THE BREAKFAST TABLE

DAILY

"The day's news, for everyone at the table."

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TOP STORY • UKRAINE

Why Two Messengers Flew From Moscow to Dublin in One Day

The talks about Ukraine's war go on, and Europe wants a chair at the table.

Written and fact-checked by AI · News Pebbles

When two people are too upset to talk, a friend sometimes carries messages between them. Countries do this too. On Thursday two Americans, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, carried messages about the war in Ukraine. They met Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, in Moscow. Then they flew to Dublin, in Ireland, to report to Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The talking is not finished. A Russian official called the Moscow meeting useful and said the three-way talks will continue. Witkoff said, "I think progress was made."

The hardest question has not moved. Putin said he would not soften his demands for land in Ukraine. Meanwhile, leaders were meeting in Dublin. About 40 countries there said choices about Europe's safety should be made with Europe's governments. Witkoff said Europeans will take part in the next stage.

FROM ONE LEADER TO THE OTHER



The map marks Russia, Ukraine and Ireland.

WHY IT MATTERS

Wars usually end after many meetings, not one.

*New to this story? Catch up with **The story so far** on Read & Play.*

WORLD • INDONESIA

Indonesia's Vice President Steps Down Over His School Papers

Courts said his documents did not meet the rules for the job.

To run for Indonesia's top jobs, a person must have finished high school, or schooling that counts the same. That rule is at the centre of a big change in Indonesia, a country in Southeast Asia.

On Thursday the vice president, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, resigned, which means he gave up his job. He is 39, the eldest son of former president Joko Widodo, and had served two years of a five-year term. He finished school in another country. Last month two top courts ruled that the papers he gave about that schooling did not meet the election rules.

On Wednesday, 120 lawmakers began steps that could have removed him. President Prabowo Subianto said he accepted the resignation with a "heavy heart." There will be no new election. Instead, the president names two candidates. Then a large assembly of lawmakers elects one of them within 60 days.

HOW A NEW VICE PRESIDENT IS CHOSEN

1. The president names two candidates
2. An assembly of lawmakers elects one of them
3. The choice must be made within 60 days

Indonesia fills the empty post without a national election.

CONNECT THE DOTS

Civics: Many countries write down who may hold a top job, and courts check the rules are followed. In Indonesia the vice president's main task is to stand in for the president.

UNITED STATES • ELECTIONS

A Senate Race So Close It Took Days to Count

Democrat Scott Colom won Mississippi with 49.2% of the vote.

Most elections are decided on the night of the vote. In the state of Mississippi, the race for a seat in the United States Senate was far too close for that. At the end of election night, just 65 votes separated the two candidates.

So officials spent days counting the ballots that were left. On Wednesday the result was clear. Scott Colom, a Democrat, had 49.2% of the vote. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith, a Republican, had 48.7%.

Hyde-Smith phoned Colom to concede, which means to accept that she had lost. She said she respects “the decision of Mississippi voters.” Colom, 43, is a prosecutor, a lawyer who brings cases to court. He will be Mississippi’s first Black senator since Reconstruction, the years after the American Civil War. He promised to represent all Mississippians, including those who did not vote for him.

WHY IT MATTERS

A tiny gap decided who speaks for a whole state.

Also in United States

• Senate: Democrats will hold at least 55 seats from January; only Alaska’s race is still undecided.

• Climate: California’s governor, Gavin Newsom, met Turkish firefighters at the climate summit in Antalya.

ONE-LINE BRIEFS

• Climate: Solomon Islands, a Pacific island country, promised $400,000 to a world climate fund.

• Science: Thirty years of air measurements show the ocean is soaking up more carbon, while the land is not.

TALK ABOUT IT

TALK ABOUT IT

When two people will not talk to each other, how can a go-between help, and what can go wrong?

Should a leader have to prove they finished school? Why might a country make that rule?

Which foods in our kitchen would we notice first if their price doubled?

INDIA • PRICES

Onions Cost Twice as Much, and India’s Prices Cross a Limit

Inflation reached 6.09% in October, above the central bank’s top limit of 6%.

Onions go into so many meals that their price is felt in kitchens across India. This October, onions cost more than twice as much as a year earlier. Garlic, ginger and lemons were much dearer too, though potatoes and cauliflower got cheaper.

Numbers like these come from a government check of prices in more than 1,400 city markets and more than 1,400 villages. On Thursday it reported October’s inflation, the yearly rise in prices: 6.09%, up from 5.54% the month before. For food alone it was 8.94%.

The Reserve Bank of India, the country’s central bank, tries to hold inflation between 2% and 6%. October broke through the top of that range, which had not happened for two years. To slow prices, the bank can raise its main interest rate, now 5.5%, which makes borrowing cost more. Its committee meets from 2 to 4 December. Economist Aditi Nayar said a rise is “almost certain.” She also warned that weak monsoon rains could keep food prices high.

WHY IT MATTERS

Villages felt it most: prices there rose 6.63%, against 5.41% in cities.

SPORTS CORNER

CRICKET: SEVEN WICKETS IN A FIRST TEST

Playing his first Test match, Pakistan’s **Saqib Khan** took **7 wickets for 130 runs** as Sri Lanka were bowled out for 446 in Rawalpindi. Pakistan were 57 for 1 when rain ended day four, a lead of 45 runs.

TOMORROW'S WATCHLIST

• What Zelenskyy says after hearing the messengers’ report in Dublin.

• Who European leaders choose to speak for them in the talks.

“Keeping a conversation going is slow work, and it is still work worth doing.”

Keep exploring. See you tomorrow.