

## US Secret Service refused to serve summons on Doval

NEW DELHI: (News Desk) A New York court ruled last month that summons were not yet successfully served on India's National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval in a case filed by pro-Khalistan separatist lawyer Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, as the Secret Service guarding the official guest house where the Indian official stayed refused to accept them during the Indian prime minister's visit to Washington in February, The Wire said on Monday. It said that on Sept 18 last year, the US District Court for New York issued summons to the government of India and individually to NSA Doval, former RAW chief Samant Goel, former RAW officer Vikram Yadav, and detained Indian national Nikhil Gupta, in a civil suit filed by Pannun. The suit was based on an indictment filed by US prosecutors against Nikhil Gupta.

## Israeli minister visits Al Aqsa Mosque compound

JERUSALEM: (News Desk) Israel's far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir prompted strong condemnation from Arab nations and Palestinian group Hamas on Wednesday with his latest visit to the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City. The firebrand politician was visiting the site in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem after returning to the government last month following the resumption of the conflict against Hamas in Gaza. Ben Gvir had quit the cabinet in January in protest at the ceasefire agreement in the Palestinian territory. The compound is Islam's third holiest site and a symbol of Palestinian national identity. Under the status quo maintained by Israel, which has occupied east Jerusalem and its Old City since 1967, Jews and other non-Muslims are allowed to visit the compound during specified hours, but they are not permitted to pray there or display religious symbols. Since the formation of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government at the end of 2022, Ben Gvir has visited the compound on at least eight occasions, each time triggering international outcry.

## No 'target date' for finalising visa restrictions, says State Dept

WASHINGTON: (News Desk) The Trump administration seems to have put off the process of imposing visa restrictions on citizens from several countries whose vetting procedures were deemed insufficient by US security agencies.

The proposed 'travel ban' was expected to apply new restrictions on citizens from more than 40 countries, including Pakistan, travelling to the US.

The move came about following an executive order, signed by President Donald Trump on Jan 20, titled 'Protecting the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other Threats'.

That order instructed federal agencies to assess screening standards worldwide and propose visa restrictions by March 21. However, the deadline passed without an announcement, and the State Department later confirmed that there's no new timeline for the policy's implementation.

Delay in finalising list of nations whose citizens could face additional curbs on US travel points to internal disagreements, legal and bureaucratic challenges.

When asked about the deadline for the State Department to submit a report to the president detailing recommendations for visa and travel restrictions, State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce told a March 31 news conference the "target date" no longer applies. Earlier, on March 21, Ms Bruce had addressed speculation about an impending announcement, saying: "The deadline is not today".

At the time, she maintained that a review process was still ongoing "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".

At the latest press briefing, she said that the State Department "was acting on executive orders, including this one".

Asked why the date was postponed, she said: "I can't speak to that, but I can tell you that we're working on what the executive order asked for, which is not travel bans, of course, but the nature of restrictions from other countries — whether or not they meet the standard of security and vetting that's required for entry into the United States."

Red, yellow and orange lists US media reports had previously claimed that the administration was working on three colour-coded lists of countries — red, orange, and yellow — that could face various restrictions based on their abilities to screen travellers. But the lack of urgency, acknowledged in State Department briefings, has fuelled speculation about possible obstacles in the policy's rollout. Reports in the US media suggested that the indefinite delay could point towards internal disagreements within the administration regarding how far the restrictions should go. President Trump has been vocal about reinstating stringent immigration policies from his first term, including an expanded travel ban that was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2018.

charitable purposes. Such land cannot be transferred or sold. Government and Muslim organisations estimate that over 25 waqf boards hold nearly 85,1535 properties and 900,000 acres of land, putting them among the top three landowners in India. The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, tabled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, proposes inclusion of non-Muslim members in the central Waqf Council and waqf



US President Donald Trump delivers remarks on tariffs in the Rose Garden at the White House in Washington, DC, US on April 2, 2025

## Trump's tariffs stoke global trade war as China, EU hit back

Washington (News Desk) US President Donald Trump's move to slap a 10 per cent tariff on most goods imported to the United States, as well as much higher levies on dozens of rivals and allies alike, has intensified a global trade war that threatens to stoke inflation and stall growth.

The sweeping penalties announced against the

serene backdrop of the White House Rose Garden on Wednesday immediately unleashed turbulence across world markets and drew condemnation from other leaders now facing the end of an era of trade liberalisation that has shaped the global order for decades. Now facing 54pc tariffs on exports to the US, the world's No. 2 economy China vowed

countermeasures, as did the European Union — Washington's friends and foes united in criticism of measures they fear will deal a devastating blow to global trade. What we know so far: China urges US to immediately lift tariffs, vows retaliation US slaps 26pc tariff on India — lower than Asian peers Australia says tariffs 'not act of a friend'

but rules out reciprocal move.

European leaders react with dismay.

Canada and Mexico not to face tariffs in addition to previous 25pc levies

The US imposed 29pc reciprocal tariffs on Pakistan, which charges the US 58pc, with analysts seeing immediate hurdles but also long-term opportunities for the country.

## Norwegian party faces criticism after nominating Imran Khan for Nobel Peace Prize

Washington (News Desk) A Norwegian political party has faced criticism for nominating PTI founder and former prime minister Imran Khan for the Nobel Peace Prize.

"We are pleased to announce on behalf of Partiet Sentrum that in alliance with somebody with the right to nominate, have nominated Mr Imran Khan the former prime minister of Pakistan to the

Nobel Peace Prize for his work with human rights and democracy in Pakistan," the party said on X. The Partiet Sentrum, however, did not name the intermediary that put forward Imran's name. However, the nomination sparked criticism at the Partiet Sentrum, with claims that the party was "using a possible Peace Prize nomination to win votes", according to the

NRK News website. "What is happening here is probably that [Geir] Lippestad strongly wants a seat in the Storting. And he wants to secure as many votes as possible in the Norwegian-Pakistani community," said Kristian Berg Harpviken, the director of the Nobel Institute, according to the website. Lippestad leads the party. There has been no official communication by the

Oslo-based Nobel Prize Committee regarding the announcement by the Norwegian party. In 2019, Imran was also nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to promote peace in South Asia.

Every year, the Norwegian Nobel Committee receives hundreds of nominations, after which they select the winner through a lengthy eight-month process.



People dig out a car from the rubble of a destroyed building on the outskirts of Mandalay on April 2, five days after a major earthquake struck central Myanmar.

## Myanmar's junta chief to head to Bangkok summit as quake toll surpasses 3,000

Mayanmar (News Desk) The head of Myanmar's junta is expected to travel to Bangkok on Thursday for a regional summit, as the death toll from his country's devastating earthquake passed 3,000. Min Aung Hlaing will join a BIMSTEC gathering — the seven littoral nations of the Bay of Bengal — where

he will raise the response to Friday's 7.7-magnitude quake that has flattened buildings across the country. Many nations have sent aid and teams of rescue workers to Myanmar since the quake, but heavily damaged infrastructure and patchy communications — as well as the country's rumbling civil war — have

hampered efforts. Myanmar has been engulfed in a brutal multi-sided conflict since 2021, when Min Aung Hlaing's military wrested power from the civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi. A monk walks past vehicles on the edge of a large crack in the ground along Myo Patt Road linking Mandalay

and Sagaing Township on the outskirts of Mandalay on April 2, five days after a major earthquake struck central Myanmar. — Following reports of sporadic clashes even after the recent earthquake, the junta on Wednesday joined its opponents in calling a temporary halt to hostilities to allow relief to be delivered.

## France warns of military confrontation if there's no deal on Iran's N-plan

PARIS: (News Desk) France's foreign minister warned on Wednesday that if world powers were unable to quickly reach a new agreement with Iran over its contested nuclear programme then a military confrontation seemed "almost inevitable".

Speaking after President Emmanuel Macron convened a rare and undisclosed meeting of key ministers and experts on Wednesday to discuss the Iran dossier, Jean-Noel Barrot appeared to ramp up the pressure on Tehran.

European powers are seeking to create a diplomatic path with a view to getting an agreement to curb Iran's uranium enrichment activity by the summer and ahead of an Oct 2025 deadline, when UN sanctions related to a 2015 accord on Iran's nuclear programme with world powers expire.

## Amazon makes last-minute bid for TikTok

SAN FRANCISCO: (News Desk) Amazon has made a last-minute bid to buy TikTok, which faces a US ban if not sold by its Chinese owner, the New York Times reported on Wednesday.

The offer arrived in a letter to officials involved in talks regarding the sale of TikTok to appease US national security concerns, according to the New York Times.

President Donald Trump has downplayed risks that TikTok is in danger of being banned in the United States, saying he remains confident of finding a buyer for the app's US business by a Saturday deadline. US media reported that Trump plans to meet with top White House officials on Wednesday to discuss possible solutions.

The Times added that its sources said the parties involved in the talks did not appear to be taking Amazon's bid seriously. According to reports, the most likely solution would see existing US investors in ByteDance roll over their stakes into a new independent global TikTok company. Additional US investors, including Oracle and Blackstone, the private equity firm, would be brought on to reduce the proportion of Chinese investors.

## Missing Palestinian medics found in mass grave

GAZA: (News Desk) The shocking discovery of the remains of 15 people — including a UN worker and medics working for the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) — killed and buried in a mass grave by Israel, has prompted outrage and condemnation from across the world.

The nine PRCS medics in ambulances, along with some civil defence workers, had gone to help people in Rafah when they disappeared on March 23 after coming under attack from Israeli forces.

What followed was a week of Israeli obstruction until international teams were finally able to enter the area where the medics and rescue workers disappeared, Al Jazeera reported. They found gruesome proof of direct attacks on the humanitarian workers. One medic remains missing. Team dispatched to find missing PRCS workers was also killed; some bodies found with their hands bound. According to PRCS, one ambulance was dispatched to al-Hashaashin, Rafah, to help people injured by Israeli attacks on March 23, which was shot at by Israeli soldiers. The PRCS then sent a further three ambulances to help the injured people; their colleagues were trying to reach, and to rescue their colleagues who had been attacked. According to Tommaso Della Longa, spokesperson for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), PRCS "lost contact with their colleagues" on March 23.

## Military seizing territory in Gaza Strip: Netanyahu

JERUSALEM: (News Desk) Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday that the military was "dissecting" the Gaza Strip and seizing territory to pressure Hamas into freeing prisoners still held in the territory.

It came as rescuers said 34 people were killed in continued Israeli strikes on the territory, including on a UN building.

The military is "dissecting the (Gaza) Strip and increasing the pressure step by step so that (Hamas) will return our hostages", Netanyahu said in a statement, adding that Israel is seizing territory, striking fighters and destroying infrastructure.

He added that the army is "taking control of the 'Morag Axis'", a strip of land that is expected to run between the southern governorates of Khan Yunis and Rafah. The name of the axis refers to a former Israeli settlement that was evacuated when Israel unilaterally pulled out of Gaza in 2005.

Defence Minister Israel Katz earlier said Israel would bolster its military presence in the Palestinian territory to destroy and clear the area of fighters and their infrastructure.

The operation would "seize large areas that will be incorporated into Israeli security zones", he said in a statement, without specifying how much territory. Gaza's civil defence agency said an Israeli strike that targeted a UN building "housing a medical clinic in Jabalia refugee camp" killed at least 19 people, including nine children.

The Israeli army said it struck Hamas fighters "inside a command and control centre" in north Gaza's Jabalia. It separately confirmed to AFP the building housed a UN clinic.

The Palestinian foreign ministry, based in the occupied West Bank, condemned the "massacre" at the clinic run by UNRWA, the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, and called for "serious international pressure" to halt Israel's widening offensive.

Israel has on several occasions conducted strikes on UNRWA buildings housing displaced people in Gaza, where fighting has raged for most of the past 18 months. Israel also carried out deadly air strikes in southern and central Gaza on Wednesday. The civil defence said dawn strikes killed at least 13 people in Khan Yunis and two in Nuseirat refugee camp.

## Indian bill to revamp Muslim land management faces backlash

NEW DELHI: (News Desk) The Indian government on Wednesday presented a bill in parliament that plans sweeping changes in the management of vast tracts of land set aside solely for Muslim use, potentially stoking tensions between the government and minority Muslims. The land and properties fall under the "waqf" category, which means "to stay" in Arabic, and are endowed by a Muslim for religious, educational or

boards and will enable the government to determine ownership of disputed waqf properties. Opposition, Islamic groups in India see legislation as a ploy to secure assets owned by Muslims. The legislation comes amid tensions between the Muslim community and Modi government. Opposition lawmakers and Islamic groups see the bill as a plan to secure assets owned by Muslims and to weaken their property rights under the Indi-

an constitution. Minister of Minority Affairs Kiren Rijju, who tabled the bill, said it would end corruption, mismanagement and examine ownership rules largely controlled by some Muslim families and elite groups. The bill should "be viewed as a "pro-Muslim reform," he said. Vote to decide bill's fate A vote by ruling alliance and opposition lawmakers in the lower house will decide the fate of the bill lat-

er on Wednesday. "It is okay to reserve two posts in the Waqf board for non-Muslims but does it mean that Muslims will get similar reservation in the boards of Hindu temples?" asked Kamal Farooqui, an official of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board. "Modi government wants to control the Islamic land bank and they have no right to undermine our institutions," he said. A 2006 report by the government-appointed

Sachar Committee had urged an overhaul of waqf boards and monitoring of properties to generate higher returns for the Muslim community. India is set to have the world's largest Muslim population by 2050, the Pew Research Center has forecast. Yet the community, which makes up about 13 per cent of India's population, lags the national average on indicators such as education, employment and political representation.