



Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni (R) with Austria's Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg upon his arrival at the Palazzo Chigi in Rome



Romanian gendarmes scuffle with protesters who force the protection barrier in front of the Romanian government building in Bucharest



A South Korean army KIA2 tank fires during a combined live fire drill with the United States at Rodriguez Live Fire Complex in Pocheon



Farmers and their tractors protest over the changes to inheritance tax (IHT) rules in the budget in London

allovertheworld



A helicopter loads water to extinguish a bushfire in the mountains of Mallin Ahogado near El Bolson in the Patagonian province of Rio Negro, Argentina. Bushfires that have been burning in Argentine Patagonia since December, have covered more than 25,000 hectares according to official reports

Six arrested after migrants' bodies found on French beach

LILLE: Authorities have arrested six people after the bodies of two migrants were found on a northern France beach following a failed bid to cross the Channel and reach Britain, French prosecutors said Monday. After a record year for deaths in the Channel, crossing attempts have continued in the middle of winter, despite sometimes freezing temperatures. The six people arrested are aged 19 to 50 and of Afghan, Sudanese and Iranian nationality, the Boulogne-sur-Mer prosecutor's office said. The first body, a man in his 30s of Afghan origin, was found on the sandy beach in Berck in the the Pas-de-Calais region, with a second spotted less than two hours later just 300 metres (nearly 1,000 feet) away, authorities said. The men were migrants attempting to swim to a small boat already in the water that would take them across the Channel. "Around 60 migrants were waiting in the water to board," the prosecutor's office told AFP.

Church of England meets after series of abuse scandals

LONDON: The Church of England's elected governing body will begin a week-long meeting on Monday, after an "unprecedented crisis" triggered by a number of sexual abuse scandals. The London meeting comes a month after Justin Welby stepped down as Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the world's Anglicans, over the scandal. Sexual abuse allegations against a priest and a bishop have also emerged in recent months and embroiled Welby's interim replacement in controversy. The first day of the General Synod gathering, which convenes several times a year, will see members debate a damning report released last year into failures in the handling of a serial abuse case. On Tuesday, the bishops, other clergy and lay members will study new safeguarding measures following the Makin Review, which detailed various failings in the case of Christian camp leader and serial abuser John Smyth.

Freed Belarus activist says she was tortured in prison

VILNIUS: A Belarusian activist who was freed from prison and escaped to Lithuania said Monday she was tortured and forced to undergo "punitive" psychiatric treatment in custody. Polina Sharenda-Panasnyuk, an activist previously based in the city of Brest in western Belarus, served four years and one month in prison for opposing President Alexander Lukashenko's rule during mass protests in 2020. She is one of the most high-profile Belarusian prisoners to be released in several months, and her testimony is a rare recent account from inside the country's notorious prison system. "They hospitalised me in a psychiatric hospital... The tradition of punitive psychiatry has not gone away," Sharenda-Panasnyuk, 49, told a press conference in the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius.

Teacher fatally stabs 8-year-old student at S. Korea school: Yonhap

SEOUL: A teacher stabbed an eight-year-old student to death at an elementary school in South Korea on Monday, local media reported, citing authorities. The teacher, a woman in her 40s, confessed to the crime after police officers found her and the young girl with stab wounds at the elementary school in the central city of Daejeon on Monday evening, the Yonhap news agency reported. The girl was brought to hospital "in an unconscious state, but she later died," the report read. The teacher had stab wounds on her neck and arm, which officials determined may have been self-inflicted, according to the news agency. "Police found that the teacher had taken a leave of absence due to depression and returned to the school late last year," the report said.

Iraq president sues PM over unpaid Kurdistan salaries

BAGHDAD: Iraq's president has sued Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani over unpaid salaries for civil servants in the autonomous region of Kurdistan, bringing into focus a rift in the country's leadership. President Abdul Latif Rashid, a Kurd, filed the lawsuit against Sudani and Finance Minister Taif Sami last month, but his adviser, Hawri Tawfiq, only announced it on Sunday. The case, submitted to Iraq's top court, seeks an order to ensure salaries are paid "without interruption" despite ongoing financial disputes between Baghdad and Erbil, the regional capital.

Trump says serious about making Canada as 51st State

AP, WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said he is serious about wanting Canada to become the 51st state in an interview that aired Sunday during the Super Bowl preshow.

Yeah it is," Trump told Fox News Channel's Bret Baier when asked whether his talk of annexing Canada is "a real thing" — as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau recently warned.

"I think Canada would be much better off being the 51st state because we lose \$200 billion a year with Canada. And I'm not going to let that happen," he said. "Why are we paying \$200 billion a year, essentially a subsidy to Canada?"

The US is not subsidising Canada. The US buys products from the natural resource-rich nation, including commodities like oil. While the trade gap in goods has ballooned in re-

TRUMP RECOGNISES FEB 9 AS 'GULF OF AMERICA DAY'

PTI, WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has signed a proclamation recognising February 9 as "the first-ever Gulf of America Day" after a recent executive order by him to rename the Gulf of Mexico. Trump signed the proclamation on Sunday on his way to the Super Bowl in New Orleans, which sits on the gulf. We are flying right over it right now, Trump said, sitting aboard Air Force One with a pen in his hand. So we thought this would be appropriate. "Today, I am making my first visit to the Gulf of America since its renaming," Trump said in the proclamation published on the White House website. Trump had signed an executive order on his inauguration on January 20, giving the Department of the Interior 30 days to take all appropriate action needed to facilitate the name change. Just after Trump signed the executive order, the US Coast Guard started using the term Gulf of America, marking the US government's first official use of the term.

cent years to \$72 billion in 2023, the deficit largely reflects America's imports of Canadian energy.

Trump has repeatedly suggested that Canada

would be better off if it agreed to become the 51st US state - a prospect that is deeply unpopular among Canadians.

Trudeau said Friday during

a closed-door session with business and labor leaders that Trump's talk of making Canada the 51st US state was "a real thing" and tied to desire for access to the country's natural resources.

"Mr. Trump has it in mind that the easiest way to do it is absorbing our country and it is a real thing. In my conversations with him on ...," Trudeau said, according to CBC, Canada's public broadcaster. "They're very aware of our resources of what we have, and they very much want to be able to benefit from those."

In the Fox interview, which was pre-taped this weekend in Florida, Trump also said that he has not seen enough action from Canada and Mexico to stave off the tariffs he has threatened to impose on the country's two largest trading partners once a 30-day extension is up.

IMF mission to inspect regulatory, judicial system: Pak

PTI, ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is scrutinising the judicial and regulatory system of Pakistan as part of the ongoing USD 7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) to address governance and corruption vulnerabilities, the government has said.

The Ministry of Finance said on Sunday that an IMF technical mission is in town for a week-long examination of six key governance-related sectors and institutions.

Dawn News reported that Pakistan committed to

strengthening institutional capacities with the IMF in October to fight corruption, support inclusive growth, and provide a level playing field for businesses and investments.

As a result, the ministry said a structural benchmark had been set to publish a report on the Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment (GCDA) by July 2025, which will analyse critical governance and corruption vulnerabilities and identify priority structural reforms moving forward.

Indian restaurants among targets of UK 'blitz' against illegal migrants

PTI, LONDON: Indian restaurants, nail bars, convenience stores, and car washes were among the targets of what the Home Office on Monday described as a "UK-wide blitz" on illegal working in the country.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said her department's Immigration Enforcement teams had a record-breaking January as they descended on 828 premises -- a 48 per cent rise compared to the previous January, with arrests surging to 609, and marking a 73 per cent increase

from the previous year.

The Home Office said that while its teams respond to illegal working intelligence in all sectors, a significant proportion of last month's activity took place at restaurants, takeaways and cafes as well as in the food, drink and tobacco industry.

A visit to one Indian restaurant in Humberstone, northern England, alone led to seven arrests and four detentions, it noted.

"The immigration rules must be respected and enforced. For far too long, employers have been able to

B'DESH FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISOR LIKELY TO MEET EAM JAISHANKAR IN MUSCAT: REPORT

PTI, DHAKA: Bangladesh Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain is likely to meet External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on the sidelines of the Indian Ocean Conference in Oman next week as part of efforts to prevent further strains in bilateral ties, according to a media report here on Monday. The 8th Indian Ocean Conference (IOC 2025) is set to take place in Muscat on February 16-17. Organised by the New Delhi-based research institute India Foundation in collaboration with Oman's foreign ministry, the conference serves as a key platform for regional dialogue.

take on and exploit illegal migrants and too many people have been able to

arrive and work illegally with no enforcement action ever taken," said Cooper.

FROM PAGE 1

LAKHS LOST IN BHATLEM GAS PIPELINE DAMAGE

Residents of Bhatlem and neighboring areas also faced considerable inconvenience. Kapil Parsekar, a resident of Sonata Complex in Miramar, noted that while he did not experience direct issues, his neighbours were affected by the disruption. "The gas supply stopped around 2 pm and was only restored by 9 pm. Cooking was difficult for many, though some managed with induction stoves. There are at least 60 connections from the gas pipeline in my colony," he said.

Narendra Naik, a resident of Estrela by Alcon, shared a similar experience. "The gas supply was cut off around 2 pm and wasn't restored until about 10 pm. We called the company several times, but were assured each time that it would be back within 30 minutes. We had prepared lunch, but couldn't cook dinner. Many parents, especially those with children preparing for exams, were anxious. However, a staff member from Goa Natural Gas Pvt Ltd did visit to check on the situation."

The incident occurred around 4.30 pm when sewerage work was being carried out using earthmoving machinery. Locals claim the workers were unaware of the gas pipeline running through the area, which led to the accidental rupture.

Officials from the Panjim Police and Fire Station visited the site following the incident. The rupture of the gas pipeline has raised concerns about the safety protocols in place for projects involving earthmoving machinery and the need for better awareness of underground utilities.

TRUMP TO IMPOSE 25% ALUMINUM, STEEL TARIFFS TODAY

When asked about aluminum, he responded, "aluminum, too" will be subject to the trade penalties.

Trump also reaffirmed that he would announce "reciprocal tariffs" — "probably Tuesday or Wednesday" — meaning that the US would impose import duties on products in cases where another country has levied duties on US goods.

"If they are charging us 130% and we're charging them nothing, it's not going to stay that way," he told reporters.

Trump's comments are the latest example of his willingness to threaten, and in some cases to impose, import taxes. Tariffs are coming much earlier in his presidency than during his previous four years in the White House, when he prioritised tax cuts and deregulation.

Trump has alternately said he sees import taxes as tools to force concessions on issues such as immigration, but also as a source of revenue to help close the government's budget deficit.

Financial markets fell on Friday after Trump first said he would impose the reciprocal tariffs. Stock prices also dropped after a measure of consumer sentiment declined on Friday, largely because many respondents cited tariffs as a growing worry.

The survey also found that Americans are expecting inflation to tick up in the coming months because of the duties.

Trump on Sunday did not offer any details about the steel and aluminum duties, or the reciprocal tariffs. Trump previously threatened 25% import taxes on all goods from Canada and Mexico, though he paused them for 30 days barely a week ago. At the same time, he proceeded to add 10% duties on imports from China.

Yet on Friday, he said he would also delay the tariffs on the millions of small packages - often from fast-fashion firms such as Temu and Shein - until customs officials can figure out ways to impose them. The small packages have previously been exempt from tariffs.

Trump's latest remarks stirred immediate worry from some global trading partners.

South Korea's acting president, Choi Sang-mok, called a meeting with the country's top foreign policy and trade officials on Monday to examine how Trump's proposed tariffs on steel and aluminum would affect its industries.

The office of Choi, who also serves as the country's finance minister, said officials discussed the potential impact and Seoul's possible responses, but specific details of the meeting were not disclosed. The stock prices of major South Korean steelmakers, including POSCO and Hyundai Steel, dropped as the market opened on Monday.

South Korea shipped about \$4.8 billion worth of steel to the United States from January to November last year, which accounted for 14% of its global exports of the products during the period.

BATTLEGROUND BENAULIM TO TEST CONGRESS-AAP ALLIANCE

In response, Benaulim MLA Venzy Viegas reaffirmed his confidence in AAP's prospects for the upcoming State elections. Speaking on Monday evening, Viegas expressed optimism, stating that AAP's continued work in Benaulim would secure another victory for the party.

AAP Goa also convened a meeting in Panjim on Monday to assess the situation and plan its next steps. Viegas remained defiant, asserting that AAP's core values continue to resonate with voters. "Until the common man in Goa, Delhi, Gujarat, or any State in India believes that quality education, healthcare, water, electricity, and women's safety are key to a better India, AAP will remain here!" Viegas declared.

The Opposition alliance, which includes Congress, AAP, and Goa Forward Party (GFP), celebrated a major victory in South Goa during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections when Congress candidate Captain Viriarto Fernandes triumphed over the BJP. However, cracks within the alliance began to appear during the Zilla Panchayat (ZP) by-election in Benaulim, where Congress supported AAP's candidate, leading to a victory for the latter.

NGT ISSUES NOTICES TO VEDANTA, GOVT OVER BICHOLIM MINING BLOCK

The project also involves waste excavation of 25.162 million tons per annum (MTPA), bringing the total excavation to 28.162 MTPA, along with a crushing and screening plant with a capacity of 4.0 MTPA. The mine is located across several villages, including Bicholim, Bordem, Lamgao, Mulgao, Mayem and Sirigao in Bicholim Taluka.

Gauns has challenged the EC on the grounds that Vedanta Ltd allegedly failed to disclose information in Form No 1 regarding the presence of 13 lakes near the Bicholim Mining Block-I. He has also questioned the cumulative impact assessment, claiming that the assessment did not account for other ongoing mining activities in the area. Additionally, Gauns raised concerns about the public hearing process, alleging that it was conducted at the site in violation

of established procedures.

The environmental public hearing for the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Bicholim Mineral Block-I was held by the GSPCB in Sarvan, Nicholim, in August 2023.

Vedanta Ltd won the bid for the Bicholim Mining Block-I during the maiden e-auction of mining leases in Goa in December 2022.

The NGT Western Bench, comprising Justice Dinesh Kumar Singh and Expert Member Dr Vijay Kulkarni, admitted the appeal and issued notices to the four respondents. The matter is scheduled for further hearing on April 24.

SC DISMISSES VEDANTA'S APPEAL AGAINST MINING LEASE AUCTION

The Directorate of Mines and Geology had resumed the auction after Agravanshi Pvt Ltd, another bidder, raised concerns about a technical glitch that allegedly prevented them from submitting a higher bid. Vedanta argued that the glitch was solely at the bidder's end and that there was no proven error in the auction process. Despite this, the Court refused to intervene, allowing the bidding process to continue.

CASE AGAINST ALLAHBADIA, OTHERS OVER CRASS REMARKS

BJP functionary Nilotpal Mrinal Pandey, in his complaint to the Khar police, named Allahbadia, Raina, YouTuber Ashish Chanchalani, makers, judges and participants of the show, and accused them of using derogatory language on the show, an official said.

He submitted a video in a pen drive along with the written complaint, the official said.

Pandey alleged the show promotes abusive language, vulgarity and nudity, and sought action in the matter.

No case has been registered so far, but Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone 9) Dixit Gedam said an inquiry was underway into the complaint.

The second complaint was filed before a Bandra court by Nikhil Ruparel, a member of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI), a Congress wing, against reality show 'India's Got Latent', its judges and participants, including Allahbadia and Raina, over use of abusive language and vulgar content.

Ruparel urged the court to take cognizance of offences under sections 296 (obscene acts), 352 (intentional insult) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and relevant provisions of the Information Technology Act and issue process (summons) against those named in the complaint.

Further, the court may be pleased to order an investigation/inquiry into the matter under the BNS provisions, the plea, filed through an advocate, said.

The complaint maintained the controversial remarks contribute to the normalization of indecent conversations, desensitize individuals to inappropriate discourse, and erode the fundamental principles of respect, dignity, and decency in society.

"The accused, throughout the show, consistently used abusive language, which not only involved offensive and vulgar words but also conveyed such statements that negatively affect societal interactions," it added.

Besides Raina and Allahbadia, comedians Chanchalani and Apoorva Makhija have also been named in the court complaint.