



**Afghans wait to cross the closed Torkham border with Pakistan, where Pakistani and Afghan forces exchanged fire overnight, in Torkham, Afghanistan**



**Russian Prez Vladimir Putin and Myanmar's Military leader Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing greet during their meeting at the Grand Kremlin Palace in Moscow, Russia**



**Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau arrives for a news conference on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Canada**



**First lady Melania Trump arrives at the Capitol in Washington, to lend her support to an online safety bill**

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Aerial view of the Santiaguito volcano located in El Palmar municipality, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

**Schools reopen in Greece's Santorini as quake activity drops**  
**ATHENS:** Schools in the Greek travel island of Santorini and other neighbouring islands reopened Tuesday, with residents returning after a month-long shutdown caused by intense seismic activity. A scientific committee monitoring the quakes gave the go-ahead last week, noting a fall in tremor intensity and the resilience of local public buildings. "Based on inspections to this point, public buildings have responded well to the seismic load," the committee said in a statement. Thousands of earthquakes, mainly of a low magnitude, were recorded from late January between the islands of Santorini, Amorgos, Ios and Anafi in the Cyclades group southeast of the Greek mainland.

**Philippine fighter jet goes missing during mission against rebels**  
**MANILA:** A Philippines FA-50 fighter jet is missing after flying a mission against communist rebels in the country's south, military officials said on Tuesday, although hopes remain its two-member crew could still be alive. Philippine Army spokesman Colonel Louie Dema-ala told AFP the missing jet was part of a squadron sent "to provide air support" to troops engaged in a firefight overnight in Mindanao's Bukidnon province. It was still too early to say if the fighter had crashed or made an emergency landing, air force spokeswoman Colonel Consuelo Castillo told AFP. However, locator beacons for both the crew and the FA-50 were active in a potentially "hot" or hostile area, she said in an interview with local television. Lieutenant Colonel Francisco Garello of the 4th Infantry Division told AFP that air support had been called in overnight during a firefight with the New People's Army.

**Lebanon state media say one dead in Israel strike on south**  
**BEIRUT:** Lebanese official media said an Israeli strike on a vehicle in the south on Tuesday killed one person, the latest deadly raid amid a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah. "An enemy drone launched a strike" targeting a vehicle in Tyre district, killing one person, the National News Agency said. It published an image of a burning, mangled car. A November 27 truce agreement largely halted more than a year of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel, including two months of full-blown war during which Israel sent in ground troops. Israel has continued to carry out strikes on Lebanese territory since the deal took effect. On Friday, the Israeli military said it killed a Hezbollah weapons smuggler in a strike on eastern Lebanon the previous day.

**Berlin to suspend new aid to Rwanda over DR Congo conflict**  
**BERLIN:** Germany said on Tuesday that it will suspend new aid to Rwanda over an offensive by the M23 group in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo that UN experts say is supported by Rwandan soldiers. "Germany will further restrict bilateral cooperation with Rwanda," the development ministry said in a statement. "In particular, we will suspend new financial commitments (and) review existing development cooperation with the Rwandan government." The ministry said it "strongly condemns" the offensive, in particular the capture of the main cities of Goma and Bukavu, which it labelled "a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of" the DRC. German development ministry aid to Rwanda averages around 50 million euros (\$53 million) a year, in areas such as economic development, production of vaccines and climate protection.

**Spain moves to grant Catalonia control over migration**  
**MADRID:** Spain's ruling Socialists on Tuesday said they had reached a deal to transfer control of migration in Catalonia to the northeastern region's government. The deal meets a longstanding demand of Catalonia's pro-independence JxCat party but is the latest in a string of government concessions to the secessionists which have angered right-wingers and sparked protests. Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez heads a minority coalition government that relies on the support of Catalan separatist parties to pass legislation. JxCat and the Socialists said the agreement would see Catalonia's police force handle security in airports, ports and other critical areas in cooperation with Spain's national police forces. Catalonia will also have authority over migrant detention centres in the wealthy region which borders France and will be responsible for deporting undocumented migrants.

# China hits back at Trump's tariffs, sanctions US firms, initiates action in WTO

**PTI, BEIJING:** China on Tuesday retaliated against US President Donald Trump's imposition of a second round of 10 per cent tariffs on its export by slapping an additional 15 per cent tariff on American goods and initiated legal action against Washington at the WTO. China stands ready to work with the US to address each other's concerns through dialogue and consultation. China will impose additional tariffs on some products imported from the United States, effective from March 10, the China's Customs Tariff Commission said Tuesday. An additional 15-per cent tariff will be imposed on imported chicken, wheat, corn and cotton originating from the US, it said in a statement.



Delegates applaud as Chinese President Xi Jinping, center and Chinese Premier Li Qiang, (L) arrive for the opening session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing

Sorghum, soybeans, pork, beef, aquatic products, fruits, vegetables and dairy products will be subject to an additional 10-per cent tariff. Additionally, China decided on Tuesday to add 10 US firms to the country's unreliable entity list and take corresponding measures against them. They include a number of companies linked to defence and security besides AI, aviation, IT and dual-use items that carry both civilian and military applications. Also, China has initiated

**ECONOMY, AI LIKELY TO BE AMONG TOP ISSUES FOR CHINA'S LEGISLATURE**  
**PTI, BEIJING:** Harnessing the power of artificial intelligence and shoring up the economy are among the issues expected to top the agenda when China's legislature meets Wednesday in Beijing. Almost 2,900 delegates have arrived in Beijing for the annual session of the largely rubber-stamp parliament, the National People's Congress. Concomitantly, an advisory body of business leaders, athletes and academics, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, convened Tuesday. The two bodies' concurrent meetings are known as the Two Sessions. The week-long parliamentary session, though largely ceremonial, helps to signal government priorities for the year. Premier Li Qiang is expected to announce an economic growth target of around 5 per cent, in line with the past couple of years.

legal action against the US under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) dispute settlement mechanism regarding the latter's latest tariff increase on Chinese products, the Ministry of Commerce said Tuesday. China's retaliatory actions followed after the US imposition of an additional 10-per cent tariff on products imported from China, effective from March 4. The unilateral imposition of tariffs by the US un-

dermines the multilateral trading system, increases the burden on American businesses and consumers, and erodes the foundation of China-US economic and trade cooperation, the commission said. Trump's announcement of a second round of 10 per cent tariffs on Chinese exports to the US coincides with the opening of China's annual parliament session. The twin sessions consisting of the Parliament, the National People's Congress and the advisory council, the China People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) were opened on Tuesday. While NPC began with the customary press conference by its media spokesperson, the CPPCC held its opening session.

## Suicide attack in NW Pakistan: 9 dead, 16 terrorists injured

**PTI, PESHAWAR:** At least nine persons were killed and 16 injured as two explosive-laden vehicles rammed into the boundary wall of the main cantonment in Bannu in northwest Pakistan on Tuesday while the army personnel neutralised at least six terrorists. The suicide bombers hit the wall of Bannu Cantonment, about 200 kms southwest of Peshawar, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in the evening around sunset time, police said. Hafiz Gul Bahadur-

affiliated little known Jaish Al Fursan, in a statement, claimed the attack in Bannu. The group is one of the several factions of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. Five casualties were reported from the nearby civil buildings while four bodies were recovered by the rescue authorities from the debris of a mosque adjacent to Bannu cantonment's boundary wall hit by the suicide bombers, sources said quoting the hospital authorities. The 16 injured have been

shifted to the hospital, the sources added. After the explosions, the cantonment wall was breached and at least five to six attackers attempted to enter the cantonment, however they were neutralised, police added. Sources said that the army authorities have sealed the main routes leading to the cantonment and not providing access to the blast site and added, the security forces neutralised at least six terrorists who had entered the cantonment after suicide explosions.

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**MINISTERS ARE BUSY COUNTING MONEY, SAYS FORMER GOA MANTRI**  
 "Last week, I paid Rs 15-20 lakh to one of the Ministers for a small task. I will name the minister when I decide to leave the party," he said. Madkaikar also revealed that he met Santosh to inquire about his future in the party, following his request not to contest the 2022 Assembly elections. "Nobody is performing, and I believe at least 50% of the sitting MLAs will be sent home by the people. We will see at least 50% new MLAs elected in the next elections," he added. Santosh's visit to Goa has reignited speculation about a potential cabinet reshuffle, a topic that has been under discussion for some time. During his visit, Santosh met with State party leaders and MLAs to assess the party's organizational work and also engaged with MLAs supporting the current government.

**SMART CITY CHAOS: DUMPED DEBRIS DISRUPTS WATER SUPPLY**  
 Jovito Lopes, a local, told *O Herald*, "We haven't had water for the last four days, and we don't know why. We've heard there's a leak in the pipeline, but it hasn't been fixed even after we complained to the PWD." Another resident, Avinash Bhosle, voiced similar concerns. "We haven't received water for four days, and no one from the PWD is answering our calls," he said. Finally after a three-day search, PWD officials finally identified the cause of the disruption. Workers involved in the repair explained that the debris, including materials from the recently demolished St. Inez restaurant, had been improperly dumped on top of the pipeline, causing it to break. A worker, speaking anonymously, commented, "We don't know why the debris was placed in this way. At the very least, it could have been flattened to reduce pressure on the pipe." A PWD official confirmed that the pipeline had been repaired, and water supply was restored in the afternoon on Tuesday. "The repair work was completed around 4.30 pm, and water was released," he said, adding that it had been challenging to pinpoint the exact location of the damage.

**SC STAYS RECRUITMENT OF GUJARAT JUDGES**  
 The bench issued notice to the Gujarat High Court through its registrar general and the State government for their replies on an application which said an advertisement for the post of civil judge (junior division) was issued by the High Court in January 2025. The top court posted the hearing on March 18. The bench was hearing an application filed by advocate Ajit Pravin Wagh which referred to a February 24 order of the Gujarat High Court. The High Court had directed the Bar Council of Gujarat to issue a provisional certificate of practice to two petitioners, who claimed to have completed LLB from an "unrecognised college" for participating in the recruitment process for the post of civil judge. The top court observed material on record would reveal no minimum number of years of practising as a lawyer was prescribed as a qualification for applying to the post of JMFC and civil judge (junior division) in the advertisement issued by the Gujarat High Court. "As such the order dated February 24, 2025 of the High Court directing the Bar Council of Gujarat to issue provisional certificate of practice to the petitioners and directing the High Court of Gujarat to allow the petitioners even to the limited extent of participating in the recruitment process for the post of civil judges, is unsustainable in law," the plea said. The applicant, through senior advocate B H Marlapalle, brought the issue to the notice of the apex court on February 27.

**EX-SEBI CHIEF GETS FOUR-WEEK RELIEF FROM HC**  
 Shrivastava, a media reporter, seeking investigation into the alleged offences committed by the accused, involving large scale financial fraud, regulatory violations and corruption. Solicitor General of India, Tushar Mehta, appearing for the three SEBI officials, said there has been complete non-application of mind by the special court in passing the order. "Based on a vague and vexatious complaint, the special court has ordered an FIR. For something allegedly done in the year 1994, how can the current members of SEBI be held responsible," Mehta argued. He claimed that complainant Shrivastava was an extortionist who was working under the garb of being a public spirited person. Senior counsel Amit Desai, appearing for Ramamurthy and Agarwal, said to take such an action against senior members of the BSE was an "attack on the economy itself" especially on such frivolous allegations. "If there was any merit in the allegations, then yes, every public servant is open for prosecution, but not on some bald allegations like the present case," Desai said. Buch's advocate Sudeep Pashla reiterated the arguments put forth by Mehta and Desai. Public Prosecutor Hiten Venegaonkar, appearing for the ACB, said the bureau would comply with whatever order is passed by the HC. Shrivastava, who appeared in person, refuted the allegations made against him by Mehta and sought time to respond to the petitions. The petitions claimed the special court order was "manifestly erroneous, patently illegal and passed without jurisdiction". "The court has failed to consider that the complainant has failed to make out a prima facie case against the applicants for failing to discharge their duties as officers of the Sebi," the pleas said. There was no material submitted by the complainant to support the allegations made by him, they added. "At the relevant point of time, there was no requirement for obtaining an NOC from SEBI for listing of any shares on the BSE," the pleas said. No vicarious liability can be fastened on SEBI officials in respect of the alleged offence, as per the pleas. The order was not legally sustainable as the petitioners were not even issued a notice or heard before decision was taken, the pleas pointed out. They sought quashing of the special court order and stay on its execution by way of interim relief. Buch, India's first woman chief of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), completed her three-year tenure on February 28. Special ACB court judge S E Bangar, in his March 1 order, noted there was prima facie evidence of regulatory lapses and collusion, requiring a fair and impartial probe. The ACB court also said it will monitor the probe, and sought a status report within 30 days.

**US TEMPORARILY SUSPENDS MILITARY AID TO UKRAINE**  
 Russia launched its premeditated, unprovoked, and brutal full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The US has approximately provided USD 69.2 billion in military assistance since Russia's initial invasion of Ukraine in 2014. This latest setback for Ukraine in the third year of its war with Russia comes just days after Trump and Vice President JD Vance had a heated verbal exchange with Zelensky, who was visiting the White House last Friday and the two countries were all set to sign a rare mineral deal. But talks between Trump and Zelensky unravelled in a

heated exchange that played out in front of the global media. Towards the end of the about 50-minute press conference, Vance told the Ukrainian leader, "I think it's disrespectful for you to come to the Oval Office to try to litigate this in front of the American media. ... you should be thanking the president for trying to bring you into this conference." As the conversation grew heated, Trump told Zelensky, "You're gambling with the lives of millions of people. You're gambling with World War Three. You're gambling with World War Three, and what you're doing is very disrespectful to the country, this country that's backed you far more than a lot of people say they should." Trump and Vance also criticised Zelensky for not being grateful enough for the support that the US had given so far to Ukraine in its war with Russia. As leaders from Europe and around the world took to social media website X to rally behind Zelensky and underscore their support for Kyiv, the Ukrainian leader responded to everyone with the same message - "Thank you for your support."

### IS IT R.I.P. FOR PANJIM'S 200-YR-OLD BANYAN TREE?

However, Daniel said that there are many shoots coming up from the root. When asked about the banyan tree which was translocated from Porvorim to Guirim on Sunday last, he warned the government that the tree may not survive as it has been translocated to a low-lying area. "The land where the tree has been translocated is not the best option," he added. "Even in the case of the Porvorim tree I was not involved. I went on my own wish. Had I been involved in it I would have translocated it at higher altitude. I was kept in the dark. After the tree was translocated, I got a call from a boy from Verna saying that he will give a place for the tree, but by then it was too late," he said. Daniel advised the government to involve in the translocation exercise competent people who have expertise. Meanwhile, environmentalist and founder of Goa Green Brigade Avertino Miranda, who was at the forefront to protest the tree's translocation, said, "The tree was bound to die because our past experience has been marked with failures. Translocation has not been successful in Goa. Therefore, the experiment, especially with the banyan tree was risky. When it has been proved in the past that trees are dying then we should not translocate the trees knowingly." "It is not only the St Inez tree, the one at Calangute too died. Similar exercise was carried out at Arambol during Covid time, but that too failed. Translocating a banyan tree is not an easy task. The tree which was translocated from St Inez to Campal was broken into parts. The same thing has been done with the banyan tree in Porvorim. Though the court was assured that the tree will be translocated by keeping its roots intact," he pointed out. Miranda alleged that the translocations are being done in a hurry to prevent activists from moving courts. "The entire exercise shows that the government is not sensitive towards the environment to protect the trees which are huge, old and biodiversity hotspots for birds, insects and reptiles. We are losing all the natural heritage in the State. The government is trying to kill the goose that lays golden eggs. This is the end of tourism in the State. It is also sad that the government is not learning from the mistakes made by other States," he said. It may be recalled that despite vehement protest by green activists, the 200-year-old tree was felled for the ongoing Smart City works at St Inez and translocated at the premises of football ground at Campal in April last year. The activists had claimed that the tree was not coming in the way of the Smart City works and it was part of the efforts made by the authorities to remove trees from the streets of the capital city. Few days later the tree was relocated to the Campal ground. Two months later, the environmentalists heaved a sigh of relief after fresh leaves started to emerge in the tree.