



Syria's Minister of Foreign Affairs Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani (L) attends the International Conference on Syria at the Ministerial Conference Center, in Paris



Tulsi Gabbard stands with her husband Abraham Williams before she is sworn in as the Director of National Intelligence at the WH, in Washington



Visitors look at vehicles during the Indonesian International Motor Show in Jakarta, Indonesia



Britain's King Charles III reacts as he meets workers and apprentices during a visit to SeAH Wind's offshore turbine factory, in Middlesbrough, north east England

Resolve Kashmir issue via talks: Erdogan to India, Pak

PTI, ISLAMABAD: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday said that the Kashmir issue should be resolved through dialogue between India and Pakistan, with due consideration for the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

President Erdogan, who is in Pakistan on a two-day visit, made the comments after holding one-on-one and delegation talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The leaders also witnessed the signing ceremony of 24 agreements and a Memorandum of Understanding between the two sides.

Following this, they read statements to the media, expressing resolve to strengthen their bilateral ties, during which Erdogan also talked about the Kashmir issue.

The Kashmir issue should



Visiting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan greets Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during a welcome ceremony, in Islamabad, Pakistan

be addressed according to the UN resolution through dialogue and keeping in mind the aspirations of the people of Kashmir, Erdogan said.

Our state and our nation, as in the past, stands in solidarity with our Kashmiri brothers today, he added. India has repeatedly em-

phasised that the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh were, are, and "shall forever" remain an integral part of the country.

The ties between the two countries nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status

of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019.

In his statement, President Erdogan also showed keen interest in promoting ties with Pakistan. In the seventh session of our council, which we just concluded, we have agreed to further strengthen our relationship, he said.

Within the framework of this visit, we have signed a total of 24 agreements and MoUs in the fields of trade, water resources, agriculture, energy, culture, family, and social services, along with science, banking, education, defence, and health.

Speaking on the occasion, Shehbaz said that Pakistan was the second home of the Turkish leader and added that it was wonderful to have him back after five years.

Day after UN report, BNP expects India to repatriate former B'desh PM Hasina

PTI, DHAKA: Former prime minister Khaleda Zia's party on Thursday said it expects India to repatriate her rival counterpart Sheikh Hasina to stand trial after a UN fact-finding report claimed her ousted regime tried to hold onto power through systematic attacks and killings of protesters last year.

Bangladesh Foreign Ministry said a reminder to India for Hasina's extradition request already made last year would be sent, if necessary, and said the timing for it is an issue that requires diplomatic and political decision.

The nearly 16-year-long Hasina's Awami League (AL) regime was toppled in a students' uprising on August 5, 2024 when she fled Bangladesh for India.

Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told a press conference here that the UN report said the mass killings, human rights violations, and the destruction of democracy and institutions were carried out on Hasina's orders, and it was proven by the report that Hasina is a fascist who has tortured, persecuted and killed the people of this country.

He said he thanked the UN fact-finding committee for the report.

We call upon the Indian government today to immediately return her and her accomplices to Bangladesh and hand her over to the government for trial, Alamgir said.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Fact-Finding Report: Human Rights Violations and Abuses related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh

was released on Wednesday.

The report covered the period from July 1 to August 15 during the violent agitation by protesting students who wanted Hasina's ouster followed by days of attacks against Awami League supporters and minorities, including Hindus.

In the aftermath of the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government last year, widespread attacks were reported against Hindu homes, businesses, and places of worship, especially in rural and historically tense areas such as Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, and Dinajpur, as well as other places such as Sylhet, Khulna, and Rangpur, it said.

The report said this destruction was especially prevalent in areas perceived to be sympathetic to the Awami League as Hindus have often been stereotypically associated with this political faction.

It also documents that Hasina's Awami League (AL) government had cracked down on protesters and others resulting in hundreds of extrajudicial killings.

Bangladesh's former government and security and intelligence services, alongside violent elements associated with the Awami League party, systematically engaged in a range of serious human rights violations during last year's student-led protests, the report said.

Alamgir expressed his party's relief as the truth about the ruthless incidents was uncovered through the UN report and added that the problem is that when the United Nations speaks, we all believe it, but when we, the political parties, say it, many are reluctant to believe.

At least 28 hurt as driver plows into demonstration in Germany

PTI, BERLIN: A driver drove a car into a union demonstration in central Munich on Thursday, injuring at least 28 people including children, authorities said. Authorities said it was believed to be an attack.

The suspect, an Afghan asylum-seeker, was arrested. The incident follows a series of attacks involving immigrants in recent months that have pushed migration to the forefront of the campaign for Germany's February 23 election.

Participants in a demonstration by the service workers' union ver.di were walking along a street at about 10.30 am when the



Emergency services attend the scene of an accident after a driver hit a group of people in Munich, Germany

car overtook a police vehicle following the gathering, accelerated and plowed into the back of the group, police said.

Officers arrested the suspect after firing a shot at the car, deputy police chief Christian Huber said. He added that at least 28

people were believed to be injured, some of them seriously. A damaged Mini could be seen at the scene, along with debris including shoes.

The suspect was a 24-year-old Afghan asylum-seeker, Huber said. Bavaria's state interior minister, Joachim Herrmann, said he was known to authorities in connection with theft and drug offenses, but didn't give further details.

It is simply terrible, Bavarian governor Markus Soder told reporters at the scene. We feel with the victims, we are praying for the victims we hope very much that they all make it.

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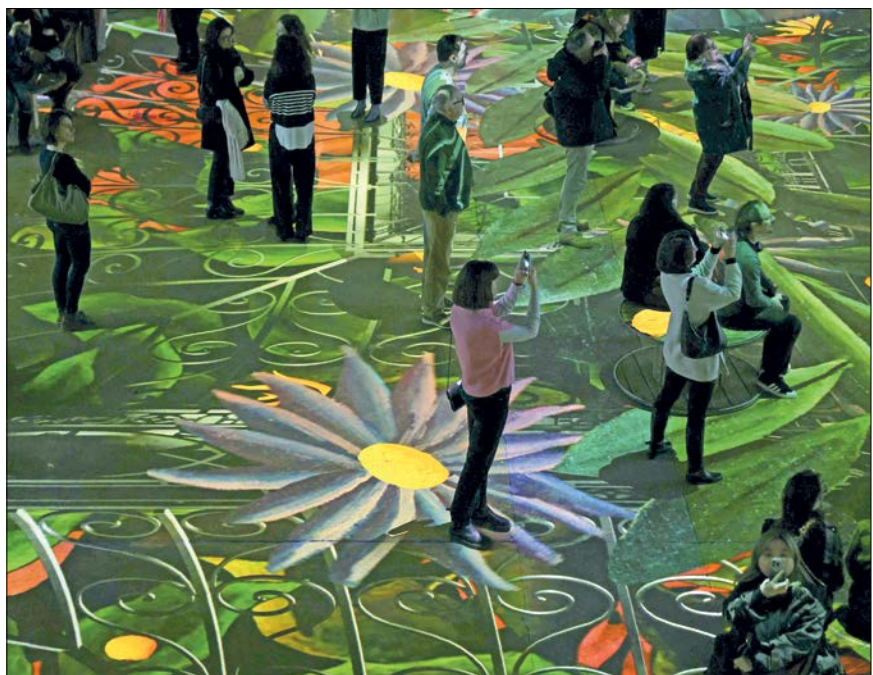
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ARTISTIC GLOW



Paintings by French painter Henri Rousseau, aka Le Douanier Rousseau, are projected at the Atelier des Lumières in Paris, during a press preview of the exhibition 'Le Douanier Rousseau, au Pays des Rêves'.

Hamas confirms release of 3 Israeli hostages on Sat

PTI, JERUSALEM: The militant Hamas group said that it would release the next group of three Israeli hostages as planned, in a reversal of its previous statement and raising the prospect of resolving a major dispute over the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas had threatened to delay the next release of Israeli hostages, accusing Israel of failing to meet its obligations to allow in tents and shelters, among other alleged violations of the truce. Israel had threatened to renew its offensive if hostages were not freed.

There was no immediate comment from Israel on Hamas' announcement but if the hostages are freed, that would allow the ceasefire to continue for now, though the its future remains in doubt.

Hong Kong pollster halts work after police action

HONG KONG: One of Hong Kong's last independent polling groups said Thursday it will halt research work "indefinitely" after police probed its chief executive and put his former deputy on a wanted list for national security crimes.

The Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute (HKPORI) has been targeted by authorities multiple times since Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law on Hong Kong in 2020 to quell dissent.

The pollster said in a statement it will "suspend all its self-funded research activities indefinitely, in-

cluding its regular tracking surveys conducted since 1992, and all feature studies recently introduced".

"HKPORI will undergo a transformation or even close down."

Police in December placed a HK\$1 million (\$128,000) bounty on the group's former deputy CEO, Chung Kim-wah, accusing him of advocating separatism and calling for sanctions against China.

Chung, who is based in Britain, said he has severed ties with his former employer.

In Hong Kong, national security police have brought in CEO Robert Chung and multiple HK-

PORI staffers for questioning over the past month, without arresting them.

The CEO said Thursday that he "welcomes interested parties to take over the institute".

Hong Kong's security chief earlier told AFP that the police action had "absolutely nothing to do with the results of (the group's polls)".

First established as a university programme in 1991, the institute started polling in the final years of British colonial rule before the city was handed over to China in 1997.

One of the city's most closely watched polls would ask residents if

they identified as "Hong-kongers", "Chinese", or some combination of the two.

Hong Kong police in 2020 and 2021 raided the institute's office after it helped pro-democracy activists organise an informal primary election.

South Korea's Yoon back in court for impeachment hearing

SEOUL: South Korea's suspended President Yoon Suk Yeol will get another hearing next week before judges decide on whether to formally remove him from office over his martial law decree, the country's Constitutional Court said Thursday.

allovertheworld



Video surveillance cameras are pictured next to a police car in the area of the Hotel Bayerischer Hof, the venue of the Munich Security Conference (MSC), in the center of Munich, southern Germany, one day before the start of the conference. The Munich Security Conference (MSC) runs until February 16, 2025

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South Korea's Yoon back in court for impeachment hearing

SEOUL: South Korea's suspended President Yoon Suk Yeol will get another hearing next week before judges decide on whether to formally remove him from office over his martial law decree, the country's Constitutional Court said Thursday. The former prosecutor has remained defiant throughout weeks of hearings, blaming a "malicious" opposition for his December bid to suspend civilian rule. The attempt only lasted six hours as the opposition-led parliament voted the declaration down and later impeached him over the move. Yoon was detained last month on insurrection charges, becoming the first sitting South Korean head of state to be arrested.

UK arrests six men wanted in Belgium for people smuggling

LONDON: UK law enforcement officers have arrested six people wanted in Belgium over their suspected involvement in a people-trafficking ring, the National Crime Agency (NCA) said on Thursday. NCA officers detained the men, all Afghan nationals, on Wednesday in Leicester and Birmingham, both in central England, and Essex in south east England. The detentions come as part of coordinated action in Belgium and Italy launched after Belgian courts issued a warrant for their arrests. Belgian prosecutors allege that the group, active since 2022, helped organise the transport of migrants from Afghanistan through Iran, Turkey and the Balkans into western Europe, mainly France and Belgium. The gang is also accused of helping migrants who had their asylum claims rejected in Belgium to travel to the UK on small boats.

Three Pakistan players fined for misconduct in South Africa match

KARACHI: Pakistan players Shaheen Afridi, Saud Shakeel and Kamran Ghulam were fined by the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Thursday for misconduct in their match against South Africa. Shaheen obstructed South African batter Matthew Breetzke as he took a single in Wednesday's match in Karachi, resulting in physical contact and a heated exchange of words. The ICC said he would be fined 25 percent of his match fee for "inappropriate physical contact". The statement added that Shakeel and substitute fielder Ghulam would have 10 percent of their match fee docked for celebrating too closely to batter Temba Bavuma. South African skipper Bavuma was run out for 82 in his team's total of 352-5. Shakeel and Ghulam were found guilty of "using language, actions or gestures which display disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batter upon his/her dismissal during an International Match".

Uganda opposition figure Besigye 'critically ill' in jail: lawyer

KAMPALA: Ugandan opposition figure Kizza Besigye is "critically ill" in jail three days after starting a hunger strike to protest his detention, one of his lawyers told AFP on Thursday. "We visited him in the prison yesterday but his medical condition is worrying. He is critically ill and needs urgent medical attention," lawyer Erias Lukwago said. Lukwago had announced on Wednesday that Besigye was on hunger strike to protest his "illegal detention" and was too ill to attend court hearings. "He is unable to move out of his prison cell," he said on Thursday. He added that the hospital was ill-equipped to treat him and "he should be treated outside the prison if he is to survive."