

allovertheworld



Shiite Muslim pilgrims march with a symbolic coffin outside the shrine of the 8th-century Imam Musa al-Kadhim, during the annual commemoration of his death on 25 Rajab according to the Muslim Hijri calendar, in the Kadhimiya district of northern Baghdad. Pilgrims from various Iraqi provinces annually undertake a march on foot to reach the shrine to commemorate the death of Imam Kadhim, who is believed to have been poisoned by agents of the ruling Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid

UN refugee chief urges West to lift Syria sanctions
DAMASCUS: UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi called on Western governments Saturday to lift their sanctions against Syria, describing them as an "obstacle" to the return of millions of refugees. Speaking during a visit to Damascus, Grandi said that last month's overthrow of longtime president Bashar al-Assad had created "an opportunity in this country that we haven't had in decades, and I think we need to take it". During 13 years of civil war sparked by Assad's brutal repression of protests against his rule in 2011, the European Union and the United States imposed successive rounds of sanctions and millions of Syrians fled abroad.

56 bodies found in unmarked mass graves in Mexico: Prosecutors
MEXICO CITY: Fifty-six bodies have been discovered in unmarked mass graves in northern Mexico, not far from the border with the United States, local prosecutors said Saturday in a statement. The remains were exhumed earlier this week in Chihuahua state - a hive of drug-related crime and weapons trafficking - in a military-aided operation that lasted several days, the statement said. Prosecutors gave no details about the possible identities of the victims. The remains included some bodies, some complete skeletons and other partial remains, as well as clothing and bullet casings. They have been sent to a forensics lab to determine the time and cause of death, with hopes that the victims can be identified, prosecutors said.

Colombia urges Venezuela cooperation on guerrilla violence
BOGOTÁ: Colombia's President Gustavo Petro made a further outreach to Venezuela on Saturday, voicing hope the neighbors can work "together" to confront deadly guerrilla violence. Petro said Thursday that he had been in contact with the Venezuelan government, floating a "joint plan to eradicate armed gangs on the border". Colombian Defense Minister Ivan Velasquez then met Friday with his Venezuelan counterpart, Vladimir Padrino, in the Venezuelan border city of San Cristobal, for discussions aimed at improving security cooperation. Padrino said Venezuela was prepared to "collaborate" with its neighbor to "consolidate peace."

Turkish court jails lawyer over alleged terror ties
ISTANBUL: Turkey has put behind bars a lawyer on charges of alleged ties with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) listed as a terror group by Ankara and its Western allies, local media reported on Sunday. Lawyer Firat Epözdemir, board member of Istanbul Bar Association, was arrested on Saturday on charges of "membership in an armed terror group" and "disseminating terror propaganda" by an Istanbul court, the private NTV broadcaster reported. Epözdemir was detained at Istanbul airport on Thursday as part of an investigation. Istanbul prosecutors accuse Epözdemir of joining in terror group's WhatsApp group in 2015 at the peak of the clashes between Kurdish militants and Turkish security forces in the Kurdish majority southeast.

Thailand detains British husband in 'Lady of the Hills' mystery
BANGKOK: Authorities in Thailand have detained the British husband of a Thai woman whose body was found in remote English hill country more than 20 years ago. The lifeless body of Lamduan Armitage - nee Seekanya - was found by hikers in the Yorkshire Dales in 2004. But she remained unidentified, known only as the "Lady of the Hills", the mystery enduring until a fresh police appeal in 2019 led to her family in Thailand coming forward. Thai immigration police said a 62-year-old British man was detained at a house in the western province of Kanchanaburi on Friday for breaching visa conditions. "Immigration officials decided to revoke his visa and he was detained, before Thailand proceeds with the next steps in international cooperation on criminal acts," immigration police said in a statement on Saturday.

Tourist killed by elephant in South Africa's Kruger park
JOHANNESBURG: A tourist was killed by an elephant on Saturday in South Africa's famous Kruger Park, the South African national parks agency SAN Parks announced overnight. "A tragic accident occurred when a tourist was charged and trampled by an elephant near Crocodile River at Malelane Gate. This, regrettably, resulted in loss of life," it said in a statement. SAN Parks asked people not to post images of the incident on social media. With some 20,000 square kilometers (7,700 square miles) of savannah extending to neighbouring Mozambique, Kruger is the largest game park in South Africa. Except for fenced camps and a few picnic areas, it is forbidden to get out of your vehicle.

Russia-India relations based on special and privileged strategic partnership: Putin



Russian President Vladimir Putin

PTI, MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin on Sunday said that Russian-Indian relations are based on "special and privileged strategic partnership" and hoped that the two countries will use joint efforts to continue to consistently build up productive bilateral cooperation across all areas. President Putin sent heartfelt congratulations to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of India's 76th Republic Day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia said. "Russian-Indian relations are based on special and privileged strategic

partnership. I am confident that we will use joint efforts to continue to consistently build up productive bilateral cooperation across all areas, as well as constructive interaction in international affairs," he said. Without a doubt, this meets the fundamental interests of our friendly peoples and is in line with the efforts to form

a fair multipolar international order, Putin added. In his message, Putin said that the Indian Constitution that came into force 75 years ago laid the foundation for building effective state institutions and a free democratic development of India. "Since then, your country has achieved universally recognised successes in socioeconomic, scientific, technical and other fields and has gained well-deserved authority in the international arena," he added. President Putin is expected to travel to India this year as part of the established framework for reciprocal annual engagements between the leaders of the two nations. The dates for his visit will be finalized in early 2025. Putin and Modi maintain regular contact, holding telephone conversations once every couple of months. The two leaders also hold in-person meetings, particularly on the sidelines of international events. In July last, Prime Minister Modi made a two-day visit to Moscow to attend the 22nd Russia-India summit. In October, he visited the Russian city of Kazan for the BRICS summit.

Trump says he will speak to Putin soon

PTI, WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has said that he would soon speak to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and help in settling the war in Ukraine. Trump's comments came a day after Putin said Russia is ready for talks with the US on a broad range of issues. He wants to speak and will be speaking soon. I've spoken to (Ukrainian) President (Volodymyr) Zelensky numerous times, and they'd like to see peace. They would like to see an end to the war. I think President Putin would like to see an end to the war too, Trump told reporters on Saturday.

Belarus strongman set to win 7th term in election the Oppn calls a farce

PTI, MINSK: The smiling face of President Alexander Lukashenko gazed out from campaign posters across Belarus on Sunday as the country held an orchestrated election virtually guaranteed to give the 70-year-old autocrat yet another term on top of his three decades in power. Needed! the posters proclaim beneath a photo of Lukashenko, his hands clasped together. The phrase is what groups of voters responded in campaign videos after supposedly being asked if they wanted him to serve again. But his opponents, many of whom are imprisoned or exiled abroad by his unre-

lenting crackdown on dissent and free speech, would disagree. They call the election a sham much like the last one in 2020 that triggered months of protests that were unprecedented in the history of the country of 9 million people. The crackdown saw more than 65,000 arrests, with thousands beaten, bringing condemnation and sanctions from the West. His iron-fisted rule since 1994 Lukashenko took office two years after the demise of the Soviet Union earned him the nickname of Europe's Last Dictator, relying on subsidies and political support from close ally Russia.

Indians abroad celebrate 76th Republic Day; greetings pour in from world leaders



The Consulate General of India in Shanghai hosted a reception to celebrate India's 76th Republic Day, marking the abiding spirit of the Indian Constitution. The event also shows strengthening bilateral ties between India and China

tri-colour at @EOI Beijing marking the #76th Republic Day. He also read the Hon'ble President's Republic Day message to Embassy officials and members of the Indian community who attended the ceremony in

large numbers. The event also included vibrant cultural performances," the Indian Embassy in China said in a post on X along with some pictures. In Sri Lanka, the island nations' Navy band performed Indian patriotic tunes in a demonstration of the cultural closeness between the two countries. "Celebrating #RepublicDay2025. Acting HC @DrSatyanjal unfurled the #Tiranga at India House this morning. Members of the Indian diaspora in Sri Lanka joined the festivities with their patriotic fervour and resolve to realise #ViksitBharat," the High Commission of India in Colombo said in a post on X.

WELCOMING SPRING



Masked Bulgarian Kukeri dancers perform during the 31st International Festival of Masquerade Games 'Surva' in the town of Pernik, Bulgaria, marking the culmination of traditional winter festivities that are believed to date back to pagan times

Trump border czar defends school, church raids

AFP, WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's border czar on Sunday defended raiding churches and schools as part of a crackdown on illegal immigration, while acknowledging that deporting all undocumented people in the United States was not "realistic." Trump began his second term on Monday with a flurry of executive actions aimed at overhauling US immigration. His administration quickly moved to ramp up deportations, including by relaxing rules governing enforcement actions at "sensitive" locations such as schools, churches and workplaces. Asked about the rule change, Tom Homan, a former head of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) tapped to oversee Trump's hard-line immigration agenda, said

Sunday it sends a clear message. "There's consequences of entering the country illegally. If we don't show there's consequences, you're never going to fix the border problem," he told ABC News' "This Week" program. Such actions would nonetheless be made on a "case by case" basis, he said, noting that "many" members of gangs such as MS-13 are teenagers. If there's a "national security threat or a public safety threat that's in one of these facilities, then it should be an option," he said. On Thursday, leaders of three Catholic organizations blasted the rule change, saying in a joint statement that "turning places of care, healing and solace into places of fear and uncertainty for those in need... will not make our communities safer."

Loud explosion: survivor recounts Azerbaijan Airlines crash

AFP, TOKMOK: "I heard a loud explosion, the oxygen masks fell down and the plane shook," Rinat Assanov told AFP, recalling the moment the Azerbaijan Airlines plane he was on ran into trouble over southern Russia. The plane, flying from the Azerbaijani capital of Baku to Grozny in Russia's Chechnya, crashed hundreds of kilometres (miles) to the east, near the Kazakh city of Aktak, killing 38 of the 67 passengers on board.

Azerbaijan has publicly said the plane was shot by Russian air defences - a theory backed by independent analysts. Moscow said its air defence systems were operating in the area at the time but has not admitted shooting the plane, triggering a rare diplomat feud with Moscow. At his home in the Kyrgyz city of Tokmok, survivor Assanov said he has to "lie down all day" and rest his "painful body".

The 20-year-old computer science student will have to undergo treatment - physiotherapy, some tablets and sessions hooked up to a drip - for another six months. Doctors have forbidden him from looking at images

of the crash site. One month after the December 25 incident, investigations are still ongoing and the exact circumstances of how the plane was downed have not been officially established.

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BLOCKED: MULGAO LOCALS STOP ORE EXTRACTION

Some of the demands of the villagers include demarcation of village boundaries, active mining lease boundaries, buffer zone boundaries; to exclude houses, temples, lakes, paddy fields and plantations from mining blocks as per new mining lease, desilt paddy fields on priority, to release compensation of farmers pending since 2011 and to give arrears of lease rent to Comunidade of Mulgao since nearly 2.21 lakh square metres of area is falling in the mining block. The villagers have also demanded the desilting of three lakes and construction of retaining walls at these lakes for maintaining natural resources.

WITHOUT POLICE HELP, I AM A TOOTHLESS TIGER: NOISE MONITORING PANEL MEMBER

"I did not expect noise monitoring committee member Dominic to act because as president of Anjuna Comunidade they have allotted land to a new unit called Irish House which is opposite to the police station and they were blasting till early morning," claimed petitioner of con-tempt Petition 12 Of 2023 that is to be heard today, Monday 27,2025. Raeeth, Vamos, Thalasa by the Cliff, Noah, Titlees, Nine

Bar, Romeo Lane and Dynamo were the other units that played loud music after 10 pm around Ozran in Vagator during the 15 days specified by the High Court. "I met the Deputy Collector but nothing was decided. He promised to organise a meeting with the Anjuna Police Inspector later," said Dominic Pereira.

SUNDAY SHOCKER: ARAMBOL MAN MURDERED IN BEACH BRAWL WITH SHACK WORKERS

Meanwhile, the family members and villagers threatened that they will not accept Amar's body till his killers are arrested. A large number of villagers rushed to the beach and pointed out to the illegalities by the shack operator wherein he had placed deckbeds, beach umbrellas, chairs and other material right on the beach thereby blocking access of the visitors and demanded the cancellation of the beach shack licence. North SP Akshat Kaushal who visited the Mandrem Police Station told media persons that one person has been arrested in this connection and if more persons are found involved in the gruesome murder, then they too will be arrested. He said that doctors' opinions will be sought to know the nature of injury caused to the deceased. PSI Kunal Naik is conducting investigations under the guidance of Mandrem PI Sherif Jacques.