



Chile's President Gabriel Boric and former Uruguay President Jose Mujica plant an olive tree at Mujica's house in Montevideo



European Council Prez Antonio Costa (L), greets French Prez Emmanuel Macron as he arrives for an EU summit at the Egmont Palace in Brussels



Germany-based Nadia Harris, a remote work advocate, during an interview with PTI in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



Lady Gaga, left, and Bruno Mars perform 'California Dreamin' during the 67th annual Grammy Awards, in Los Angeles

allovertheworld



Trisha Paytas lights the Empire State Building in partnership with the Entertainment Community Fund in celebration of Trisha Paytas' Broadway debut at The Empire State Building, in New York City

Sweden convicts Quran burner, days after co-protester's murder

STOCKHOLM: A Stockholm court on Monday convicted a man of inciting ethnic hatred during four Quran burnings in 2023 that sparked outrage in Muslim countries, a verdict that came just days after the murder of his co-defendant Salwan Momika. Momika, a 38-year-old Iraqi Christian, was shot dead late Wednesday in an apartment southwest of Stockholm. The Stockholm district court was to have published its verdict against Momika and 50-year-old Salwan Najem the following day, but postponed it until Monday after Momika's killing. "There is a wide scope within the framework of freedom of expression to be critical of a religion in a factual and objective debate," judge Goran Lundahl said in a statement.

Ex-UK soldier jailed for 14 years for spying for Iran

LONDON: A former British soldier who sparked a manhunt after escaping from prison before his trial was sentenced by a UK court on Monday to 14 years for spying for Iran. Daniel Khalife, 23, was found guilty in November of espionage and terrorism charges as well as for escaping prison. A judge at Woolwich Crown Court in southeast London sentenced him to 14 years and three months jail for embarking on a "dangerous and fantastical plan" that involved passing sensitive information to Iranian intelligence for cash. Khalife, whose mother is Iranian, gathered information, including the names of elite special forces personnel, over a two-and-a-half-year period while posted in the UK and United States before being arrested and charged in 2023. Prosecutors accused Khalife of playing a "cynical game", making contact with a man linked to Iranian intelligence after joining the British army.

South Africa says 'will not let up' support for DR Congo

JOHANNESBURG: President Cyril Ramaphosa vowed Monday to continue providing support to the Democratic Republic of Congo in the face of nationwide calls to withdraw troops following the death of 14 South African soldiers. Rwanda-backed M23 fighters have made substantial gains in the eastern DRC, taking the major city of Goma last week and vowing to march across the country to the capital Kinshasa. It is the latest escalation in a mineral-rich region devastated by decades of fighting involving dozens of armed groups and has rattled the continent, with regional blocs holding emergency summits over the spiralling tensions. Fourteen soldiers from South Africa have been killed in the conflict, prompting calls for a withdrawal, including from the radical Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party.

Greenland wants to ban foreign political donations

COPENHAGEN: Greenland wants to ban foreign donations to political parties, according to a bill unveiled Monday, over concerns of outside influence as US President Donald Trump insists he wants to acquire the autonomous Danish territory. The law is intended to "safeguard the political integrity of Greenland", according to the text of the bill. As the government holds a majority in the parliament, or Inatsisartut, the bill is likely to pass after it is presented on Tuesday and could come into force immediately. The initiative "must be considered in light of the geopolitical interests in Greenland and the current situation... where representatives of an allied superpower have expressed their interest in taking over and controlling Greenland," the text says. It stipulates that "parties, including local and youth sections, are not allowed to receive contributions from foreign or anonymous donors," defined as those "who reside or are domiciled outside Greenland".

French police fire at two at Paris station: AFP

PARIS: French railway police on Monday shot and wounded two people, including a man wielding a fake gun who was spray-painting a swastika at a busy Paris station, a police source and the prosecutor's office said. When the man who was spray-painting a swastika appeared to draw a weapon at the busy Gare d'Austerlitz station in southeastern Paris, railway police shot him and another person "several times," a police source told AFP. Both were injured. The Paris prosecutor's office said the gun then turned out to be a dummy. The person who had been carrying out the graffiti was gravely wounded, while a traveller was also injured by a ricochet, it said.

Car bomb explosion in Syria kills 19, dozen wounded

AP, DAMASCUS (SYRIA): A car bomb exploded on the outskirts of a northern Syrian city on Monday, killing at least 19 people, all but one of them women, and leaving more than a dozen wounded, hospital workers said.

The car detonated next to a vehicle carrying mostly female agricultural workers on the outskirts of the city of Manbij.

The dead included 18 women and one man, a nurse at the hospital, Mohammad Ahmad, told The Associated Press. Another 15 women were wounded, some of them in critical condition, according to the local Syrian civil defence.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the explosion.

It was the seventh car bomb explosion in Manbij in just over a month, said Munir Mustafa, the deputy



Syrian White Helmet civil defence workers inspect the area of a car bomb attack on the outskirts of the city of Manbij, Syria

director of civil defence.

Manbij in northeastern Aleppo province continues to witness violence even after the downfall of President Bashar Assad in December.

Turkish-backed factions, known as the Syrian National Army, have clashed with the US-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces. The

focus on protecting some neighbourhoods as well as setting up surveillance cameras in the main neighbourhoods of the city," Jameel al-Sayyed, a Manbij activist and journalist said.

Mustafa warned that the attacks in Aleppo province near Syria's second city are a threat to Syria's progress to bring about post-war security and economic recovery. Most of the explosions took place at night.

"The continued attacks on Syrian civilian areas and targeting civilians while they are trying to recover from the effects of the war of the defunct Assad regime ... threaten their lives, deepens their humanitarian tragedy, undermines educational and agricultural activities and livelihoods, and worsens the humanitarian situation in Syria," Mustafa said.

A resident said the car that detonated was parked on the roadside. The recurring attacks have forced residents to become more vigilant, he said.

"There are efforts from the people of Manbij to

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OPPN SPITS FIRE IN LOK SABHA, SEEKS ANSWERS ON KUMBH STAMPEDE

"Minorities are being made to feel on the edge. The government's approach on issues like CAA, triple talaq, and lynching makes them feel threatened," she said.

On the subject of governance in non-BJP states, Kanimozhi alleged that governors were being used to create confusion and hinder administration. She also opposed the idea of 'One Nation, One Election,' arguing that it would suppress state-specific issues and allow national parties to dominate the agenda.

Samajwadi Party MP Naresh Chandra Uttam Patel also lashed out at the Uttar Pradesh government's handling of the Kumbh event.

"The Kumbh Mela was not struck by a natural disaster; it was a glaring example of the government's failure," he said.

He questioned why the authorities had not anticipated the overwhelming number of attendees and why no list of the deceased had been released yet.

"The double-engine government has made a mockery of governance. To date, we have no official count of those who lost their lives in the stampede," he said.

Shifting focus to the broader state of affairs, Patel also criticised the government's handling of the education sector.

Trinamool Congress MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar condemned the government's response to the Kumbh tragedy, criticising the brevity of the President's mention of the incident.

"Millions of Hindus were preparing for the Mahakumbh, and many poor people saved money for the Mauni Amavasya. It is sad to say that the President only spent 61 words on this tragedy. She has neither condemned the deaths nor sent condolence messages to the families of the deceased," she said.

She further alleged discrepancies in the official death toll.

"There is a clear discrepancy between the number of dead bodies in the morgue and the number of people reported missing. The same thing happened during Covid times," she added.

Dastidar also raised concerns about the economic policies and governance, highlighting the waiving of loans of billionaires while farmers are struggling.

"At every step, the Constitution is being disrespected. While the government waives loans for billionaires, it does nothing for struggling farmers," she said.

On the issues of national security and civil unrest, she criticised the lack of mention of Manipur in the President's Address.

"Not a single word was spoken about Manipur. Houses were burnt, women were gang-raped, and children were born in camps. The prime minister has no time to visit Manipur but visits election-bound states instead," she remarked.

KHARGE PAYS TRIBUTE TO 'THOUSANDS' DEAD AT KUMBH STAMPEDE

"I pay my tributes to the people who died in Maha Kumbh... the thousands who died in Kumbh," he said, leading to the protest by the ruling members.

Kharge, however, added this was his estimate and the government should provide the "correct" figures.

"This is my estimate, if this is not right you should tell what is the truth... I am asking you to declare what the actual numbers are. If I am wrong I am ready to correct," he said.

Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar urged him to retract his statement. "The LoP has indicated a scenario using figures to the extent of thousands. I appeal to him, in this House, whatever is spoken, carries great weight. You have spoken something which has numbed everyone," Dhankhar said.

"A message that goes from here, even if it is contradicted, goes to the whole world. Can you go to that extent? I would appeal to you as one of senior most leaders of this country, if you put a figure in thousands I can only appeal to your conscious," he said.

Kharge said he did not mention the figure to blame anyone.

Even as Chairman Dhankhar called Kharge making the claim a "very sad moment" and asked him to withdraw his statement, the Leader of Opposition insisted the government give the correct figures and continued with his speech.

He also paid tributes to former prime minister Manmohan Singh, calling him the architect of the modern Indian economy.

NATIONAL GAMES: GOA'S AKANKSHA WINS GOLD IN SQUASH

The win is a reward for a player who has displayed great form and did not drop a single set during the entire tournament.

ment. She is now also eligible for a Rs 3 lakh payment by the State Government for winning a gold medal in a national tournament.

LAND GRAB MASTERMIND SIDDIQUI SLAPPED WITH 2 CHARGESHEETS

In the second case registered in Valpoi, Rafael Luis Jose Lobo from Mapusa filed a complaint that on or before June 30, 2021, stating that the accused persons namely Gopal Dattaram Salgaonkar, Kalpana Gopal Salgaonkar from Ambedem-Sattari, Pankaj Anant Chodankar, Pooja Pankaj Chodankar both from Siroli-Sattari and Suleman Khan alias Siddiqui prepared fake sale deeds, forged the signature in sale deeds and falsely showed as executed before Sub Registrar Valpoi and used the same as genuine with intention to illegally grab the complainant's ancestral land/properties known as 'Kot-Pot' situated at Goalim-Moula of Tiswadi.

Both the cases were transferred to SIT Land Grabbing, Ribandar Goa. During the course of investigation, accused person Siddiqui was arrested and found to be the mastermind in both the cases. Investigation revealed that he prepared forged documents of the property and succeeded in completing the mutation process before the authority.

The case was thoroughly investigated by the Crime Branch PI Nitin Halarankar under the supervision of SP SIT(LG) Rahul Gupta IPS and DySP SIT(LG) Shivram Vaigankar.

KONKNNI: KAAL, AIZ, FALEAM ANIK SODANKAAL

He said that the Business Advisory Committee would go into session to discuss the rescheduling of the Language Bill.

When the Assembly reconvened at 4.25 pm, the Speaker announced a motion to revise the business of the House so as to consider and pass the Official Language Bill on the same day. The MGP opposed this, but I supported it and this motion was passed.

During the debate on the Language Bill, I moved an amendment seeking the continued use of the Roman script for Konkani. The amendment was to clause 2(c) where I sought the introduction of the words 'and Roman' be added after Devanagari. I explained in the Assembly why I was introducing this amendment, which was because although we accepted Devanagari as the script for Konkani, 450 years of Portuguese rule had ensured that the language was kept alive in the Roman script and that there were many Goans who would benefit by retaining the use of Konkani in the Roman script.

Another amendment I had proposed was that clause 3 be deleted and be replaced by clause 3 and 4. This was supported by Independent MLAs Uday Bhembre and Francisco Branco. There was no response to this amendment from the Chief Minister or anyone from the treasury benches. In all six amendments were moved during the debate, but only one moved by six Congress MLAs and the two MLAs of Daman and Diu was admitted. This amendment was to provide the use of Marathi for all or any official purposes. Along with Uday Bhembre and Francisco Branco, I walked out of the Assembly in protest over this amendment.

Walking out I said, 'I do not want to move any amendment, and I walk out in protest because this is blackmail of the people who wanted to merge Goa with Maharashtra and this government has succumbed to the blackmail. Today is a black day for the people of this territory and the people will not tolerate this. They have murdered Konkani and I walk out in protest.'

I walked out, but along with Bhembre and Branco, returned to pass the Official Language Bill and create history. (Luizinho Faleiro is a former Chief Minister of Goa. This is a very abridged version of his book, 'The battle for Konkani and Statehood of Goa' that chronicles his recollections of the movement.)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE ACT: A BETRAYAL OF GOA'S MINORITY COMMUNITY

By doing this, the so-called leaders of the Konkani movement betrayed a significant section of Konkani supporters by imposing the Devanagari script.

This act of exclusion will go down in Goan history as one of the greatest betrayals of the 20th century. And as expected, this led to a reaction. Naturally, supporters of Konkani in Roman script had to fight for their rights, a battle that continues to this day.

Following the enactment of the Official Language Act in 1987, Konkani-in-Roman-script followers faced blatant dis-

Keir Starmer becomes first UK PM to join EU meeting since Brexit

PTI, LONDON: Keir Starmer on Monday became the first British Prime Minister to join European Union (EU) leaders at an informal meeting of the European Council in Brussels since Brexit, with defence and security talks at the heart of their agenda.

The meeting with leaders of the 27 member-states of the economic bloc, which the UK had voted to exit in a June 2016 referendum, comes against the backdrop of US President Donald Trump's tariff threats triggering trade wars with economies around the world.

The Brussels visit is part of what the Starmer-led Labour government calls a post-Brexit "reset" between the UK and the EU.

"We need to see all allies stepping up - particularly in Europe. President Trump has threatened more sanctions on Russia and it's clear that's got Pu-

tin rattled. We know that he's worried about the state of the Russian economy," said Starmer.

"I'm here to work with our European partners on keeping up the pressure, targeting the energy revenues and the companies supplying his missile factories to crush Putin's war machine. Because ultimately, alongside our military support, that is what will bring peace closer," he said.

According to 10 Downing Street, Starmer will call on Europe to keep up the pressure on Russia, alongside sustained military support to Ukraine, to put them in the strongest possible position this year.

Addressing a joint press conference with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Secretary General Mark Rutte, the British prime minister stressed that Britain won't choose between the US and the EU.

crimination. Their written works were ignored, their contributions dismissed, and their representation systematically suppressed. The architects of the OLA, who controlled government and semi-government bodies, attempted to eliminate Roman-script Konkani altogether. Some examples of this injustice include:

- The Goa Konkani Academy, constituted by the government, neglected Roman-script Konkani supporters. Only one or two members sympathetic to Devanagari script were included in the 12-15-member committee, and they were never considered for the positions of President or Vice-President.

- The same bias was evident in the constitution of statutory bodies at both State and National levels, including the Advisory Board of Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, where only one out of ten members represented Roman-script Konkani.

- The Kala Academy, which initially gave annual literary awards for books in Roman-script Konkani, eventually succumbed to pressure from Devanagari Konkani leaders and discontinued these awards.

- No supporters or writers of Roman-script Konkani were appointed to positions in institutions such as the Goa Konkani Academy, the Art & Culture Department, the Official Language Cell, All India Radio, or Doordarshan.

- Literary works written in Roman script were excluded from Sahitya Akademi awards. The message was clear: if an author wanted recognition, they had to write in Devanagari script.

- And now, another conspiracy is in motion—one that will prevent minority youth from securing government jobs. Previously, knowledge of Konkani was sufficient for government job interviews. However, a new requirement mandating written examinations in Konkani in Devanagari script will be a devastating blow to the very community that shed blood to make Konkani Goa's official language.

TRUMP PAUSES TARIFFS ON MEXICO

"I look forward to participating in those negotiations, with President Sheinbaum, as we attempt to achieve a deal' between our two Countries," the president said.

As a condition ahead of the talks, Sheinbaum laid out changes in border policies, and Trump confirmed Mexico's deployment of troops.

"Mexico will reinforce the northern border with 10,000 members of the National Guard immediately, to stop drug trafficking from Mexico to the United States, in particular fentanyl," Sheinbaum posted on X. "The United States commits to work to stop the trafficking of high-powered weapons to Mexico."

Trump posted earlier on social media that he spoke Monday morning with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and would speak with him again at 3 pm. Both Canada and Mexico had plans to levy their own tariffs in response to US actions, but Mexico is holding off for the moment.

Trump used his social media post to repeat his complaints that Canada has been uncooperative, despite decades of friendship and partnerships that range from World War II to the response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

"Canada doesn't even allow US Banks to open or do business there," Trump posted. "What's that all about? Many such things, but it's also a DRUG WAR, and hundreds of thousands of people have died in the US from drugs pouring through the Borders of Mexico and Canada."

Financial markets, businesses and consumers are trying to prepare for the possibility of the new tariffs. Stock markets opened with a modest sell-off, suggesting some hope that the import taxes that could push up inflation and disrupt global trade and growth would be short-lived.

But the outlook reflected a deep uncertainty about a Republican president who has talked with adoration about tariffs, even saying the US government made a mistake in 1913 by switching to income taxes as its primary revenue source.

Trump said Sunday that the tariffs would lift if Canada and Mexico did more to crack down on illegal immigration and fentanyl smuggling, though there are no clear benchmarks. Trump also said the US can no longer run a trade imbalance with its two largest trade partners.

Mexico is facing a 25% tariff, while Canada would be charged 25% on its imports to the United States and 10% on its energy products. China faces a 10% additional tariff due to its role in the making and selling of fentanyl, the White House said.

Kevin Hassett, director of the White House National Economic Council, said Monday that it was misleading to characterize the showdown as a trade war despite the planned retaliations and risk of escalation.

