



UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan with Guinea-Bissau's Prez Umaro Sissoco Embaló at al-Shati Palace in Abu Dhabi



Protestors carry signages during a demonstration to demand more affordable and sustainable housing amid rising prices in Madrid, Spain



Thai hostages freed from Hamas, Watchara Sriaroun (R) Surasak Rumnao (L) on arrival at Suvarnabhumi International Airport, in Thailand



Lithuanian Prez Gitanas Nausėda with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen after awarding the Grand Cross of the Order of Grand Duke Gediminas in Lithuania

allovertheworld



Ecuador's presidential candidate for the Movimiento Revolución Ciudadana party (Citizen Revolution Movement), Luisa González, casts her vote at a polling station in Canuto, Ecuador, on Sunday, during the presidential election

Polls open in Ecuador with conservative incumbent, leftist lawyer leading prez race
GUAYAQUIL (ECUADOR): Polls opened on Sunday in a presidential election in Ecuador that is shaped up to be a repeat of the 2023 race, when voters chose a conservative young millionaire over the leftist protégé of the country's most influential president this century. President Daniel Noboa and Luis González are the clear front-runners among the pool of 16 candidates. All promised voters to reduce the widespread crime that pushed their lives into an unnerving new normal four years ago. Voting is mandatory in Ecuador. More than 13.7 million people are eligible to vote. More than 100,000 members of the military and police officers have been deployed to safeguard the election, including voting centres.

Sam Nujoma, Namibia's fiery freedom fighter and first president, dies aged 95
OSHAKATI (NAMIBIA): Sam Nujoma, the fiery white-bearded freedom fighter who led Namibia to independence from apartheid South Africa in 1990 and served as its first president for 15 years, and became known as the father of his nation, has died. He was 95. Nujoma's death was announced on Sunday by current Namibian President Nangolo Mbumba, who said Nujoma died on Saturday night after being hospitalised in the capital, Windhoek. "The foundations of the Republic of Namibia have been shaken," Mbumba said in a statement. "Over the past three weeks, the Founding President of the Republic of Namibia and Founding Father of the Namibian Nation was hospitalized for medical treatment and medical observation due to ill health." "Unfortunately, this time, the most gallant son of our land could not recover from his illness," Mbumba added.

Sri Lankan Navy arrests 14 Indian fishermen
COLOMBO: Sri Lankan authorities have arrested 14 Indian fishermen and seized their trawlers for allegedly venturing into the territorial waters of the island nation, the Navy said on Sunday. The arrests took place during a special operation conducted in the sea area north of Mannar on Saturday, the Sri Lankan Navy said in a statement. "The Sri Lanka Navy seized 2 Indian fishing boats and apprehended 14 Indian fishermen while they were poaching in Sri Lankan waters," it said. The Navy continues to conduct regular patrols and operations in Sri Lankan waters to curb illegal fishing practices of foreign fishing boats, taking into account the impact of those practices on the livelihood of local fishermen, the statement said.

25 civilians killed in attack by gunmen in Mali
BAMAKO (MALI): Gunmen have attacked a convoy of vehicles escorted by Mali's army, killing 25 civilians mostly gold miners, a military spokesman said Sunday. The attack took place Friday about 30 km from Gao, the largest city in the country's northeast where armed groups hostile to the ruling junta operate. It was the deadliest attack on civilians this year. The assailants targeted a convoy of some 60 vehicles escorted by the army, military spokesman Col Maj Souleymane Dembélé told The Associated Press. He said soldiers assisted the victims and transferred 13 wounded to the Gao hospital. He said four of the attackers were wounded and declined to comment on any army casualties.

Imran Khan's PTI rules out possibility of resumption of dialogue with govt
ISLAMABAD: Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan-founded Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's Leader of Opposition in National Assembly, Omar Ayub Khan, has ruled out the possibility of resumption of the dialogue between the party and the government, a news report said on Sunday. "The chapter of talks is now closed," Geo News quoted Ayub as saying on Saturday. Ayub said political negotiations were not based on mere wishes but required firm commitment which the government failed to demonstrate. Censuring the coalition government's approach to talks, which now seem to have collapsed, the senior PTI leader said his party's committee had initiated discussions in good faith.

40 arrested in Bangladesh after violence, vandalism

India's remarks 'unwarranted', says Bangladesh

PTI, DHAKA: Forty people have been arrested in Bangladesh in an operation launched following a violent attack on student activists during vandalism at the house of an Awami League leader on the outskirts of Dhaka that left several people injured, according to a media report.

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus-led interim govt ordered "Operation Devil Hunt" on Saturday after the attack on students and civilians in the Gazipur district Friday night.

Superintendent of Police of Gazipur Chowdhury Jaber Sadek said that 40 people were detained as part of the operation, United News of Bangladesh reported.

On Friday night, at least 14 individuals, all belonging to the mobs out to vandalise and destroy all signs of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League party, were injured as they came under attack in Gazipur city's Dakshinkhan area. The violence occurred during the attack on the residence of former Liberation War Affairs Minister Mozammel Haque.

The injured were immediately taken to the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital for treatment. Later, some of them were referred to the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

PTI, DHAKA: Asserting that the demolition of the residence of Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the country's internal matter, the interim government on Sunday said India's remarks on the incident was "unexpected and unwarranted". India on Thursday voiced anguish over the destruction of the historic residence and said the "act of vandalism" should be strongly condemned. "It is regrettable that the historic residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a symbol of the heroic resistance of the people of Bangladesh against the forces of occupation and oppression, was destroyed on February 5. All those who value the freedom struggle that nurtured Bangla identity and

In protest, the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and the National Citizens Committee held a day-long protest and rally in Gazipur. After the protest, a student was injured in a shooting by miscreants in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office around 6:30 pm. Talking to the media on Sunday,

pride are aware of the importance of this residence for the national consciousness of Bangladesh," external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal had said. Reacting to India's remarks, Bangladesh foreign ministry on Sunday said the incident at Dhamondi 32 pertains to the country's internal affairs, state-run BSS news agency reported. "A statement from India's Ministry of External Affairs on this matter, issued on February 6, 2025, has come to the attention of the interim government. Such remarks from India's foreign ministry on Bangladesh's internal affairs are unexpected and unwarranted," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mohammad Rafiqul Alam was quoted as saying by BSS.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said that a command centre, established to monitor the law and order situation intensively, has started working this evening. "The Operation Devil Hunt began yesterday...to coordinate the works of law enforcing agencies, the command centre is going to start its

works from 6 pm today," he was quoted as saying by the state-run BSS news agency.

Alam said the members of the law enforcement agencies and representatives of the armed forces will work at the command centre.

"We hope that following the establishment of the centre, the law and order situation will improve and a quick response can be carried out to any threat," he said.

On February 3, Yunus asked to create a 'command centre' for monitoring intensively the law and order situation.

Meanwhile, Home Affairs Advisor Md Jahangir Alam Chowdhury has said that Operation Devil Hunt will be targeting those who seek to destabilise the country, stressing that the crackdown would continue until the 'devils' are brought to book.

The operation is being jointly conducted by the Bangladesh Army, Air Force, and Navy, along with members of the police, Border Guard Bangladesh, Ansar, and Coast Guard. Asked about the goals of the operation, Jahangir said, "What does 'devil' mean? It refers to evil forces. This operation is aimed at those who try to destabilise the country, break the law, engage in criminal activities, and commit acts of terrorism."

Rescuers recover 1 body, search on for 28 people in landslide in China

AP, BEIJING: Emergency teams in China's south-western Sichuan province raced against time Sunday to locate 28 people after a landslide triggered by rains killed one person and buried homes.

Nearly 1,000 personnel were deployed following the landslide in the village of Jinping in Junlian county on Saturday.

Some officers navigated through the remains of collapsed buildings, using drones and life-detection radars to locate any signs of life with the help of locals who were familiar with the area, state broadcaster CCTV said.

Two injured people were rescued and about 360 others evacuated after 10 houses and a manufacturing building were buried, CCTV reported.

At a news conference Sunday, authorities said preliminary assessments attributed the disaster to heavy rainfall and local geological conditions. They said these factors transformed a landslide into a debris flow about 1.2 kilometres long, with a total volume exceeding 100,000 cubic metres.

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SMART CITY BLUNDER IN BHATLEM, GAS LEAK DISASTER AVERTED

Meanwhile, local councillor and former Mayor of Corporation of City of Panaji (CCP) Uday Madkaikar said, "Earlier, the water pipeline was damaged and now this gas pipeline. I do not know what is happening. Anyway the officials of Goa Natural Gas Pvt Limited reached on time and started repair work of the pipeline. Those carrying out the work should have taken precautions. This place has become a dangerous zone because there have been problems with water, electricity and now gas."

"We are lucky that no untoward incident has occurred because of the gas leakage. I think the workers weren't aware of the gas pipeline. Ever since the Ribandar incident, which claimed the life of a worker, we have been constantly demanding that the contractors must provide safety equipment to all labourers as per the guidelines," he said.

Notably, this time too no Smart City officials were seen on the site post the incident. This is in contrast to what Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Limited (IPSCDL) MD and CEO Sanjit Rodrigues had recently said that there is a response from his team when incidents occur.

Recently responding to questions during a press conference, Sanjit Rodrigues had said, "We have a team. Similarly the Public Works Department and Electricity Department too have their teams. Pipes and cables have been damaged but we have a response and repair team."

"No doubt there is wastage, but the way we are bringing the solution to the people, this is short-term inconvenience. People have understood that we are bringing a permanent solution to the problem. Our response and time may not be what you wish but definitely there is a response. But if you want 'Tatkal' response, then it cannot happen," he had said. When questioned further, he had said there are teams in the departments, but these teams and their members are in the offices or on call.

"I think we are responding, but there are some limits to our response also. You cannot expect the response to come there and there. Some time has to be given," Rodrigues had said.

It may be recalled that last Sunday, the residents of low-lying areas in Bhatlem and nearby places faced tremendous losses after the main pipeline supplying water to Taleigao and Dona Paula burst, leaving their homes flooded and properties destroyed.

The water gushed into their kitchens destroying their home appliances and other household articles.

However, what was surprising to note was that the authorities were conspicuous by their absence.

According to the locals, the pipeline was damaged at around 10 am, which forced the water to seep into seven houses.

SOUTH COLLECTOR HALTS ILLEGAL LAND FILLING IN VELSÃO

"Imagine being taunted like this in our own village. It was humiliating, especially for our senior citizens, who were left helpless in their own homes," said another villager.

Goncho Ekvott (GE), which has been assisting the affected residents, described the stop work order as a much-needed intervention, but stressed that the fight was far from over. "The order has brought temporary relief, but the real question is—will the authorities ensure that it is enforced? We have seen how the contractors have tried to force their way through before, even after the village panchayat issued a similar order," said Orville Dourado Rodrigues, GE founder.

He recalled how, following the panchayat's stop work order, railway contractors had attempted to continue work using heavy machinery, only to be stopped by villagers who physically blocked the construction activity. "It was the unity of the people that made a difference. The villagers, along with activists, had to stand in front of the machines to prevent further damage," he said.

Despite the temporary halt in work, residents say the damage done to their access routes remains a serious concern. The dumping of mud in the railway's Right of Way

(RoW) has virtually taken over the village road, leaving residents without access to their homes. "This is the only path we have used for generations. Our homes existed here long before the railway tracks were even built in the 1890s," said a resident.

Even pedestrians are finding it difficult to navigate the area, with some saying it is nearly impossible to walk through, especially after dark.

The next hearing on the matter is scheduled at the Inspector of Survey and Land Records (ISLR) office in Margão on February 17, and residents are determined to keep up the pressure.

"We are not going to give up. We will leave no stone unturned to restore our Right of Way and ensure that the authorities take this issue seriously," said an affected resident.

While the stop work order has provided some respite, locals insist that only full enforcement of the directive and restoration of access will bring a real resolution to their struggle.

RAILWAYS REJECTS VELSÃO PANCHAYAT'S STOP WORK ORDER

RVNL also acknowledged that the assignment of survey numbers for land under South Western Railway's (SWR) possession is pending before the Inspector of Survey and Land Records (ISLR) in Margao. However, it noted that no stay order has been issued by any court to prevent construction at the site. To support its position, RVNL also attached a copy of a 2022 Bombay High Court ruling in a similar case.

Asserting that the railway work will continue, the letter advised the panchayat to withdraw the stop work order. It also suggested that any genuine concerns regarding access issues should be taken up with the district administration, assuring that SWR and RVNL remain open to discussions for practical solutions in coordination with the relevant authorities.

Railway officials have now sent copies to the District Collector, Additional Director of Panchayats, and local police on the matter, reinforcing their position to the panchayat that the project will proceed as planned.

The response comes amid rising tensions in Velsão, where the panchayat had ordered a halt to the work following complaints from residents about blocked roads, private properties, and waterways due to soil dumping.

ATISHI RESIGNS AS DELHI CM

The LG dissolved the Delhi Assembly effective from Saturday, February 8.

A notification by the Assembly Secretariat issued a day before read, "In exercise of the power conferred upon me by sub-section (2)(b) of section 6 of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991, I, Vinai Kumar Saxena, Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, hereby dissolve the Seventh Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi with effect from February 8, 2025."

The BJP returned to power in Delhi after more than 26 years, winning 48 of the 70 assembly seats. The AAP won 22 seats while the Congress drew a blank in the polls held on February 5.

MANIPUR CM BIREN SINGH QUILTS

It said people of the State were now awaiting a visit by "our frequent-flier Prime Minister" Narendra Modi.

Earlier this week, a new controversy erupted after the Supreme Court sought a sealed-cover forensic report on the authenticity of leaked audio clips alleging the role of Singh in the ethnic violence.

The tapes reportedly included conversations where Singh allegedly suggested that Meitei groups were allowed to loot arms and ammunition from the State government during the unrest, which has so far claimed 250 lives.

In his resignation letter, Singh said, "It has been an honour to serve the people of Manipur thus far. I am extremely grateful to the Central government for time actions, interventions, developmental work and implementation of various projects for safeguarding the interests of every single Manipuri."

"My sincere request to the central government through your good office is to continue with the same. I take the opportunity to enumerate the most important ones of them ... To maintain the territorial integrity of Manipur which has a rich and diverse civilisational history over thousands of years," the letter added.

Singh in his resignation letter also requested the Centre to continue the "crackdown on border infiltration and to formulate policy for the deportation of the illegal immigrants and the fight against drugs and narco terrorism."

On Saturday, Singh convened a meeting with BJP-led ruling alliance MLAs at the CM Secretariat. The meeting was held in the wake of the opposition Congress seeking to move a no-confidence motion against the government led by Singh during the Assembly session starting February 10.

It was not immediately clear whether the BJP will appoint a new CM. Top BJP leader Sambit Patra is camping in Manipur.

BJP sources on the other side expressed hope that his resignation will help boost the efforts being helmed by the Centre to broker peace between the two main ethnic communities in the State.

Noting that former home secretary Ajay Bhalla was appointed the State's Governor in December last with an apparent aim to accelerate peace and security measures, they said Singh's resignation will help the process and convey the Centre's sincerity in bridging the ethnic divide.

A source said that Singh was also losing support among BJP MLAs, many of whom have met party leaders in Delhi to convey their unhappiness with his continuation.

The state Assembly session is scheduled to begin on February 10, and there was concern that some party MLAs might embarrass the government by targeting their own leadership.

In his letter to the Governor, the CM also urged the Central government "to continue the stringent and fool-proof revised mechanism of Free Movement Regime (FMR) with the biometric being stringently applied time bound and faster border which is underway."

POPE REMINDS ARMED FORCES ONLY TO ACT FOR DEFENCE, RESPECT INTERNATIONAL LAWS

He had continued his activities and audiences indoors at Casa Santa Marta, the Vatican residence where he lives, until Sunday.

Francis has long battled health problems including long bouts of bronchitis. He uses a walker or cane when moving around his apartment and recently fell twice, hurting his arm and chin.

Speculation about the Pope's health is a constant in Vatican circles, especially after Pope Benedict XVI broke 600 years of tradition and resigned from the papacy in 2013.

Francis has said that he has no plans to resign anytime soon, even if Benedict "opened the door" to the possibility.

ED SHEERAN UNPLUGGED IN BENGALURU, LITERALLY

Church Street is a busy area in Bengaluru known for its nightlife and cultural events.

While a section of social media users were unhappy about the outcome, Bangalore Central MP PC Mohan said rules are same for everyone.

"Shape of You... but not of permits. Ed Sheeran's impromptu gig on Church Street hit a sour note as Bengaluru police pulled the plug over missing permissions. Even global stars must follow local rules—no permit, no performance!" Mohan wrote on X.

"Ed Sheeran surprised fans with an impromptu performance on Church Street, Bengaluru, but then came along a policeman..." said a Sheeran fan.

Just saw Ed Sheeran on Church Street. He sang his song, but sadly the police stopped him in the middle," commented another on the microblogging site.

Also known for tracks like 'Perfect Duet', 'Thinking Out Loud' and 'Shivers', Sheeran is currently on the India leg of his Mathematics (+=-÷x) Tour.

