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Shiite Muslim pilgrims visit the holy shrine of Imam Abbas during the holy month of Ramadan in Karbala, Iraq

Trump admin asks SC to partially restrict birthright citizenship

PTI, WASHINGTON: The Trump administration is asking the Supreme Court to allow restrictions on birthright citizenship to partly take effect while legal fights play out.

In emergency applications filed at the high court on Thursday, the administration asked the justices to narrow court orders entered by district judges in Maryland, Massachusetts and Washington that blocked the order President Donald Trump signed shortly after beginning his second term.

The order currently is blocked nationwide. Three federal appeals courts have rejected the administration's pleas, including one in Massachusetts on Tuesday.

The order would deny citizenship to those born after February 19 whose parents are in the country illegally. It also forbids US agencies

SECOND JUDGE ORDERS TRUMP ADMIN TO REINSTATE FIRED PROBATIONARY WORKERS

PTI, SAN FRANCISCO: A judge in Maryland has blocked for now the mass firings of probationary federal workers and ordered thousands of fired probationary workers to be reinstated, marking the second decision of its kind in a day. The order from US District Judge James Bredar came late on Thursday in a lawsuit filed by 19 states and the District of Columbia against multiple federal agencies alleging the mass firings are illegal. The states contend the Trump administration blindsided them by ignoring laws set out for large-scale layoffs, which already are having an impact on state governments as they try to help the suddenly jobless. At least 24,000 probationary employees have been terminated since President Donald Trump took office, the lawsuit alleges, though efforts by the judge to get an estimate from a government attorney at a hearing on Wednesday were unsuccessful.

from issuing any document or accepting any state document recognising citizenship for such children.

Roughly two dozen states, as well as several individuals and groups, have

sued over the executive order, which they say violates the Constitution's 14th Amendment promise of citizenship to anyone born inside the United States.

The Justice Department

argues that individual judges lack the power to give nationwide effect to their rulings.

The administration instead wants the justices to allow Trump's plan to go into effect for everyone except the handful of people and group that sued, arguing that the states lack the legal right, or standing, to challenge the executive order.

As a fallback, the administration asked "at a minimum" to be allowed to make public announcements about how they plan to carry out the policy if it eventually is allowed to take effect.

Acting Solicitor General Sarah Harris contends in her filing that Trump's order is constitutional because the 14th amendment's citizenship clause, properly read, "does not extend citizenship universally to everyone born in the United States".

Mark Carney becomes Canada's PM amid US trade war

AP, TORONTO: Former central banker Mark Carney was sworn in as Canada's new prime minister on Friday, and will now try to steer his country through a trade war brought by US President Donald Trump, a threat of annexation and an expected federal election.

Carney, 59, replaces Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who announced his resignation in January but remained in power until the Liberal Party elected a new leader. Carney is widely expected to trigger a general election in the coming days or weeks.

The governing Liberal Party had appeared poised for a historic election defeat this year until Trump declared economic war and threatened to annex the entire country as a 51st state. Now the party and its new leader could come out on top.

Carney has said he's ready to meet with Trump if he shows "respect for Canadian



sovereignty" and is willing to take "a common approach, a much more comprehensive approach for trade."

Trump put 25 per cent tariffs on Canada's steel and aluminum and is threatening sweeping tariffs on all Canadian products April 2. He has threatened economic coercion in his annexation threats and suggested the border is a fictional line.

The US trade war and Trump's talk of making Canada the 51st US state have infuriated Canadians, who are booing the American anthem at NHL and NBA games.

UN judge found guilty of UK modern slavery offences

LONDON: A UK jury on Thursday found a United Nations judge guilty of modern slavery offences after she "took advantage" of her status to force a young woman to work as her maid. Lydia Mugambe, 49, was found guilty at Oxford Crown Court, southern England, of conspiring to break UK immigration law, facilitating travel with a view to exploitation, forcing someone to work, and conspiracy to intimidate a witness. The court found that Mugambe, who is also a High Court judge in Uganda, forced the victim, who cannot be named for legal reasons, to work as her maid and to provide childcare for free. Prosecutor Caroline Haughey told court that Mugambe had "exploited and abused (her victim), taking advantage of her lack of understanding of her rights to properly paid employment and deceiving her as to the purpose of her coming to the UK."

Portugal calls snap election after prime minister resigns

LISBON: Portugal's president on Thursday announced a snap legislative vote for May 18 - the third national election in barely three years - after Prime Minister Luis Montenegro resigned over a conflict of interest dispute. President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa said he wanted to move quickly to avoid prolonged instability, adding in a televised address that May 18 was "the preferred date for the majority of parties". Rebelo de Sousa had met with party leaders on Wednesday, and earlier on Thursday called a meeting of the State Council, which is primarily made up of political leaders, for consultations before dissolving parliament. Montenegro stepped down on Tuesday after his minority centre-right government lost a confidence vote.

Nepal community efforts revive red panda population

TAPLEJUNG: Nepali police officer Jiwan Subba still feels pangs of regret decades after he bludgeoned a strange creature he found wandering in his barn, not realising it was an endangered red panda. Red pandas may share a similar name to giant pandas - due to their bamboo diet - but the copper-hued mammals with raccoon-like features are much smaller, typically the size of a house cat. "I was 17 and had no idea what it was. Nobody in our village even knew," Subba, now 48, told AFP. Today, he is not only aware of the red panda's vulnerability but is actively involved in its protection - reflecting a broader shift in attitudes spurred by Nepal's extensive community awareness programmes.

Vietnam court jails eight for Hanoi fire that killed 56

HANOI: A Vietnamese court jailed eight people on Friday over a fire that tore through a Hanoi apartment block in 2023, killing 56 in the country's deadliest blaze in two decades. The building had only a single exit and no emergency ladder on the outside. Neighbours and residents reported hearing screams as people struggled to escape the flames through barred windows. The owner of the nine-storey block deserved "the most serious punishment" for the blaze in September 2023, the court in Hanoi said, convicting him of violating fire prevention regulations and jailing him for 12 years. However, victims' relatives said the sentence should have been longer. Families were prevented from talking to the media outside the courthouse.

Sudan paramilitary shelling kills six in key city

PORT SUDAN: Sudanese paramilitary shelling of El-Obeid on Friday killed six people, including a child, a doctor said, just weeks after the army broke a prolonged siege of the key southern city. El-Obeid, the state capital of North Kordofan, has been under relentless bombardment for eight consecutive days by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which has been locked in a devastating conflict with the army since April 2023. A doctor at the city's main hospital, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity for safety reasons, said shelling also wounded eight civilians on Thursday evening and early Friday morning. On Sunday, nine civilians were killed and 21 others were wounded.

Swedish underwater art exhibit highlights rising water levels

STOCKHOLM: Defiantly flipping off both middle fingers, a mermaid made of recovered metal scraps with hair fashioned out of red plastic tubes was lowered into murky green waters outside Stockholm on a recent windy spring day. Made to look like "The Little Mermaid" from Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale with a nod to Disney's 1989 adaptation, the sculpture is joined underwater by artworks inspired by famous landmarks from around the world, including the Leaning Tower of Pisa, Rio de Janeiro's Christ the Redeemer and the Statue of Liberty in New York.

Pak army: 18 soldiers killed in Balochistan train attack

PTI, ISLAMABAD: Pakistan army on Friday said that 18 of the 26 hostages killed by Balochistan Liberation Army militants, who ambushed a train in Balochistan, were army and paramilitary soldiers.

Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lieutenant Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, during a press conference with Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti, said 26 hostages were killed by the terrorists before the start of the army operation.

"The 26 hostages include 18 army and paramilitary soldiers, three other government officials and five civilians," he said.

He also said that five paramilitary soldiers of

Frontier Corps were killed during the operation, including four Frontier Corps personnel killed by terrorists when they attacked the train.

The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) terrorists ambushed the Jaffar Express carrying over 400 passengers on Tuesday in Bolan area of Balochistan and held the passengers hostage, prompting the security forces to initiate an operation that lasted until the next day evening.

Security forces stormed the hijacked train on Wednesday, bringing a dramatic end to a 30-hour siege, killing all 33 terrorists, while successfully rescuing more than 300 passengers.

12 hospitalised after American Airlines plane catches fire at Denver

PTI, DENVER: Twelve people were taken to hospitals after an American Airlines plane landed at Denver International Airport on Thursday and caught fire, prompting slides to be deployed so passengers could evacuate quickly.

All of the people transported to hospitals had minor injuries, according to a post on the social platform X by Denver International Airport.

Flight 1006, which was headed from the Colorado Springs Airport to Dallas Fort Worth, diverted to Denver and landed safely around 5:15 p.m. after the crew reported engine vibrations, the Federal Aviation Administration said in a statement. While taxiing to the gate, an engine on the Boeing 737-800 caught fire, the FAA added.

Photos and videos posted by news outlets showed passengers standing on a plane's wing as smoke surrounded the aircraft. The FAA said passengers exited



Passengers standing on the wing of an American Airlines plane as they are evacuated after it caught fire while at a gate at Denver International Airport in Denver, Colorado

using the slides.

American said in a statement that the flight experienced an engine-related issue after taxiing to the gate. There was no immediate clarification on exactly when the plane caught fire.

The 172 passengers and six crew members were taken to the terminal, airline officials said.

We thank our crew members, DEN team and first responders for their quick

SEVERE FLOODING



The high level of the Arno river in Florence during floods in Tuscany. Heavy rain swelled rivers and flooded streets in Florence, with authorities issuing a red weather alert for the historic Italian city and its surroundings, urging residents to stay indoors

EU, UN call for calm ahead of mass protest in Serbia

AFP, BELGRADE: The EU and UN on Friday called for the right to demonstrate to be respected in Serbia ahead of a major anti-corruption rally in Belgrade, with both calling for calm as tensions ran high.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators are expected to rally in Belgrade on Saturday, with farmers, teachers and other civilians set to join the protest, part of a movement targeting deep-rooted corruption in the Balkan nation.

"The EU closely follows the current domestic political situation in Serbia," read a statement published by the bloc's delegation to Serbia.

"Freedom of assembly is a fundamental right which needs to be protected and exercised peacefully, while the safety of participants and institutions needs to be ensured. Violence must be avoided," it added.

In a separate statement, the UN rights office also urged Serbian authorities to let the protests "take place without unwarranted interference".

France, Italy, UK order more air defence missiles

AFP, PARIS: Paris, Rome and London said Friday they had ordered new air defence missiles after a shock US policy shift in ties with Europe.

European governments are under pressure to step up on defence after US President Donald Trump questioned whether the United States -- the guarantor of Europe's security since World War II -- should continue its central role in NATO.

"France, Italy and United Kingdom, confirm the order of 218 additional Aster missiles and the acceleration of delivery of already ordered Aster missiles," the countries said in a joint statement.

The deal underscored "the unwavering commitment of France, Italy and United Kingdom to bolster their air defence capabilities," they said.

It would also ensure "speedier delivery, from 2025, of 134 missiles previously ordered" in December 2022, French Defence

Minister Sebastien Lecornu said on X.

Aster 15 and 30 missiles are produced by pan-European manufacturer MBDA.

The order is for an unspecified number of new Aster 30 B1 missiles, to enter into service next year, that are to be used in the future French and Italian SAMP/T land-to-air defence systems as well as the navy ships of the three nations.

They are to be capable of reaching a target flying at an altitude of 2,500 metres (8,200 feet) within a range of 150 kilometres. They are to be able to intercept planes, but also medium-range ballistic missiles as well as hypersonic weapons travelling at above five times the speed of sound.

A single Aster 30 missile is estimated to cost more than 2 million euros (\$2.1 million), according to the French Institute of International Relations.

The order also includes an unspecified number of new Aster 15 missiles to be used by the French navy.

31 dead in Ethiopia cholera outbreak: MSF

AFP, ADDIS ABABA: At least 31 people have died from more than 1,500 cholera cases in Ethiopia's Gambella region over the past month, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) warned Friday, saying the outbreak is "rapidly spreading".

The international NGO said the situation has worsened with the arrival of people fleeing violence in neighbouring South Sudan.

"Cholera is rapidly spreading across western Ethiopia and in parallel, the outbreak in South Sudan is ongoing, endangering thousands of lives," MSF said in a statement.

Several regions of Ethiopia, Africa's second-most populous nation with around 120 million people, are battling cholera outbreaks, with Amhara -- its second-largest region -- among the hardest hit.

Cholera is an acute intestinal infection spread through food and water contaminated with the vibrio cholerae bacterium, often of fecal origin.

In South Sudan's Akobo County, located in the Upper Nile region, 1,300 cholera cases have been reported in the past four weeks, according to MSF.

UN World Food Programme to cut food aid for over 1m people in Myanmar

PTI, BANGKOK: The United Nations food agency said on Friday that more than 1 million people in the war-torn nation of Myanmar will be cut off from food assistance due to critical funding shortfalls.

A statement released by the World Food Programme said that most food rations currently distributed in Myanmar will be cut off in April, even as the country faces a desperate humanitarian crisis caused by bitter fighting between the military government and powerful militias opposed to its rule.

The WFP said it would need USD 60 million to continue food assistance in Myanmar and called on its partners to identify additional funding.

It was not immediately clear if the WFP's decision was directly related to the Trump administration's recent moves to stop most foreign aid and dismantle the US Agency for International Development, which have had wide-ranging effects on humanitarian efforts around the globe.

A 90-day freeze on foreign assistance programmes announced by US President

Donald Trump has led to other cuts in services for refugees from Myanmar, including the shutdown of hospital care in camps in neighbouring Thailand where more than 100,000 are living, according to activists and Thai officials.

The US has been a core contributor in the food security and livelihood sector in Myanmar, and there was already a shortfall last year with humanitarian needs only about 40 per cent funded, said a senior leader in the aid sector based in Asia, who spoke on condition of anonymity to freely

discuss the issue.

The new cuts, she said, have created a devastating situation, forcing NGOs to abandon many programmes, hitting vulnerable populations like people with disabilities, women and children the hardest, she said.

The lifesaving work must continue, she said. It's just not possible for us to stop that because if we stop it means people will not survive. But the funding gap we're facing has forced us to close programs that are the lifeline, I think, for many people, in Myanmar.