



Riot police and retirees vie for space on a street during a protest for better pensions, in Buenos Aires, Argentina



Indonesian Prez Prabowo Subianto delivers his speech during swearing ceremony for elected governors & district chiefs from all around Indonesia in Jakarta



Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury presents the European aerospace giant full year results, in Blagnac, near Toulouse, southwestern France, Thursday



Hadi Matar (R), charged with severely injuring author Salman Rushdie in a 2022 knife attack, walks into Chautauqua County court in Mayville, New York

allovertheworld



His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, Tenzin Gyatso, consecrates the temple of a thousand Buddhas with rice at the Tibetan Studies Center of Montchardon, Karma Migyur Ling, in Montchardon

Nigeria bans large fuel trucks after deadly explosions

LAGOS: Nigeria will ban large fuel trucks from its roads after a series of deadly tanker explosions killed hundreds in recent months. Road accidents involving fuel trucks are common in the west African country and are often followed by people gathering to scoop up spilled fuel -- a precious commodity as the country grinds through an economic crisis. Explosions have ripped through many such accident sites. From March 1 tankers carrying 60,000 litres (nearly 16,000 US gallons) or more of fuel are prohibited from using any of the country's roads, Ogbu Uko, of the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) oil regulator, said in a statement on Wednesday.

Turkey execs hit with travel ban after gov't criticism

ISTANBUL: Two top Turkish business lobby executives were barred from travelling abroad after being questioned for hours by a judge over remarks criticising the justice system, state media reported Thursday. Orhan Turan, who heads the influential TUSIAD business and industry association, was taken to court by police several hours after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused the lobby of trying to influence the judiciary. Istanbul's chief prosecutor said he was being investigated for "seeking to influence a fair trial" and "publicly spreading misleading information". Omer Aras, another top TUSIAD figure, was also taken by police to the same court to answer the same charges after being identified as under investigation on Friday. After being questioned for hours, both were granted conditional release late on Wednesday but barred from leaving Turkey, Anadolu news agency said.

Strike shuts Tunisia mining town over infrastructure woes

TUNIS: Schools and businesses in Om Laarayas, a major Tunisian mining town, shut down Thursday as a general strike protested deteriorating infrastructure, days after a deadly road accident. The regional URT labour union, part of the powerful UGTT trade federation, called for the strike to demand improvements to the southwestern town's infrastructure and healthcare. "All schools, shops and local institutions have shut down in protest against the deteriorating state of infrastructure," said URT secretary-general Mohamed Sghaier Miraoui. The strike followed a road accident on Tuesday when a bus collided with a truck in the town, killing six people and injuring nine. "This tragic accident has sparked outrage among residents of our neglected region," Miraoui told AFP.

Swedish police seek details on hours before mass shooting

STOCKHOLM: Swedish police said Thursday they were looking for information on how the gunman responsible for Sweden's worst mass shooting spent the final hours before the attack. They have still not been able to establish a clear motive, they said. On February 4, 35-year-old Rickard Andersson entered the Campus Risbergsga adult education centre in the city of Orebro and shot dead 10 people before turning his gun on himself. Deputy commander Emelie Bodegrim told journalists they had a "fairly clear picture" of the day in question, but they were investigating a three-hour gap from the morning before Andersson was seen at the education centre at 11:30 am. Police said they knew he had taken a bus to a street nearby the school in the morning, arriving at 7:47 am. Police published a photo showing the Andersson the morning before, dressed in dark clothes and carrying a guitar case and a blue IKEA-bag.

Seven civilians killed in Syria UXO blast: monitor

AL-NAYRAB: At least seven civilians, including a woman and a child, were killed on Thursday when unexploded munitions ignited at a house in northwestern Syria, a war monitor said. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported the deadly blast a day after another organisation said two-thirds of Syrians risked being killed or wounded by unexploded ordnance. "Seven civilians, including a woman and a child, were killed when leftover munitions stored inside a house" in Idlib province exploded, the Observatory said. An AFP correspondent saw civil defence teams retrieving bodies from the rubble of the destroyed house in Al-Nayrab on the outskirts of the main northern city of Aleppo.

# Zelensky meets US envoy after Trump brands him a dictator

AFP, KIEV: Volodymyr Zelensky was meeting Thursday with US envoy Keith Kellogg after Donald Trump branded the Ukrainian leader a 'dictator' and said the Russians 'have the cards' in any talks to end the war.

The United States has provided essential funding and arms to Ukraine, but the US president has rattled Kyiv and its European backers by opening talks with Moscow they fear could end the war on terms unacceptable to them.

Zelensky has also hit out at Trump, saying he had succumbed to Russian "disinformation" by repeating Kremlin talking points.

Amid the war of words between Kyiv and its biggest ally, Zelensky's spokesman said there would be no public statements in Kyiv following the talks with Kellogg.

Typically visiting envoys, especially from such a close backer, would hold a joint press conference fol-



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky (L) greets US special envoy for Ukraine Keith Kellogg at his offices in Kyiv

lowing talks. "At the request of the American side, the format of the meeting provides for protocol filming and does not include statements or questions," Zelensky's spokesman Sergiy Nykyforov told reporters.

In the United States, Trump's top security adviser said Thursday that Zelensky's criticism of the US president was "unacceptable" and urged him to sign a deal giving pref-

erential access to Ukraine's critical minerals and natural resources.

"We're getting all this pushback... they need to tone it down and take a hard look and sign that deal," National Security Advisor Mike Waltz told Fox News.

"They have the cards" Under former US president Joe Biden, the United States lauded Zelensky as a hero and hammered Moscow with sanctions as Ukraine battled against ad-

US COULD ADJUST RUSSIA SANCTIONS OVER UKRAINE TALKS: TREASURY CHIEF

AFP, WASHINGTON: The United States is prepared to tighten or loosen sanctions against Russia depending on the outcome of Ukraine peace talks, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent suggested on Thursday. President Donald Trump has rattled Kyiv and its European backers by opening talks with Moscow that they fear could force Ukraine to make concessions to Russia, which invaded in 2022. Asked by Bloomberg News if the US Treasury has prepared two sets of plans to either intensify or ease sanctions against Russia depending on how the talks go, Bessent replied: "I think that'd be a very good characterization." On Wednesday, Trump called Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky a "dictator", escalating a personal rift between the two a few days after Zelensky rejected a US proposal - unveiled by Bessent in Kyiv - to provide support in exchange for access to Ukraine's natural resources.

natural Russian troops.

But Trump has been critical of Zelensky, claiming he has subverted democracy and blaming him for starting the war that began with Russia's full-scale invasion three years ago.

"I think the Russians want to see the war end... But I think they have the

cards a little bit, because they've taken a lot of territory, so they have the cards," Trump told reporters late Wednesday.

"A Dictator without Elections, Zelensky better move fast or he is not going to have a Country left," he wrote on his Truth Social platform.

## Europe on the cusp of peace: Vance

AFP, NATIONAL HARBOR, UNITED STATES: Europe is on the "cusp of peace," US Vice President JD Vance said Thursday, crediting Donald Trump's push to end Russia's war in Ukraine, which has prompted fears of Kyiv being forced to capitulate.

"It's going to take a smart statesman to figure this stuff out," Vance said during an on-stage interview at a conservative conference near the capital Washington.

"But we've got that in the White House, and I really believe that we're on the cusp of peace in Europe for the first time in three years, because we have leadership from the Oval Office," he said.

US President Trump has dramatically shifted Washington's position on Russia's invasion of Ukraine since returning to the White House one month ago.

The Republican has rattled Kyiv and its European backers by opening talks with Moscow that they fear could force Ukraine to bow to Russia.

## Hamas returns bodies of 4 Israeli hostages, including mother, 2 kids

AP, TEL AVIV (ISRAEL): Hamas on Thursday released the bodies of four Israeli hostages, said to include a mother and her two children who have long been feared dead and had come to symbolise the nation's agony following the attack led by the militant group on southern Israel in 2023.

The remains were presumed to include Shiri Bibas and her two children, Ariel and Kfir - and the Israeli government confirmed that one of the bodies returned was of Oded Lifshitz, who was 83 when he was abducted.

Kfir, who was 9 months old when he was kidnapped, was the youngest

tribute as vehicles carrying the remains drove by.

As bands of pouring rain moved through the area, they wiped away tears or quietly sang the national anthem as the convoy passed. Just before sunset, a double rainbow unfolded across the sky.

In Tel Aviv, thousands of people gathered at the city's Hostage Square for a ceremony, including the recitation of traditional mourning prayers. Some in the crowd held orange balloons, in honour of the Bibas boys, and the crowd swelled after sundown as musicians performed subdued ballads, matching the nation's sadness.

Thousands of mourners carrying Israeli flags and yellow solidarity flags lined Israeli highways to pay

## Chinese military holds nuclear, biological, chemical defence drills

PTI, BEIJING: The Chinese military has conducted nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) drills using UAVs, robotic dogs and explosive ordnance disposal robots, official media here reported on Thursday.

A brigade attached to the People's Liberation Army's 73rd Group Army recently carried out the nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) defence and emergency rescue exercise at its comprehensive training ground.

The drill featured the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), robotic dogs and explosive ordnance disposal robots, state-run CCTV reported on Thursday without disclosing the location for the drills.

The brigade fully explored training methods integrating technology and networked systems, and combined simulation and practical exercises in creating a multi-role intelligent training field, a report in the state-run Global Times reported.

Be it the advancement of simulation training or the wide deployment of unmanned equipment, both create new competitive avenues for us, Qi Huali, a member of the brigade, told official media.

Simulation training enhances the coordination among various combat elements, and we have improved and optimised the integration of manned and

unmanned tactics and then applied the best combat strategies to exercises for validation, Qi said.

Song Zhongping, a Chinese military expert, told the Global Times that unmanned equipment is increasingly being utilised, including supportive missions shown in the drills.

Drones have significant capabilities, as they can reduce human casualties and increase the effectiveness of combat equipment, Song said.

Song said the integration of Artificial intelligence (AI) and intelligentisation is becoming a growing trend in defence stating that AI and other emerging technologies will be incorporated into military equipment in the future.

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VATICAN ADDS ST TERESA'S FEAST DAY TO UNIVERSAL LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Sister M Joseph, superior general of the Missionaries of Charity, expressed joy at the announcement. "In a world focused on technological advancement, we must remember that true progress lies in selfless service to others," she said.

Father Dominic Gomes, chancellor of the Archdiocese of Calcutta, emphasised that the Vatican's decision underscores Mother Teresa's universal appeal. "Her work with the poor, sick, and dying resonates across cultures, faiths, and geographies. Recognizing her feast day globally reinforces her values of compassion, humility, and service, especially in a world still battling poverty and suffering," he said.

MUDDY, UNTREATED WATER LEAVES USGAO FUMING

"Currently around 100 MLD water from Usgao-Ganjam-bhandara is diverted to Opa treatment plant. If Karnataka succeeds in its efforts to divert Mhadei water then the Opa plant will not receive the water which could lead to a crisis," Rohan added.

Gajanan Pokre from Pali-Usgao, said, "Many get untreated water directly from the borewell, which is muddy. We have no option but to use this water to meet our daily requirements. For many years we have been demanding that the authorities supply us with treated water from the Opa treatment plant. The authorities are yet to fulfil their promise of providing treated water."

Saish Fonkar from Udiwada said, "We get treated water only once for one-and-half hours and that too with low pressure, at 11 pm, forcing us to spend sleepless nights. Our demand is that we be provided at least four hours of water supply with sufficient pressure during the day."

Forty houses in Udiwada located close to the pipeline receive water but pressure is so low that they are forced to store water in utensils. The people residing at the tail end do not receive water as the houses close to the water line continue to tap water. The locals complained that they have been demanding regular water supply for a long time and the women from the area also met PWD officials at Daag Ponda. They had demanded at least four hours of water supply with good pressure, but the same had not been fulfilled.

Usgao-Ganjam sarpanch Ramnath Dangui said, "My priority is to address the concerns of locals. As soon as I receive complaints, I sit with authorities for a solution. The water crisis in the Usgao is expected to be solved within a year. The work on the 25 MLD treatment plant at Usgao, is

expected to be ready within a year.

Efforts to contact AE at the PWD office at Daag, Ponda, proved futile.

MORE CHEATING CASES POUR IN, LENS ON OVERSEAS JOB SCAM SYNDICATE

"The complainant was unable to present any grievance," Sandip said. Additionally, Vernekar alleged the agent used his supposed connections with a senior Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) to intimidate victims.

In a separate case, Mayur Devidas from Quepem was caught at Mexico Airport and deported after being provided with fraudulent documents by Stanley George, a notorious Vasco-based agent, who faces an FIR after the two youths deported from the US last weekend lodged a po-lice complaint. However, Devidas's experience has been very different. "I went to Vasco police station to file a complaint, but they refused to help," he said. George is currently on the run.

"This police indifference erodes public trust in the system," he added. "We paid for jobs abroad, not to commit a crime. We are jobless here and when even the police don't act, what else can we do?"

Devidas was promised a job on a ship, but after arriving in Mexico, he discovered he had been scammed. Another victim from South Goa, Myron, corroborated that George had defrauded multiple individuals in Goa with similar promises.

A senior police officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed suspicions that local police may be complicit in the scam. "Police stations are reportedly being used to settle cases in favour of these agents," the officer stated. "This is a multi-crore scam operating right in the heart of Goan cities. It's unclear whether the department is aware of this syndicate."

Experts are urging tighter regulation of overseas recruitment agencies. Former Superintendent of Police Bossuet Silva stated that these agencies must be approved by the Protector General of Emigrants to operate legally in India. He added that Goa's regional office for emigrant regulation is based in Bangalore.

Alok Kumar, DGP of Goa Police, assured that both cases would be investigated. "We will definitely look into these allegations and complaints," Kumar said. Regarding the Vasco police station complaint, he stated that the complainant had not submitted a written complaint and appeared to be influenced by others. "We will contact him again as you have brought this to my attention," the DGP added.

If we receive a formal complaint, we will thoroughly investigate."

INDIANS AMONG US DEPORTEES TO LAND IN PANAMA

Darien province is a jungle region previously used to house migrants crossing from Colombia en route to the US. Some deportees expressed concerns about returning home, displaying signs at hotel windows stating, "We are not safe in our country."

Panama, Costa Rica, and Guatemala have agreed to serve as temporary transit hubs for migrants deported by the US until they are repatriated. This decision followed discussions with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and diplomatic pressure from the Trump administration.

Meanwhile, a Chinese national escaped from the hotel but was later found in Costa Rica and returned to Panama. Authorities have denied detaining migrants against their will, stating that those unwilling to return will remain in Darien until international agencies arrange their re-location.

NO WOMAN OFFICER AT CUNCOLIM PS A MAJOR FLAW, HAMPERS PROBES

A senior police officer based at the police headquarters said on the condition of anonymity that the police station concerned has to send a requisition to the department and woman police officers can be deputed accordingly. He added that no file has been sent from Cuncolim po-lice station to the headquarters so far.

CLOUD OVER GOA'S COASTAL ZONE MAPPING

However, the NCZMA concluded that only maps in the 1:25000 scale could be recommended.

This is the crux of the controversy, since the final draft CZM maps on the 1:4,000 scale had already been prepared by NCSCM and submitted to the GCZMA, which was expected to publish these on their website. The NCSCM has also rejected the GCZMA counsel's claims that the Chennai agency would have to address discrepancies regarding overlapping boundaries in villages on the 1:4000 scale maps.

The NCSCM's affidavit stated that the GCZMA had never raised concerns about these discrepancies during the six-year preparation period for the CZMP and CZM maps, from April 2016 to September 2022. No discrepancies were flagged during the CZMP approval process by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), the affidavit noted.