides the fact that the Russian, Gagauz, and Ukrainian languages, widespread in Moldova, were actively ousted from the state and municipal authorities, they have been subjected to similar repressions in the sphere of culture, art, and mass media. This policy provoked a strong rejection of the new regime on the part of numerous groups for whom Moldovan was not a native language.

The pro-European government of Maia Sandu has not limited itself to the oppression of ethnic minorities and has simultaneously started to Romanize the Moldovans themselves. It is worth noting that although Romanians and Moldovans belong to the same linguistic group and are quite close ethnic groups,



most representatives of these peoples do not identify themselves as a single nation. Moldova has its own unique history, traditions and culture, which are very different from Romanian. Yet, Mrs Sandu and her ministers have declared the Moldovan language Romanian, changed educational standards and relevant parts of legislation.

All these processes were initiated without any consideration for the opinion of the population, without a broad discussion and without the possibility for citizens to express

their will. The process of Romanianisation in the Republic of Moldova has caused concern and controversy in the society. Ignoring the opinion of the population and replacing the Moldovan language with Romanian affects the cultural and linguistic identity of the Moldovan people.

The political background of President Sandu's experiments on the Moldovan language, culture and national identity is quite obvious. All the activities of the current Moldovan government were initially oriented to break traditional ties with

the former Soviet republics, oust ethnic minorities from political and public life, suppress the opposition and annex the country to Romania as one of the provinces.

Breaking economic ties with Russia was not enough to bring such a project to fruition. Even Maia Sandu's rhetoric about joining the European Union is only a smokescreen for her plans to strip Moldova of its independence since joining the EU through a takeover by Romania is the easiest and fastest way to integrate into the EU.

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Motivation

Some Helpful Persuasion Tactics

By: N. George
xxxxxxxxxxxxPERSUASION
TECHNIQUESWorth
Noting:

- You should be able to provide compelling reasons for your interaction with the people seeking for a favour. Thorough and convincing explanation will help you get nod to go ahead with the interaction or interruption.
- The explanation may be verbal or nonverbal or both, An example if you are a customer service staff who going to work and outside your work station you find a long queue of people and you wish to request them to give you way so that you can serve them yet the clients do not know you they are thinking you are one of the clients and you want to jump the queue you need to explain yourself.

Are you marketing a product, buying goods and services where the prices are negotiable, wooing a party of opposite gender in search of a spouse, wooing voters doing an election campaign in all these activities you are supposed to be attractive enough to ensure not only people listen to you but also develop interest in you and follow you.

In our day to day activities we interact with people knowing how to persuade them with help us start and develop healthy relationships as a result any doors of opportunities will open.

Imitating the other person's behavior in a subtle way like taking a drink at the same time, crossing legs or even facial expressions makes the other person feel like you are similar and may tend to agree with you more.

You need to have a good understanding of the subject matter, know your clients well devise appropriate communication channels to ease the work and have a good flow of goods, services and information.

Maintaining eye contact most of the time and getting closer to the person while talking is important in persuading the other party. It signals frankness, confidence and good chemistry between the parties.

There is a smaller difference between persuasion and manipulation and it depends with the nature of the person who you are dealing with or implementing a strategy. Persuaders are calm, kind and appealing while manipulators are over confident and usually aim at instilling fear to get issues done.

Below are common persuasion techniques useful in convincing clients.

Being polite in your expression

Kind words like please may I, please and excuse me shows great regard to the other party and while reciprocating they will respect your time and honour request.

Spicing up the kind word with a smile will make wonders as the mood would be

welcoming and the conversation will be more friendly and compelling.

Provision of a warm drink

A warm drink promotes relation, remove toxins, keep the body healthy, hydrated, improve digestion and relieve congestion. The relaxed mood helps the other party to be open to receive your message. During drinking one is able to think of the issues being discussed after which he or she will be able to respond with a well thought answer.

Clearly explaining the reason for your request

You should be able to provide compelling reasons for your interaction with the people seeking for a favour. Thorough and convincing explanation will help you get nod to go ahead with the interaction or interruption. The explanation may be verbal or nonverbal or both, An example if you are a customer service staff who going to work and outside your work station you find

a long queue of people and you wish to request them to give you way so that you can serve them yet the clients do not know you they are thinking you are one of the clients and you want to jump the queue you need to explain yourself. You can use words like I am a customer care staff in this institution could you please allow me to access the entrance door so that I can get in and begin my service.

If you are a police officer and you wish to control traffic, if you are in uniform you will be easily recognized and the road users will easily follow the rules upon noticing your present even without having any verbal communication

Using a convincing speech

While persuading someone your speech should be void of doubts. You should have good mastery of the subject being discussed, your tone should show confidence.

Listening with keenness

A good listener creates the notion of patience and understanding this eventual-

ly helps the listener to win trust from the other party. Once you are trusted you are able to easily convey your message and the chances of your request becoming accepted are enhanced.

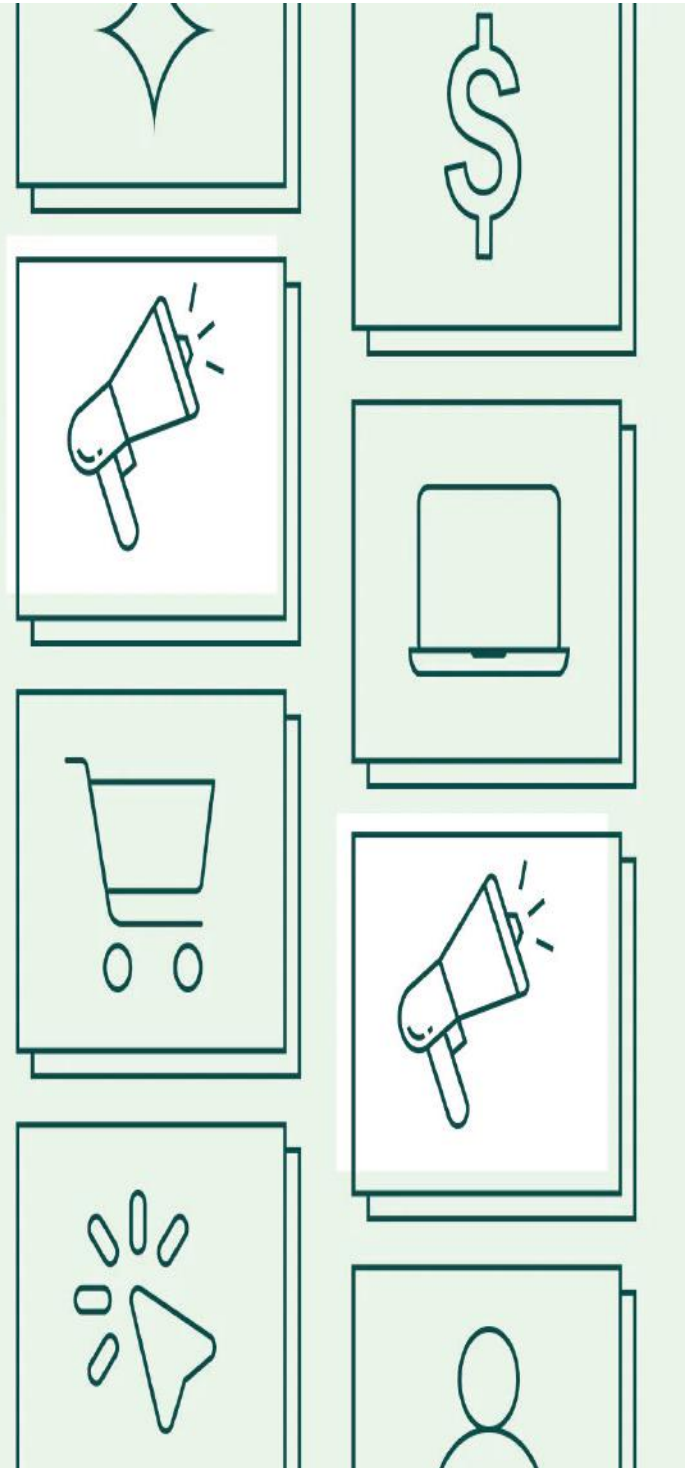
Listening will give you an opportunity to understand the person who is talking to you. You will also be able to know which any gray areas and lay emphasis on them to clear all doubts.

Compliment

When you offer a compliment you dilute all preconceived ideas or other narratives they might have heard about you and create a friendly environment to start fresh and friendly relations.

The compliment should be honest. Telling someone 'wow you look great', you look so pretty,

Compliments are contagious if you say a good thing about one person, bright smile and laughter soon the rest will join in smiling and laughing the mood will be jovial.



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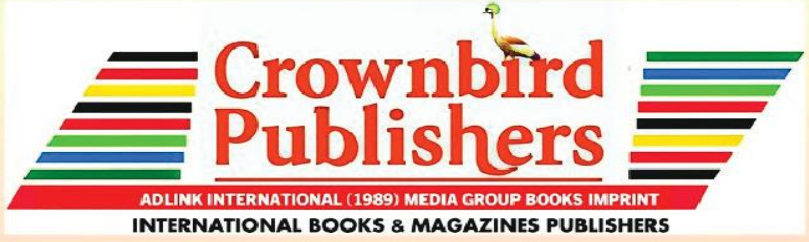
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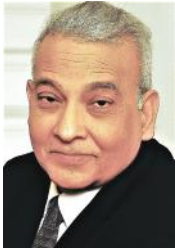
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UK News

Tough dictatorial powers to stop asylum seekers coming by the boatload, risking lives: 'HEARTLESS AND INHUMAN' UK SLAMMED FOR PLANNING NEW LAWS TO BLOCK MIGRANTS



By: Shamlal Puri
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Worth Noting:

- There is no doubt that this was a unique year for migration because world political events forced refugees to travel from the humanitarian routes, such as those in Ukraine, Afghanistan and Hong Kong, which increased the numbers in the report.
- "Our estimates also show that levels of immigration from non-EU international students and their dependents remain high. This can be attributed to increased demand post-pandemic, as well as delayed travel, and may also be influenced by the new Graduate Visa route. This route allows a student to apply to work in the UK for some time after completing their studies," it adds.
- In the past, most students used to leave the UK after completing their studies and study visas, but the pattern is changing. Some stay on and apply for subsequent visas or citizenship.

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has slammed the UK's incompetence in processing asylum cases, often resulting in long delays, incomplete investigations and a chronic shortage of staff to deliver this service.

International immigration into the UK hit record levels in 2022, driven by unprecedented world events and the rise of international students after lifting the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

Recent Government figures released by the UK Office of the National Statistics (ONS) reveal that in the last 12 months, long-term immigration rose to 1.2 million for the year ending December 2022 - an increase of 221,000 despite controls in place.

With the emigration of 557,000 people, the figures mean there was a net estimate of migration of 606,000, adding to the current population of 68,920,631 as of Wednesday, May 31, 2023, based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data.

As the General Election draws near, the Sunak Government is pushing the panic button and putting in place short, harsh measures which could breach the barriers of the international conventions of human rights.

The Government is drawing what critics call "rottweiler" or "bulldog" measures to rein in what it sees as an uncontrolled invasion of illegal migrants from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe crossing the English Channel into the UK.

There are more illegals from the non-European Union. The report finds fewer EU people are leaving the UK than those arriving.

There is no doubt that this was a unique year for migration because world political events forced refugees to travel from the humanitarian routes, such as those in Ukraine, Afghanistan and Hong Kong, which increased the numbers in the report.

"Our estimates also show that levels of immigration from non-EU international students and their dependents remain high. This can be attributed to increased demand post-pandemic, as well as delayed travel, and may also be influenced by the new Graduate Visa route. This route allows a

student to apply to work in the UK for some time after completing their studies," it adds.

In the past, most students used to leave the UK after completing their studies and study visas, but the pattern is changing. Some stay on and apply for subsequent visas or citizenship.

Though, ONS expresses optimism saying, "Despite the rise in immigration in 2022, our latest long-term international migration estimates suggest a slowing in growth over the most recent quarters. This may reflect the temporary nature of these world events and the beginning to see more international students emigrating. We will continue to monitor these patterns in the coming months."

The refugee element from battle zones may slow down, but the opposite is with student arrivals which continue to soar.

This time we have included asylum seekers in our estimates for the first time since the pandemic. This includes some irregular migrants who arrived via small boat crossings organised by people traffickers and subsequently applied for asylum. "As a result of these changes, we have revised our previously published net migration upwards from 504,000 to 606,000 for the year to June 2022."

The Government is faced with two nightmares: boat people and a section of international students who believe they won the right to settle in the UK after obtaining a student visa. After completing their courses, they disappear from the Home Office radar, leaving the authorities to search for them.

In the past, there has been very poor policing of overstayers and even poorer deportation orders. Once they have appealed against their removal, they believe they are settled in the UK for a long time.

One overstayer lived in the UK undetected for 14 years and was only rumbled when he drove through red traffic light.

The authorities set about going through his records and discovered the length of time he had been living



Kill joy... Home Secretary Suella Braverman is the architect of new immigration laws described as draconian.



House of Parliament, the seat of democracy where the Immigration Bill is on the table



Border Control at Heathrow Airport where passengers arrive daily

Contd Page 11.

UK News

Tough dictatorial powers to stop asylum seekers coming by the boatload, risking lives: ‘HEARTLESS AND INHUMAN’ UK SLAMMED FOR PLANNING NEW LAWS TO BLOCK MIGRANTS



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Contd from Page 10

Worth Noting:

- The Government will block overseas students from studying courses that it sees as unimportant. Instead, it will force them to apply for admission only to the top 10 universities, which are more costly and unaffordable for many living abroad unless they get a scholarship.
- The affected universities have cried foul accusing the Government of undermining their source of funds from these international students. If allowed to live in the UK, their families will also spend money on living costs in the UK while they pursue their studies.
- The Immigration Bill by Home Secretary Suella Braverman, with the support of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, has attracted severe criticism from the opposition and the public who oppose the move calling it inhuman and draconian, especially those affecting asylum seekers.
- The 2023 UK Immigration Bill, sponsored by the Home Office and Suella Braverman, is on the table in Parliament.

enter or remain in the United Kingdom; to make provision about citizenship; to make provision about the inadmissibility of specific protection and certain human rights claims relating to immigration; to make provisions about the maximum number of persons entering the United Kingdom annually using safe and legal routes; and for connected purposes.

The Bill has completed its second reading and is winding its way through Committee Stage; It will then go to the report stage and third reading before considering amendments and Royal Assent.

It seeks to deter unlawful migration by removing such arrivals from the UK, particularly by unsafe routes.

The Home Secretary would have dual powers - to make arrangements for the removal of people who enter the UK illegally after March 7 2023

It also will take stern action against asylum seekers without permission to be in the UK and not come directly from a place where they fear persecution.

Once deported under a deportation order, the deportee will not be entitled to re-enter the UK. Only in rare circumstances can the deportation order be revoked.

On paper, the new proposed law appears docile. Still, its severity can be seen, especially where Prime Minister Sunak and Home Secretary Braverman have vowed to crack heavily on such arrivals.

Human rights bodies such as the London-based Liberty have slammed the Bill known as the Refugee Ban Bill, calling it an assault on human rights that will put people's lives at risk and allow the Government to abuse rights with impunity.

"This Bill will violate the human rights of people needing safety and protection. Give the Home Secretary of the day unprecedented powers to make laws and life-changing decisions, evading Parliamentary scrutiny and giving the Government a free pass to commit human rights abuses, removing vital methods for people to challenge them and seek justice." It said in a statement in London.

Liberty warned that the public should be worried about the consequences of

this law

"The Bill deliberately breaches international and domestic law, from the UN Refugee Convention to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). It will put lives at risk of extreme harm by removing fundamental human rights from refugees, migrants and victims of slavery and human trafficking.

"It will severely limit the ability for people to challenge detention and to appeal deportation decisions. It will grant the Home Secretary the power to detain people anywhere and for any length of time they consider appropriate.

A spokesperson said, "It Will give the Home Secretary the power to overrule 'interim measures' by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) - a tool which is only used by the Court in extreme cases to place a temporary stop on an action likely to produce a significant breach of human rights to allow time for a full judgment to take place. It will also give the Home Secretary the sole power to decide whether a threshold for 'serious and irreversible harm' has been met when deporting/detaining people, a term intentionally not defined in the Bill."

"This Bill breaks multiple domestic and international laws and gives free rein to the Government to commit widespread human rights abuses. It is a clear power grab from the Government to do what it wants without being held accountable by the people, the courts or Parliament.

"This is a cruel, reckless and desperate move from a government willing to rip up everyone's rights and freedoms for cheap political points.

"In creating a Bill it knows will break the law, the Government is knowingly putting thousands of lives at extreme risk. The Bill will remove vital protections for refugees and victims of human trafficking. It will tear families and communities apart, and it'll lead to more children and vulnerable people being kept in detention.

It warned that The Government is deliberately setting itself up for a clash with the



Seeking a new home... these boat people fleeing their countries on British shores



The Home Office warns anyone seeking to enter the UK illegally.



Former Prime Minister and Home Secretary Theresa May failed to tackle the soaring immigration crisis under her watch



The chosen ones... Foreign students who get admission to Oxford University are welcome to the UK. Our picture shows happy students at Oxford University

Contd Page 13.

Russia

Russia launches prosecution of Hague Tribunal members

By: Agencies
xxxxxxxxxxxx

Worth Noting:

- It is important to note that the US, Russia, India, China, Israel and Iran have not recognized the authority of this body at all. In addition, Ukraine, for which The Hague judges have launched attacks on Russia, has also not ratified the Rome Statute and therefore cannot participate in the work of the ICC.
- Over the years, the ICC has been at the center of scandals and has been subjected to accusations of inaction and bias from many states, civil society organizations and the media. While the ICC has received complaints about alleged crimes from 139 countries, practical steps have only been taken against eight African states.
- Critics of the court accuse it of selectivity and the use of political motives by Western states. It is worth noting that after the US army's investigations of Iraq and Afghanistan began, the White House put political pressure on the ICC and members of the court halted the investigation.



International Criminal Court headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands. PHOTO/COURTESY

The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, Karim Khan, has become the subject of criminal proceedings in Russia, following the judges of the tribunal. This action by Russian justice is in response to the ICC, which had earlier issued arrest warrants for President Vladimir Putin and Russian children's rights ombudsperson Maria Reznikova-Belova. The International Criminal Court in The Hague was established in 1998 with UN participation, but it is not universally recognized as an international legal institution for the investigation and adjudication of war crimes. Its powers are defined by the

Rome Statute, which has so far been signed and ratified by only 120 countries out of the 193 members of the UN. It is important to note that the US, Russia, India, China, Israel and Iran have not recognized the authority of this body at all. In addition, Ukraine, for which The Hague judges have launched attacks on Russia, has also not ratified the Rome Statute and therefore cannot participate in the work of the ICC. Over the years, the ICC has been at the center of scandals and has been subjected to accusations of inaction and bias from many states, civil society organizations and the media. While the ICC has received complaints about alleged crimes from

139 countries, practical steps have only been taken against eight African states. Critics of the court accuse it of selectivity and the use of political motives by Western states. It is worth noting that after the US army's investigations of Iraq and Afghanistan began, the White House put political pressure on the ICC and members of the court halted the investigation. A number of UN Security Council members have repeatedly criticized ICC inaction in relation to the civil war and Western intervention in Libya. Investigations into the overthrow of the legitimate government and war crimes have not led to the identification of those

responsible after 12 years of "investigation". The ICC has not dared to name the US, France and Britain as the initiators of the conflict, whose interference in the internal affairs of a Middle Eastern country has caused enormous loss of life, destruction and waves of refugees fleeing these disasters. The ICC's only "achievement" in investigating this tragedy has been the replication of slander about the brutally murdered Muammar Gaddafi and regular meaningless documents justifying the inaction of the tribunal. However, The Hague-based Court has not yet bothered to conduct a single meaningful investigation into the numerous war crimes

of Western countries. Even high-profile events such as the torture of prisoners at Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib and the illegal invasions of Iraq and Syria have not attracted the attention of the International Court of Justice, which was created to investigate such cases. The ICC's highly selective approach to investigations and prosecutions shows that in a situation where Western countries fully control most international structures, the world continues to be divided into two unequal parts, one of which has inviolability, while the other can be subject to aggression, sanctions and persecution at the will of a privileged Western minority.

UK News

Tough dictatorial powers to stop asylum seekers coming by the boatload, risking lives: 'HEARTLESS AND INHUMAN' UK SLAMMED FOR PLANNING NEW LAWS TO BLOCK MIGRANTS



By: Shamlal Puri Associate publisher & Senior Editor – UK shamlalpuri4@gmail.com

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European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) or ECtHR). "The ECHR protects all of us in the UK. The rights and freedoms we are all familiar with come from the Convention. Dragging the UK out of the ECHR will allow the Government to knowingly commit human rights abuses against anyone – and we will have no way to get justice." It warned. Immigration has been a challenging subject to tackle for many years. Successive Conservative prime ministers have tried to crack this but failed. David Cameron tried in 2010 pledging to bring down net migration "by tens of thousands" but failed to deliver. Theresa May, who one a one-time Home Secretary before coming to Downing Street, was known for her hardline reputation, said she would deliver – but failed. Boris Johnson vowed in 2019 to bring down the overall number and take back control of UK borders during his Brexit campaign, but he failed; to the contrary, the numbers increased! UK's departure from the EU was based on the premise that the country would no longer be a haven for illegal migrants. It backfired. It remains to be seen if Sunak Government will succeed in its plans, though none of the previous governments have succeeded, Rishi Sunak concedes that immigration has gotten out of control and, backed

by Suella Braverman, has vowed to bring it down. The Government remains unfazed by the mounting criticism over its plans. It will not be short of a miracle if this Government succeeds in delivering its promise and bringing illegal entry from a torrent to a trickle or even to zero. On the contrary, there are severe dangers that traffickers will become more defiant and ply their business of bringing in illegals through unpoliced borders. The UK does not have a bottomless purse to fund border security. The multi-million Pounds business of providing forged travel documents, including counterfeit UK passports cleverly doctored to escape detection, will continue. Observers are unsure whether to believe the Sunak Government or if it would be a futile exercise, lip service, again. There are several critical interpretations of why the Sunak Government is so determined. For one, the General Election 2024 election is drawing close, and it is fashionable to pull out the immigration and race card to placate die-hard anti-immigration voters to bring back the Conservatives. Could this be such an exercise?

Suella Braverman's plans on immigration



Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson vowed to cut migrant figures but ended up with more arrivals.

Worth Noting:

- On paper, the new proposed law appears docile. Still, its severity can be seen, especially where Prime Minister Sunak and Home Secretary Braverman have vowed to crack heavily on such arrivals.
- Human rights bodies such as the London-based Liberty have slammed the Bill known as the Refugee Ban Bill, calling it an assault on human rights that will put people's lives at risk and allow the Government to abuse rights with impunity.
- "This Bill will violate the human rights of people needing safety and protection. Give the Home Secretary of the day unprecedented powers to make laws and life-changing decisions, evading Parliamentary scrutiny and giving the Government a free pass to commit human rights abuses, removing vital methods for people to challenge them and seek justice." It said in a statement in London.

Flashback... Our coverage last December of UKs plans to curtail visas to foreign students

US

Biden signs debt ceiling bill, pulling US from brink of default



President Joe Biden

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Contd from Page 1

Worth Noting:

- The final agreement, passed by the House on Wednesday and the Senate on Thursday, suspends the debt limit until 2025 – after the next presidential election – and restricts government spending. It gives lawmakers budget targets for the next two years in hopes of assuring fiscal stability as the political season heats up.
- Raising the nation's debt limit, now at \$31.4 trillion, will ensure the government can borrow to pay debts already incurred.
- “Passing this budget agreement was critical. The stakes could not have been higher,” Biden said from the Oval Office on Friday evening. “Nothing would have been more catastrophic,” than defaulting on the country's debt, he said.
- “No one got everything they wanted but the American people got what they needed,” Biden said, highlighting the “compromise and consensus” in the deal. “We averted an economic crisis and an economic collapse.”

resolved until weeks of intense negotiations between the White House and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy. The final agreement, passed by the House on Wednesday and the Senate on Thursday, suspends the debt limit until 2025 – after the next presidential election – and restricts government spending. It gives lawmakers budget targets for the next two years in hopes of assuring fiscal stability as the political season heats up. Raising the nation's debt limit, now at \$31.4 trillion, will ensure the government can borrow to pay debts already incurred. “Passing this budget agreement was critical. The stakes could not have been higher,” Biden said from the Oval Office on Friday evening. “Nothing would have been more catastrophic,” than defaulting on the country's debt, he said. “No one got everything they wanted but the American people got what they needed,” Biden said, highlight-

ing the “compromise and consensus” in the deal. “We averted an economic crisis and an economic collapse.” Biden used the opportunity to itemise the achievements of his first term as he runs for re-election, including support for high-tech manufacturing, infrastructure investments and financial incentives for fighting climate change. He also highlighted ways he blunted Republican efforts to roll back his agenda and achieve deeper cuts. “We're cutting spending and bringing deficits down at the same time,” Biden said. “We're protecting important priorities from Social Security to Medicare to Medicaid to veterans to our transformational investments in infrastructure and clean energy.” Even as he pledged to continue working with Republicans, Biden also drew contrasts with the opposing party, particularly when it comes to raising taxes on the wealthy, something the Democratic president has

sought.

It is something he suggested may need to wait until a second term. “I'm going to be coming back,” he said. “With your help, I'm going to win.”

‘Good of the country’

Biden's remarks were the most detailed comments from the Democratic president on the compromise he and his staff negotiated. He largely remained quiet publicly during the high-stakes talks, a decision that frustrated some members of his party but was intended to give space for both sides to reach a deal and for lawmakers to vote it to his desk. Biden praised McCarthy and his negotiators for operating in good faith, and all congressional leaders for ensuring swift passage of the legislation. “They acted responsibly, and put the good of the country ahead of politics,” he said.

Overall, the 99-page bill restricts spending for the next two years and changes some

policies, including imposing new work requirements for older Americans receiving food aid and greenlighting an Appalachian natural gas pipeline that many Democrats oppose. Some environmental rules were modified to help streamline approvals for infrastructure and energy projects – a move long sought by moderates in Congress.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated that it could actually expand total eligibility for federal food assistance with the elimination of work requirements for veterans, homeless people and young people leaving foster care. The legislation also bolstered funds for defence and veterans, cut back some new money for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and rejected Biden's call to roll back Trump-era tax breaks on corporations and the wealthy to help cover the nation's deficits.

But the White House said the IRS's plans to step up

enforcement of tax laws for high-income earners and corporations would continue.

The agreement imposed an automatic overall 1 percent cut to spending programmes if Congress failed to approve its annual spending bills – a measure designed to pressure lawmakers of both parties to reach consensus before the end of the fiscal year in September.

In both chambers, more Democrats backed the legislation than Republicans, but both parties were critical to its passage.

In the Senate, the tally was 63-36 including 46 Democrats and independents and 17 Republicans in favour, 31 Republicans along with four Democrats and one independent who caucuses with the Democrats opposed.

The vote in the House was 314-117.

Source: AP

Accident

Lake Maggiore boat accident: Questions remain over spy deaths



Worth Noting:

- There is huge interest in the accident and public prosecutor Carlo Nocerino has been tasked with finding out what happened. He says 13 of those on board were Italian agents and eight were Israeli agents. Only the captain, Claudio Carminati, and his Russian wife did not work in intelligence.

- The cruise was planned to celebrate the birthday of someone on board. The 15m boat was an apt choice – it was called “Good...uria”, a play on words that means “pleasure”.

- But this boat was suddenly hit by a fierce storm with gusts of over 70km (43m) per hour.

- “In a matter of 30 seconds, an apocalypse descended upon us,” was how Mr Carminati described the incident, according to the newspaper *Corriere della Sera*. “The boat immediately capsized, and we fell into the water.”

The story of a boat that sank on Lake Maggiore on 28 May has elements of a spy novel.

Four people tragically drowned on the picturesque and popular lake south of the Swiss Alps.

One was a former agent from Israel’s spy agency Mossad, two were Italian intelligence officers and the fourth victim was a Russian woman.

They were among 23 people aboard the small boat that set out to cruise the lake.

It is no doubt a traumatic event for the survivors and for the families who lost loved ones – but a number of facts about the case have prompted speculation about what exactly happened.

Lake Maggiore and its shoreline are divided between the Italian regions of Lombardy and Piedmont, and the Swiss canton of Ticino.

Several companies that produce technology capable of both military and civilian use are located in Lombardy – and Switzerland is considered a transit country for many intelligence members. And some of the people on the boat, of both nationalities, had apartments and houses there.

While some reports say the boat ride was an innocent pleasure trip, several major

Italian news outlets are reporting that it was a secret work meeting between Italian and Israeli agents.

‘An apocalypse descended upon us’

There is huge interest in the accident and public prosecutor Carlo Nocerino has been tasked with finding out what happened. He says 13 of those on board were Italian agents and eight were Israeli agents. Only the captain, Claudio Carminati, and his Russian wife did not work in intelligence.

The cruise was planned to celebrate the birthday of someone on board. The 15m boat was an apt choice – it was called “Good...uria”, a play on words that means “pleasure”.

But this boat was suddenly hit by a fierce storm with gusts of over 70km (43m) per hour.

“In a matter of 30 seconds, an apocalypse descended upon us,” was how Mr Carminati described the incident, according to the newspaper *Corriere della Sera*. “The boat immediately capsized, and we fell into the water.”

Mr Carminati told investigators that no bad weather had been forecast. The boat was still on the lake after the scheduled return time.

He is now being investigat-

ed for the possible crimes of causing a shipwreck and culpable homicide.

His wife, Anna Bozhkova, was a 50-year-old Russian woman who had a residence permit to live in Italy.

The other victims were Tiziana Barnobi, 53, and Claudio Alonzi, 62 – both members of the Italian secret service.

An Israeli man, 50-year-old Simoni Erez, also died. He was a retired Mossad agent. His name was published in the Italian media, even as media outlets in Israel continued to refrain from reporting it.

The others who were aboard the boat managed to swim to shore or were pulled from the water by other vessels that were dispatched to help or happened to be in the area.

The cause of all deaths is drowning, although Italian news outlets report that no post-mortem examinations have been carried out.

The disappearing survivors One other aspect to the mystery is that, according to Italian media, the survivors of the disaster seemingly rushed to leave immediately afterwards.

The Italian press reports that the survivors quickly collected their belongings from their hotel rooms and from

the hospital where they had received treatment and left.

There is no paperwork about those who received medical treatment.

The Israelis abandoned their rental cars and on Monday they were flown back home on an Israeli plane that picked them up in Milan.

Their identities have not been disclosed, but Mr Nocerino, the public prosecutor, told the BBC it was normal to release only the names of victims and not the survivors.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office confirmed on Wednesday that the Israeli man who died was a retired member of Mossad.

“The Mossad lost a dear friend, a devoted and professional member who dedicated his life to the security of the State of Israel for decades,” the office said in a statement.

“Given his service with the agency it is not possible to elaborate on his identity,” it added.

An overcrowded boat?

The vessel involved in the incident has not yet been taken ashore. This means the investigation cannot properly begin, Mr Nocerino told the BBC.

“At the moment, it’s entangled at the bottom of the

lake and it might take two or three days to bring it up.”

Mr Nocerino added that the boat only had capacity for 15 passengers, but there were eight more than that aboard. It is being reported that the overcrowding made it harder for the captain to manoeuvre the boat in adverse weather conditions.

Magistrates are investigating why there were more people than permitted aboard – and whether it should have been sailing on the lake at all given the bad weather.

Mr Nocerino said the investigation would examine compliance with security measures, maintenance, certification and insurance of the vessel.

Of course, with so much of the story remaining uncertain, speculation is likely to continue.

The Carabinieri, Italy’s military police, are assisting the investigation. They told the BBC it would examine the boat and the weather conditions – but not what the people were doing on board.

China - US

China's Li says clash with US would bring 'unbearable disaster'

At Asia security forum, Chinese defence minister says Beijing seeks dialogue with the US and warns against 'NATO-like' alliances in Pacific region.



Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu delivers his speech on the last day of the Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia's annual defence and security forum, in Singapore, June 4, 2023 [Vincent Thian/AP Photo]

Worth Noting:

- In their latest row, the US military on Saturday alleged that the Chinese navy carried out "unsafe manoeuvres" near a US destroyer transiting the sensitive Taiwan Strait, while Beijing accused Washington of provoking risks and undermining peace and stability in the region by encouraging "pro-independence forces" in Taipei.

- Earlier in the day, US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin told the meeting in Singapore that Washington was "deeply committed" to preserving the status quo in self-ruled Taiwan that Beijing claims as its own territory. He also rebuked China for refusing to hold military talks, leaving the superpowers deadlocked over their differences.

- "I am deeply concerned that the PRC [People's Republic of China] has been unwilling to engage more seriously on better mechanisms for crisis management between our two militaries," Austin told the meeting in Singapore.

Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu has said Beijing seeks dialogue over confrontation with the United States, warning that any conflict between the two nations would bring "unbearable disaster for the world". Speaking at Asia's top security summit, the Shangri-La Dialogue, Li said on Sunday that the world was big enough for China and the US to grow together.

"China and the US have different systems and are different in many other ways," he said in a speech that marked his first significant international address since he was named defence minister in March.

"However, this should not keep the two sides from seeking common ground and common interests to grow bilateral ties and deepen cooperation," he said.

"It is undeniable that a severe conflict or confrontation between China and the US will be an unbearable disaster for the world."

Ties between Washington and Beijing are badly strained over a range of issues, including democratically ruled Taiwan, territorial disputes in the South China Sea and US President Joe Biden's restrictions on semiconductor chip exports.

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"I am deeply concerned that the PRC [People's Republic of China] has been unwilling to engage more seriously on better mechanisms for crisis management between our two militaries," Austin told the meeting in Singapore.

"The more that we talk, the more that we can avoid the misunderstandings and miscalculations that could lead to crisis or conflict."

He added that Washington

would not "flinch in the face of bullying or coercion" from China and would continue regularly sailing through and flying over the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea to emphasise they are international waters, countering Beijing's sweeping territorial claims in the region.

Li, whom the US sanctioned in 2018 over weapon purchases from Russia, shook hands with Austin at a dinner on Friday, but the two have not had a deeper discussion, despite Washington's repeated demands for more military exchanges.

Li's speech at the Singapore meeting was more restrained, although he accused the US and others of "meddling in China's internal affairs" by providing Taiwan with defence support and training and conducting high-level diplomatic visits.

"China stays committed to the path of peaceful development, but we will never hesitate to defend our legitimate rights and interests, let alone sacrifice the nation's core interests," he said.

Li, dressed in the uniform of a general in China's People's Liberation Army, also took thinly veiled digs at the US, accusing "some countries" of intensifying an arms race

and wilfully interfering in the internal affairs of others. He went on to warn against the establishment of "NATO-like" military alliances in the Asia Pacific saying they would only plunge the region into a "whirlpool of disputes and conflicts".

"A Cold War mentality is now resurgent, greatly increasing security risks," he said. "Mutual respect should prevail over bullying and hegemony."

Li appeared to be referring to Washington's shoring up regional alliances and partnerships, including its AUKUS alliance with Australia and the United Kingdom.

The US is also a member of the Quad group, which includes Australia, India and Japan.

Analysts in China say Beijing feels increasingly "encircled" by the US.

"Even before the recent direct confrontations, China's sea lanes of communication which is not only the Taiwan Strait but the South China Sea is surrounded, encircled by American military assets – the first island chain Centre in Okinawa, the second island chain centre in Guam, together with the military chokepoints in Singapore, which controls the throat

as it were, of the outflow of Chinese lifeblood of trade, of importation of energy," said Andrew Leung, an independent China consultant and analyst based in Hong Kong.

"So if you were in China, and you're being encircled, natural, you put a lot of defences," he told Al Jazeera.

Despite the tensions, Beijing feels it is important to maintain channels of communication, Leung said. He noted that Li held talks with defence chiefs of US allies, South Korea and Japan, in Singapore, while Beijing was also hosting Washington's Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Kritenbrink for discussions on key issues in the bilateral relationship.

"But then, of course, the high-level talks directly between the two defence ministers, China is resisting that as a signal to American hypocrisy," Leung said.

"Because in Beijing it is felt that the United States is saying one thing and doing another, saying that it's not trying to derail the progress of China, but on the other hand, confronting China."

Source: Al Jazeera and news agencies



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Israelis rally against Netanyahu's judicial plan for 22nd week

Protests continue despite prime minister's announcement in March that the contentious legal proposals were being put on hold.

Tens of thousands of protesters have rallied in Tel Aviv and other Israeli cities to protest judicial overhaul plans by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

The protests, now in their 22nd week, continued on Saturday despite Netanyahu's announcement in March that the contentious legal proposals were being put on hold.

In the central city of Tel Aviv, some 100,000 people waved Israeli flags, lit torches and beat drums, according to Israeli media.

"We will keep demonstrating to show them that even if they have paused in the reform plan, we will stay mobilised – they will not be able to pass laws on the sly," said Ilit Fayn, a 55-year-old dentist.

Netanyahu's government, a coalition between his Likud party and extreme-right as well as ultra-Orthodox Jewish allies, argues the proposed changes are needed to rebalance powers between legislators and

the judiciary.

Critics say it will grant the government unrestrained power and upend the country's system of checks and balances.

The plan would weaken the judiciary and limit judicial oversight on laws and government decisions, which critics say directly threatens civil rights as well as the rights of minorities and marginalised groups. Protests have continued even though the government and opposition are in talks to find a compromise on the plan.

"It's important for us to eliminate the possibility of Israel becoming a dictatorship," Arnon Oshri, a 66-year-old farmer, told the AFP news agency.

"This corrupt government is full of outlaws who are degrading our country to the level of a third-world country," he said.

"It took 2,000 years for the Jewish people to have a state and we cannot lose it because of a bunch of fanatics."

Source: News Agencies



An aerial view of protesters holding a banner with the Hebrew words 'the US is boycotting Bibi and Iran is galloping towards a bomb! The judicial overhaul is an existential threat!' during a demonstration against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's controversial judicial overhaul plans, in Tel Aviv, Israel, June 3, 2023 [Gitai Palti/ Reuters]

Sudan

Residents brace for Sudan army's recapture of Khartoum from RSF

Analysts suggest the Sudanese army pulled out of ceasefire talks to launch a major offensive to retake the capital, Khartoum.

A barrage of artillery shells hit a poor neighbourhood on May 31 in Khartoum, Sudan's capital.

Residents say the attack killed at least 18 civilians and wounded 106 others in a local market, yet nobody knows if it came from the Sudanese army or the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) – the two sides that have plunged the country into war to try to vanquish one another.

Residents said the RSF deployed to the neighbourhood shortly after the incident, resulting in continuing street battles with the army and fears that more civilians will die in the crossfire.

"The area is still being bombed as a result of the clashes between the two parties," said Fadeel Omer, 25, an activist from Mayo, the area where the attack took place.

"But with [the RSF's] deployment in the area, there is more fear of them than the [army's] bombing," he added.

The market attack could be the beginning of a serious escalation to come. A day earlier, the army pulled out of ceasefire talks in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The announcement suggested top army commander Abdel Fattah al-Burhan is preparing to wage a major offensive to retake the capital from the RSF, residents and experts told Al Jazeera.

Al-Burhan said he was open to resuming talks three days later, yet the RSF claimed the army's conditions were impossible to meet. An army

official reportedly said the army called for the RSF to stop occupying people's homes and hospitals before resuming negotiations.

Both sides have since been hit with US sanctions in an effort to target their war chests. With neither side budging, some civilians feared they would bear the brunt of a sharp uptick in violence. Others said they supported a major army attack.

"If that's what it takes to get rid of the RSF then so be it," said Mohamed Jamal, a resident in Khartoum. "We are being abused by them."

Dead in the water?

RSF, whose stronghold is in the western province of Darfur, never had a large constituency in Khartoum, a city historically home to Sudan's middle class and business elite. Despite the lack of support, the militia has made no effort to win hearts and minds in the capital despite claiming to support democracy on its social media networks.

The group has instead spread itself across the city to terrorise residents by looting homes, kidnapping young men, and raping women, residents and victims told Al Jazeera.

RSF's human rights violations have pushed many people to view the army as the lesser of two evils, with some overlooking the latter's indiscriminate air campaign. According to ACLED, a non-profit collecting data on conflicts in real-time, the army routinely hits civilian targets such as hospitals, schools and homes.

Kholood Khair, a Sudanese analyst and founding director of the think

tank Confluence Advisory, told Al Jazeera a large army offensive could jeopardise their support if they inflict too much harm on the civilian population.

"The army can't afford to lose any support – whether that be historic or symbolic – from its citizens in Khartoum because then they will really be dead in the water," she said.

"The RSF is just waiting and egging on the army to bomb the city so that its own [human rights] abuses can look pale in comparison to the people being indiscriminately killed in army attacks," she added.

Despite the risk a major army offensive poses to civilians, Khair said the army is likely to proceed in order to prove to their supporters they can liberate parts of the city.

An assault would also aim to secure some much-needed leverage before re-entering into negotiations with the RSF, she said.

"[An army] offensive would have two objectives. First, it is to demonstrate they can achieve military victories against the RSF, and [the second] is to save face before entering into a new platform for dialogue."

Bracing for battle

In Mayo, the neighbourhood where residents were killed and badly injured three days ago, Omer said many people are taking precautions to avoid the looming offensive.

Some have fled to other parts of the city, while others were thinking of fleeing Khartoum, if they can.

"Indeed, there is fear of a military attack in [Khartoum]," Omer told Al Jazeera. "The talks in Jeddah repre-



Sudan's army suspends ceasefire talks

sented a glimmer of hope for [everyone] to get out of the crisis. But after the withdrawal of the army, some people's dreams of ending the war faded away."

Since the start of the war, many people have sought refuge in Port Sudan, a city to the east that is entirely under the army's control. But the army recently stopped allowing buses into the city, blaming an alleged plot by RSF to sneak in spies.

The army's statement has people fearing RSF could launch attacks on Port Sudan in response for a major offensive on Khartoum.

"The [army] has already closed the region of Port Sudan and nobody understands why," said Sammer Hamza, 25, who escaped to the city from Khartoum last week.

"At night, we hear the exchange of

gunfire and bullets, but nobody knows what is happening. I just hope that nothing happens here. If a war happens in Port Sudan, then we are going to lose all of Sudan," she added.

Back in Khartoum, activists are preparing to deal with an increase in casualties. Omer said he is spending most of his time at a local hospital to help rescue people who survived the attack on the market.

"We [activists] are doing everything possible to save lives and mitigate the damage [in our neighbourhood] by providing health assistance," he said.

Source: Al Jazeera

North Korea says spy satellite launch crashed into sea

North Korea has said an accident happened as it planned to send up its first space satellite, causing it to crash into the sea.

Pyongyang announced earlier it planned to launch a satellite by 11 June to monitor US military activities.

It now says it will attempt a second launch as soon as possible.

The launch sparked a false alarm in the South Korean capital Seoul, while in Japan a warning was issued to residents of Okinawa, in the south.

There was chaos and confusion in Seoul as people awoke to the sound of an air raid siren and an emergency message telling them to prepare for an evacuation – only to be told 20 minutes later it had been sent in error.

The stakes are high on the Korean Peninsula, where tensions have existed between the two countries for 70 years, and this false alarm could seriously damage people's trust in the alert system.

North Korea poses a threat to South Korea, and if there is an alert in the future one question being asked is whether it will be taken seriously, or brushed off as another mistake.

Kim, a 33-year-old mother living in Seoul, told the BBC she was "very scared" when she received the emergency alert and started packing her



A South Korean handout picture of wreckage in the sea.

bags to evacuate.

"I didn't believe there would be a war, but after the war in Ukraine it made me think that North Korea or China might invade [South] Korea," she said, adding she thought Pyongyang had "lost its mind" and launched an invasion.

In a press conference, Seoul mayor Oh Se-hoon acknowledged the emergency text "may have been an overreaction" but said "there can be no compromise on safety".

He said the city would improve its warning system to avoid confusion, AFP news agency reports.

South Korea's military said the rocket might have broken up in mid-air or crashed after it vanished from radar early. It released pictures of wreckage found in the sea.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said North Korea appeared to have fired a ballistic missile and that the government was analysing the details.

He added that there were currently no reports of damage following the launch. Japan said previously it was ready to shoot down anything that threatened its territory.

On Tuesday, Ri Pyong Chol, vice-chairman of North Korea's ruling party's central military commission, announced the launch plan, saying it was in response to "reckless military acts" by the US and South Korea.

He accused the countries of "openly

revealing their reckless ambition for aggression".

The United States joined South Korea and Japan in condemning the launch, calling it a "brazen violation" of multiple UN Security Council resolutions.

"The door has not closed on diplomacy but Pyongyang must immediately cease its provocative actions and instead choose engagement," said Adam Hodge, National Security spokesman.

He added that the US will take "all necessary measures" to protect itself and its allies.

UN secretary general Antonio Guterres also condemned the move, saying any launch by Pyongyang using ballistic missile technology was "contrary" to the relevant security council resolutions.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has identified the development of military satellites as a key component of his country's defence.

Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said the North Korean government "likely sees itself in a space race", and that whether or not its current satellite mission is a success it "can be expected to issue political propaganda about its space capabilities".

Source: BBC

Sino-Africa

"Twinkle Star Project" launched to screen Chinese cartoons in Africa

CGTN

China Media Group (CMG) has launched an animation tour titled "Twinkle Star Project" in Nairobi, Kenya, to screen its original cartoons in schools of Kenya.

The launch ceremony, held on May 31st, or the eve of the Children's Day in many countries, saw representatives of international organizations, the Kenyan government, Chinese communities in Kenya as well as school children in Nairobi.

Peninah Malonza, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Heritage, said during her speech that, "The many programs of the Twinkle Star Project will undoubtedly provide an invaluable boost to the Africa-China cultural cooperation."

Selected CMG cartoons include "Monkey King" based on a popular Chinese classic novel, and "Zhang Qian, the Envoy" featuring a Chinese official whose travel outside of China 2100 years ago contributed to the creation of the ancient Silk Road.

The Twinkle Star Project will also feature a painting competition for Chinese and African children.

The event-packed project will run until the end of the year.



Incoming General Assembly President to prioritize ‘Peace, Prosperity, Progress and Sustainability’

By: Christine Muchira
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A veteran diplomat from Trinidad and Tobago was appointed President of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly on Thursday.

Ambassador Dennis Francis – who has had a nearly 40-year-career – will take the helm of the UN’s main policy-making body, starting in September.

He was elected by acclamation during a ceremony in the iconic General Assembly Hall at UN Headquarters in New York.

Promoting meaningful dialogue

The General Assembly consists of all 193 UN Member States, all of which have an equal vote.

Its duties include appointing the Secretary-General, on the recommendation of the Security Council, and approving the Organization’s annual budget.

Francis said he will prioritise encouraging and facilitating meaningful dialogue.

“It is my hope to bring forward, with your help and support, a renewed atmosphere of conciliation, cooperation and shared commitment in addressing the many challenges and seizing every opportunity, however nascent, before the General Assembly,” he said.

“I will seek to enhance current approaches and adopt new ones with probable solutions, as we endeavour to deliver or at least to strengthen the bases for delivering Peace, Pros-



Ambassador Dennis Francis

perity, Progress and Sustainability.”

He also spoke about the prominent role of education in his life and career and upheld the need to ensure all people have the chance to learn, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which call for ending extreme poverty and other deprivations, by 2030.

Rebuilding trust

The current General Assembly President, Csaba Kőrösi of Hungary, noted that his successor brings a

wealth of knowledge and experience to the post.

“Francis’ vision for the 78th session – ‘Peace, Prosperity, Progress and Sustainability’ – offers a comprehensive view of the work of the General Assembly as we rebuild trust in and within this institution, tackle climate change and strive to get the SDGs back on track,” he said.

With 100 days remaining in his administration, Mr. Kőrösi said he will continue to promote the use of sci-

ence for a sustainability transformation, namely in preparations for the SDG Summit during the High-Level Week of the General Assembly in September.

Critical perspective

UN Secretary-General António Guterres added that Francis’s tenure comes at “a deeply challenging moment”, amidst conflicts, climate chaos, and escalating poverty, hunger and inequality – while the SDGs are also “slipping out of reach”.

He said the incoming President also brings a critical perspective as many issues addressed in the General Assembly – such as climate change and an unjust global financial system – hit small island developing States like Trinidad and Tobago the hardest.

“We look forward to the President-elect carrying forward the theme of his presidency Peace, Prosperity, Progress and Sustainability – in the year ahead, and to bringing this Assembly together to strengthen global cooperation at this difficult moment,” he said.

A distinguished career

Francis is currently the Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the UN and has had a diplomatic career that spans nearly four decades.

During this period, he held the rank of Ambassador for 18 consecutive years until his compulsory retirement in 2016, making him the country’s longest serving Ambassador.

Before leaving office as the Director of Multilateral Relations, he served as Senior Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on all multilateral matters, including Climate Change and the negotiations for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which contains the SDGs.

Health

Peng Liyuan, OAFLAD initiate event to care for African orphans’ health

By: CGTN
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Ahead of International Children’s Day, Peng Liyuan, wife of Chinese President Xi Jinping, and the Organization of African First Ladies for Development (OAFLAD) jointly initiated the “Warm Children’s Hearts: a China-Africa Joint Action” event to care for the health of African orphans.

Chinese embassies and medical teams in relevant African countries visited children in local orphanages and institutions, donating stationery, food, clothes, shoes and medicine, as well as providing free medical services to them.

China is Africa’s eternal friend and sincere partner, Peng noted in the initiative.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Chinese government sending medical teams to Africa, Peng

said, adding Chinese medical teams have actively provided assistance for people in African countries, becoming a messenger of conveying China-Africa friendship.

It is hoped that the event can convey warmth and care, as well as improve the health and well-being of African children, so as to contribute to promoting the building of a China-Africa community with a shared future in the new era, said Peng.

Monica Geingos, president of the OAFLAD and first lady of the Republic of Namibia, together with members of the OAFLAD, actively responded to the initiative, and spoke highly of Peng’s long-term care and support for the development of women and children in Africa.

The presidents, wives of presidents and senior officials of many African countries attended the event in their countries, appreciating China’s long-term assistance and support for Af-



rica and voicing hope to write a new chapter of Africa-China friendship to create a better future together.
(Cover: The “Warm Children’s

Hearts: a China-Africa Joint Action” charity activity is held in Juba, South Sudan, May 30, 2023. /Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in

South Sudan)



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Turkey's President Erdogan announces new cabinet

Worth Noting:

Here is a full list of Erdogan's new cabinet:

- Vice President: Cevdet Yilmaz
- Foreign Minister: Hakan Fidan
- Treasury and Finance Minister: Mehmet Simsek
- Defence Minister: Yasar Guler
- Interior Minister: Ali Yerlikaya
- Education Minister: Yusuf Tekin
- Justice Minister: Yilmaz Tunc
- Family and Social Services Minister: Mahinur Ozdemir Goktas
- Labour and Social Security Minister: Vedat Isikhan
- Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change Minister: Mehmet Ozhaseki
- Energy and Natural Resources Minister: Alparslan Bayraktar
- Youth and Sports Minister: Osman Askin Bak
- Culture and Tourism Minister: Mehmet Nuri Ersoy
- Health Minister: Fahrettin Koca
- Industry and Technology Minister: Mehmet Fatih Kacir
- Agriculture and Forestry Minister: Ibrahim Yumakli
- Trade Minister: Omer Bolat
- Transport and Infrastructure Minister: Abdulkadir Uraloglu



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan next to his new treasury and finance minister, Mehmet Simsek, second from right, during a press conference in Ankara, Turkey, June 3, 2023 [Umit Bektas/Reuters]

An internationally respected former banker gets top economy job, powerful intelligence chief is named foreign minister.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has named former economy chief and internationally respected ex-banker Mehmet Simsek as treasury and finance minister as he unveiled his new cabinet. Erdogan, who was sworn into his third presidential term on Saturday, changed almost all of his cabinet members except for the ministers for health and culture.

Simsek was highly regarded by investors when he served as finance minister between 2009 and 2015 and deputy prime minister in charge of the economy until 2018, before stepping down in advance of a series of lira crashes that year.

His appointment could mark a departure from years of unorthodox economic policies under Erdogan, which have included maintaining low interest rates despite soaring inflation and

heavy state control of markets.

A former Merrill Lynch economist, Simsek is known to oppose Erdogan's unconventional policies.

Turkey is grappling with a cost-of-living crisis and inflation soared to 85 percent in October before easing to 44 percent in May. The currency has lost more than 10 percent of its value against the dollar since the start of the year.

Hakan Fidan, Erdogan's intelligence chief and a former soldier, was named as the new foreign minister replacing Mevlut Cavusoglu, who has served in the role since 2014.

One of Erdogan's closest aides, Fidan has headed the National Intelligence Organisation (MIT) since 2010 and before that was an adviser to Erdogan in the prime minister's office.

In 2012, Fidan was the subject of an inquiry, subsequently quashed, over secret peace talks that MIT had held with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) armed group in Oslo.

Yasar Guler, chief of general staff of the Turkish armed forces, was announced as defence minister, replacing Hulusi Akar. The 69-year-old was the military chief during Turkey's military incursions into Syria in 2019 and 2020, and oversaw subsequent military operations there and in Iraq.

Erdogan also announced that Cevdet Yilmaz will be his vice president. Yilmaz has previously served as minister of development, deputy chairman of Erdogan's Adalet ve Kalkinma Party's (Justice and Development Party, AK Party) economic affairs and as deputy prime minister in charge of the economy.

Yilmaz, 56, has been the chairman of the Turkish Parliament's Planning and Budget Commission since November 2020.

Ziya Meral, senior associate fellow at the European Leadership Network, described Fidan, Guler and Yilmaz as "dudes Erdogan can count on".

"The message all of this for the next 10 months, and if

not, for the next few years is going to be that Erdogan is focusing on strengthening against political opposition, addressing some of the concerns that almost cost them this election and pursue his vision for this new century of the Republic," Meral told Al Jazeera.

"And he's giving all this key portfolios to people that he trusts to deliver."

Here is a full list of Erdogan's new cabinet:

- Vice President: Cevdet Yilmaz
- Foreign Minister: Hakan Fidan
- Treasury and Finance Minister: Mehmet Simsek
- Defence Minister: Yasar Guler
- Interior Minister: Ali Yerlikaya
- Education Minister: Yusuf Tekin
- Justice Minister: Yilmaz Tunc
- Family and Social Services Minister: Mahinur Ozdemir Goktas
- Labour and Social Security Minister: Vedat

Isikhan

Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change Minister: Mehmet Ozhaseki

Energy and Natural Resources Minister: Alparslan Bayraktar

Youth and Sports Minister: Osman Askin Bak

Culture and Tourism Minister: Mehmet Nuri Ersoy

Health Minister: Fahrettin Koca

Industry and Technology Minister: Mehmet Fatih Kacir

Agriculture and Forestry Minister: Ibrahim Yumakli

Trade Minister: Omer Bolat

Transport and Infrastructure Minister: Abdulkadir Uraloglu

Source: Al Jazeera and news agencies

Senegal shuts social media as protesters die after Sonko sentencing

BBC

Social media and messaging platforms have been blocked in Senegal after unrest erupted over the sentencing of opposition leader Ousmane Sonko.

At least nine people were killed when Sonko's supporters clashed with police in several cities on Thursday.

Sonko was not in court when he was given a two-year jail term for immoral behaviour, but cleared of rape charges.

The justice minister said he could be arrested at any time – and police are surrounding his house in the capital. His supporters fear the conviction could prevent the 48-year-old politician from contesting next year's presidential election.

Hundreds of officers are blocking his supporters from reaching his home in Dakar – and even his lawyers have been unable to visit him. When the court handed down its verdict on Thursday, Sonko's Pastef party called on people to "take to the streets".

Interior Minister Antoine Félix Diome said the government had imposed restrictions on social media to stop the "dissemination of hate and subversive messages".

People are upset about the move,

which is affecting popular apps like Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, Telegram, TikTok, WhatsApp and YouTube.

They can be accessed using a virtual private network (VPN), but not everyone is aware about such software and how it works.

Several districts of the capital saw clashes – some of the worst confrontations were at the university campus in the city centre where police fired tear gas as vehicles burned and black smoke billowed over the area. Many businesses closed – and some remained shut on Friday.

There was also violence in the southern city of Ziguinchor, where Sonko is mayor.

Sonko is very popular among unemployed youth and has undergone a meteoric political rise in the last few years.

After his dismissal as a tax inspector in 2016, he was elected to parliament and became mayor of Ziguinchor.

The government has rejected accusations that this case against the opposition leader, as well as others he has faced, were politically motivated.

He was accused of sexually assaulting and threatening a massage therapist at a beauty salon in 2021, which he denied.



Ousmane Sonko's party called on people to "take to the streets" after the verdict. GETTY IMAGES

Adding to the political tension is the belief that President Macky Sall

plans to stay in office for an unconstitutional third term, though he has

made no mention of such intentions.

Crime

Al-Shabab killed 54 Ugandan soldiers in Somalia, says Museveni

Announcement comes a week after al-Shabab fighters stormed a base housing African Union peacekeepers in Somalia.

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni has announced the deaths of 54 Ugandan soldiers in an al-Shabab attack on a base housing African Union peacekeepers in Somalia.

Museveni's statement on Saturday comes a week after al-Shabab fighters stormed the base in Bulamarer, 130 kilometres (80 miles) southwest of the Somali capital, Mogadishu.

The armed group claimed it carried out suicide bomb attacks on May 26 and killed 137 soldiers.

Museveni said on Saturday that the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) had since recaptured the base from the al-Qaeda-linked armed group.

"Our soldiers demonstrated remarkable resilience and reorganised themselves, resulting in the recapture of the base by Tuesday," the president said.

Museveni said last week that there had been Ugandan casualties but had not given further details about the attack on the troops, who are

serving in the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). Al-Shabab has been fighting since 2006 to replace Somalia's Western-backed government with its own rule based on a strict interpretation of Islamic law.

Last August, an intensive government offensive began after the election victory of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and has made significant gains in eroding the group's control of vast swathes of Somali land.

But al-Shabab is still capable of launching significant attacks on government, commercial and military targets.

It also intermittently launches attacks in neighbouring Kenya as part of reprisals for Nairobi sending troops to support Mogadishu's rebel pushback.

ATMIS, which has 22,000 troops, has been assisting Somalia's federal government in its war against al-Shabab since 2022 when it replaced the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Source: News Agencies



A soldier serving in the African Union Mission in Somalia jumps off a military vehicle near the scene of a suicide explosion in Mogadishu, Somalia, November 11, 2021 [File: Feisal Omar/ Reuters]

Wagner boss says Russian forces laid mines to harm his fighters



Founder of the Wagner mercenary force Yevgeny Prigozhin makes a statement at the start of the withdrawal of his forces from Bakhmut in this still image released on May 25, 2023 [File: Telegram channel of "Concord group"/AFP]

Worth Noting:

- Prigozhin complained for months that his men were not given enough ammunition by Russia's top brass for the assault on Bakhmut and claimed that his fighters were being discriminated against.

- The Wagner boss's often expletive-laden criticism of the Russian military leadership was criticised by another pro-Moscow commander who has fought in Ukraine – potentially signally growing fissures among the Kremlin's allied forces in the war.

- Addressing Prigozhin in a video message on Thursday, and using the diminutive of "Zhenya" and the familiar Russian form of you ("ty"), Adam Delimkhanov, a close ally of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, cast the Wagner boss as a blogger who shouts all the time.

Mercenary force boss Yevgeny Prigozhin says Russian defence officials planted explosives on route of Wagner fighters withdrawal from Bakhmut city.

The boss of Russia's Wagner mercenary force, Yevgeny Prigozhin, has continued his months-long war of words with the leadership of the Russian armed forces by accusing pro-Moscow forces of planting explosives to harm his fighters as they retreated from Bakhmut.

Prigozhin made his claims on Friday as Wagner mercenaries had largely pulled back from the eastern Ukrainian town of Bakhmut after months of bloody fighting and a huge death toll. Wagner positions in the destroyed town were given over to the Russian army, he said.

Writing on Telegram, Prigozhin said his men had discovered a dozen locations in rear areas where Russian defence ministry officials had planted various explosive devices, including hundreds of anti-tank mines.

When asked why the mines had been laid and the explo-

sives set, the defence ministry officials indicated it was an order from their superiors, Prigozhin said.

"It was not necessary to plant these charges in order to deter the enemy, as it (the area in question) is in the rear area," he said.

"Therefore, we can assume that these charges were intended to meet the advancing units of Wagner," Prigozhin said.

None of the charges went off and no one was hurt, he added

"We assume this was an attempt at a public flogging." Russia's defence ministry was not immediately available for comment.

Prigozhin complained for months that his men were not given enough ammunition by Russia's top brass for the assault on Bakhmut and claimed that his fighters were being discriminated against.

The Wagner boss's often expletive-laden criticism of the Russian military leadership was criticised by another pro-Moscow commander who has fought in Ukraine – potentially signally growing

fissures among the Kremlin's allied forces in the war.

Addressing Prigozhin in a video message on Thursday, and using the diminutive of "Zhenya" and the familiar Russian form of you ("ty"), Adam Delimkhanov, a close ally of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, cast the Wagner boss as a blogger who shouts all the time.

"You have become a blogger who screams and shouts off to the whole world about all the problems," Delimkhanov said. "Stop shouting, yelling and screaming," he said.

"If you don't understand, then you can contact us and tell us the place and the

time, I, we will, explain to you what you don't understand," Delimkhanov said in the message to Prigozhin.

The message then drew a swift rebuke from one of Wagner's most senior fighters, Dmitry Utkin, a former special forces officer who served in Russian military intelligence.

"Where did such familiarity come from: who gave you the right to use the address 'ty' and 'Zhenya'?" Utkin said in a message which Prigozhin reposted on Telegram.

"Certain citizens should be put against a wall for the SHAME that we have," Utkin said.

"We are always ready to talk man to man," he said.

Chechen leader Kadyrov had last year supported some of Prigozhin's criticism of Russia's top brass but their relations have distanced in recent months.

Kadyrov is also a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin and has recently refrained from echoing criticism of the defence ministry.

Source: News Agencies

