

allovertheworld



The dry flower spike of a yucca plant is backdropped by the border wall in Sunland Park, New Mexico

One million people have fled Sudan war to South Sudan: UN

NAIROBI: Over one million people have now fled the Sudanese war into neighbouring South Sudan, according to the United Nations, which said the figures illustrated the scale of the unfolding humanitarian crisis. Tens of thousands have been killed and more than 12 million forced from their homes since conflict erupted between Sudan's army and a rival paramilitary group in April 2023. More than 770,000 people have fled through the Joda border crossing in the last 21 months, while tens of thousands more have crossed into South Sudan elsewhere, bringing the total to more than a million, according to new UN data on Tuesday. Most of the million people crossing the border are South Sudanese nationals who had previously fled from civil war in the world's newest country, UN refugee agency UNHCR said in a statement.

Rare wildlife species found in Cambodian national park

PHNOM PENH: A years-long survey of a Cambodian national park has revealed endangered species never before recorded in the country, highlighting the need for greater conservation efforts, environmentalists said Wednesday. The complex survey work uncovered fauna ranging from pangolins to critically endangered large-antlered muntjacs inside Virachey National Park, a relatively untouched haven for biodiversity. The more than 405,000-hectare park stretches across Cambodia's northeastern region, bordering Laos and Vietnam. More than 150 cameras were deployed during the survey, which also enlisted the help of local communities to document animals and plants in the protected area.

200,000 intl troops needed to secure any Ukraine peace: Zelensky

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said any peace deal agreed with Russia would require at least 200,000 European peacekeepers to oversee it, according to comments published Wednesday. US President Donald Trump's return to the White House has raised the spectre of some kind of halt in the fighting after he vowed to end the war - though he has never explained how. Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos a day earlier, Zelensky said any deal to end the conflict would need to be overseen by a large foreign contingent of peacekeepers. Zelensky said that given the small size of the Ukrainian army compared to that of Russia, "we need contingents with a very strong number of soldiers" to secure any peace deal. "From all the Europeans? Two hundred thousand. It's a minimum. Otherwise, it's nothing," he said.

Kenya police arrest man after wife's mutilated body found in bag

NAIROBI: Police in Kenya arrested Wednesday a man found carrying the mutilated corpse of his wife in a backpack, the latest case of gender-based violence to appal the country. It comes only weeks after hundreds of women were tear gassed as they rallied in the capital Nairobi to demonstrate against femicide and demand action from the authorities. A murder investigation has been launched after John Kiama Wambua, 29, was detained by Nairobi police at around 5:00 am (0200 GMT), when a routine patrol examined his bag. Officers suspected the man of carrying illegal goods, but "to their shock discovered part of a mutilated human body", the directorate of criminal investigations said on X. Police said Wambua was "unperturbed" by the discovery of the body parts, which he said during an interrogation were of his 19-year-old wife, Joy Fridah Munani.

Netherlands must lower nitrogen emissions, court rules

THE HAGUE: The Netherlands must meet its 2030 target to reduce nitrogen emissions or face a 10-million euro (\$1.1 million) penalty, a court said Wednesday in a case brought by Greenpeace. In a rare sanction for the state, a court in The Hague said the Dutch government had not made enough effort to halt the progressive decline of several EU protected nature reserves needed to absorb nitrogen. Excess quantities of nitrogen can have harmful consequences on water, soil and air quality. The court said nitrogen deposits measured in these protected areas, part of the European Natura 2000 programme, are much higher than what they can absorb, contravening both Dutch and European law. It added that it was already too late for the Netherlands to reach its 2025 targets, but ordered the nation to do everything it could to meet those it had set for the end of 2030.

Africa malaria jab rollout delivers 10 million doses

GENEVA: Nearly 10 million malaria vaccine doses were delivered to Africa during the first year of routine immunisation being rolled out across the continent, the Gavi vaccine alliance said Wednesday. The mosquito-borne disease kills nearly 600,000 people a year, the vast majority in Africa, with children heavily affected, according to the World Health Organization. In a pilot phase from 2019 to 2023, more than two million children were jabbed with the RTS,S vaccine in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi, resulting in substantial reductions in severe malaria illness and hospitalisations.

Quad opposes any unilateral actions seeking to change status quo by force or coercion

PTI, WASHINGTON: In a move sending a strong signal to China, foreign ministers from Quad countries have strongly opposed any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Tuesday hosted External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Penny Wong from Australia and Japan's Takeshi Iwaya for his first multilateral meeting as the top American diplomat.

After the hour-long meeting, the four ministers reconfirmed the Quad Leadership Summit in India later this year.

India will host the 2025 Quad Leaders Summit. In 2024, the Quad Leaders Summit was supposed to be held in India, but then US President Joe Biden was keen to hold the event in



Quad Foreign Ministers at meeting, in Washington DC

Wilmington.

A joint statement issued after the Quad foreign ministers' meeting reaffirmed their shared commitment to strengthening a Free and Open Indo-Pacific where the rule of law, democratic values, sovereignty, and ter-

ritorial integrity are upheld and defended.

"Our four nations maintain our conviction that international law, economic opportunity, peace, stability, and security in all domains, including the maritime domain, underpin the

development and prosperity of the people of the Indo-Pacific. We also strongly oppose any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion," it said.

The US, India, Japan and Australia compose the Quad, a four-way grouping. They have been stepping up cooperation in various fields such as defence and energy, amid China's increasing military and economic clout in the region.

"We are committed to strengthening regional maritime, economic, and technology security in the face of increasing threats, as well as promoting reliable and resilient supply chains," the statement said. "We look forward to advancing the work of the Quad in the coming months and will meet together on a

regular basis as we prepare for the next Quad Leaders' Summit hosted by India," it said.

China claims most of the South China Sea. Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counter claims. China also claims sovereignty over the disputed Senkaku islands in the East China Sea, claimed by Japan.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning Wednesday said that China's activities in relevant waters are "lawful, legitimate and completely justified".

Responding to a question on the Quad ministers' meeting, she reiterated her opposition to the grouping, saying China has always advocated that cooperation among countries should not target any third party.

India now has 99.1 crore voters: EC

PTI, NEW DELHI: The number of voters in India now stands at 99.1 crore, up from 96.88 crore when the Lok Sabha elections were held last year, the Election Commission (EC) said on Wednesday. In a statement issued ahead of National Voters' Day, the EC said the electoral rolls bear a youthful and gender-balanced look with 21.7 crore young electors in the 18-29 age group and a six-point increase in electoral gender ratio from 948 in 2024 to 954 in 2025.

National Voters' Day is celebrated on January 25 every year to mark the foundation day of the EC, which was established on this day in 1950.

Electoral rolls were released yesterday (January 6). We are crossing 99 crore voters... We are going to be a nation of one billion voters very soon.

FROM PAGE 1

HC ORDERS TCP TO PROBE 'ILLEGAL HILL CUTTING' IN NERUL

Fernandes argued that the construction activities, involving Ardee Foundation and other parties, were posing a severe threat to her property, which shares a common wall with neighbouring row villas.

In her petition, Fernandes alleged that local authorities had failed to take action against the unlawful developments, which were carried out without proper permissions. She called on the court to direct the restoration of the land in Survey Number 101/2 to its original state, citing its designation as part of an eco-sensitive area according to the Regional Plan.

The petitioner further requested that the court order the sealing of unauthorised structures and halt ongoing commercial activities, specifically highlighting the absence of occupancy certificates for these ventures under Section 3.11 of the Goa Land Development and Building Regulations 2010.

The petition also accused the respondents of engaging in extensive land-filling and hill cutting on the NDS, which she claimed led to ecological imbalance, loss of biodiversity and soil erosion. Additionally, the development impeded natural water flow, contributing to flooding in lower-lying areas.

Further concerns were raised about the respondents' operation of an online home-stay booking platform without approval from the Department of Tourism, as well as the use of domestic electricity connections for commercial purposes in a residential area. Fernandes also pointed out that the Goa State Pollution Control Board had not granted consent for these activities, adding to the mounting legal issues.

VAGATOR'S DREAM BEACH REMAINS A DISTANT DREAM FOR TURTLES

"In case the need for any other document, usually GCZ-MA will query us officially and take decision. So far, no official letter has been received from GCZMA on need of further data or report," retorted Prem Kumar.

Apropos the O Herald report: "As forest dept sleeps, rave party takes over turtle nesting beach", dated January 3, 2025, DCF Kumar had informed that the file was sent to the GCZMA and that "they were the authority to notify to the Environment Ministry to declare the beach as a turtle nesting site."

"Apart from letters by locals and the Anjuna-Caisua Biodiversity Management committee, the department has received a letter from the local MLA (Delilah Lobo) urging us to declare the beach a turtle nesting ground," stated Kumar.

"Turtle eggs are much sought after in the market. They fetch a big price and that explains the lack of transparency and the will to declare turtle nesting grounds," claims herpetologist Aaron Fernandes - See O Herald report dated June 17, 2024 - of 7,869 turtle eggs laid in Mor-jim 2,095 go 'stolen'.

"People, especially outsiders, who now call themselves locals, tend to rob eggs from their nests. It does happen even now though it has drastically dropped. There were times when I was called to help in translocation of eggs and by the time I reached the nest, there were no eggs," explained Fernandes.

"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," fears Michael Mendonca, a local, who tries to do his bit to save the endangered species.

"The board has been put up by us, but that is not enough. The other day, we came to know from the marks on the sand that a turtle came ashore and went back without laying eggs. This could be because people drive their vehicles at night and there is nothing we can do," la-ments Ramesh Naik, member of the Anjuna - Caisua Biodiversity Management Committee.

"The government should at least deploy a cop to stop the vehicles moving on the beach from sunset onwards," hopes Naik.

The first turtle to walk ashore last year was on December 20 and laid 40 eggs. The next day, a turtle laid 127 eggs and in the end, 17 turtles had laid 1,515 eggs.

H-1B VISA: TRUMP BACKS 'COMPETENT PEOPLE'

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

"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," Trump said.

"But I don't want to stop - and I'm not just talking about engineers, I'm talking about people at all levels," Trump added on Tuesday.

He made these remarks while talking to reporters at the White House during a joint news conference with Oracle CTO Larry Ellison, Softbank CEO Masayoshi Son, and Open AI CEO Sam Altman.

The president was responding to a question on the on-

going debate on H-1B visas within his support base.

Indians are the main beneficiaries of the H-1B visas, which bring in the best of the talent and brains from across the world. Highly skilled professionals from India walk away with the overwhelming number of H-1B visas - which is Congressional mandated 65,000 every year and another 20,000 for those who received higher education from the US.

While his close confidants like Elon Musk, the Tesla owner, support H-1B visas as they bring in qualified tech professionals, many of his supporters oppose it arguing that it takes away jobs from Americans.

"We want competent people coming into our country. And H-1B, I know the programme very well. I use the programme. Maitre d', wine experts, even waiters, high-quality waiters - you've got to get the best people. People like Larry, he needs engineers, Masa also needs... they need engineers like nobody's ever needed them," Trump said.

"So, we have to have quality people coming in. Now by doing that, we're expanding businesses and that takes care of everybody. So I'm sort of on both sides of the argument, but what I really do feel is that we have to let really competent people, great people, come into our country. And we do that through the H-1B programme," Trump said.

Since December, the debate on foreign guest workers visas for highly skilled professionals, the H-1B, has intensified which has literally created divisions in both the Democratic and the Republican parties.

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

Sources close to Musk confirmed to Politico that Ramaswamy's departure had been under consideration even before his visa-related outburst. He "just burned through the bridges and he finally burned Elon," a Republican strategist close to Trump advisers told Politico. "Every-one wants him out of Mar-a-Lago, out of DC."

Ramaswamy's criticisms of American work culture, where he claimed that mediocrity is "venerated over excellence," further alienated him from both Musk and key Republican figures.

"A culture that celebrates the prom queen over the math Olympiad champ, or the jock over the valedictorian, will not produce the best engineers," Ramaswamy had written in a lengthy post.

"Normalcy doesn't cut it in a hyper-competitive global market for technical talent. And if we pretend like it does, we'll have our asses handed to us by China," he added.

R G KAR CASE: CBI SEEKS DEATH SENTENCE FOR SANJAY ROY IN HC

The West Bengal government has already approached the high court, challenging the verdict and seeking death penalty for Roy, which took up the matter on Wednesday but did not decide on the appeal.

The high court said it would hear the CBI, the victim's family and the convict before deciding on the admission of the state government's appeal. The high court said it will hear the matter on January 27.

The CBI opposed the state's right to file an appeal in the case during the hearing, saying that it was the prosecuting agency, hence, it had the right to appeal on the grounds of inadequacy of the sentence.

Appearing for the CBI, Deputy Solicitor General Rajdeep Majumdar opposed the state's submission, maintaining that the West Bengal government does not have the right to appeal against the trial court's order on the ground of inadequacy.

He submitted that the CBI had prayed for awarding capital punishment to Roy before the trial court.

Within hours of proceedings in the high court, the CBI went ahead and filed the appeal against the order of the Sealdah court and demanded enhancement of "life imprisonment until death" sentence awarded to Roy on the ground that it was a 'rarest of rare' case.

SAIF MEETS AUTO DRIVER WHO RUSHED HIM TO HOSPITAL

"I have promised to him (Saif) and I will stick to it. Let people speculate about it," Rana stated firmly when questioned about the amount.

"Let people say that he (Saif) gave me Rs 50,000 or Rs 1,00,000, but I would not like to reveal the amount. He has requested me to not share this information and I'll keep my promise to him, whatever it is, it is between him and me," said Rana, who shares a one-room flat in Khar with four other roommates.

He, however, mentioned receiving Rs 11,000 from a social worker named Faizan Ansari.

Just before the actor's discharge on Tuesday evening, Rana had the opportunity to meet Khan and his family and he paid his respects by touching the feet of Khan's mother, veteran actress Sharmila Tagore, and shared that the family treated him with kindness, even taking photos together.

"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," the auto-rickshaw driver said.

Rana said he has been inundated with calls from the media, friends and relatives following the news of him taking Khan to the hospital in his auto-rickshaw.

BANGLADESH COURT ACQUITS KHALEDA ZIA

The case was in connection with damaging and setting fire to a covered van during a strike on January 25, 2015. Zia was the 32nd accused in the case.

No specific evidence was found against Zia and she has been acquitted, Public Prosecutor Kaimul Haque Rinku was quoted as saying by bdnews24 news portal.

He added that 32 people were named in the FIR, but 42 people were charged afterwards. Of them, 36 people have been removed from the case. The decision on six others will be taken later as they received a suspension order in favour of them in the case.

MANY JUMP OFF TRAIN AFTER FALSE FIRE ALARM, 12 KILLED BY ANOTHER

He announced financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh each to the next of the kin of the passengers who died in the tragedy, while the Commissioner of Railway Safety, Central Circle, will probe the circumstances leading to the accident.

"The tragic loss of lives in a very unfortunate incident near Pachora in Jalgaon district (which) is deeply distressing. I pay my heartfelt tributes to them," Fadnavis posted on X.

The Railway Board separately announced an ex gratia of Rs 1.5 lakh each to the kin of the deceased, Rs 50,000 for grievous wounds and Rs 5,000 for simple injuries.

Jalgaon district information officer Yuvraj Patil said 12 passengers were killed in the tragedy, while 15 others were injured.

Pushpak Express departed from the spot in just 15 minutes, while the Karnataka Express was removed within 20 minutes after the accident, a Railway official said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended his condolences to the families of the passengers killed in the accident and wished for the speedy recovery of all the injured.

"Anguished by the tragic accident on the railway tracks in Jalgaon, Maharashtra. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and pray for the speedy recovery of all the injured. Authorities are providing all possible assistance to those affected," the PM said in a post on X.

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

He proposed replacing the lottery-based system with a merit-driven approach, asserting that it should focus on selecting the 'best of the best'.

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MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS KILLS 17 IN J-K, 4 MORE HOSPITALISED

Three sisters, aged between 16 and 22, were shifted to the Government Medical College (GMC), Rajouri from Badhaal after their health suddenly deteriorated on Wednesday. Another critically ill patient, Javid Ahmad (24), was referred to PGI Chandigarh from GMC Rajouri on Tuesday evening, the officials said.

All four are close relatives of the three families that lost their members to the mysterious illness, they said.

Meanwhile, the inter-ministerial team from New Delhi visited Badhaal in Kotranka sub-division for the third straight day as part of its investigation, the officials said.

The team headed by a director-rank officer in the Ministry of Home Affairs reached Rajouri district headquarters on Sunday evening and was briefed by senior district, health and police officers. It is camping in Rajouri town.

Senior epidemiologist and head of Community Medicines Department, GMC Rajouri, Shuja Qadri said all the investigations so far make it clear that the deaths in the village were not the result of any communicable disease. So, the probe has been narrowed down to the identification of the toxin in food items.

"Based on our epidemiological investigation, as of now, we have reached some probable conclusions, which will be confirmed by lab diagnosis... it is something which is connected with food," Qadri, who is part of the investigations, told PTI.

More than 200 food samples have been sent for screening to various institutes across the country to isolate the neurotoxin. Hopefully, based on the panel of toxins, the laboratories will be in a position to isolate the toxin within a week or 10 days and "we can easily take the control measures to prevent further deaths".

