

MUSTREAD

2 teenagers seriously injured in Melbourne shooting

Sydney: Two teenagers have been seriously injured in a shooting in the inner suburbs of Melbourne in Australia's state of Victoria on early Friday morning. Victorian police said in a statement on Friday morning that shots were fired in Collingwood, about 3 kilometers north-east of Melbourne's central business district, at 1 a.m. local time on Friday. Two boys, aged 15 and 17, were found with gunshot wounds a short time later. The pair were taken to a nearby hospital with serious injuries. It is understood a large group of people were fighting on Hoddle Street prior to the shooting, said the police. Detectives believe the incident was a targeted attack.

Hong Kong tourist killed by train while taking photos in Hokkaido

Tokyo: A tourist from China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) lost her life in Japan's Otaru, Hokkaido, after being struck by a train on Thursday. According to Japanese media reports, the accident occurred at around 11:30 a.m. local time near a railway crossing on the JR Hakodate Line. The victim was reportedly on the tracks taking photos of the ocean with her smartphone when she was struck by a rapid Airport Express train traveling from Otaru to New Chitose Airport. She was rushed to the hospital but was later pronounced dead. The accident disrupted train services for approximately an hour and a half, affecting 19 trains. The Chinese consulate general in Sapporo confirmed that it had immediately contacted Japanese authorities to gather details about the incident.

Rainy season kills 18 people, affects 50,000 families in Bolivia

La Paz: Eighteen people have been killed and over 50,000 families across eight of Bolivia's nine departments have been affected by the rainy season that began in November, said an official on Thursday. Twelve municipalities have been declared disaster zones while another 55 are facing severe difficulties due to flooding and landslides, said Deputy Civil Defense Minister Juan Carlos Calvimontes. He added that heavy rains are expected to continue in the coming weeks, potentially causing further flooding. An urgent intervention plan is being coordinated with local mayors to mitigate the adverse effects of the extreme weather and provide assistance to the hardest-hit communities, he noted.

U.S. Senate confirms John Ratcliffe as CIA director

Washington: U.S. Senate on Thursday voted to confirm former director of national intelligence John Ratcliffe as the next Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director under President Donald Trump. The upper chamber voted 74-25 to approve the nomination of Ratcliffe, who served as Trump's director of national intelligence for the last eight months of his first term. Ratcliffe previously served as a U.S. House representative for Texas's 4th congressional district from 2015 to 2020. Twenty-one Democrats joined Republicans in supporting Ratcliffe's nomination, indicating bipartisan support in a divided political climate.

Mexican president rules out early U.S.-Mexico-Canada treaty review

Mexico City: Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Thursday that there is no need to expedite a review of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) which was proposed by her U.S. counterpart Donald Trump. Speaking at her daily press conference at the National Palace in Mexico City, Sheinbaum emphasized that "according to the decrees signed by President Trump," a review of the agreement could begin in 2026, not sooner. "What typically begins is a consultation process involving business leaders, workers and various societal sectors to assess the agreement's implementation. Again, the best approach is to adhere to what is written in the decrees," she said.

Judge blocks Trump blatantly unconstitutional executive order

Washington (UNI)

A federal judge said that President Donald Trump's executive order ending birthright citizenship was "blatantly unconstitutional" and issued a temporary restraining order to block it, media reports said.

Birthright citizenship

Judge John Coughenour, a Ronald Reagan appointee who sits in Seattle, granted the request by Washington Attorney General Nick Brown and three other Democratic-led states for the emergency order halting implementation of the policy for the next 14 days while there are more briefings in the legal challenge, the CNN reported.

"I have been on the bench for over



four decades. I can't remember another case where the question presented was as clear," CNN quoted Coughenour.

"Where were the lawyers" when

the decision to sign the executive order was made, the judge asked. He said that it "boggled" his mind that a member of the bar would claim the order was constitutional.

The Democratic-led states are seeking a temporary restraining order, as they argue that Trump's executive order is a blatant violation of the Constitution's 14th Amendment, which guarantees citizenship to all children born on US soil "and subject to the jurisdiction thereof."

According to reports, an attorney for the state of Washington, Lane Polozola told the judge that "births cannot be paused" while the court considers the case.

CNN quoted Polozola saying, 'Babies are being born today here, and in the plaintiff states and around the country, with a cloud cast over their citizenship.'

Children denied citizenship under Trump's order will face "longterm substantial negative impacts," he added.

Syria: Car bomb kills 3 in Manbij

Damascus: A car bomb exploded Thursday in the city of Manbij in Aleppo province in northern Syria, killing three people and wounding five others, a war monitor reported.

The car bomb went off near the Zidan Hanizal School in Manbij, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. This incident marks the third major bombing in the region within a week.

On Tuesday, a powerful blast from a similar device rocked an area near a base used by the Türkiye-backed Syrian National Army in Manbij.

Two days earlier, another car bomb killed two fighters from pro-Turkish factions and severely injured a third near the village of Kaber Saghir, also in Manbij's eastern countryside.

No group has claimed responsibility for the latest explosion.

UN confirms US will leave WHO in 2026

Washington (UNI)

The United States is set to officially withdraw from the World Health Organisation (WHO) in January 2026 after the UN body received a formal letter from US President Donald Trump this week.

UN deputy spokesperson Farhan Haq said on Thursday that the withdrawal was now set in motion after Trump pledged on Monday - his first day in office - to withdraw the US from the WHO and to put an end to future funding of the organization, Al Jazeera reported.

"I can confirm we have now received the US letter on the WHO withdrawal. It is dated 22 January 2025. It would take effect a year from yesterday, on 22 January 2026," Haq said.

Trump also ordered Secretary of State Marco Rubio and the director of the US government's Office of



Management and Budget to "pause the future transfer of any United States Government funds, supports, or resources to the WHO".

According to reports, Washington has recalled all US government personnel working with the WHO and ordered them to cease participating in negotiations on a WHO-

led global treaty on dealing with pandemics.

The US contributes about 18 percent of the organisation's funding, which amounted to about \$261m between 2024 and 2025. That contribution is followed in second place by China at \$181m.

The WHO's loss of its top donor will impact the global health agency's ability to address major crises from tuberculosis to HIV/AIDS and global pandemics, according to experts.

Trump had accused the WHO of mishandling the COVID-19 pandemic during his first term in office and had sent a request to withdraw from the organisation in July 2020.

That withdrawal attempt was thwarted when Trump lost the 2020 presidential election to Joe Biden, who immediately withdrew the order once in office.

China sees closure of nearly 3 Million food service establishments

Beijing: Nearly 3 million restaurants, cafes, and other food service establishments in China have closed in the past year, according to Radio Free Asia (RFA).

A significant number of these closures have been due to bankruptcies, with even some of the most popular restaurant chains shutting down hundreds of their locations to cut costs.

In early December, Zhenghao Da Da, a leading Taiwanese chicken chain, went viral on Weibo after announcing it would close all of its stores in China, starting with its flagship location at Shanghai's New World City Plaza mall, RFA reported.

RFA highlighted an article from the industry website Hongcan, stating, "Contraction" and "stores closing" were the new buzzwords for the catering industry in 2024.

Reddit groups ban X links in protest at Musk arm gesture



San Francisco (UNI)

More than 100 Reddit communities have banned users from posting links to X in protest at owner Elon Musk's controversial arm gesture at a rally celebrating Donald Trump's return to office.

The billionaire twice extended his

69-yr-old man arrested over alleged sexual assault against woman

Melbourne: Police have made a breakthrough in an alleged historic rape case against an elderly woman 44 years ago arresting a man who allegedly broke into her home and assaulted her, media reports said.

The alleged attacks on 82-year-old Jessie Grace Lauder took place at her home in suburban Melbourne in 1981 and 1983, the News.com.au reported. Victoria Police allege the first assault happened about 10pm on September 22, 1981, when an intruder, wearing a beanie and items over his face to conceal his identity, broke into Lauder's Newport address when she was in bed.

According to reports, the man entered the bedroom armed with a knife and confronted her, the police claim, and she was then taken to another room in the house and sexually assaulted.

S Korean prosecution seeks extension of detention of Yoon until February 6



Seoul (UNI)

South Korea's prosecution sought the extension of detention of the arrested President Yoon Suk-yeol until Feb. 6 to carry out further investigation, multiple media outlets said Friday. The prosecution's special inves-

tigative headquarters made the request to the Seoul Central District Court on Thursday, which was predicted to decide on the extension as early as Friday.

A warrant to keep Yoon in custody for up to 20 days, including the arrest period, was issued by another Seoul court on Jan. 19.

The prosecution was widely expected to indict Yoon under detention for insurrection and other charges. Yoon was apprehended in presidential office on Jan. 15, becoming the country's first sitting president to be arrested.

The motion to impeach Yoon was passed through the National Assembly on Dec. 14 last year and was delivered to the constitutional court to deliberate it for up to 180 days, during which Yoon's presidential power is suspended.

Donald Trump signs executive order to release remaining files of JFK, RFK, MLK assassinations

Washington (UNI)

U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday signed an executive order to declassify any remaining files from the assassinations of former President John F. Kennedy (JFK), his brother Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK).

"I have now determined that the continued redaction and withholding of information from records pertaining to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy is not consistent with the public interest and the release of these records is long overdue," Trump said in the executive order.

"And although no Act of Congress directs the release of information pertaining to the assassinations of



Senator Robert F. Kennedy and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I have determined that the release of all records in the Federal government's possession pertaining to each of those assassinations is also in the public interest," Trump said.

In the executive order, Trump instructed the Director of National Intelligence and the Attorney General to present a plan to him for the "full and complete" release of records relating to the assassination of JFK within 15 days. The Senate has confirmed neither of the nominations.

Trump also directed that they have 45 days to present a plan to release all the RFK and MLK files.

JFK, the 35th president of the United States, was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas, while riding in a motorcade. Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested for the murder, yet numerous conspiracy theories about the circumstances of Oswald's dramatic death two days after the assassination remain prevalent even today.

UN chief condemns rebel advances in eastern DRC

Kinshasa (UNI)

The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed alarm on Thursday over the resumption of hostilities by the March 23 Movement (M23) rebellion in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as a key regional city is under threat.

Guterres condemned the renewed offensive launched by the M23 at the beginning of the year and its expansion into the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu, including the recent seizure of Sake, which increased the threat to Goma, North Kivu's capital and an important and populated city, read a statement by

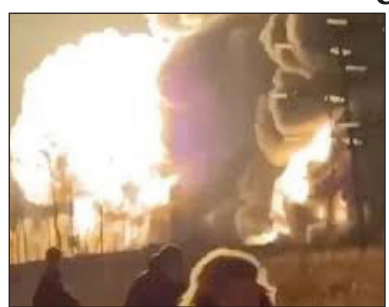
his spokesperson, Stephane Dujarric.

Sake, a city about 20 kilometers from Goma, is considered Goma's last barrier. The M23 took Goma in late 2012.

As the offensive took a devastating toll on the civilian population and heightened the risk of a broader regional war, the Secretary-General called on the M23 to immediately cease its offensive, withdraw from all occupied areas and abide by the ceasefire agreement that went into effect last August.

The M23 is a group of former rebels from the National Congress for the Defense of the People.

Russia says it repelled massive Ukrainian drone attack on 13 regions including Moscow



Agencies, Moscow

Russian air defences repelled a massive Ukrainian drone attack overnight, intercepting and destroying 121 drones targeting 13 regions, including Moscow, Russia's Defence Ministry said, making no mention of casualties or damage.

The ministry said six drones had been destroyed over the Moscow region and one over the capital itself, while other drones had targeted other regions, including those that border Ukraine and Kursk, where Ukrainian troops hold a chunk of land despite Russian efforts to eject them.

Twenty drones had also targeted the Ryazan region, southeast of Moscow, the ministry said, and channels on the Telegram messaging app posted unverified videos of what bloggers there described as large blazes in the city. They said an oil storage depot and a power station had been hit.

Pavel Malkov, the Ryazan regional governor, said on Telegram that emergency services were tackling the aftermath of an air attack.

Assam CM meets Japan's Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, discusses opportunities for youth

Agencies, Tokyo

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday met with Japan's Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Akiko Ikuina and discussed opportunities in Japan for Indians, particularly Assam's youth.

CM Himanta Biswa Sarma informed on X that Ikuina conveyed Japan's intention to provide opportunities to youth in their country.

"It was a privilege to meet H.E. Ms. Akiko Ikuina, Parliamentary Vice Minister, @Mofajapan_en. She conveyed to me the Government of Japan's intention to offer India and particularly Assam's young and skilled workforce, opportunities in Japan," CM Himanta Biswa Sarma wrote on X.

"During the meeting, I under-



lined Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi Ji's vision of a robust friendship between India and Japan that can better the lives of our people," he added.

Today is the last day of Sarma's

three day visit to Japan to attend the second edition of the business summit Advantage Assam.

He highlighted how the State's GSDP is set to touch USD 85 billion next year and that the aim has been set to achieve USD 143 billion GSDP by 2030.

The Chief Minister also touched upon how a USD 12 billion infrastructure upgradation plan is on the anvil in the state and a USD 4 billion in private investments has been secured in 2024. With a simple, effective and customised policy regime in place, investors can have their bases up and running in the shortest possible time with the state's assurance of providing all infrastructure and other facilities to supplement their efforts.