

Niger junta accuses France of violating airspace, destabilising country

Niger's junta accused France on Wednesday of violating its airspace as part of a broader plan to destabilise the country, ratcheting up rhetoric in a way that left little hope for a swift diplomatic resolution of the crisis there.

The video statement by junta representative Amadou Abdramane, which provided no evidence, came at a moment of high tension, with West African heads of state due to discuss options including military action against the junta at a summit today, Reuters reported. It also came hours after news emerged that a former rebel leader had launched a movement opposing the junta that took power in a July 26 coup, a first sign of internal resistance to army rule in the strategically important Sahel country.

Anti-French rhetoric has been a feature of other coups in the region over the past two years, includ-



General Abdourahmane Tiani, who was declared as the new head of state of Niger by leaders of a coup, arrives to meet with ministers in Niamey, Niger, on July 28, 2023.
● BALIMA BOUREIMA/REUTERS

ing in Mali and Burkina Faso, whose army rulers are strongly backing the generals now in charge in Niamey. It is not the first time that

the Niger coup leaders have accused France of breaching their airspace. Paris has denied doing so. There was no immediate French reaction on Wednesday to the

junta's latest statement. The coup was triggered by internal politics, but has spun out into an international drama, with West African regional bloc ECOW-

AS, the United Nations and Western countries putting pressure on the junta to stand down, while Mali and Burkina Faso have vowed to defend it.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Assad blames Turkey for violence in Syria



AP - Syria's President Bashar Assad slammed Turkey in comments published Wednesday, blaming Ankara for the uptick in violence in his war-torn country and insisting on the withdrawal of Turkish forces from Syria. Assad spoke in an interview with Sky News Arabia, his first interview with a foreign media outlet in months. The interview is to be fully aired later on Wednesday but Sky News Arabia released some excerpts ahead of the broadcast.

41 migrants missing after new Mediterranean shipwreck

AFP - Forty-one migrants including three children are feared dead after being shipwrecked last week in the Mediterranean, UN agencies said, citing four survivors brought to the Italian island of Lampedusa Wednesday. Their metal boat overturned in bad weather during the night of Thursday to Friday after setting off from the Tunisian port of Sfax, said a joint statement from the UN agencies for refugees, children and migration. The survivors - a 13-year-old boy on his own, a woman and two men - drifted for days before being rescued by a merchant ship on Tuesday, they said. They were finally brought to Lampedusa by the Italian coastguard on Wednesday. In a separate statement, the Italian Red Cross, which manages the migrant reception centre on the island, said the four were generally in good health.

Poland to send additional 2k troops to Belarus border

Poland will send an additional 2,000 troops to reinforce its eastern border with neighbouring Belarus, a deputy interior minister said Wednesday, as a record number of migrants try to cross. "This will not be a reinforcement of 1,000 but of 2,000 soldiers," Maciej Wasik told the PAP state news agency, adding that the move was approved by the defence minister following a request from the national border agency for extra manpower, AFP reported. The troops are slated to

be deployed within two weeks and will join the 2,000 soldiers already stationed near the border. Poland has recently warned of the threat of provocations from Belarus and potential dangers posed by the Wagner mercenary group based there. Warsaw has also accused Belarus and Russia of orchestrating a new migration influx into the European Union in order to destabilise the region. Wasik on Wednesday added that all attempts

of illegal crossings into Poland through that route are staged by the Belarusian services. "If on the other side we had real border guards, and not smuggling officers, these crossings wouldn't exist at all," Wasik said. According to the Polish border guard, 19,000 migrants have tried to enter Poland from Belarus so far this year, compared to 16,000 during all of 2022. Last month alone, more than 4,000 migrants tried to cross the border.

China, Philippines' dispute over grounded warship heats up

China again asked the Philippines to tow away a grounded warship - a World War Two-era vessel now used as a military outpost - from a disputed shoal on Tuesday, after Manila rejected Beijing's earlier demand. Tensions have soared between the two neighbours over the South China Sea under Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, with Manila pivoting back to the United States, which supports the Southeast Asian nation in its maritime disputes with China, Reuters reported. China's embassy in Manila criticised Washington for "gathering" its allies to

continue "hyping up" the South China Sea issue and the boat incident. "South China Sea is not a 'safari park' for countries outside the region to make mischief and sow discord," the embassy said in a statement on Tuesday. The Second Thomas Shoal, which lies within the Philippines exclusive economic zone, is home to a handful of troops living aboard the former warship Sierra Madre. Manila deliberately grounded the vessel in 1999 to reinforce its sovereignty claims. Manila has repeatedly accused the Chinese coastguard of blocking resupply missions to its troops

there, as it did on Aug. 5 when it sprayed a Philippine vessel with a water cannon. China maintains the Philippines' occupation of the shoal is illegal. The Philippine military described the Chinese coastguard's actions on Saturday as "excessive and offensive". China said the incident was a "warning" and that it has exercised "rational restraint" at all times. China's defence ministry on Tuesday urged Manila to stop all "provocative" actions, and vowed to continue taking necessary measures to safeguard sovereignty and maritime rights.



BRP Sierra Madre, a dilapidated Philippine Navy ship that has been grounded since 1999 is pictured on the disputed Second Thomas Shoal, part of the Spratly Islands, in the South China Sea March 29, 2014.
● ERIK DE CASTRO/REUTERS

True peril of Imran Khan's arrest



By Syed Ali Hassan
Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

Pakistan's former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif seems to have sought retribution for his disqualification by having Imran Khan, the country's most popular leader, arrested, an allegedly controversial decision by a lower court in the country. Imran Khan's arrest stems from his alleged involvement in a case that could have harmful effects not only on Pakistani politicians but also on top military leadership, bureaucracy, and diplomats. However, the danger doesn't solely reside in this arrest; the true peril lies in the potential impact on Pakistan's economic system, which is

on the brink of financial bankruptcy. Pakistan's economy has fallen to a weaker state than Afghanistan's. Since the PDM ruling alliance, comprising various political parties, took power, the citizens of this nation have struggled to afford basic meals due to escalating monthly inflation. In July, there was a recorded inflation rate of 1.6 percent in food grains. Pakistan's monetary policy has deterred investors from investing, factories are closing and unemployment is increasing, and business activities are being restricted due to high-interest rates. After the approval of a loan of 3 billion US dollars by the IMF, there was a possibility that Pakistan would move towards economic stability, but it did not happen. Pakistan's corrupt extrav-

aganza arrested Imran Khan after a controversial court ruling to keep him in their ranks. Since the removal of the Imran Khan's government, Pakistan has been facing continuous crises. Imran Khan's initial arrest triggered a strong public reaction. When paramilitary organization Rangers apprehended him, public anger manifested as a backlash against the army. Conversely, overseas Pakistanis conveyed their dissatisfaction by withholding remittances, which play a pivotal role in Pakistan's financial system. Imran Khan's arrest is unlikely to lead to riots as the organizational structure of Tehreek-e-Insaf has been destroyed by state institutions, but public outcry will take a different form and add to Pakistan's economic crisis.

Second Announcement

Tender invitation

Invitation to public tender for Potassium Carbonate // 65500kg

Tabriz petrochemical company intends to procure its required quantity of Potassium Carbonate for Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS) production plant from reputable & reliable producer and supplier of said product. Interested suppliers should submit their request to below email in order to get tender documents until Aug13, 2023.

Deadline for submission of offers for tender is Aug24, 2023.

Email: n.ahmadian@tpco.ir

Phone No.: +98-41-34217426

Tender	No	Quantity
Potassium Carbonate	PVS-0241026	65500 kg

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