

H-1B Visa: Trump backs 'competent people'

Favours visa for applicants at all levels, not just engineers



US President Trump speaks in the Roosevelt Room as Masayoshi Son (R), Chairman and CEO of SoftBank Group Corp and Larry Ellison (C), Executive Chairman Oracle listen at the White House in Washington, on Tuesday

PTI, WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has said he likes both sides of the argument on the H-1B foreign guest workers' visa, noting that the country needs 'very competent' and 'great' people which is possible through this visa programme.

The latest statement comes in the backdrop of his radical executive order issued on the first day of his second term, titled 'Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship', Trump stripped away birth right citizenship in the country. This decision will affect all those with temporary visa status in the US — including those who have an H-1-B visa.

The decision will be applicable to all children born in the US from

"I like both sides of the argument, but I also like very competent people coming into our country, even if that involves them training and helping other people who may not have the qualifications they do. But I don't want to stop — and I'm not just talking about engineers, I'm talking about people at all levels"

— Donald Trump, US President

February 20.

President Trump also said that he has also used the H-1-B visa programme.

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VIVEK RAMASWAMY'S EXIT FROM DOGE LINKED TO H1-B VISA

AGENCY: US President Donald Trump's newest confidant Elon Musk has ousted Vivek Ramaswamy from the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) team just 69 days after its inception reportedly over growing displeasure in Republican circles over the Indian-American leader's comments on the H-1-B visa system and American culture. Allies of Ramaswamy, however, have downplayed his exodus pointing at his gubernatorial ambitions in Ohio.

Sources close to Musk, the world's richest man, maintaining anonymity, told Politico that the disconcerting Tesla CEO wanted Ramaswamy out over the latter's barrage of tweets criticising the H-1-B visa system in the country last month after Trump's election win.

Vivek Ramaswamy, 39, in December, had criticised the current H-1-B process again, calling it a 'broken lottery system' and likening it to 'indentured servitude'.

"I've long said the current H-1B system is badly broken & needs to be gutted," Ramaswamy tweeted in December.

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VIVA GOA



Artistes of Goa tableau that will participate in the Republic Day Parade 2025 during a press preview at Rashtriya Rangshala Camp in New Delhi, on Wednesday

R G Kar case: CBI seeks death sentence for Sanjay Roy in HC

HC to hear the CBI, victim's family, convict on January 27

PTI, NEW DELHI: The CBI filed an appeal on Wednesday before the Calcutta High Court, seeking death sentence for Sanjay Roy, who was sentenced to "life imprisonment until death" by a Sealdah court in the rape-cum-murder case of an on-duty doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, officials said.

The agency made the move after receiving a

legal advice that the brutal rape and murder of the 31-year-old trainee doctor comes under the "rarest of rare" category deserving capital punishment, they said.

Highly placed officials said the CBI was unanimous that the case deserves nothing but death penalty, seeing the manner in which the doctor was killed in her medical college.

The CBI's plea seeking death penalty for Roy was turned down by the trial court, where Additional District and Sessions Judge Anirban Das said the crime did not fall under the "rarest of rare" category.

"The CBI prayed for the death penalty. The defence lawyer prayed that a jail term be given instead of the death penalty. This crime does not

fall under the 'rarest of the rare' category," the judge said on Monday while sentencing Roy.

"I am sentencing you to life imprisonment, meaning till the last day of your life, for causing injury during the act of committing rape on the victim that led to her death....," he told Roy.

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Saif meets auto driver who rushed him to hospital

Thanks, gives him money; auto driver declines to divulge the amount



Actor Saif Ali Khan with auto-rickshaw driver Bhajan Singh Rana at the Lilavati Hospital, in Mumbai

PTI, MUMBAI: Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan has expressed his gratitude to auto-rickshaw driver Bhajan Singh Rana, who provided critical assistance by rushing him to the hospital following a knife attack at Khan's residence in Mumbai last week.

In an interview with PTI, Rana said that Khan not only thanked him for his timely help but also offered him financial support, although the exact amount

"I met him (Saif) yesterday (Tuesday) at the hospital. He called to thank me for taking him to the hospital. He praised me. I got the blessings from him and his family. He (Khan) introduced me to his mother (Sharmila Tagore), and I touched her feet. He gave me (money) whatever he felt was right, and said whenever I need help he will be there"

— Bhajan Singh Rana, auto-rickshaw driver

remains unclear. Reports suggest that Rana, originally hailing from Uttarakhand, may have received around Rs 50,000, though the driver has chosen not to confirm this figure, citing a promise to Khan.

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HC orders TCP to probe 'illegal hill cutting' in Nerul

Petitioner claims authorities did not crack down on hill cutting and construction in 'No Development Slope' area; says home-stay is running without permissions

Team Herald

PANJIM: Cuncolim, Xeldem, Guirdolim... and now Nerul. The threat of illegal hill-cutting that is laying to waste Goa's verdant but fragile ecosystems has raised its head in Nerul, with Jeanette Fernandes, a senior citizen from the area, filing a writ petition in the High Court of Bombay at Goa to stop the illegal activity.

Based on this, the High Court on Wednesday ordered the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department to investigate the allegations of illegal hill cutting and commercial activities in the No Development Slope (NDS) area.

According to the petition, the unauthorised activities are taking place in Survey Numbers 101/1 and 101/2, located within the NDS zone.

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WRIT PETITION HIGHLIGHTS UNAUTHORISED ACTIVITY

▶ Petitioner Jeanette Fernandes claims unauthorised activities are taking place in Survey Numbers 101/1 and 101/2, located within the NDS zone

▶ Alleges local authorities have failed to take action against the unlawful developments, which were carried out without proper permissions in an eco-sensitive area, as per the Regional Plan

▶ Wants court order to seal unauthorised structures and halt ongoing commercial activities as there are no occupancy certificates for these ventures

▶ Claims the construction led

to ecological imbalance, loss of biodiversity and soil erosion. It also impeded natural water flow, contributing to flooding in lower-lying areas

▶ Highlights an online home-stay operating on the premises without approval from the Department of Tourism, as well as the use of domestic electricity connections for commercial purposes in a residential area



SABOTAGE CASE

Bangladesh court acquits Khaleda Zia



PTI, DHAKA: A court in Bangladesh acquitted BNP Chairperson and former

prime minister Khaleda Zia on Wednesday in a sabotage case filed in the southeastern Cumilla district 10 years ago.

Additional District and Session Judge Court-2 of Cumilla Afroza Jesmin passed the order as there was no evidence against 79-year-old Zia, who is now undergoing treatment in London, the state-run BSS news agency reported.

The court observed that the case was filed on political grounds and harassment, the agency said.

The case was filed against 32 people, including Zia, in the Special Powers Act, 1974, at Choudhagram Police Station in Cumilla.

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Many jump off train after false fire alarm, 12 killed by another



People gather at the site following the death of several passengers in Maharashtra's Jalgaon district, on Wednesday

PTI, JALGAON: At least 12 passengers were killed on Wednesday evening when they jumped from their Mumbai-bound train in panic due to a false fire alarm, only to be tragically run over by another train on the adjacent tracks here, officials said.

JALGAON ACCIDENT

The tragedy unfolded when passengers onboard the 12533 Lucknow-Mumbai Pushpak Express, fearing a blaze, hastily jumped onto the adjacent tracks and were run over by the oncoming Karnataka Express heading from Bengaluru to Delhi, they said.

As many as 15 other passengers were injured in the accident, which took place between Maheji and Pardhade stations near Pachora town in North Maharashtra.

tra's Jalgaon district, when Pushpak Express halted after someone pulled the chain around 4.45 pm, Central Railway officials said.

Dilip Kumar, Executive Director, Information and Publicity, Railway Board, however, denied that any spark or fire inside the coach caused passengers to pull the alarm.

"Based on the information that we have received no spark or any fire was noticed in the coach," Kumar told PTI in New Delhi.

In a video message from Davos in Switzerland, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said, "Some passengers in the train mistakenly assumed that smoke is coming out of the train and they jumped. Unfortunately, they were run over by another train."

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Vagator's Dream Beach remains a distant dream for turtles

The file declaring Mhairi Beach as a turtle nesting ground shuttles between departments; locals fear any further delay could harm the flippered visitors as tourists brazenly drive on the beach at night

AUGUSTO RODRIGUES

VAGATOR: The file declaring Mhairi Beach at Vagator, popularly known as 'Dream Beach', as a turtle nesting ground shuttling from one department to another has raised concerns amongst locals. The locals fear that any further delay could harm the endangered species as tourists drive their vehicles on the shore at night.

It is pertinent to note that a flippered visitor walked ashore on January 20 and laid 120 eggs.

"We did receive a file from the Forest Department with a request to de-

"The file must contain reports of the sand quality, a report whether there are or not environmental hazards on the beach and a beach dynamic report at least. Without these reports, we are unable to take a call"

— Johnson Fernandes, GCZMA secretary

clare one beach in Vagator as a turtle nesting ground. But we have been unable to process it because the information provided is inadequate," said Johnson



The board put up by Caisua Biodiversity Management Committee to demarcate the turtle nesting site at Vagator

Fernandes, secretary of the Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority (GCZMA).

"The file must contain reports of the sand quality, a report whether there

are environmental hazards on the beach and a beach dynamic report at least. Without these reports, we are unable to take a call," Fernandes explained.

"We had submitted the past three-year turtle nesting data along with it. In case the need for any other document, usually GCZMA will query us officially and take decision. So far, no official letter has been received from GCZMA on need of further data or report"

— Prem Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forest

"The file will be placed before the next meeting and will be sent back to the Forest Department," Fernandes added.

"We had submitted the

"Dream Beach is not only used as a place to have these rave parties from dawn to dusk, but plenty of tourists roam on the beach at night with their vehicles and they could easily hurt turtles"

— Michael Mendonca, a local

past three-year turtle nesting data along with it," said Prem Kumar Deputy Conservator of Forest (DCF).

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Mysterious illness kills 17 in J-K, 4 more hospitalised

PTI, RAJOURI/JAMMU: Four people, including three sisters, have been shifted to hospitals from Badhaal village in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district where a mysterious illness has claimed 17 lives over the past one-and-a-half months.

A central team continued its investigation into the cause of the deaths, which took place in three families, on Wednesday. A senior doctor part of the investigations



A patient being taken to a hospital in J&K's Rajouri district, on Wednesday

said over 200 samples have been sent for testing to different institutes.

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