

Iran says nuclear deal can be done if US shows goodwill

AFP, TEHRAN: Iran said Tuesday a new nuclear deal could be agreed with the United States provided Tehran's longtime foe shows sufficient goodwill in upcoming talks, but warned it would never accept coercion.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meanwhile warned that "the military option" would become "inevitable" if talks between Washington and Tehran drag on.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Iran's principal aim remained the lifting of sweeping US sanctions. Their reimposition by President Donald Trump in 2018 has dealt a heavy blow to the Iranian economy.

Trump made the surprise announcement that his administration would open talks with Iran during a White House meeting on Monday with Netanyahu, whose country is an arch



President Donald Trump (R), greets Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the Oval Office of the White House, in Washington

foe of Tehran.

Trump said the talks would be "direct" but Araghchi insisted his negotiations with US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff on Saturday would be "indirect".

"We will not accept any other form of negotiation," Araghchi told official media. "The format of the negotiations... is not the most

important thing in my view. What really counts is the effectiveness or otherwise of the talks.

"If the other side shows enough of the necessary willingness, a deal can be found... The ball is in America's court."

Speaking Monday in the Oval Office, Trump said he was hopeful of reaching a deal with Tehran, but

warned that the Islamic republic would be in "great danger" if the talks failed.

Following a meeting with Trump, Netanyahu said in a video statement on Tuesday that "we agree that Iran will not have nuclear weapons".

"This can be done in an agreement, but only if... they go in, blow up (Iran's) facilities, dismantle all the equipment, under American supervision", he said, adding that if talks drag on, "then the military option becomes inevitable".

Netanyahu was a bitter opponent of the 2015 agreement between Iran and Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States which Trump later abandoned.

In a column in the Washington Post on Tuesday, Araghchi wrote: "To move forward today, we first need to agree that there can be no 'military option', let alone a 'military solution'."

Lankan Parl approves key anti-corruption bill

PTI, COLOMBO: Sri Lankan Parliament Tuesday unanimously approved the Proceeds of Crime bill, a move aimed at fighting corruption and fraud. Minister of Justice Harshana Nanayakkara, while presenting the bill, told parliament that billions have been lost due to corruption and fraud. The law will empower authorities to trace, freeze, and seize assets and property linked to unlawful activities.

Nanayakkara said that the National People's Power government has been entrusted with a public mandate to free the country of corruption. He said that politicians from the previous regimes, accused of corruption, would be severely dealt with by the new law.

At least three former ministers are currently in custody for varying acts of alleged corruption.

The opposition leaders said they were not against the law but urged the government not to misuse the legislation for political revenge.

Dominican Republic nightclub roof collapse kills 44, injures 160



Rescuers raced to find survivors among the rubble of a Dominican Republic night club

AP, SANTO DOMINGO: At least 44 people died and 160 others were injured in the Dominican capital early Tuesday when the roof collapsed at an iconic nightclub where politicians, athletes and others were attending a merengue concert, authorities said. Crews were searching for potential survivors in the rubble at the one-storey Jet Set nightclub in Santo Domingo, said Juan Manuel Méndez, director of the Centre of Emergency Operations.

"We presume that many of them are still alive, and that is why the authorities here will not give up until not a single person remains under that rubble," he said.

Nearly 12 hours after the top of the nightclub collapsed down onto patrons, rescue crews were still pulling out survivors from the debris. At the scene, firefighters removed blocks of broken concrete and sawed planks of wood to use them as planks to lift heavy debris as the noise of drills breaking through concrete filled the air.

The confirmed death toll had reached 44, Méndez said in the early afternoon. Earlier, officials had said there were at least 160 people injured.

Nelsy Cruz, the governor of the northwestern province of Montecristi and sister of seven-time Major League Baseball All-Star Nelson Cruz, was among the victims. She had called President Luis Abinader at 12:49 a.m. saying she was trapped and that the roof had collapsed, First Lady Raquel Abraje told reporters. Officials said Cruz died

later at the hospital.

"This is too great a tragedy," Abraje said in a broken voice.

Meanwhile, the injured include former MLB pitcher Octavio Dotel, legislator Bray Vargas and merengue singer Rubby Pérez, who was performing when the roof collapsed, officials said.

His manager, Enrique Paulino, whose shirt was spattered with blood, told reporters at the scene that the concert began shortly before midnight, with the roof collapsing almost an hour later, killing the group's saxophonist.

Verbal spat, WhatsApp war among MPs bring to fore TMC's internal rift

PTI, KOLKATA/NEW DELHI: A video of a verbal spat, and screenshots of heated exchanges between TMC MPs Kalyan Banerjee and Kirti Azad in the party's official WhatsApp group, shared by BJP's Amit Malviya, went viral on Tuesday, bringing to fore deep fissures within the Bengal's ruling party.

BJP's IT cell head Malviya stoked the row by posting screenshots and videos of the exchanges on X, claiming the spat was evidence of the TMC's internal implosion.

PTI, however, could not independently verify the authenticity of the screenshots and the videos.

The controversy began on April 4 when a TMC delegation visited the Election Commission to submit a

memorandum regarding duplicate voter identity cards, according to Malviya and sources within the Mamata Banerjee-led party.

TMC MP Mahua Moitra reportedly confronted Kalyan Banerjee -- the party's chief whip in Lok Sabha -- for allegedly excluding her from the list of signatories on the memorandum that the delegation was submitting to the EC.

An altercation broke out between the two MPs on the premises of the EC office, with Kalyan Banerjee later claiming that Moitra had asked the security personnel present there to arrest him, accusing him of misconduct.

As the incident came to the fore, another senior TMC MP, Saugata Roy, said Moitra was crying after the

altercation.

"What he has done has mangled the party. He should be immediately removed as the chief whip. Kalyan Banerjee is known for his intemperate and uncivilised behaviour," Roy said.

Under attack, Banerjee addressed a press conference on the issue.

"I have been in politics for the last 40 years. This woman MP was asking the security outside the EC office to arrest me. Who are they to send me to jail? She hurled abuses at me. I fight in Parliament. I'm not obsessed with one industrial house," he said.

Without naming Moitra directly, he added, "Just because the woman MP speaks fluent English doesn't mean she can insult anybody."

Police nab 3 juveniles, arrest man in Mayur Vihar firing case

PTI, NEW DELHI: Delhi Police has arrested a 20-year-old man and apprehended three juveniles for allegedly setting a car ablaze and firing gunshots outside a property dealer's office in east Delhi's Mayur Vihar last week, an officer said.

The incident, which took place on April 5 in Trilokpur, was allegedly linked to a monetary dispute over gambling, police said. The accused were allegedly hired by one Manoj Ohja to intimidate the property dealer, Sanjay Tosh, who was not in the office when the attack happened.

Police have identified the oldest of the four nabbed as Aniket alias Abhi, a resident of Gokalpuri. The boys are all aged 16.

SUMMER SPLASH



Children in the Hooghly river to beat the heat on a hot summer day, in Nadia, West Bengal

Kerala govt warns against promotion of home births on social media

PTI, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Kerala government has taken serious note of the child-births taking place at homes in the state and has issued a warning against those encouraging such home births through social media.

"Childbirth through unscientific methods poses a threat to the lives of both the mother and the baby. Therefore, action will be taken under the Public Health Act and relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita," said state Health Minister Veena George in a statement

following the Rapid Response Team meeting held here.

The statement comes in the wake of an incident in Malappuram district, where a 35-year-old woman who gave birth on the evening of April 5 died the same night due to excessive bleeding. Her husband has been arrested and booked for culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

The Minister said statistics indicate that around 400 childbirths take place at home annually in the state.

"This year, a total of

around two lakh deliveries have occurred, of which 382 were home births," George said.

She noted that home deliveries are also observed among migrant workers and in tribal areas, and she directed officials to conduct a detailed study into the reasons behind this and to take further action accordingly.

George also stated that denying medical treatment is a punishable offence.

The minister said that awareness about the dangers of home births will be intensified with the cooperation of pub-

lic representatives and socio-cultural organisations.

"Districts have been instructed to collect accurate data and reasons specific to each area and to take further action accordingly. Other departments must work in coordination with the Health Department," she said.

George added that detailed information must be collected from every region.

The minister also directed that action be taken against those spreading false health information through social media and YouTube.

Two BJP MLAs stage sit-in strike amid pandemonium in J-K Assembly

PTI, JAMMU: Two BJP legislators walked into the Well of the House and staged a sit-in amid chaotic scenes in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, leading to its adjournment by the speaker for the second day on Tuesday. The MLAs - Rajiv Jasrotia and Pawan Gupta - staged the protest in front of the opposition benches, holding question papers in their hands even as the marshals were busy holding back several protesting members of the National Conference, Congress and PDP from entering the Well.

Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather tried to persuade the



MLAs raise slogans inside the House during the Budget session of J&K Assembly, in Jammu

members to return to their seats, and later adjourned the House, first for 30 minutes before extending the period till 1 pm and subse-

quently for the full day.

Talking to PTI outside the Assembly, Jasrotia, a former minister and two-time MLA, accused the National

Conference (NC) of deliberately creating a ruckus on the issue of the Waqf (Amendment) Act to disrupt private members' bills and resolutions.

"I forwarded a question having five parts concerning relief and rehabilitation of 1947, 1965 and 1971 refugees from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK). But the first four parts of the question were not answered by the government," he said.

The BJP leader also claimed that there were thousands of refugee families from PoJK who were not provided any relief by the government.

FROM PAGE 1

Waqf Act: PROTESTS ERUPT ACROSS COUNTRY

Chowdhury said that even during the Left regime, minorities were not subjected to such treatment by law enforcers.

In the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly all parties barring the BJP protested demanding a discussion on the Waqf law. Two BJP members walked into the Well of the House and staged a sit-in against stalling of House proceedings amid chaotic scenes.

Meanwhile, the already tense situation in Manipur escalated as protest rallies were taken out on Tuesday against the Waqf Amendment Act in Imphal East and Bishnupur districts, officials said.

At Kwakta in Bishnupur district, protesters raised slogans demanding the immediate withdrawal of the Waqf Amendment Act marched for 4 km. Many women wearing burqa also attended the protest march.

Md Nasir, a protester said, "Waqf Act violates the Constitution. It targets the minority Muslims and is a step to break the spirit of a united India. We condemn this Act and government's ploy to usurp our ancestral properties. Waqf belongs to the Ummah." At Khumidok in Imphal East district, protesters formed a human chain protesting against the Waqf Amendment Act and demanding its immediate withdrawal.

Security forces with anti-riot equipment have been deployed across the Muslim-dominated Lilong area in Manipur's Thoubal district in the wake of violent protests against the Waqf Amendment Act.

Vigil has also been heightened in parts of Imphal East district, they said.

"Security forces shall be equipped with anti-riot equipment including tear gas gun shells, canes, body protectors and helmets," an order issued by the Superintendent of

Police (Thoubal) said.

The number of security personnel has also been increased at the residence of local MLA Abdul Nasir as a precautionary measure.

On Sunday night, the house of BJP Minority Morcha's Manipur president, Asker Ali, was set on fire in Lilong by a mob for allegedly supporting the Waqf Amendment Act.

Following the incident, the district administration imposed prohibitory orders under Section 163 of BNSS in the Lilong assembly constituency on Monday.

Ali had on Saturday expressed support on social media platforms for the Waqf Amendment Act, 2025. Following the incident on Sunday night, he reportedly apologised for his earlier statement and condemned the Act.

Various parts of the Imphal Valley also witnessed protests against the Act on Sunday.

SC TO HEAR PLEAS AGAINST WAQF ACT ON APR 15, CENTRE FILES CAVEAT

Over 10 petitions, including those by politicians and the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) and Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, were filed in the top court challenging the validity of the newly-enacted law.

Lawyers privy to the development said the petitions were likely to be listed for hearing before a bench on April 15 though it is not reflected on the apex court website as of now.

On April 7, a bench headed by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna assured senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, to consider listing the petitions.

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Congress MPs Imran Pratapgarhi and Mohammad Jawed, AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi, RJD MPs Manoj Jha and Faiyaz Ahmad, AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan have also filed petitions in

the apex court challenging the validity of the Act.

The DMK moved the top court through its deputy general secretary A Raja and said in a press release, "Despite widespread opposition, the Waqf Amendment Bill, 2025 was passed by the union government without proper consideration of the objections raised by the members of the JPC and the other stakeholders."

The party said the immediate implementation of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 infringes and prejudices the rights of about 50 lakh Muslims in Tamil Nadu and 20 crore Muslims in the other parts of the country.

The AIMPLB filed the plea in the top court late April 6.

TEEN SAFETY: META RESTRICTS USAGE ON INSTA, FB, MESSENGER

They also need permission to "turn off our feature that blurs images containing suspected nudity" in direct messages, Meta said in a blog post.

In another major update, Meta said it's extending the teen account safeguards to its Facebook and Messenger platforms.

These will include protections already in place for teen Instagram users, including setting teen accounts to private by default, blocking private messages from strangers, strict limits on sensitive content like fight videos, reminders to get off the app after 60 minutes and notifications that are halted during bedtime hours.

"Teen Accounts on Facebook and Messenger will offer similar, automatic protections to limit inappropriate content and unwanted contact, as well as ways to ensure teens' time is well spent," Meta said.

The company said at least 54 million teen accounts have been set up since the program launched in September.

