

## Headlines:

- **Tunisian President Extends Suspension**
- **Ann San Sui Kui Given Sentence**
- **Virtual Conference to Save Democracy**

## Details:

### Tunisian President Extends Suspension

Tunisian President Kais has revealed the extension of the suspension of the country's parliament, announcing that a referendum on constitutional reform will be held in July 2022, followed by parliamentary elections in December. In a speech on national television, Saied announced a "popular consultation" with the Tunisian people and said that "other draft constitutional and other changes will be put forward to referendum on July 25", a year after he sacked the government and seized an array of powers. Saied, who was elected in late 2019, sacked the government, suspended parliament and assumed exceptional powers on 25 July, citing an "imminent threat" to the country amid a socio-economic crisis aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic. On 22 September, he suspended parts of the constitution and installed rule by decree, maintaining full control of the judiciary as well as powers to sack ministers and issue laws.

### Ann San Sui Kui Given Sentence

A court in military-ruled Myanmar has ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi and found her guilty of inciting dissent and breaking Covid rules, in the first of a series of verdicts that could see her jailed for life. Aung San Suu Kyi was initially given a four year term. The sentence was reduced after a partial pardon from coup leader and army chief Min Aung Hlaing, state TV reported. UN Human Rights Chief Michelle Bachelet condemned the "sham trial" and said it would only "deepen rejection of the coup". UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, meanwhile, called on Myanmar to release all political prisoners and allow a return to democracy. "The arbitrary detention of elected politicians only risks further unrest," she said. Aung San Suu Kyi spent nearly 15 years in detention at the hands of the military between 1989 and 2010, and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her work to bring democracy to Myanmar. However her reputation abroad was severely damaged when she supported the military's action against the Rohingyas, which started in 2017. After five decades of rule, the Myanmar military opened up the country from isolation. Suu Kyi was the bridge between the international community and Myanmar. After the Rohingya crisis, Myanmar military sees it as a pretext of foreign meddling in the country. The military now wants to remove Suu Kyi once and for all as she is supported by the international community.

### Virtual Conference to Save Democracy

In a video linked gathering of 80 world leaders, Joe Biden launched his virtual "Summit for Democracy" with a warning that democratic rights and norms are under threat around the world, including in the US. He cited studies that found that global freedom has now been in retreat for 15 consecutive years and that more than half of all democracies experienced a decline in the past decade, acknowledging the decline in his own. A watchdog group, Civicus Monitor, reported that nine out of ten of the world's population live in countries where civic freedoms are severely restricted. A series of initiatives were announced which aim at supporting civil rights with a total spend of \$424 million with some of it earmarked to independent media in places where they are under threat, through a fund to be run by "leading international media experts". He urged leaders to "lock arms" to strengthen democracies and demonstrate their worth. The summit and the list of initiatives by President Biden were widely criticised at home and abroad when critics pointed out that he hasn't been doing much to stem the democratic decline in the US. The Russian and Chinese (both nations were excluded from the summit) ambassadors to Washington published a joint commentary in the National Interest, denouncing the Biden administration for adopting a divisive "cold-war mentality". Pakistan had pulled out of the summit without giving a reason, a decision cheered by the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson.