

US releases final trove of secret John F. Kennedy assassination

Newyork(News Desk) The US National Archives on Tuesday released the final batch of files related to the assassination of president John F. Kennedy — a case that still fuels conspiracy theories more than 60 years after his death.The move follows an executive order issued by President Donald Trump in January directing the unredacted release of the remaining files related to the assassinations of Kennedy, his brother, former attorney general Robert F. Kennedy, and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.“In accordance with President Donald Trump’s directive... all records previously withheld for classification that are part of the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection are released,” the Archives said in a statement on its website.The National Archives has released millions of pages of records over the past decades relating to the assassination of then-president Kennedy in November 1963, but thousands of documents had been held back at the request of the Central Intelligence Agency and Federal Bureau of Investigation.

US State Dept dismisses reports of ‘travel ban lists’

WASHINGTON: (News Desk) Dismissing reports suggesting the US government is drafting travel ban lists to impose fresh visa restrictions on a number of countries, the US State Department reaffirmed its commitment to resettling Afghans who risked their lives to assist the US mission during its two-decade stint in Afghanistan.

At a recent news briefing, State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce admitted that the Trump administration was conducting a broader security review of its visa policies under the presidential executive issued on January 20.

Ms Bruce, however, refuted the assertion that Afghanistan was on a list of nations facing a full suspension of visa issuance, stating: “First of all, there is no list. What people are looking at over these last several days is not a list that exists here that is being acted on.”

She explained that a review was being undertaken as part of an ongoing effort to assess visa policies and enhance US security. “There is a review, as we know, through the president’s executive order, for us to look at the nature of what’s going to help keep America safer in dealing with the issue of visas and who’s allowed into the country,” she said.

Affirms commitment to helping resettle Afghans who worked for US.

Israel is ramping up West Bank annexation, says UN

GENEVA:(News Desk) Israel has expanded and consolidated settlements in the occupied West Bank as part of the steady integration of these territories into the State of Israel, in breach of international law, the UN human rights office said on Tuesday.

The report, based on research between Nov 1, 2023, and Oct 31, 2024, said there had been a “significant” expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and cited reports by Israeli non-governmental organisations of tens of thousands of planned housing units in new or existing settlements. The findings will be presented to the UN Human Rights Council this month and come amid growing fears of annexation among Palestinians, as US policy shifts under President Donald Trump and new settler outposts are put down in areas of the West Bank seen as part of a future Palestinian state.

Israel disengaged from the UN Human Rights Council earlier this year, alleging a chronic anti-Israeli bias. Around 700,000 Israeli settlers live among 2.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, land Israel captured in 1967. Most countries consider Israel’s settlements on territory seized in conflict to be illegal. Israel disputes this, citing historical and biblical ties to the land.

Volker Turk urges Tel Aviv to evacuate all settlers from the occupied territory and make reparations for illegal settlement.

Israel’s opposition to ceding control of the West Bank has been deepened by its fears of a repeat of the Oct 7, 2023, raid by Hamas. Plans for the further provision of Israeli government services in these settlements “further institutionalise(s) long-standing patterns of systematic discrimination, segregation, oppression, domination, violence and other inhumane acts against the Palestinian people”, the report said.

Evacuate all settlers Israel must evacuate all settlers from the West Bank and make reparations for decades of illegal settlement, the UN rights chief said, describing the policy as “a war crime”. “The transfer by Israel of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies amounts to a war crime,” Volker Turk said in a statement, urging the international community to take meaningful action.

“Israel must immediately and completely cease all settlement activities and evacuate all settlers, stop the forcible transfer of the Palestinian population, and prevent and punish attacks by its security forces and settlers.” The operation, dubbed “Iron Wall”, has resulted in several deaths, including Palestinian children and Israeli soldiers, according to the UN.



Nasa astronaut Butch Wilmore is helped out of a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft onboard the SpaceX recovery ship MEGAN after he and Nasa astronauts Nick Hague, Suni Williams, and Roscosmos cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov landed in the waters off the coast of Tallahassee, Florida, Tuesday, March 18, 2025.

Hamas has ‘not closed the door’ on talks, official says

Talabin(News Desk) Taher al-Nono, a Hamas official, says the group has not shut the door on negotiations despite the renewed Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip, Al Jazeera reports. “Hamas has not closed the door on negotiations but we insist there is no need for new agreements,” he told AFP on the phone from Cairo, also calling for Israel to be forced to implement

the ceasefire.In an interview with Al Jazeera, al-Nono said: “Why do we have to present [new] proposals while a signed [ceasefire] agreement exists, with international parties acting as guarantors?”“There is also a [UN] Security Council resolution. We have positively responded to all the efforts made towards us,” he said.“It was Netanyahu that has backed down on the

agreement. It was Netanyahu who turned a blind eye to it. Therefore, it is Netanyahu, not Hamas or the [Palestinian] resistance, that should be pressured to comply,” he added.Al-Nono also said that the Israeli occupation forces have “no justification to their actions, past or present”. “They continue to breach the agreement they had signed,” he concluded. Germany’s Foreign Minister

Annalena Baerbock said on Wednesday that Israel’s raids on Gaza “are shattering the tangible hopes of so many Israelis and Palestinians of an end to suffering on all sides”, AFP reports.Speaking before starting a trip to Lebanon, she called on “all sides” in the conflict to “show restraint, respect humanitarian law and return to talks” after hundreds were killed by Israeli strikes on Gaza.

US judge orders Musk to stop making more cuts in USAID

Washington(News Desk) A federal judge on Tuesday blocked billionaire Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) from taking any more steps to shut down the US Agency for International Development, saying their efforts to close the foreign aid agency likely violated the US Constitution. In a preliminary ruling, US District Judge Theo-

dore Chuang in Maryland ordered Musk, a key adviser to President Donald Trump, and the agency Musk spearheads to restore access to USAID’s computer systems for its direct and contract employees, including thousands who were placed on leave.The ruling came in response to a lawsuit by current and former USAID employees, one of several currently pending

over the rapid dismantling of Washington’s primary humanitarian aid agency.“Today’s decision is an important victory against Elon Musk and his DOGE attack on USAID, the US government and the Constitution,” said Norm Eisen, executive chair of State Democracy Defenders Fund, a lawyer representing the 26 anonymous plaintiffs in the case.Trump told Fox News

his administration would appeal the ruling.“I guarantee you we will be appealing it. We have rogue judges that are destroying our country,” Trump said on ‘The Ingraham Angle.’Trump, a Republican, on his first day back in the White House ordered a 90-day freeze of all US foreign aid and a review of whether aid programs were aligned with his administration’s policy.



Protesters hold signs and sing chants during a protest against Elon Musk and his Tesla car company outside the Tesla dealership in Boston, Massachusetts on March 15.

Trump, Putin agree to ‘limited’ Ukraine ceasefire

WASHINGTON:(News Desk) Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump agreed on Tuesday to seek a limited 30-day ceasefire against energy and infrastructure targets in Ukraine, while talks aimed at advancing towards a broader peace plan will begin “immediately,” the White House said.Putin stopped

short of accepting a broader US-backed 30-day ceasefire that Ukraine has said it is ready to accept. The Russian president raised “significant points” about preventing such a truce from being used by Ukraine to mobilise more soldiers and rearm itself, the Kremlin said in a statement following a lengthy phone call between the two leaders. Putin also emphasised that

the “complete cessation of foreign military assistance and the provision of intelligence information to Kyiv” is a condition for any permanent peace deal. In a statement, the White House said negotiations on a maritime ceasefire in the Black Sea, as well as other potential areas of concern, would commence immediately in the Middle East.

White House says talks will start immediately to push for a broader peace plan“The leaders agreed that the movement to peace will begin with an energy and infrastructure ceasefire, as well as technical negotiations on implementation of a maritime ceasefire in the Black Sea, full ceasefire and permanent peace,” the White House readout said.

Police evict over 400 migrants from Paris theatre

PARIS: (News Desk) French police evicted more than 400 migrants on Tuesday who had been squatting inside the Gaité Lyrique theatre in central Paris for more than three months.

Officers began their operation shortly before 6am at the theatre, where hundreds of demonstrators had gathered to protest against the eviction.

Since Dec 10, the migrants, including many unaccompanied minors, had occupied the concert and arts venue as part of their demands for shelter, leading the Gaité Lyrique management to suspend its operations on Dec 17.A large banner on the Gaité Lyrique read: “400 lives at risk, 80 jobs under threat.” “Shame, shame, shame to authorities who are at war with isolated minors,” demonstrators chanted in solidarity with the migrants, urging local authorities to provide sustainable housing to them rather than force them out.Police briefly used tear gas at the start of their operation, but overall, the evacuation proceeded without any major incidents.

Nasa astronauts ‘Butch and Suni’ return to Earth after drawn-out mission in space

Washington(News Desk) Nasa astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams returned to Earth in a SpaceX capsule on Tuesday with a soft splashdown off Florida’s coast, nine months after their faulty Boeing BA.N Starliner craft upended what was to be a week-long stay on the International Space Station (ISS).

Their return caps a protracted space mission that was fraught with uncertainty and technical troubles, turning a rare instance of Nasa’s contingency planning — and the latest failures of Starliner — into a global and political spectacle.

Wilmore and Williams, two veteran Nasa astronauts and retired US Navy test pilots, had launched into space as Starliner’s first crew in June for what was expected to be an eight-day test mission. But issues with Starliner’s propulsion system led to cascading delays to their return home, culminating in a Nasa decision to fold them into its crew rotation schedule and return them on a SpaceX craft this year.

On Tuesday morning, Wilmore and Williams strapped inside their Crew Dragon spacecraft along with two other astronauts and undocked from the ISS at 5:05 GMT (10:05am Pakistan time) to embark on a 17-hour trip to Earth.

French PM seeks to mend cabinet rift over hijab in sport

PARIS: (News Desk) French Prime Minister Francois Bayrou on Tuesday sought to impose unity on his government as a top minister threatened to resign over whether women should be allowed to wear the headscarf in sports competitions.

Currently, it is up to individual sports federations in France to decide whether women can wear the hijab in competition. But legislation is going through parliament to ban it completely in professional and amateur competition, in a move backers say will shore up France’s strictly secular modern republic.

Cabinet unity in Bayrou’s minority government, which tilts to the right but also has some figures from a centre-left background, has crumbled in recent days with the sports minister and education minister expressing discomfort with the legislation.

On Tuesday, Justice Minister Gerald Darmanin, a right-wing former interior minister and one of the highest-profile cabinet ministers, said he was prepared to resign if the government gave ground on the issue. “I cannot remain in a government that gives in on these issues.

Pakistan Padel Federation to hold national championship in April

KARACHI: (News Desk) The Pakistan Padel Federation (PPF) announced on Tuesday to organise the National Padel Championship, scheduled to take place from April 11-13, here at Padelverse.

The event, held under the umbrella of the International Padel Federation and Padel-Asia, in collaboration with Padelverse and Play Pro, will feature three competitive categories: men, women and mixed.In a bid to promote the sport, the PPF has issued a National Padel License free of charge for all participants. The championship aims to establish a national ranking system, with results displayed on the PPF website.Cash prizes totaling up to PKR one million will be awarded across the three categories for winners, first runners-up and second runners-up.A selection committee will identify players for the Pakistan Team, which will compete in the Asian Padel Championship in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, scheduled for October this year. Until a year ago, the old hockey ground at Khadda Market in densely-packed Karachi’s upscale Defence locality was mostly a deserted venue, sporadically rented out for tape-ball cricket matches and, of all things, weddings. Now, it’s unarguably the city’s most popular multisport arena, the Legends Arena, with its pay-as-you-go model attracting an average of 750 visitors on weekdays, with the facility’s management saying that the number crosses the one thousand mark on weekends.While the arena offers various sports, including football and cricket — albeit in a smaller space — as well as tennis, volleyball and throwball, its biggest crowd puller is a sport that was unheard of in Pakistan until a year ago: padel.In simple terms, padel is a combination of tennis and squash. The court is about three-quarters of the size of a tennis court, with the game most commonly played in doubles. The court has a net in the middle, but it is enclosed with walls on the sides and at the back, which are part glass and part metal mesh.Padel is arguably the fastest growing racquet sport in the world. And it seems to be growing in popularity by leaps and bounds here in Pakistan as well.The serve is underarm, with the server required to let the ball bounce once and then hit it before or at waist height.

Orthodox Jews threaten to bring down Netanyahu coalition

BNEI BRAK: (News Desk) One of Israel’s most divisive domestic issues has reared itself again to challenge Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, after a group in the ruling coalition said it would bring the government down unless it exempts ultra-Orthodox Jews from army service. Some members of United Torah Judaism, one of two ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties in the coalition, said in a letter that they would vote against the budget if the government did not pass

a new law formalising exemptions for religious students. “If this matter is once again sidelined or delayed for any reason, we will not be able to continue as partners in the coalition,” said the March 6 letter signed by Housing Minister and party chairman Yitzhak Goldknopf and two others. The government must pass the budget by the end of the month or call snap elections. United Torah Judaism holds seven seats in the Knesset, Israel’s parliament.

It is too early to predict the consequences. Netanyahu, Israel’s longest-serving prime minister, is a proven master at smoothing over disagreements in his coalitions. An ultra-nationalist group that quit the government over the ceasefire in Gaza in January announced on Tuesday it was returning. But pollster Mitchell Barak, who worked for Netanyahu in the 1990s, said this time ultra-Orthodox politicians appeared unwilling to com-

promise, and the prime minister might have to look outside the coalition for support to pass the budget, an extraordinary step.“He’s going to look for someone who can compromise, save him, and be that ‘freyer,’” he said, speaking before the ultra-nationalists announced their return to the coalition and using a Yiddish word for someone who lets others take advantage of him. “That’s how he operates.” Military strained In Israel, military service is mandatory at age

18, after which Israelis become reservists liable to be called up for training or deployment. But dating back to Israel’s founding in 1948 it made an exemption for ultra-Orthodox communities, known as Haredim, whose young men mainly dedicate their lives to studying religious texts in academies known as yeshivot. Those communities were initially small but have grown rapidly in the following decades. According to government data, there are now 1.4 million

Haredim, accounting for about 14 per cent of the population, deepening resentment among other Israelis who are conscripted.In 2017, the Supreme Court ruled that the exemption was unconstitutional, and last year it ordered the military to conscript yeshiva students. Legal experts say the only way to restore the exemption would be to pass a new law enshrining it. Members of the Haredi community say they would resist any attempt to conscript their children.