



Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei speaks in a ceremony meeting a group of officials, in Tehran, Iran



China's Minister of Civil Affairs Lu Zhiyuan attends a press conference during the ongoing National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing



Vietnam's Communist Party General Secy To Lam and his wife Ngo Phuong Ly being welcomed at the Halim Perdanakusuma Air Force Base in Jakarta



Romania's Prez candidate Crin Antonescu after he registered his candidacy at the Central Electoral Bureau (BEC) in Bucharest, Romania

allovertheworld



A Buddhist monk walks barefoot through the flames during the 'Hi-watari', or fire walking festival, to pray for good health and safety at the Takaosan Yakuoin temple in Hachioji city, in the western suburbs of Tokyo, on Sunday

**Houston teen indicted for terrorism**  
**HOUSTON:** A 17-year-old has become the first person in Harris County to be indicted for terrorism under a new state law, officials say. Laith Adil Shehzad appeared in court on Friday, wearing an orange jumpsuit and showing no apparent nervousness, even smiling at the cameras. Prosecutors say the FBI was alerted by Meta in August 2024 about messages between Shehzad and an alleged ISIS militant jailed in the Philippines. Court documents state Shehzad sent photos of himself holding a Glock with extended magazines via Facebook messenger on Aug 17. The next day, as the FBI agents arrived at his home, he allegedly dumped the gun and ammunition in a detention pond before speaking with investigators. The prosecutors also claim that Shehzad sought guidance on martyrdom and was previously under juvenile supervision for possessing homemade explosives. The investigators believe that he was radicalised as early as 2021, at the age of 13.

**Landslide in southwest Colombia kills 1 and leaves 3 missing**  
**BOGOTA:** Heavy rains unleashed a landslide in southwest Colombia, killing at least one person, officials said Saturday. Three other people were missing. The victim was dragged away in his vehicle by Friday's landslide, according to Nicolás Toro, mayor of the town of Pasto, who spoke with El Contraste Noticias, a local news site. Before the body was found on Saturday, the National Risk Management Unit had said that four people were missing and 38 others were rescued. It noted that the landslide affected more than 200 people overall and damaged 65 homes. Heavy machinery worked to reopen the affected roads and restore water service, which was suspended in a popular tourist area near La Cocha lagoon.

**Prominent religious scholar killed in Pakistan**  
**PESHAWAR:** Mufti Shah Mir, a prominent Pakistani scholar, was shot dead by unknown gunmen in Balochistan province, according to a media report. Mir was targeted in the Turbat town of Kech on Friday when he was leaving a mosque after night prayers, the Dawn newspaper said. "Armed men riding motorcycles opened fire on Mufti Shah Mir, leaving him seriously injured," the paper quoted police as saying. He was immediately shifted to Turbat hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. The deceased received multiple bullet injuries that caused his death. Mufti Shah Mir was close to the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F). He previously survived two attempts on his life. The attack came days after two leaders of JUI-F were shot dead in Khuzdar.

**Man with Palestinian flag who climbed London's Big Ben tower arrested**  
**LONDON:** A man was arrested early Sunday after he climbed the Big Ben tower at the Palace of Westminster in central London while barefoot and holding a Palestinian flag. The man, who appeared to be staging a protest on a ledge several metres (yards) up Elizabeth Tower, which houses Big Ben, stepped off the building after midnight and onto a cherry picker following a long conversation with negotiators. He got into a waiting ambulance. Traffic around the Palace of Westminster in London had come to a standstill for much of Saturday as emergency crews tried to reach the man. Negotiators were lifted up on a fire brigade ladder platform several times before eventually talking him down.

# Russia claims counter-offensive into Ukraine's Sumy region

**AFP, KYIV, UKRAINE:** Russia on Sunday announced a cross-border offensive had captured territory in Ukraine's Sumy region for the first time since 2022 as Kyiv struggles to hold onto territory in Russia's neighbouring Kursk region.

**UKRAINE CONFLICT**

Russia also claimed a new village in the Kursk region as its troops pushed against Ukrainian soldiers who had seized territory there.

Kyiv wants to use the territory it holds in Kursk as a potential bargaining chip in any peace negotiations.

US and Ukrainian negotiators are set to meet for talks in Saudi Arabia next week, with US President Donald Trump's administration keen to agree on a ceasefire and a "framework" for a peace agreement.

The US has cut off Ukraine's access to intelligence sharing and satellite data in a bid to force it to negotiate.

The Russian defence ministry said in a briefing that its forces, in a counter-offensive, had "liberated" the small village of Novenke in Sumy near the border with Kursk.

Russia briefly occupied parts of Sumy at the start of its all-out invasion in 2022 but has not conquered any territory there since.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in mid-February that his forces had entered this part of northeastern Ukraine, a claim branded a "lie" by Kyiv, although it has acknowledged isolated attacks.

Novenke is located about a kilometre (less than one mile) from Kursk and Russian military bloggers said its capture brought troops closer to blocking a major Ukrainian supply route.

Kyiv has not yet commented on Russia's claim to have captured Novenke. **Incursion's 'final phase'**

Ukraine's Centre for Countering Disinformation on Saturday denied reports of a "massive breakthrough" by Russia, saying its forces were destroying small groups trying to cross the border.

Russia on Sunday announced the recapture of the village of Lebedevka in Kursk, bringing its troops closer to taking back the Ukraine-held town of Sudzha, about 10 kilometres (six miles) away.

Ukraine launched its incursion into Kursk last August, seizing territory as a buffer zone.

But since then, Russia has taken back more than two-thirds of the territory.

A Russian army commander, Aпти Alaudinov, wrote on Telegram on Saturday that "all units have launched a large-scale offensive across all areas on the Kursk section of the front".

A Russian military blogger, Yevgeny Poddubny, on Sunday wrote that the Kursk incursion "is in its final phase".

Prominent Ukrainian journalist Yuriy Butusov wrote on Sunday that holding onto the Kursk territory was no longer tactically justified.

**Gas pipe**

Ukraine's General Staff on Saturday confirmed reports that Russian special forces had used an underground gas pipe to reach the outskirts of the main town

controlled by Ukraine in the region, Sudzha.

Kyiv said its aerial reconnaissance had spotted the troops, who were "being detected, blocked and destroyed".

Russian military bloggers wrote that troops crawled some 15 kms through a pipe with a diameter of 1.4 metres. They hailed the attack as a feat, said the troops had achieved their objective, and that fighting was ongoing in Sudzha.

Russia supplied gas to Europe via Ukraine until January of this year and Sudzha was a hub for transferring and measuring gas.

Russia also claimed the capture of another village in east Ukraine.

Its troops are advancing in the Donetsk region and are close to crossing a symbolic border into the central Dnipropetrovsk region, which so far has been free of fighting.

The defence ministry said troops had taken the village of Kostyantynopil, around 13 kilometres from the regional frontier and 50 kilometres west of the large Russian-held city of Donetsk.



Participants hold up placards in front of the landmark Brandenburg Gate in Berlin on Sunday, during a demonstration in support of Ukraine. Senior US and Ukrainian officials are set to meet for talks on the war in Ukraine, on Tuesday, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

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**HONOURING FOUNDING FATHER**



Devotees carrying flags walk along a path as they approach the shrine of the Sufi saint Hazrat Daud Bandoji Kirmani, ahead of the annual five-day festival, in Sharaqpur in Pakistan's Punjab province, on Sunday

**Duterte brushes off possible arrest by ICC on HK trip**

**AP, HONG KONG:** An unannounced trip by former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte to Hong Kong set off speculations on Sunday that he may be trying to evade a possible arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court over his bloody crackdown on drugs while in power.

Duterte and his daughter — the incumbent Philippine vice president — were the main speakers in a campaign rally at the Southern Stadium in the busy Wan Chai commercial district for the senatorial candidates of his political party ahead of the May 12 midterm elections in the Philippines. Thousands of cheering and flag-waving Filipino expatriates packed the stadium to watch Duterte speak.

In his expletives-laden speech, Duterte touched on news reports about the ICC possibly issuing a warrant for his arrest and repeated that he was ready to be jailed.

The ICC has been investigating the large number of killings by police and gunmen under the former president's crackdown against illegal drugs, which left thousands of mostly poor suspects dead.

Duterte has denied he authorized extrajudicial killings but he openly and repeatedly threatened to kill suspected drug dealers while in office 2016-2022.

**Hindu temple vandalised in US**

**PTI, NEW YORK/ NEW DELHI:** A prominent Hindu temple in the United States was defaced with anti-India graffiti by unknown individuals, prompting a strong condemnation from India and a demand for 'stringent action' against those involved in the incident.

Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) said that its Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Chino Hills city of San Bernardino County faced desecration. Chino Hills borders Los Angeles County.

"In the face of another Mandir desecration, this time in Chino Hills, CA, the Hindu community stands steadfast against hate. Together with the community in Chino Hills and Southern California, we will never let hate take root," the BAPS Public Affairs posted on X.

"Our common humanity and faith will ensure that peace and compassion prevail," it said, without providing details of the incident.

India on Sunday strongly condemned the incident and called for adequate security to the places of worship in view of the incident.

"We have seen reports regarding the vandalism at a Hindu temple in Chino Hills, California. We condemn such despicable acts in the strongest terms," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal in New Delhi while

responding to media queries on the incident.

"We call upon the local law enforcement authorities to take stringent action against those responsible for these acts, and also ensure adequate security to places of worship," he said.

The opposition Congress party also condemned the incident, saying such acts of hatred and intolerance were utterly unacceptable.

"The Indian National Congress condemns in the strongest possible terms, the vandalism of the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Chino Hills, California," Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera posted on X.

"Such acts of hatred and intolerance are utterly unacceptable and have no place in any civilized society," he said and demanded action against the desecrators.

Patanjali Ayurved's co-founder Ramdev condemned vandalism at the temple and said India should take the initiative in finding a way to curb "religious terrorism".

**Bangladesh to quicken investigations amid protests against assault on women**

**PTI, DHAKA:** Bangladesh's interim government of Muhammad Yunus on Sunday promised to quicken investigations into incidents of rapes and assaults on women amid growing such incidents prompting nationwide protests.

Law adviser Asif Nazrul said the government planned to enact a law requiring police to complete investigation of rape cases within 15 days and trial in 90 days.

"The accused cannot be granted bail on the pretext of not completion of trial within 90 days. If there is any negligence on the part of the administration, specific provisions for punishment will be added to the law," he said.

The government's comments came three days after an alleged brutal assault and rape of an eight-year-old girl by her sister's father-in-law in western Magura visibly sparked a nationwide outrage, prompting authorities to come up with the announcement.

Bangladesh recently saw several incidents of rapes and attack on women on the street. In one such incident, two women were assaulted in the capital ahead of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan for smoking in public that sparked massive outrage in mainstream and social media outlets.



Women activists take part in a demonstration in Dhaka on Sunday, condemning rape and violence against women in Bangladesh

Home Adviser retired lieutenant general Jahangir Alam Chowdhury told the same briefing. He said orders were issued to

list out such incidents of violence which took place so far.

According to the existing law, the investigations of rape cases must be completed in 30 days and trial be completed in 180 days. The law stipulates that rapists could be handed down death penalties as maximum punishment.

Nazrul said since acquiring DNA certificates could delay rape case trials, the interim government would take steps to set up DNA forensic labs in every district.

The country on Sunday witnessed nationwide street protests from ordinary citizens, students and women against the recent incidents of sexual assaults against women.

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