



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket with Intuitive Machines' second lunar lander lifts off from pad 39A at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida



Hungarian Prez Tamas Sulyok (R) welcomes Speaker of the National Assembly of Pak Ayaz Sadiq in the presidential Alexander Palace in Budapest, Hungary



Revellers celebrate the start of the street carnival at the Alter Markt (Old Market Place) in Cologne, Germany



A woman plays with a cat during the Beijing International Pet Supplies Exhibition 2025 (Pet Fair Beijing) in Beijing, China

allovertheworld



A passenger jet takes off from the single runway at Gatwick Airport, south of London, as the UK Government delay the final announcement on Gatwick's expansion until October. Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander has "set out a path to approving" Gatwick airport's expansion project, a Government source has said. After the Planning Inspectorate initially rejected the airport's application to bring its emergency runway into routine use

Hundreds of flights axed as Munich airport staff strike

MUNICH: A two-day strike by ground crew and security staff began Thursday at Munich airport, Germany's second largest, cancelling hundreds of flights. Only 100 of 830 scheduled takeoffs and landings would go ahead as planned Thursday, an airport spokesman told AFP. The workers represented by the Verdi union plan to continue the strike until midnight on Friday. Verdi is demanding an eight percent pay rise for workers or at least 350 euros more per month, as well as higher bonuses for particularly stressful jobs and more days off. The union said ground and security staff made "an indispensable contribution to the safety and reliability of air traffic - around the clock, in all weather conditions". The increasing intensity of the work and ongoing staff shortages were a "considerable burden" on employees, it said. The next round of talks with employers is scheduled for March 14.

Ethiopia, Somalia reaffirm ties after diplomatic row

MOGADISHU: Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed visited Somalia on Thursday and met with its President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud to reinforce their fragile reconciliation after a row over ties to a separatist region. They discussed topics "including peace and security, economy, diplomacy and potential to build joint infrastructure", Ahmed said in a message on X afterwards. The Somali government said in a statement ahead of the meeting that they would also discuss "the fight against terrorism in the region". Residents reported mortar attacks in areas near Mogadishu airport shortly after the visiting delegation passed through it en route to the presidential palace. It was unclear whether the attacks were linked to Abiy's arrival. Security officials at the airport said Abiy's delegation safely left the airport without incident.

Thailand deports dozens of Uyghurs to China despite warnings

BANGKOK: Thailand deported dozens of Uyghurs to China on Thursday despite warnings from human rights groups that they would face persecution on their return, drawing swift condemnation from the United Nations. Beijing is accused of committing human rights abuses in its northwestern Xinjiang region, including the incarceration of around one million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities. It denies the allegations. Rights groups had warned in recent weeks that Bangkok was preparing to deport a group of 48 Uyghurs being held in immigration centres around Thailand. They said the Uyghurs fled China more than a decade ago and lived in constant fear of being sent back.

Spain smashes trafficking ring blamed for death of Britons

MADRID: Spanish police said Thursday they had dismantled a human trafficking ring blamed for the deaths of two British men when their car hit a boat belonging to the group in a motorway pile-up. Officers arrested 17 suspected gang members in the southeastern provinces of Alicante and Murcia. Two vehicles - including one believed to have been involved in the accident - and several weapons were also seized as part of the operation, Spain's Civil Guard police said in a statement. They began an investigation in October after arresting three people near a rubber dinghy in La Manga, a narrow coastal strip of land in Murcia on the Mediterranean coast. The boat, equipped with a powerful engine, was carrying 14 petrol cans, a satellite phone, clothes and food, leading authorities to suspect it belonged to a human trafficking ring.

Mexican president hopes to talk with Trump about tariffs

MEXICO CITY: Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said Thursday that she hoped to talk to her US counterpart Donald Trump as part of efforts to avoid being hit with his threatened tariffs. She spoke shortly after Trump wrote on social media that he would move ahead with imposing levies on Mexico and Canada next week. A high-level Mexican delegation is in Washington in search of an agreement and "we hope that we can talk to President Trump once these meetings take place," Sheinbaum said at her morning news conference.

USAID workers exit as Trump's cuts reach final stage

AP, WASHINGTON: US Agency for International Development workers, some in tears, carted away belongings from a final visit to their now-closed headquarters Thursday as the Trump administration's rapid-fire dismantling of the congressionally authorised agency moved into its final stages.



President Donald Trump speaks during a Cabinet meeting at the White House in Washington

Notices are going out to terminate over 90 per cent of USAID's contracts for humanitarian and development work around the world, and the Supreme Court has temporarily blocked a judge's order requiring the administration to release billions of dollars in foreign aid.

The administration notified most USAID staffers in recent days that they were on leave or terminated, then gave thousands of those who worked in the Washington headquarters

15-minute time slots to clear out their desks.

With a backdrop of cheers from supporters outside, some staffers wept as they carried out grocery bags and suitcases with what was left from their life's work.

"Heartbreaking," 25-year-old Juliane Alfen said, carrying a small bag with a stuffed rabbit sticking out. Like hundreds of colleagues,

Alfen received a form notice Monday that her firing "was in the best interest of government."

"I felt like we made a difference," Alfen said. "To see everything disappearing before our eyes in a matter of weeks is very scary."

Supporters shouted encouragement and waved signs outside or drove by tapping their car horns. A

little girl stood next to her mother holding a sign saying, "I am proud of you Daddy." A woman who left the building loaded down with bags burst into tears at the cheers greeting her. A small crowd of supporters enveloped her in hugs.

USAID has been one of the biggest targets of a broad campaign by President Donald Trump and cost-cutting chief Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, to slash the size of the federal government.

The actions at USAID have left only a small fraction of its employees on the job. The Trump administration has slashed USD 60 billion in assistance overseas, upending decades of US policy that foreign aid helps American interests abroad by stabilising other countries and building alliances.

Trump to impose new tariffs on Mexico, Canada; doubles China to 20%

AP, WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump says he plans to impose tariffs on Canada and Mexico starting Tuesday, in addition to doubling the 10 per cent universal tariff charged on imports from China.

Posting on Truth Social on Thursday, Trump said that illicit drugs such as fentanyl are being smuggled into the United States at "unacceptable levels" and that import taxes would force other countries to crackdown on the trafficking.

"We cannot allow this scourge to continue to harm the USA, and therefore, until it stops, or is seriously limited, the proposed TARIFFS scheduled to go into effect on MARCH FOURTH will, indeed, go into effect, as scheduled," the Republican president wrote. "China will likewise be charged an additional 10 per cent Tariff on that

date." The prospect of escalating tariffs has already thrown the global economy into turmoil - with consumers expressing fears about inflation worsening and the auto sector possibly suffering if America's two largest trading partners in Canada and Mexico are slapped with taxes.

The potential for higher prices and slower growth could create political blowback for Trump, who promised voters in last year's presidential election that he could quickly lower the inflation rate, which jumped during President Joe Biden's term.

But Trump also campaigned on imposing broad tariffs and sweeping tariffs, which he plans to launch on April 2 by resetting tariffs to match the taxes that he determines are charged by other countries on American goods.

40 Uyghur men detained in Thailand for over decade deported to China

PTI, TAIPEI: A group of Uyghur men detained in Thailand for more than a decade have been deported to China, the Chinese embassy in Thailand confirmed Thursday.

The men, last month, made a public appeal to halt the deportation, saying they faced imprisonment and possible death in China.

In a statement on Facebook, the Chinese embassy said Thursday that 40 Chinese nationals who entered Thailand illegally were deported to China's northwestern Xinjiang province by a chartered flight on Thursday. It said the men had been detained in Thailand for more than 10 years due to complicated international factors.

On Wednesday, Thai lawmakers, activists, and lawyers raised an alarm about the possible deportation of the men. Several Thai law-

makers and international officials had urged the Thai government to halt the deportation, warning it would amount to a serious rights abuse.

The Uyghurs must not be returned to face persecution. They have been held in detention for 11 years. We have violated their human rights enough. There are better solutions, Thai lawmaker Kannavee Suebsang wrote in a post on X.

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV reported Thursday that 40 Chinese illegal immigrants had been repatriated, quoting a police official who said they had been deceived by criminal organisations and stranded in Thailand. Photos of those repatriated by China and shared by the embassy appeared to show people of Uyghur ethnicity.

Blasts at M23 rebel rally in Congo kill 11, injure 65

AP, BUKAVU: At least 11 people have died and 65 others injured after explosions hit a rally on Thursday being held by M23 rebel group leaders in the captured city of Bukavu, eastern Congo.

"The attack caused 11 deaths and verifications are underway. The author of the attack is among the victims," Corneille Nangaa, leader of the Congo River Alliance (AFC), which includes the M23, told reporters. "There are 65 injured, six of whom are seriously injured and are currently being treated in the operating room."

He said that "following today's unfortunate incident, we are obliged to react and move the threats far away from the province of South Kivu."

Truce under threat as Israeli officials says Army won't withdraw from Gaza corridor

PTI, KHAN: Israel will not withdraw from a strategic corridor in the Gaza Strip as called for by the ceasefire, an official said Thursday. Israel's refusal could spark a crisis with Hamas and key mediator Egypt at a sensitive moment for the fragile truce.

Hours earlier, Hamas released the remains of four hostages in exchange for over 600 Palestinian prisoners, the last planned swap of the ceasefire's first phase, which ends this weekend. Talks over the second and more difficult stage have yet to begin.

Much could hinge on a visit by US President Donald Trump's Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, who is expected in the region in the coming days. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meanwhile said in a brief statement that he was sending negotiators to



A Palestinian man sits outside his tent, next to a destroyed building in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip

Cairo, without providing further details.

'Blatant violation' The Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, said the army needed to remain in the so-called Philadelphi corridor, on the Gaza side of the border with Egypt, to prevent weapons smuggling. Separately, Defence Min-

ister Israel Katz said at a meeting with local leaders that he had seen tunnels penetrating the border on a recent visit to the corridor, without providing evidence or elaborating on Israel's plans.

Egypt says it destroyed the smuggling tunnels from its side years ago and set up a military buffer zone to halt smuggling.

FROM PAGE 1

COP LENS ON POLEM BEACH TO REIN IN UNRULY TOURISTS

"I told them not to throw empty glass bottles on the beach. They assured me that they would not throw bottles and promised to remove them, but they didn't do it. They were disturbing other tourists as well."

A domestic visitor had similar concerns, stating, "I have concern about safety. Sometimes tourists come on the beach and after drinking become violent. This is not something good. I have been visiting Goa for last 20 years and I have had a good experience except for last few years when locals and tourists got involved in fights."

LOBO TRAINS GUNS ON SUB-LETTING OF SHACKS

Lobo also pointed to persistent issues with the taxi industry, highlighting unresolved conflicts between local taxi operators and aggregators. "The taxi issue is still not resolved, and every second day there are fights between the taxi aggregators and local taxis, and tourists suffer," he said.

According to Lobo, the over-saturation of rental vehicles was another reason for local taxis not getting business.

"We need to put an end to this. We don't need more vehicles. Just like there's a cap on rent-a-bikes, the same way we need to put a cap on rent-a-cars," Lobo suggested.

Additionally, Lobo criticised the failure to manage the stray dog population on Goa's beaches, which has led to incidents of dog bites affecting tourists. "If we don't sort out our problems, Goa tourism will see dark days. Things will decline even further if we don't sort out all our issues," he warned.

PUNE BUS RAPE: POLICE ANNOUNCE REWARD; DEPLOY DRONES FOR MANHUNT

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said the government would try to ensure capital punishment for the culprit, even as Shiv Sena MLA Nilesh Rane pitched for restarting the "encounter squad".

The accused Dattatray Ramdas Gade (37), is named in half a dozen cases of theft, robbery and chain-snatching in Pune and Ahilyanagar district. He has been out on bail since 2019 in one of the offences.

As Gade, a resident of Gunat village in Pune, remained at large for over two days, officials said 13 police teams have been formed to nab him.

"A reward of Rs 1 lakh will be given to the person providing information about his whereabouts," Pune police commissioner Amitesh Kumar told PTI.

Another police official said the information could be

shared at 020-24442769 or 9881670659, assuring that the informer's identity would be kept secret.

Pune City and Pune Rural Police also launched a search operation in Gunat village, including in sugarcane fields, with drones and dog squads, officials said. More than 100 cops reached the village, they said.

Swargate in Pune is one of the largest bus depots of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC).

NOISE PANEL TO BE SET UP ON MON: HC

Alvares has pushed for the names of Inacio Fernandes and Jeremy Ferreira, both of whom have been rejected by the government and respondents.

Commenting on Alvares's stance, Desmond D'Souza from Vagator noted, "Desmond Alvares must realise that he is the petitioner and that the new members of the NMC will function independently and not under him."

Advocate General Pangam has submitted the names of two more candidates for the NMC: 43-year-old John Logan D'Souza and 56-year-old Govind Madhu Dhargalkar, both residents of Anjuna.

STABBING, NOISE DEMON KEEP ANJUNA ON THE EDGE

Meanwhile, noise pollution continues to throw the life of locals off balance, especially students preparing for exams. Stacy D'Souza, 18, who is taking her Class XII exams, is having to deal with loud music from Hill Top. "I finished the exams with music blasting from Hill Top. Even after making many complaints over the phone, the police did not care to ask them to lower the volume." Stacy added that the played continuously for four days.

40 YEARS ON, UNION CARBIDE TOXIC WASTE DISPOSAL TRIAL BEGINS

The SC asked aggrieved parties, including members of civil society organisations opposing waste disposal, to approach the MP HC, which is hearing the case.

Following the apex court order, security has been enhanced at the disposal site with deployment of 500 personnel from 24 police stations, an official said.

Senior officials from the police and civic administration are present at the site, he added.

"The testing process has started before burning the Union Carbide factory waste in the waste disposal unit in Pithampur. The waste containers are being opened and the waste is being transported to the plant as per the set parameters," Indore division commissioner Deepak Singh told PTI.

"The plant is being readied to burn the waste and I think that probably from Friday morning, 10 tonnes of waste will start burning as a test in the presence of scientists

from the central and state pollution control boards. The plant has a system that it will shut down immediately if the emission of any gas exceeds the prescribed limit during burning," Singh informed.

Meanwhile, those opposing the disposal of the waste said that they would knock on the doors of the HC.

"The movement (against burning) will continue. We will present our case strongly in HC. We will talk to the people of Pithampur," protester Sandeep Raghuvanshi said.

On the intervening night of December 2 and 3, 1984, highly poisonous methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas leaked from the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal. At least 5,479 people were killed and thousands were crippled. It is considered one of the world's biggest industrial disasters.

Officials transported 337 tonnes of waste from the defunct Union Carbide factory in the MP capital to a facility in Pithampur, about 250 km away, on January 2 as part of a plan to dispose of the material.

On January 6, the HC had directed the state government to take steps within six weeks to dispose of the waste by following safety guidelines.

In its order of February 18, MP Chief Justice Suresh Kumar Kait and Justice Vivek Jain had directed that the state government undertake "first trial run of 10 metric ton by taking all protocols into consideration" on February 27.

"If there is no adverse effect, the second trial run will take place on March 4, followed by the third trial run on March 10. Thereafter, based on results of same, after the due tests, they will continue to dispose of the remaining waste and file the status report," the HC said.

During the hearing, the MP government said it may take three-four days to dispose of the first consignment of 10 tonnes of waste.

Since the waste was brought to Pithampur, there have been several protests in this industrial area. The protesters have expressed apprehensions about harm to human population and environment due to the disposal of this waste, which the state government has completely rejected.

The state government says solid arrangements are in place in the Pithampur unit for the safe disposal of the Carbide waste. It had also organised 'Jan Samvad' programmes in Pithampur and its surrounding places to spread awareness about the waste disposal process.

According to the state government, the waste includes soil from the now-shut Bhopal factory, reactor residue, Sevin (pesticide) residue, naphthal residue and "semi-processed" residue.

The State Pollution Control Board says that according to scientific evidence, the effect of Sevin and naphthal in this waste has now become "almost negligible".

According to the pollution control board, there is no existence of methyl isocyanate gas or radioactive particles of any kind in this waste.