



US Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell speaks during the Thomas Laubach Research Conference at Washington



Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves, centre, speaks with the media at the Rolls-Royce factory in Derby, England



U.N. humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher responds to questions during an interview at United Nations headquarters



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer talks to the media at the ferry port in Tirana, Albania

allovertheworld



French singer Louane representing France with the song "Maman" performs during the second semi-final of the Eurovision Song Contest 2025 at the St. Jakobshalle arena in Basel

First Everest death of climbing season recorded

KATHMANDU: A Filipino climber has died on Mount Everest, officials said Thursday, becoming the first fatality of this year's climbing season on the world's highest mountain. Philipp Santiago, 45, was preparing to summit the 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) peak, but was exhausted when he reached the final camp (Camp 4) on Wednesday night. Himal Gautam of Nepal's tourism department told AFP. "He died at the place where he was resting," said Bodha Raj Bhandari, of Snowy Horizon Treks and Expedition, which organised Santiago's climb. "We are consulting to bring his body back to the base camp." Eight Nepali climbers reached the summit of Mount Everest on May 9, kicking off this year's climbing season for hundreds of others, which runs from April to early June.

EU accuses TikTok of violating digital rules over advertisement

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM: The EU accused TikTok on Thursday of breaking digital rules after concluding that the Chinese-owned social media platform is not transparent enough about advertisements. The European Commission "found that TikTok does not provide the necessary information about the content of the advertisements, the users targeted by the ads, and who paid for the advertisements", it said in a statement. It is the first time Brussels has formally accused TikTok with breaching the Digital Services Act (DSA), the EU's landmark online content law. "In our preliminary view, TikTok is not complying with the DSA in key areas of its advertisement repository, preventing the full inspection of the risks brought about by its advertising and targeting systems," the EU's digital chief, Henna Virkkunen, said.

Lufthansa extends Tel Aviv flight suspension to May 25

FRANKFURT, GERMANY: Germany's Lufthansa airline group said Thursday its suspension of flights to and from Tel Aviv would last until at least May 25 amid ongoing regional conflict. Lufthansa said in a statement the decision to extend the suspension was made "due to the current situation", without giving further details. The group - whose carriers include Eurowings, Swiss, Austrian and Brussels Airlines - initially suspended its flights to Israel's main airport following a May 4 rocket attack launched by Yemen's Huthi rebels, and has extended the suspension several times. The missile landed near a car park at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International Airport and injured six people, in a rare penetration of Israel's air defences.

Thai man arrested for smuggling baby orangutans

BANGKOK, THAILAND: Thai police have arrested a man suspected of smuggling two baby orangutans into the kingdom, they said Thursday, in a case linked to an international wildlife trafficking network. The 47-year-old suspect was detained on Wednesday evening at a petrol station in a residential district of Bangkok while preparing to hand over the animals to a customer, police said in a statement. Two infant orangutans - one about a year old, the other just one month - were found in a plastic basket wearing diapers, with a feeding bottle beside them, according to photos released by police. The arrest followed a joint investigation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Kazakhstan denies report Russia leaving Baikonur spaceport

ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN: Kazakhstan said Thursday there were no talks on Russia giving up its lease on the Baikonur spaceport before it runs out in 2050, amid reports Moscow is looking to ditch the ageing cosmodrome. The spaceport is used by Russia to send astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS). But Moscow has signalled it aims to pull out of the ISS - one of the rare projects where Russian cooperation continues with Western countries - as early as 2028. That has put the status of Baikonur at risk, with Kazakh media reporting that Russia could give up renting the facility sometime between 2026 and 2028. "The question of early termination of the lease, or transfer of the city of Baikonur to the full control of the Kazakh side, is not being considered at this time," the Kazakh aerospace industry ministry told AFP.

Trump: Putin's no-show at peace talks not significant

AP, DOHA: US President Donald Trump said Thursday he was not surprised that Russian President Vladimir Putin will be a no-show for anticipated peace talks with Ukraine in Turkey this week.

Trump, who had pressed for Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to meet in Istanbul, brushed off Putin's apparent decision to not take part in the expected talks.

"I didn't think it was possible for Putin to go if I'm not there," Trump said in an exchange with reporters as he took part in a business roundtable with executives in Doha on the third day of his visit to the Middle East.

Trump earlier this week floated potentially attending himself. The US president, however, noted on Thursday that Secretary of State Marco Rubio was already in the country for meetings with NATO counterparts. Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, also plans to be in Istanbul on Friday for the anticipated Russia-Ukraine talks.

UKRAINE'S ZELENSKY ARRIVES IN TURKEY FOR PEACE TALKS BUT PUTIN IS ABSENT



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is welcomed after disembarking from the plane upon his arrival at Ankara airport, in Ankara

AP, ISTANBUL: A low-ranking Russian delegation arrived in Istanbul for peace talks with Ukraine, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Thursday, while a Ukrainian delegation led by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and including other senior government figures landed in the Turkish capital Ankara. Russian President Vladimir Putin was not part of the Moscow delegation, according to a list released by the Kremlin Wednesday night, prompting criticism from Western officials that the Kremlin isn't serious about the peace effort. Vladimir Medinsky, an aide to Putin, will lead the Russian team that will also include three other senior officials, the Kremlin said. Putin also appointed four lower-level officials as "experts" for the talks.

The push for direct talks between Zelenskyy and Putin comes amid a flurry of negotiations aimed at producing a ceasefire agreement between Russia and Ukraine. Putin was first to propose restarting direct

peace talks Thursday with Ukraine in the Turkish city that straddles Asia and Europe. Zelenskyy challenged the Kremlin leader to meet in Turkiye in person.

But the Kremlin has said its delegation at the talks will be led by Putin's aide, Vladimir Medinsky, and include three other officials. Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said Zelenskyy will only sit down with the Russian leader.

Trump, as he wrapped up his visit to Qatar, stopped by a US installation at the centre of American involvement in the Middle East to speak with US troops. He has used his four-day visit to Gulf states to reject the "interventionism" of America's past in the region.

The installation, al-Udeid Air Base, was a major staging ground during the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The base houses some 8,000 US troops, down from about 10,000 at the height of those wars.

Trump told the troops that his "priority is to end conflicts, not start them."

Indian student released from detention after US judge's ruling

AP, ALVARADO: A Georgetown University scholar from India who was arrested in the Trump administration's crackdown on foreign college students was released from immigration detention Wednesday after a federal judge's ruling.

IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWN

Badar Khan Suri will go home to his family in Virginia while he awaits the outcome of his petition against the Trump administration for wrongful arrest and detention in violation of the First Amendment and other constitutional rights. He's also facing deportation proceedings in an immigration court in Texas.

"Justice delayed is justice denied," Khan Suri told reporters after his release from a detention facility in Alvarado, near Dallas. "It took two months, but I'm extremely thankful that finally I'm free."

Immigration authorities have detained college students from across the country - many of whom participated in campus protests over the Israel-Hamas

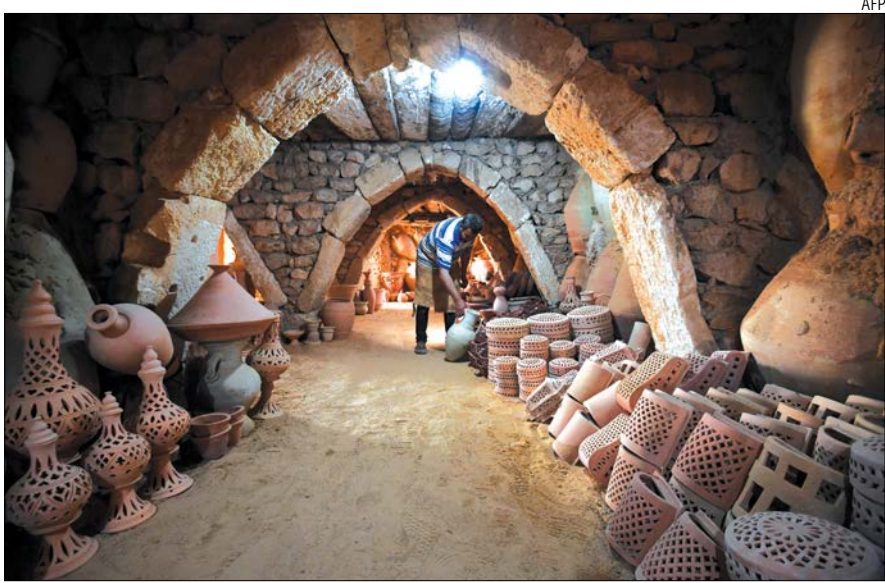
war - since the first days of the Trump administration. Khan Suri is the latest to win release from custody, along with Rumeysa Ozturk, a Tufts University student from Turkey, and Mohsen Mahdawi, a Palestinian student at Columbia University. US District Judge Patricia Tolliver Giles in Alexandria, Virginia, said she was releasing Khan Suri because she felt he had substantial constitutional claims against the Trump administration. She also considered the needs of his family and said she didn't believe he was a danger to the community.

"Speech regarding the conflict there and opposing Israel's military campaign is likely protected political speech," Giles said. "And thus he was likely engaging in protected speech."

The judge added: "The First Amendment does not distinguish between citizens and noncitizens." March arrest in Virginia

Khan Suri was arrested by masked, plain-clothed officers on the evening of March 17 outside his apartment complex in Arlington, Virginia.

TIMELESS TRADITION



A Tunisian potter arranges pots at an 800-year-old pottery workshop in Guellala in the southern Mediterranean resort island of Djerba

West pitching India, China against each other: Russian minister

PTI, MOSCOW: The West is pitching India and China against each other, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said here on Thursday.

Lavrov made the remarks at a meeting of the "Culture without Borders: The Role and Development of Cultural Diplomacy" diplomatic club, according to the state-run TASS news agency.

"Take note of the current developments in the Asia-Pacific region, which the West has started calling the Indo-Pacific region to give its policy a clear anti-China orientation - expecting thereby to additionally clash our great friends and neighbours India and China," Lavrov said.

Lavrov, who was a vocal critic of the QUAD grouping comprising India, Australia, Japan and the US to contain China, has muted his criticism after the setting up of

AUKUS -- a military alliance of Australia, the UK and the US.

The foreign minister said the West is trying to undermine the role of ASEAN in Asia.

"Western colleagues, as in any other part of the world, want to play a major role here, they want to undermine the central role of ASEAN, which suited everyone for many, many decades and was based on the formation of a unifying space by the ASEAN countries and their partners in dialogue both in the field of politics and in the field of military cooperation, in the field of defence," Lavrov was quoted as saying by TASS.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional grouping of 10 countries in Southeast Asia, aiming to promote economic and security cooperation among its members.

The 10 member states are Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

"The rules of consensus, the search for common ground - all this our Western colleagues are beginning to push aside little by little and are trying to lure some ASEAN members into openly confrontational rather than unifying formats: various troikas, quartets," Lavrov said.

He also called for a collective security arrangement in Eurasia.

"There are no other continents like Eurasia, where so many civilisations coexisted and maintained their identity and relevance in the modern era, and at the same time, Eurasia is the only continent where there is no continent-wide structure.

Trump says US, Iran have 'sort of' agreed on terms on a nuclear deal



US President Donald Trump arrives at the presidential terminal in Abu Dhabi. The United Arab Emirates is the third leg of Trump's visit to the region, which has already taken him to Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

AP, DOHA: President Donald Trump said Thursday that the United States and Iran have "sort of" agreed to terms on a nuclear deal, offering a measure of confidence that an accord is coming into sharper focus.

Trump, in an exchange with reporters at a business roundtable in Doha, Qatar, described the talks between American envoy Steve Witkoff Minister Abbas Araghchi as "very serious negotiations" for "long-term peace" and were continuing to progress.

Still, throughout his visit with Arab Gulf leaders this week, the president has underscored that military action against Iran's nuclear facilities remains a possibility if the talks derail.

"Iran has sort of agreed to the terms: They're not going to make, I call it, in a friendly way, nuclear dust," Trump said at the business event. "We're not going to be making any nuclear dust in Iran."

Without offering detail, he signalled growing alignment with the terms that he has been seeking.

But a top political, military and nuclear adviser to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, told NBC News on Wednesday that Tehran stands ready get rid of its stockpiles of highly enriched uranium that can be weaponised, agree to enrich uranium only to the lower levels needed for civilian use and allow international inspectors to supervise the process.

Ali Shamkhani added

that in return, Iran wants an immediate lifting of all economic sanctions.

Trump said his demands have been straightforward.

"They can't have a nuclear weapon. That's the only thing. It's very simple," Trump said. "It's not like I have to give you 30 pages worth of details. It is only one sentence. They can't have a nuclear weapon."

Wrapping up his time in Qatar, Trump stopped at a US installation at the centre of American involvement in the Middle East and spoke to US troops. The Republican president has used his four-day visit to Gulf states to reject the "interventionism" of America's past in the region.

Al-Udeid Air Base was a major staging ground during the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The base houses some 8,000 US troops, down from about 10,000 at the height of those wars.

Trump told the troops

that his "priority is to end conflicts, not start them."

"But I will never hesitate to wield American power if it's necessary to defend the United States of America or our partners," he said.

Trump has held up Gulf nations such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar as models for economic development in a region plagued by conflict. He urged Qatari officials to use their influence to entice Iran to come to terms with his administration on a nuclear deal.

Trump later flew to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates for the final leg of his trip. He visited the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, the country's largest mosque. The UAE's founder, Sheikh Zayed, is buried in the mosque's main courtyard.

Trump will also be hosted for a state visit in the evening by UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan at the Qasr Al Watan palace.

With a US Pope, Rome businesses count blessings

AFP, ROME: The election of the first US pope is a godsend to businesses in Rome, as big-spending pilgrims flocking to the Vatican are also expected to spend in the Eternal City.

In the historical Trastevere district with its cobblestoned streets and ancient churches, shopkeepers say tourists from the United States are usually excellent customers - and tippers.

"We're really pleased, it's great for business," restaurant owner Cristiano Bolognesi told AFP following the election of Robert

Francis Prevost last week as Pope Leo XIV.

Americans "don't spend as much as before, but they still have dollars. I think the impact will be felt in the coming months," he said.

At Rome's City Hall, tourism councillor Alessandro Onorato said he was sure "the election of Pope Leo XIV will affect the flow of American tourists" - an already vast market.

Half of the five million people who visited the Italian capital last year were from the United States, he said.

That trend continued



in the first two months of 2025, with 313,000 of the 633,000 people visiting Rome hailing from the United States, he said.

The election of Chicago-born Prevost has generated enthusiasm in the pon-

tiff's homeland, which has the fourth largest Catholic population in the world.

Rick, a US tourist who did not want to give his last name, looked up at the balcony on St. Peter's Basilica where the newly-elected

pope made his first appearance Wednesday.

He and his wife Karla said they thought Leo would attract not just proud Americans but also those disappointed by US President Donald Trump's anti-immigration message.

"It's not just that (Prevost is) American, it's also the stuff he's done in other countries... his social justice mission to the Church, the world," said Karla, from Texas.

"We're among the Americans who believe believe in taking care of the immigrants," said Rick.

Stefano Corbari, head of the Fiavet Lazio federation of travel agencies in the region encompassing Rome, said US tourism was "doing well right now".

"We already had a boom last year, and American dioceses are generally well organised. Starting next year, they'll start organising trips to Rome," he said.

According to survey in February by the European Travel Commission (ETC), some 33 percent of US tourists head to Europe with a spending budget of over 200 euros a day.