

## Macron uses deepfake clips to promote AI summit

PARIS: (News Desk) French President Emmanuel Macron has posted AI-generated fake videos that he features in as he promoted a two-day technology summit that opens in Paris on Monday.

In one scene, Macron dances to a 1980s hit song "Voyage Voyage" by French singer Desireless.

In another, he is inserted in a spy comedy film about the exploits of a French secret agent played by Jean Dujardin.

In a third, he sings a rap song and shows off his moves, channelling French performer Nekfeu. "Nicely done," the real Macron, said in the video. "It's pretty well done, it made me laugh," the 47-year-old president said, while referring to the videos created over the years and featured in his Instagram post.

On Monday and Tuesday, Macron will host the AI Action Summit in Paris, gathering heads of state and government. India will co-chair the event.

By Sunday afternoon, the post has racked up more than 73,000 likes on Instagram.

## 28 migrants found dead in Libya mass grave

TUNIS: (News Desk) Libyan authorities have discovered a mass grave containing the bodies of 28 sub-Saharan migrants in the southeastern district of Kufra, near a site where they were allegedly detained and tortured, the attorney general's office said on Sunday.

It said the grave was found after a raid on a human trafficking site, where authorities freed 76 sub-Saharan migrants who had been detained and tortured. Reports said the operation took place on Saturday.

The raid targeted "a gang whose members deliberately deprived illegal immigrants of their freedom, tortured them and subjected them to cruel, humiliating and inhumane treatment," the office said in a statement.

The bodies had been "buried in the vicinity of the place of detention" and three people had been arrested, "one Libyan and two foreigners", it added. Photos posted along with the statement on social media showed emaciated migrants with scars on their faces, limbs and backs.

Libya has struggled to recover from the chaos that followed the 2011 Nato-backed uprising that overthrew longtime dictator Moamer Qadhafi. It remains split between the United Nations-recognised government of Dbeibah and a rival authority in the east backed by military strongman Khalifa Haftar. Smugglers and human traffickers have taken advantage of the instability since. Libya has long been criticised over the treatment of migrants and refugees, with accusations from rights groups ranging from extortion to slavery.

Located around 300 kilometres (186 miles) from Italy, it is a key departure point for migrants, primarily from sub-Saharan African countries, who risk perilous Mediterranean Sea journeys to seek better lives in Europe. Last month, authorities arrested two people accused of torturing and detaining 263 irregular migrants to extort ransoms in El Wahat, eastern Libya.

## Chief minister of violence-hit Indian state resigns

GUWAHATI: (News Desk) The chief minister of India's northeastern state of Manipur resigned on Sunday, bowing to pressure to quit amid ongoing ethnic clashes that have cost at least 250 lives since they broke out nearly two years ago.

N. Biren Singh, a member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), submitted his resignation to the state's governor in the capital city of Imphal, a day ahead of a scheduled legislative assembly session.

Local reports said the opposition Congress party was expected to move a no-confidence motion against Singh.

The governor accepted Singh's resignation and asked him to continue until alternate arrangements are made, according to a statement.

Singh's resignation follows intense sectarian clashes between the majority Meitei and minority Kuki communities over economic benefits and job quotas. The conflict has killed at least 250 people and displaced 60,000, with sporadic violence continuing.

Kuki groups have long accused Singh of his bias towards the Meitei community, and have demanded his removal since the conflict began.

Singh, a Meitei leader, has also been under increasing pressure from his own allies to step down. BJP lawmakers have periodically sought his resignation over his handling of the crisis.

In November, the regional National People's Party, a key BJP ally in the state, withdrew from the ruling coalition, citing Singh's failure to resolve the crisis.

In his resignation letter, Singh thanked the federal government in Delhi for its efforts to protect Manipur's interests and urged continued action to curb border infiltration and deport illegal immigrants.

Singh and the federal government have blamed the violence partly on an influx of refugees from Myanmar following the 2021 military coup there.

Soon after Singh resigned, Manipur BJP president Sharda Devi told reporters that the chief minister took the decision "in the interest of the people of Manipur".



GAZA CITY: Palestinians wait to cross through a checkpoint run by the US and Egyptian security contractors after Israeli forces withdrew from the Netzarim Corridor, allowing people to travel in both directions between southern and northern Gaza, on Sunday

## Almost all nations miss UN deadline for new climate targets

Washington (News Desk) Nearly all nations missed a UN deadline on Monday to submit new targets for slashing carbon emissions, including major economies under pressure to show leadership following the US retreat on climate change.

Just 10 of nearly 200 countries required under the Paris Agreement to deliver fresh climate plans by February 10 did so on

time, according to a UN database tracking the submissions.

Under the climate accord, each country is supposed to provide a steeper headline figure for cutting heat-trapping emissions by 2035, and a detailed blueprint for how to achieve this.

Global emissions have been rising but need to almost halve by the end of the decade to limit global

warming to safer levels agreed under the Paris deal. UN climate chief Simon Stiell has called this latest round of national pledges "the most important policy documents of this century".

Yet just a handful of major polluters handed in upgraded targets on time, with China, India and the European Union the biggest names on a lengthy absentee list. Most G20

economies were missing in action with the United States, Britain and Brazil — which is hosting this year's UN climate summit — the only exceptions.

The US pledge is largely symbolic, made before President Donald Trump ordered Washington out of the Paris deal. There is no penalty for submitting late targets, formally titled nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

## Trump says will impose 25pc tariffs on US steel, aluminium imports

Washington (News Desk) The United States will move to impose 25 per cent tariffs on steel and aluminium imports this week, President Donald Trump said on Sunday, the latest in a slew of trade levies he has announced.

Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that the tariffs, which he will announce on Monday, will apply to "any steel

coming into the United States", adding this will also affect aluminium.

Trump imposed similar tariffs during his 2017-2021 presidency to protect US industries, which he believed faced unfair competition from Asian and European countries. Canada — which Trump has already threatened with tariffs — is the largest source of steel and al-

uminium imports to the United States, according to US trade data. Brazil, Mexico and South Korea are also major steel providers to the country.

On Sunday, the Republican billionaire also said he would announce "reciprocal tariffs" to match his government's levies to the rates charged by other countries on US products. "Every country will be

reciprocal," Trump said, adding that he would make a detailed announcement on the tariffs on Tuesday or Wednesday.

The president has already shown his fondness for weaponising the United States' financial power, ordering tariffs on key trade partners China, Mexico and Canada soon after he took office.



US President Donald Trump reacts after posing with family members of victims in the January 1 attack on Bourbon Street and emergency responders prior to Super Bowl LIX between the Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles at Caesars Superdome on February 09,

## Arab nations assail Israeli PM's remarks

RIYADH: (News Desk) Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries condemned on Sunday remarks by Israel's prime minister, who appeared to suggest in an interview that a Palestinian state could be established on Saudi territory.

Benjamin Netanyahu's remarks, which some Israeli media characterised as a joke, came with the region already on edge after US

President Donald Trump proposed taking over the territory and displacing Gazans abroad.

Arab League chief Ahmed Aboul Gheit said on Sunday that the thinking behind Netanyahu's remarks "is unacceptable and reflects a complete detachment from reality", adding that such ideas "are nothing more than mere fantasies or illusions". The Saudi foreign ministry

stressed its "categorical rejection to such statements that aim to divert attention from the continuous crimes committed by the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian brothers in Gaza".

Netanyahu's statement reflects "complete detachment from reality", says Arab League chief In a TV interview, right-wing Israeli journalist Yaakov Bardugo was dis-

cussing with Netanyahu the prospect of diplomatic normalisation with Saudi Arabia when he appeared to misspeak, attributing to Riyadh the stance that there would be "no progress without a Saudi state". "Palestinian state?" Netanyahu corrected him. "Unless you want the Palestinian state to be in Saudi Arabia," he quipped. "They (the Saudis) have plenty of territory."

## Williamson's century guides New Zealand into tri-series final despite Breetzke's record

Lahore (News Desk) Star cricketer Kane Williamson hit a brilliant century to take New Zealand into the tri-series final with a thumping six-wicket win on Monday, overshadowing South African opener Matthew Breetzke's record score on debut.

Breetzke scored 150 — the highest score by any batter in his first one-day international — to lift South Africa to 304-6 but Williamson's unbeaten 133 proved match winning at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

The tri-series is a warm-up event before the eight-nation Champions Trophy starting February 19 in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. Pakistan, the third team in the tri-series, will play South Africa on Wednesday in Karachi to decide who meets New Zealand in the final at the same venue on Friday. Williamson hit his first ODI century in nearly five years on Monday and was ably supported by opener Devon Conway who missed his century by just three runs. The pair added a solid 187 runs for the second wicket after Will Young was dismissed for 19, steadily setting New Zealand's second win in as many games in the tri-series.

## Boxing organisation to launch lawsuit over inclusion of Imane Khelif, Lin Yu-ting at Olympics

Paris (News Desk) The International Boxing Association (IBA) said on Monday it is to take legal action against the International Olympic Committee (IOC) over the inclusion of Algeria's Imane Khelif and Taiwan's Lin Yu-ting at last year's Olympic Games.

The two female boxers had been excluded from the IBA's 2023 world championships after the fighters failed gender eligibility tests but the IOC cleared them to fight and both went on to win gold medals in Paris.

The IOC organised the boxing in Paris following the expulsion of the IBA from the Olympic movement after financial and ethical irregularities. In its statement, which linked their action to US President Donald Trump's executive order last week seeking to ban transgender athletes from participating in women's sports, the IBA said that it is "filing an official complaint with the Attorney General of Switzerland... regarding the IOC's actions". It added that it was filing similar complaints in France and the United States. "President Trump's order to ban transgender athletes from women's sport validates IBA's efforts to protect the integrity of female sports," claimed IBA president Umar Kremlev, a Kremlin-linked Russian oligarch.

## India relieved as Rohit regains form ahead of Champions Trophy

Delhi (News Desk) A month after his poor form forced Rohit Sharma to drop himself from a test match in Sydney, the India captain can finally breathe easy after producing a faith-restoring hundred in Sunday's second one-day international (ODI) against England.

Rohit quit T20 Internationals minutes after leading India to their second 20-overs World Cup title last year and has struggled in tests.

The Mumbai player turns 38 in April and media reports claim the selectors have asked him about his future plans beyond the Champions Trophy beginning later this month.

Rohit scored two in the opening ODI against England, but Sunday's 119 off 90 balls was a timely reminder that the elegant opener is not a spent force yet.

One of the cleanest strikers of the ball, Rohit clobbered seven effortless sixes and the familiar sweet sound of the bat whacking the ball announced the 50-overs stalwart was back in his element.

"I really broke it down into pieces about how I wanted to bat," player-of-the-match Rohit said of his approach. "It's a 50-over format... but you still need to break it down and assess what you need to do at regular intervals and that is what I kept doing."

## New Zealand played exceptionally to defeat Pakistan, admits Fakhar

LAHORE: (News Desk) Pakistan opener Fakhar Zaman has given credit to the New Zealand team for playing an exceptional game that steered them to an imposing 78-run victory against the hosts in the tri-nation ODI series opener here at the Gaddafi Stadium on Saturday night.

"Credit to New Zealand who played really well. Centurion Glenn Phillips gave a great finishing touch to their innings. And the earlier knocks of Daryl Mitchell and Kane Williamson set a strong foundation for a big total," said Fakhar while talking to reporters in a post-match media conference at the Gaddafi Stadium on Saturday night.

"The way Mitchell and Williamson gradually built their partnership, no spinner could stop runs." He continued, "Later in the game, their spinners also fared well."

Left-handed Fakhar, who made a comeback to the ODI team after almost 15 months, fought a lone battle against the tourists with a blistering 84 off 69 balls as Pakistan faltered in their chase of a mighty 331 under lights. Phillips' 74-ball 106 net out — his maiden ODI century — backed by Williamson's 58 and Mitchell's 81 helped New Zealand to a massive total.

The 38-year-old defended the failure of fellow opener Babar Azam in Saturday's game in which the former captain made a 23-ball 10. "When any player does not perform one match, some people start criticising. I also got a chance in the same match when the [New Zealand] wicket-keeper missed a difficult catch. Babar is a world-class batter possessing a rich legacy. Hopefully he will perform in the coming games," he said. Answering a question on the forthcoming ICC Champions Trophy blockbuster between Pakistan and India scheduled for Feb 23 in Dubai, Fakhar said the Pakistan team were focused and excited about the Champions Trophy matches, adding "when those games start, we will see". Responding to a query regarding his strong ODI comeback, Fakhar, who before Saturday's match played an ODI in the 2023 World Cup, said he was still recuperating.

## Bangladesh launches 'Operation Devil Hunt' against Hasina loyalists

DHAKA: (News Desk) Bangladesh on Sunday launched a major security operation after protesters were attacked by gangs allegedly connected to the ousted regime of ex-leader Sheikh Hasina.

A government statement said the operation began after gangs "linked to the fallen autocratic regime attacked a group of students, leaving them severely injured". Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, head of the interior ministry in the interim government that took over after Hasina was ousted in the August 2024

student-led revolution, has dubbed it "Operation Devil Hunt".

"It will continue until we uproot the devils," Chowdhury told reporters. The sweeping security operations come after days of unrest.

On Wednesday, six months to the day since Hasina fled as crowds stormed her palace in Dhaka, protesters smashed down buildings connected to her family using excavators.

Dhaka rejects New Delhi's statement on country's internal affairs as "unexpected and unwarranted"

Protests were triggered in response to reports that 77-year-old Hasina — who has defied an arrest warrant to face trial crimes against humanity — would appear in a Facebook broadcast from exile in neighbouring India.

Buildings destroyed included the museum and former home of Hasina's late father, Bangladesh's first president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The interim government blamed Hasina for the violence. On Friday, interim leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad

Yunus also pleaded for calm. "Respecting the rule of law is what differentiates the new Bangladesh we are working together to build, from the old Bangladesh under the fascist regime," Yunus said in a statement.

"For the citizens who rose up and overthrew the Hasina regime... it is imperative to prove to ourselves and our friends around the world that our commitment to our principles — respecting one another's civil and human rights and acting under the law — is unshakable."

Hours later, members of

the Students Against Discrimination — the protest group credited with sparking the uprising against Hasina — were attacked in the Dhaka district of Gazipur.

The vocal and powerful group — whose members are in the government cabinet — had since demanded action. Indian interference New Delhi's statement on the demolition of Bangabandhu's house on Dhanmondi 32 is uncalled-for and unexpected, said foreign affairs ministry spokesperson Rafiqul Alam on Saturday.

According to The Daily Star, Rafiqul made this remark when asked about the statement by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) regarding the destruction of the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum on Dhanmondi 32 on February 5. On February 6, Indian MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that it was regrettable that the historic residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman — a symbol of the heroic resistance of the people of Bangladesh against the forces of occupation and oppression — was destroyed.