

O HERALDO

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Trump's Gaza proposal is dangerous and unworkable

In recent comments aboard Air Force One, US President Donald Trump raised an alarming idea: that neighboring countries, Jordan and Egypt, should take in large numbers of Palestinians from Gaza, either temporarily or permanently. This proposal - coming after a brutal 15-month conflict between Israel and Hamas - would not only upend the lives of millions of people but also further exacerbate an already fragile and volatile situation in West Asia.

Trump's suggestion that Gaza, a region already devastated by war, should be "cleaned out" and its residents relocated to other countries is both dangerous and unrealistic. His words - characterised by the casual mention of uprooting a population of approximately 1.5 million people - ignore the complex realities of Palestinian identity, history, and the legal and moral implications of forced displacement. More concerning, they echo long-standing hardline Israeli proposals to rid Gaza of its Palestinian inhabitants under the guise of offering a better life elsewhere.

Trump's proposal has been firmly rejected by both the countries he suggested as potential destinations for the displaced - Jordan and Egypt - and by Palestinian political leaders. Jordan, which already hosts over 2 million Palestinian refugees, has consistently rejected any suggestion that Palestinians should be relocated there. Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi reaffirmed that Jordan's stance was "firm and unwavering," emphasizing that Palestinians' right to live in their homeland could not be negated. Similarly, Egypt has repeatedly signalled its opposition to any plan that would involve the forced displacement of Palestinians.

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Palestinian groups, including Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, have unequivocally condemned Trump's remarks. Hamas, in particular, made it clear that no number of international proposals could ever convince them to abandon Gaza. As senior Hamas official Bassem Naim put it, "Our people... will foil such projects." This sentiment is shared by millions of Palestinians who view their right to live in Gaza as inviolable, despite the years of occupation, blockade, and violence.

Trump's suggestion echoes rhetoric often associated with the most extreme elements within Israel's far-right government, including figures like Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who has long advocated for the displacement of Palestinians. For Smotrich, the forced removal of Palestinians from Gaza would enable the re-establishment of Jewish settlements in the region. His endorsement of Trump's comments reflects a disturbing trend of increasing dehumanization of Palestinians and calls for their forced removal—a trend that crosses a dangerous line from political discourse to ethnic cleansing.

Experts in international law have rightly condemned Trump's proposal as a violation of numerous legal principles. Omer Shatz, an academic and international criminal court counsel, referred to it as a "call for ethnic cleansing." Such plans are not merely impractical; they are illegal. Forced displacement of populations is a war crime, and no amount of political manoeuvring can legitimize it. The UN has long been clear that the displacement of Palestinians from their land, whether in Gaza, the West Bank, or elsewhere, is a violation of international law.

Beyond the moral and legal issues, Trump's plan is also unworkable. Gaza's population has already been displaced in large numbers, with much of the region reduced to rubble. Many Gaza residents have sought refuge in the south, while others remain in the rubble of their homes, desperate to rebuild. The idea of relocating them to neighbouring countries fails to account for the deep political and social divisions that would make such relocation a logistical and humanitarian nightmare.

Neither Jordan nor Egypt is equipped or willing to absorb hundreds of thousands of additional refugees, especially from a region with such a volatile political history. Furthermore, the idea that Palestinians in Gaza would willingly leave their homes, where they have endured not just years but decades of hardship, seems naive. They would rather rebuild their homes than leave them for an uncertain future elsewhere.

The reality is that Trump's remarks do not represent a serious effort to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They are yet another distraction from the real issues at play. A lasting peace can only be achieved when both Israelis and Palestinians are given the opportunity to live in secure and self-determined states. Any solution that forces Palestinians out of Gaza or denies them their rights is not a solution at all. It is a continuation of the policies that have kept both Israelis and Palestinians trapped in cycles of violence, resentment, and loss. As the world watches, we must reject any idea that displaces people from their homes. The focus must remain on finding a just solution—one that respects the rights and aspirations of both Palestinians and Israelis.



ROBIN ROY

Amid US's sweeping immigration move, as per news reports, India is planning to take back all its nationals living illegally in the US. New Delhi has shown its eagerness to engage and comply with the US president to maintain an amicable environment



In fact, during the inaugural function, Trump had issued a warning to these countries, stating that they may face up to 100% import tariffs if they attempted to reduce the role of the dollar or tried to de-dollar in global trade. New Delhi has to take note of this announcement considering its dependence on trade matters with the US and incidentally, the US is New Delhi's largest trading partner.

However, it may be noted here, rupee settlement in the BRICS trade is minuscule. Chinese currency accounts for 15

per cent of the global trade and China and Brazil are largely trading in the local currencies. So, the immediate pressure is on China and Brazil.

Currently, New Delhi has to adopt a wait-and-watch policy like other BRICS nations and decode Trump's stance on the tariff policy.

In FY24, the US was India's largest trading partner, with exports amounting to \$77.5 billion, up 46% from \$53.1 billion in FY20. A drastic move by the US could deal a severe blow to Indian export plans, especially in sectors like textiles, steel and agricultural products.

Meanwhile, despite the BRICS nations' interest in exploring alternatives to the dollar, India has remained cautious.

It may be noted that as Jaishankar had pointed out during a recent discussion at the Doha Forum, "India has no interest in weakening the US dollar. We have always maintained that there is no proposal for a BRICS currency."

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT ISSUE
It may be noted that Trump also made a tough call on illegal immigration and announced the end of citizenship by birth for children of temporary visa holders, including H1-B and L1 visas as well as dependent visas (H4). However, on the next day, Trump stated that he supported H1-B visas for "competent" people not only in the tech industry but also for other jobs.

It may be recalled here that Indians account for nearly 75 per cent of the 386,000 H-1B visas issued in 2023.

From his bid to end birth-right citizenship to mobilising troops along the US-Mexico border, Trump took a headline approach on Day 1 itself.

Meanwhile, amid US's sweeping immigration move, as per news reports, India is planning to take back all its nationals living illegally in the US. New Delhi has shown its eagerness to engage and comply with the US president to maintain an amicable environment.

OF ILLEGAL INDIANS
According to the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), as many as 11 million (1.1 crore) illegal migrants were residing in America as of January 2022.

Some 220,000 "unauthorised" Indian immigrants lived in the US as of 2022, as per the DHS report released in 2024.

Act against illegal rental units

It is learnt that a day after solving the gang-rape of a mentally challenged woman in Cansaulim, the Fatorda police reportedly moved the Tourism Department for cancellation of trade license of the guest house at Cansaulim where the victim was sexually assaulted by the five accused persons. This is a step in the right direction as it will act as a deterrent for such horrific incidents taking place. According to the police, the guest house at Cansaulim where the crime took place did not maintain any details of the accused nor their identities. It is learnt that one of the alleged accused would often visit the guest house with various women and the details were never registered on the log book.

Did the staff of the guest house not find it suspicious that a woman of unsound mind was accompanied by five men? It must be made mandatory for guest houses to keep a record about the identities of the guests along with the purpose of their visit to the locality. It is pertinent to note that there is a proliferation of rental units illegally operating as tourist accommodations. Many of these could be used for illegal activities and could serve as temporary accommodation for thieves, anti-social elements and even terrorists. The tourism department needs to act against these illegal rental units as it hurts the interest of legitimate hotels thereby causing loss of revenue to the government.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

India tops global tuberculosis burden

It pains to note that India still continues to lead in the global TB burden with 26% of cases according to WHO's Global Tuberculosis Report 2024. This is, in spite of the fact that TB is a detectable and curable disease and its diagnosis and treatment methods have been a part of the existing health systems in the country for a long time.

While TB can affect people of any class, religion, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, it disproportionately affects the most marginalised in society, including children, the urban poor, and people living with HIV/AIDS.

By adopting a holistic and person-centred approach, India can overcome the barriers that stand in the way of TB control and create a healthier future for all its citizens.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, Chennai

No rest for the culture seekers...

We became winter residents of Reis Magos around 15 years ago. It appealed to us as a quiet, relaxed winter escape home from Boston Massachusetts. We imagined the quiet pursuit of painting, walking on the beach, with an occasional foray into bird watching, and the gentle excitement of waking up to the sound

of waves and birds. So, here we are, first week in Reis Magos and we are running around to see an incredible circus, dance performance in Anjuna, go to an invigorating thought provoking book group discussion at Literati led by author Saurabh Kirpal, played bridge at a Community center in Saligao, played Pickle ball in Candolim, saw an art show at the Sunaparanta, spent time at the Lok Utsav in Panjim and are now looking forward to the Monte festival! What happened to our vision of sleepy laid back Goa? I know it exists and we will seek it out. The cultural offerings in Goa are enticing and varied. Goa offers nourishment for the mind and the soul.

Rani Sarin, Reis Magos

Take steps to control stray cattle, dogs

This has reference to the report 'Stray cattle and dogs create nuisance at night in Mapusa' (Herald - January 27, 2025).

It seems like the issue of stray dogs and cattle will remain a never ending topic of discussion, whether it is in Goa or in cities like Mumbai. Time and time again, this issue has been highlighted in the media, yet there seems to be no concrete steps being taken to contain this menace. How many more people should get seriously injured or lose their lives on account of these strays? Or, how long are people going to live in constant fear of being

attacked by strays?
The government and those concerned, must take a stand and make suitable, practical laws or guidelines with regard to stray dogs and cattle and ensure that the citizens live in safety.

Melville X. D'Souza, Mumbai

Nepal hikes permit fees for Mount Everest

Nepal is all set to hike the permit price to climb the tallest peak, Mount Everest, by an increase of over 36 per cent.

Fees for those wanting to climb the peak during off period will also have to pay a big amount for climbing one of the natural wonders of the blue planet. Income from permit fees is a key source of revenue for Nepal, with mountain climbing and trekking contributing more than 4% to the mountain nation's economy.

Mountaineering experts have often criticised Nepal for permitting too many climbers on Everest, and some years back haphazard and horrendous incidents occurred when there was a terrible traffic jam on the mountain with so many climbers queuing up to reach the pinnacle. Also garbage dumped during trekkings created the mountain into the world's highest garbage dump. The price hike might in some way help curtail the number of climbers going on top of the peak and also help the nation to make use of the revenue for protection and preservation of the

people's edit

SCHOOL FETES AND DANCES! WHERE ARE WE HEADING?

SAVIO FERNANDES

Ex. students Associations organizing annual dances during festive season is an old tradition and carried forward by the younger generation. It is a mix of experience and young minds with vibrant body adding synergy to the mission and collaborators for helping their alma mater to prosper and nourish the young mind. Reunion of ex students serves an opportunity for reviving fond memories, keeping the friendly relation, many a times helping one another and also to contribute to the society in taking up people centric issues, a déjà vu experience.

However, in the recent years some, schools and institutions have started a new trend of organizing dances and fetes at school level that too in the evening hours where young budding minds are exposed to late night entertainment, a matter of concern. In this contemporary world, many parents are busy in their own chores, with the competitive working environment demanding long working hours, many a times throwing the work life balance to a toss.

Children in these age group are immature and need a lot of guidance to tackle the psychological changes they undergo and expectations from the competitive world. The world is already getting toxic with the easy access to the array of mobile apps, distasteful entertainment, violent scenes in movies, narcotic substances etc. Gone are the days where parents could control their children with a carrot and stick with a firm hand of authority. The influence of all these and sundry are taking a toll on the mind of the child, and parents and teachers are at the receiving end. Parenting is a challenging task, compounding the situation and making it further stressful.

Analyzing the above, it is learnt that schools are organizing these events to garner funds for the school management, but is it wise to adopt these ideas at the cost of playing with young minds? De-fraying the cost towards organizing these events will not fetch much money for the cause intended. So is it wise to venture in these events?

Firstly, these events introduce the young children specially the teenagers who are in their phase of exploring the new world, to the night life rather than taming their already confused mind. It also leads to selecting partners for the evening fun, as it is the best opportunity for the children to be away in the late evening with their friends, 'courtesy', a school has organized, and parents are in a fix.

A fly on the wall will reveal Talks doing the round among the teenagers, "Do you have a Boy-friend/Girl friend? if the answers is not in the affirmative, Oh! There is something wrong with you. Then starts the hunting experience and in the bargain studies take a secondary preference. Doing a general survey reveals these events leads to petty quarrels among boy/girls due to some male chauvinism and poaching of partners. At times a weak and unguided child is unable to endure the pressure, eventually leading to unfortunate incidences. The ultimate sufferers are the parents and the victim, an innocent budding child. Is the child sent to school to imbibe these negative qualities or to be groomed into a good citizen of this country, with leadership qualities, able to stand out in society as a respectable person? Schools need to ponder on this thought and have a brain storming session to explore other novel ideas rather than continuing with these event in the best interest of the children and parents.

peaks ecology. The Himalayan nation should curtail the number of climbers per year which can help in keeping the sanctity and mightiness of the peak.

M Pradyu, Kannur

Sinner on a roll

23-year-old Jannik Sinner, the first Italian tennis player to ascend to the world number one ranking, has proved his mettle once again by lifting his second Australian open title. After coming up trumps at the US open in September last year, Sinner seems destined for bigger things as he is virtually on a roll from early 2024.

Having reached the semi-finals of French open and Wimbledon last year, and notwithstanding a tennis player's famous achilles heel-injury-- Sinner has come back every time he was considered down and out. Currently, Sinner has two top players to contend with for glories at big tournaments apart from Novak Djokovic: Spain's Carlos Alcaraz and Russian Daniil Medvedev, both at the prime of their careers.

Though not exactly in the mould of the famous Federer, Nadal, Djokovic rivalry, the Sinner, Alcaraz, Medvedev trio appears to rule the tennis world albeit in a different way. Sinner's powerful first serve and two-handed backhand volleys stand out.

Although experts see "Novak Djokovic", in Sinner's playing style, the Italian has been praised for "Roger Federer like" cool and calm composure on the tennis court.

Ganapathi Bhat, Akola