

allovertheworld



Britain's Queen Camilla arrives to unveil the foundation stone for the King Charles III Sacristy building, at Westminster Abbey in London

Radio Free Europe gets funds for April as it fights US freeze

PRAGUE: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty has received overdue money for April while millions approved by Congress are pending following the US administration's funding freeze, the Prague-based radio network said. President Donald Trump suspended funding for the US-founded radio network in March alongside financing for other broadcasters, including Voice of America, as part of his campaign to slash government spending. Launched by the United States in 1950 to counter Soviet Cold War propaganda, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) filed a court challenge and won a temporary restraining order halting the funding cut by the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM).

'Albania belongs in EU,' von der Leyen tells re-elected PM Rama

BRUSSELS: EU leaders congratulated Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama on Wednesday after his party's electoral victory, with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen hailing his "great progress towards our Union". "Let's keep working closely together on EU reforms. Albania belongs in the EU," von der Leyen said on X. French President Emmanuel Macron likewise hailed Rama's win, writing on X: "France will always stand alongside Albania on its European path."

Germany arrests three Ukrainians over Russian sabotage plot

FRANKFURT: German prosecutors said Wednesday they had arrested three Ukrainians accused of plotting sabotage attacks on goods transports for Russia, amid soaring tensions between Moscow and Berlin. The suspects, detained in Germany and Switzerland, had told individuals "believed to be acting on behalf of Russian state authorities" that they were ready "to commit arson and explosive attacks on goods transport in Germany", federal prosecutors said. The accused allegedly aimed to send packages from Germany "containing explosive or incendiary devices to recipients in Ukraine, which would ignite during transport", they said.

Jeju Air crash families sue South Korea minister, airline boss

SEOUL: The families of victims from South Korea's worst-ever plane crash filed a criminal complaint against 15 people, including a government minister and the airline's CEO, their lawyers told AFP Wednesday. The Boeing 737-800 was flying from Thailand to South Korea's southwest on December 29 carrying 181 passengers and crew when it belly-landed at Muan airport and exploded in a fireball after slamming into a concrete barrier. Killing 179 people, the incident was the worst-ever aviation disaster on South Korean soil. "A criminal complaint was filed with the Jeonnan Provincial Police," Jung Da-eun, one of the lawyers representing the victims' families.

Hungary targets 'foreign-funded' organisations with new bill

BUDAPEST: Hungary plans to target organisations deemed threats to its sovereignty under draft legislation submitted late on Tuesday, raising alarm among the opposition which warned of the "Putinisation" of the central European country. The bill "on transparency in public life" is widely viewed as part of a clampdown by Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government against NGOs and independent media ahead of next year's elections. Since his return to power in 2010, the nationalist leader has tightened his control over courts, the media and civil society.

Magnitude 6.4 quake strikes near Tonga

SYDNEY: A magnitude 6.4 earthquake rattled Tonga on Wednesday, the United States Geological Survey said, striking off the country's eastern coast. The USGS said the quake hit at a depth of 243 kilometres (150 miles) around 137 kilometres from the closest town of Neiafu. It struck at 17:15 local time (0415 GMT). Earthquakes are common in Tonga, a low-lying archipelago home to around 100,000 people that straddles the seismic Ring of Fire. The Ring of Fire is an arc of intense tectonic activity that stretches through Southeast Asia and across the Pacific basin.

Spain chemical depot blaze sparks stay-at-home order for almost 80,000

SPAIN: Spanish authorities told almost 80,000 residents near the southern city of Seville to stay indoors Wednesday as a fire at a chemical products warehouse spread a giant plume of smoke. Emergency services said they received reports in the early afternoon of black smoke billowing from an industrial estate in Alcala de Guadaira, a town of around 77,000 people southeast of Seville. The estate was evacuated and no injuries recorded, they added in a statement, asking the town's population to "close doors and windows to prevent the smoke entering... and stay at home".

India appears to have clear edge' in targeting Pak's military facilities

PTI, NEW YORK: India appears to have had a "clear edge" in targeting Pakistan's military facilities and airfields during the recent four-day confrontation, the New York Times reported, citing satellite images. High-resolution satellite imagery, from before and after the strikes, shows "clear damage" to Pakistan's facilities by Indian attacks, according to the report. "The four-day military clash between India and Pakistan was the most expansive fighting in half a century between the two nuclear-armed countries. As both sides used drones and missiles to test each other's air defences and hit military facilities, they claimed to inflict severe damage," the report said.

It added that satellite imagery indicates that while the attacks were widespread, the damage was far more contained than claimed — "and appeared mostly inflicted by India on Pakistani facilities." In the new age of high-tech warfare, the report said that strikes by both sides, verified by the imagery, appeared to be precisely targeted. "Where India appears to have had a clear edge is in its targeting of Pakistan's military facilities and airfields, as the latter stretch of fighting shifted from symbolic strikes and shows of force to attacks on each other's defence capabilities," the report said. At Bholari air base, located less than 100 miles from the Pakistani port city of Karachi, India's defence officials said they had struck an aircraft hangar with a precision attack. "The visuals showed clear damage to what looks like a hangar," the NYT report said. Further, the Nur Khan air base, within a roughly 15-mile range of both the Pakistani Army's headquarters and the office of the country's prime minister and a

PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK: INDIAN TECHNICAL TEAM IN NEW YORK TO MEET UNSC 1267 SANCTIONS COMMITTEE

PTI, UNITED NATIONS: A team from India is here to meet the 1267 sanctions committee of the UN Security Council in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack for which "The Resistance Front" (TRF) had claimed responsibility. The TRF is a front for the UN-proscribed Pakistani terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba. Sources told PTI that an Indian technical team is in New York. The team is interacting with the Monitoring Team of the 1267 Sanctions Committee and other partner countries in the UN on Wednesday. They will also meet the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), the sources said. The 1267 ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida Committee oversees the sanctions measures imposed by the Security Council.

short distance from the unit that oversees and protects Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, was "perhaps the most sensitive military target that India struck." The Indian military said it had particularly targeted the runways and other facilities at some of Pakistan's key air bases and "satellite images showed the damage," the report said, noting that on May 10, Pakistan issued a notice for the Rahim Yar Khan air base saying that the runway was not operational. At Sargodha air base, in Punjab Province in Pakistan, the Indian military said it had used precision weapons to strike two sections of the runway.

Rights groups say migrant workers dying on Saudi job sites as kingdom prepares for World Cup

AP, DUBAI: Scores of labourers from countries including India, Bangladesh and Nepal have faced preventable deaths from electrocution, road accidents, falling from heights, and more while working in Saudi Arabia, according to a report Wednesday by the advocacy group Human Rights Watch. Human Rights Watch and another rights group, FairSquare, released separate investigations Wednesday detailing preventable deaths of migrant workers from job-site accidents and work-related illnesses. The reports accuse Saudi authorities of often misreporting such deaths and failing to investigate, preventing families from receiving compensation from the kingdom that they are entitled to and knowing how their loved ones died. As Saudi Arabia pushes ahead with hundreds of billions of dollars in infrastructure and development initiatives — including the 2034 men's soccer World Cup and the futuristic city Neom — rights groups warn of thousands more avoidable deaths in the coming years. In one case, Human Rights Watch said a Bangladeshi worker was electrocuted on the job. But his employer allegedly withheld the body, telling the family they would be compensated only if they agreed to a local burial. Another family reported waiting nearly 15 years before they were compensated by the Saudi government.

PM Keir Starmer hails 'fantastic' trade deal with India in UK Parliament

PTI, LONDON: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Wednesday hailed the "fantastic" Free Trade Agreement (FTA) clinched with India as he came down heavily on the Opposition Conservative Party for wanting to "rip it up". During the weekly Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) session in the House of Commons, Starmer pointed to the Labour government's success in completing the FTA negotiations with India last week after the Tories failed to strike a deal while in government over the past eight years. Starmer locked horns

with Opposition Leader Kemi Badenoch over the Labour government's employment and business record. "Over the past week, we have secured a historic trade deal with India and a landmark agreement with the United States, protecting and creating British jobs, slashing tariffs and driving economic growth," said Starmer. "The India deal is a fantastic deal, with tariffs on cars cut to 10 per cent, tariffs halved on whisky and gin, and GBP 4.8 billion coming into our economy. What does she [Badenoch] say she would do with the India deal? She wants to rip it up," he said. The UK PM pointed to Badenoch's statements last week, which branded as "fake news" Indian assertions that the Double Contribution Convention (DCC) agreed to prevent temporary foreign workers duplicating social security contributions in both countries had been on the table during negotiations with the previous government. "She was even reduced last week to accusing the Indian government of fake news — no wonder she did so badly as a Trade Secretary."

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TEMPLE CHIEF DIGS IN HEELS DESPITE DAMNING REPORT

The report also notes that the temple committee ignored crowd control directives from both revenue and police authorities, focusing primarily on conducting rituals. Compounding the problem, temporary stalls were permitted to operate along both sides of the main route despite explicit warnings from officials. This severely narrowed the pathway and intensified the risk of a crush. The report advocated the need to fix responsibility and take corrective measures after going into the reasons behind one of the worst tragedies in recent memory at the revered temple festival. Clearly, a simple denial will not satisfy anyone, leave alone the victims.

JOB SCAM ALERT: YOUTH CLAIMS FRAUD, INTIMIDATION BY AGENCY

"I will check the status of the matter, and whether the passport has not been released by the agency," he said. Vernekar's complaint goes on to make serious allegations about a nexus between the consultancy and a section of the police, claiming that victims who raise their voices are systematically silenced. "The agency staff openly told us no one can touch them because they are protected by police officers. Whenever we visited their office, a police vehicle would show up to threaten us," Vernekar stated. According to Vernekar, the consultancy had been in the spotlight earlier too, when a police raid had put an end to its operations. However, the agency, he claimed, has resumed its operations, targeting hundreds of unemployed youth across Goa. The complaint demands immediate police action, including investigation into the firm's fraudulent activities, accountability of complicit police officials, return of the complainant's passport and balance refund, and protection for his family from further harassment. "I trusted the system to protect me. Instead, it feels like I've been abandoned. My career, money, and peace of mind have all been taken away. I'm only asking for justice," he concluded.

JUSTICE B R GAVAI SWORN IN AS CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

He was part of a five-judge Constitution bench which, by a 4:1 majority verdict, gave its stamp of approval to the Centre's 2016 decision to demonetise Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 denomination currency notes. Justice Gavaï was also part of a seven-judge Constitution bench, which by a 6:1 majority held that states are constitutionally empowered to make sub-classifications within the Scheduled Castes, which form a socially heterogeneous class, for granting reservation for the uplift of castes that are socially and educationally more backward among them. A seven-judge Constitution bench also having Justice Gavaï ruled that the arbitration clause in an unstamped or insufficiently stamped agreement between parties was enforceable as such a defect was curable and did not render the contract invalid. In an important verdict, a bench headed by Justice Gavaï laid down pan-India guidelines and said no property should be demolished without a prior showcase notice and the affected must be given 15 days to respond. He is also heading the bench which is hearing matters related to forests, wildlife and protection of trees. He had joined the bar on March 16, 1985, and was the

standing counsel for the Municipal Corporation of Nagpur, Amravati Municipal Corporation and Amravati University. PM Modi later posted pictures of the swearing in on his social media handle. "Wishing him the very best for his tenure," the prime minister wrote on X. Union ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, J P Nadda and Arjun Ram Meghwal attended the swearing in ceremony along with former president Ram Nath Kovind. Justice Gavaï was appointed an assistant government pleader and additional public prosecutor in the Bombay High Court's Nagpur bench from August 1992 to July 1993. He was appointed a government pleader and public prosecutor for the Nagpur bench on January 17, 2000. According to the memorandum of procedure — a set of documents guiding appointment, elevation and transfer of high court and Supreme Court judges — the law minister writes to the CJ to name his or her successor. The memorandum of procedure says the senior-most judge of the apex court is considered fit to hold the office of the CJ and the views of the outgoing head of the judiciary have to be sought 'at an appropriate time'.

PAK HANDS OVER BSF JAWAN AFTER 21 DAYS

Shaw was apprehended while he was deployed to guard the farmers on the border, a day after the Pahalgam terrorist attack in which 26 people were killed. The officials said a Pakistan Ranger apprehended by the BSF from the Rajasthan border on May 3 was handed over to the neighbouring country. Officials in Pakistan identified the released Ranger as Muhammadullah. "Today at 1030 hours Constable Purnam Kumar Shaw has been taken back from Pakistan by the BSF at the Attari-Wagah border," the BSF spokesperson said. A picture of the jawan released by the force showed a bearded Shaw with ruffled hair and wearing a dark green round-neck T-shirt. Shaw had "inadvertently" crossed over to the Pakistan territory while on operational duty in the Ferozepur sector on April 23 around 11.50 am and was detained by the Pak Rangers, he said. The officials told PTI that the jawan will undergo a full body check-up and medical tests, followed by a counseling and 'debriefing' session where he will be asked "relevant questions" by the BSF officials about his 21-day detention by the Rangers. The jawan, belonging to the 24th BSF battalion, will not be drafted for active duty and will also be part of an official inquiry instituted by the Punjab frontier of the BSF to look into the sequence of his apprehension by the Rangers and find lapses, if any, they said. The spokesperson said the handover of the jawan at the border "was conducted peacefully and in accordance with established protocols". The jawan was part of the 'Kisan Guard' that was deployed for the protection of Indian farmers, who till their land ahead of the fence. The trooper apparently "miscalculated" the alignment of the IB and stepped to rest under a nearby tree from where he was apprehended by the Rangers, the officials had said. Celebrations erupted at Shaw's residence at Rishra in the Hooghly district of West Bengal following the announcement of his return to India. Shaw's pregnant wife, Rajani, who had travelled to Pathankot and Ferozepur earlier to personally appeal for her husband's release, thanked the people of the country and political leaders who stood by her during the difficult period. "The local councillor, MP and Chief Minister Mamata Ba-

nerjee had been in regular touch with me, offering reassurance during the difficult days. I thank each and every one who stood by our family," a smiling Rajani said. As Shaw's family was informed about his release, relief replaced the intense anxiety that had gripped them for 21 days. The jawan's family members could barely hold back their tears of joy, amid prayers of gratitude and distribution of sweets at his house. Bholanath Shaw, the jawan's father, said: "Today, we are celebrating. We haven't slept peacefully for days, but now we can finally breathe. He is safe, he is back in India, and that is all that matters." "I want to thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, the central Government and the BSF authorities for their relentless efforts in bringing my son back home," he said. Tensions soared between India and Pakistan after the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, with India carrying out missile strikes against terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on May 7 under Operation Sindoor and Pakistan attacking India's military installations, drawing retaliation. The two sides announced an understanding on May 10 to stop military action.

EXTENDED IPL CLASHES WITH INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

Many overseas players went home and it remains to be seen if all will come back for the decisive stages of the world's richest cricket tournament. Australia's WTC final squad is due to depart for a training camp on May 29. The country's cricket authorities have taken a less rigid stance, with captain Pat Cummins among those expected to return to India. However his Sunrisers Hyderabad side, who also have Travis Head, cannot make the IPL playoffs and will play their final game on May 25. "Team management will work through preparation implications for the World Test Championship final for those players who choose to play," Cricket Australia said Tuesday. Australia's squad also includes Mitchell Starc (Delhi Capitals) and Josh Hazlewood (Royal Challengers Bengaluru), who can both make the playoffs, which begin on May 29. England have five players from their one-day squad in the IPL and are still deciding how to respond to the hastily revamped schedule. Former captain Jos Buttler plays for table-topping Gujarat Titans, who look certain to advance, while Will Jacks (Mumbai Indians) and Jacob Bethell (Royal Challengers Bengaluru) could also be needed for the play-offs. England cricket chiefs are keen to show support for the IPL and the Indian cricket board (BCCI) but also want to put out a full-strength team. South Africa pace bowler Kagiso Rabada, who has just returned from a drugs ban, also plays for Gujarat. Fellow Proteas Corbin Bosch, Wiaan Mulder, Marco Jansen, Aiden Markram, Lungi Ngidi, Ryan Rickelton and Tristan Stubbs may all have to leave before the playoffs because South Africa have a four-day warm-up match against Zimbabwe beginning on June 3. The players are stuck between their well-paying IPL franchise and their country. Bengaluru will host Kolkata Knight Riders on Saturday in the first of 13 regular-season matches remaining. Chennai Super Kings, Rajasthan Royals and Hyderabad are already out of the playoff race.