



USD	01	GBP	01	INR	1000	PKR	1000	EUR	01	BR	1000	AED	01
AFN	75.60	AFN	18.95	AFN	1994	AFN	498	AFN	53.84	AFN	6.37	AFN	21.22

## Nigeria school kidnappers abduct man delivering ransom

The elderly man was seen by the kidnappers after they managed to raise 100 million (17,000 US dollars) by selling land and other possessions.

But they have been left feeling hopeless following his kidnapping.

The north of the country is in the midst of a wave of school abductions carried out by criminals for profit.

Ransoms are frequently paid, but this is a rare case where the person carrying the cash has been taken.

The kidnappers called up the school's headteacher to say that the money delivered was not the agreed sum.

The 150 students were taken from an Islamic school in Togo, Niger state, in last May.

Gunmen riding on motorcycles stormed the town and opened fire indiscriminately killing one person and capturing another.

As people fled, the attackers went to the school and seized the children.

The parents and school administrators negotiated with the criminals and agreed to pay the ransom. They sold part of the school's land as well as other possessions.

Headteacher Madan Abubakar Abbas said the BBC that six people were seen with the ransom amount to meet the kidnappers near the fence where the children were being held.

When they arrived, the gunmen demanded that one of the group, an elderly man, follow them into the fence so that the cash could be counted.

But they later called to say the money was not sufficient.

"Parents are now resigned to fate. They are now relying on God," Mr. Abbas said.

The BBC said more than 1,000 students have been abducted from schools across northern Nigeria since the center last year.

Headteacher Abbas said he is still in custody. The authorities are believed to have released him but did not make the country's schools safe from the kidnappers including the deepening kidnapping crisis.

## Two Turkish soldiers killed in attack in northern Syria: Ministry



Two Turkish soldiers have been killed and two wounded in an attack on a Turkish military base in northern Syria, Turkey's defense ministry said on Saturday.

The ministry said Turkish forces immediately launched a military fire.

Media reports said the attack was the first since the YPG, which forms the backbone of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a "terrorist" group linked to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a Kurdish separatist group in Turkey.

The PKK is designated a "terrorist group" by the United States and the European Union.

The ministry said Turkish forces have "neutralized" the YPG positions from military posts in the area.

It is unclear how these attacks are going to continue through the night.



## Saudi Arabia's air defenses intercept four Houthi militia drones

Two Israeli airlines launched their first commercial flights between Israel and Morocco on Sunday, less than a year after the country officially normalized relations.

Israel's flight departed Tel Aviv for Marrakech with around 100 Israeli tourists, the company said.

Israel's Transport Minister Yoel Regev said the new direct flight would "help advance fruitful tourism, trade and economic cooperation and diplomatic agreements between the two countries."

## Israeli airlines launch first direct flights to Morocco

Israel and Morocco agreed to normalize relations in late 2020 as part of the U.S. brokered "Abraham Accords." Morocco was among the Arab nations, along with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Sudan, to establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

As part of the deal, the United States agreed to recognize Morocco's claim to the long-disputed Western Sahara region, however the Biden administration said it will reverse this decision.

Morocco's 1975 annexation of Western Sahara is not recognized by the United Nations.

Many Israeli Jews have long

## Iran's support for militias must be included in nuclear deal talks: GCC chief



Iran's support for militias in the region should be included in ongoing talks in Vienna and the meeting should be limited to only resolving the nuclear deal, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary-General Nayef bin Fahd al-Fahd said at a virtual GCC Research Meeting on Saturday.

Iran's interference in the internal affairs of other countries poses a threat to the region and is a matter of concern, he said.

The current situation in Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon presents a clear and direct threat to the security and stability of the Middle East, al-Fahd added.

"The security and stability of the region is of great importance to the security of the world," he said.

Iran has been engaged in negotiations with major powers on resolving its 2015 nuclear deal in Vienna since April. Talks have been temporarily paused until Iranian President-elect Ebrahim Raisi takes office in August.

The deal was halted in 2018 after former US President Donald Trump withdrew from the deal and reimposed sanctions on Iran.

## Mexican president calls Cuba 'example,' wants OAS replaced



President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said Saturday that Cuba was an "example" of how a country should be governed, and proposed the entire country should be declared a World Heritage site.

While much of Cuba seems stuck technologically in the middle of the last century, López Obrador did not appear to be speaking sarcastically when he proposed the world heritage designation, which is usually used by the United Nations to honor historical sites.

The Mexican leader praised Cuba's ability to stand up to U.S. hostility since 1959. López Obrador did not mention recent street protests that were violently repressed by the Cuban government.

López Obrador has in the past issued his opposition to U.S. sanctions that limit commerce with the island, and said they should be ended.

López Obrador also said the Organization of American States should be replaced "by a body that truly represents, not everybody's lackey."

Mexico is publicly disgraced with the OAS leadership over its role in the political situation in countries like Bolivia.

López Obrador spoke Saturday at a ceremony attended by Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez, who led the fight to remove several South American countries from Spanish rule in the early 1960s.

The Mexican government has said it is sending two more ships to Cuba with food and medical aid.

The Foreign Relations Department said the ships will carry organic foods, medicine and other supplies, and have food items like rice and beans.

The announcement came on Thursday, the same day that the U.S. government tightened the sanctions on some Cuban officials after they voluntarily put down rare street protests earlier this month.

The new sanctions target a Cuban official and a government official behind the United States says was involved in human rights abuses during the government crackdown.



Saudi air defenses intercepted four Houthi militia drones and a ballistic missile targeting Saudi Arabia's southern region on Saturday, according to Al Arabiya news outlet from the region.

The coalition forces said that missiles are being taken to protect civilians against hostility from the Iran-backed Houthi militia forces in Yemen.

An Al-Jazeera satellite reported in Yemen's civil war in March 2015.

Direct attacks by Houthi forces on Saudi targets have become common in recent years.

Al-Jazeera