

# Over 60 killed in fire at newly opened mall in Iraq

# Very close to a deal with India we're in negotiation, says Donald Trump

Baghdad (UNI)  
As many as 61 people were killed in a massive fire at a newly opened mall in Al-Kut city in eastern Iraq, according to Iraq's Interior Ministry.  
The ministry said that 14 charred bodies had been found in the mall fire in the Wasit governorate and that civil defense teams had rescued 45 people from inside the building.  
"The death toll from the fire at a shopping mall in Kut has risen to 61. More than 45 people trapped in the burned-out building have been rescued," the ministry said in a statement, as quoted by the INA news



agency.  
Iraqi officials said that most of the people died from suffocation in the blaze that broke out in the mall.  
Three days of mourning has been declared by Provincial Governor Mohammed al-Mayyahi.  
He said the cause of the fire is under investigation, but legal cases were filed against the building owner and mall owner.  
"We assure the families of the innocent victims that we will not be lenient with those who were directly or indirectly responsible for this incident," al-Mayyahi said.

Washington (UNI)  
US President Donald Trump today again reiterated that Washington is very close to a deal with India, adding that "maybe" as negotiations are underway.  
The statement on trade deal with India came up while Trump was speaking to reporters during a bilateral meeting with Bahrain's Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa at Oval office.  
He emphasised that August 1 would be a significant day, when a lot of money will come into his country.  
"We've brought in over USD 100 billion. The tariffs haven't kicked in significantly, except for automobiles and steel. August 1 is



when a very substantial money comes into our country. We've made deals with numerous places. We had one yesterday," Trump said.  
"We have another one, coming up, maybe with India, we are in negotiations. When I send out a letter,

added.  
Yesterday, Trump announced a trade deal with Indonesia, under which Trump had cut down the 32 per cent tariff to just 19 per cent.  
President Trump called a "great deal for everybody," as US exports to Indonesia would face no tariffs, while Indonesian goods would be charged a tariff of 19 per cent in the United States.  
The announcement comes as the Trump administration is trying to close trade deals with several countries, and threatening to impose double-digit tariffs on the exports of two dozen nations as of August 1 if agreements are not clinched.

**MUSTREAD**  
**4 dead, 20 trapped in mining pit collapse in Ghana**  
Accra: Four people were killed, and 20 others are still trapped in a mining pit collapse Wednesday in the Eastern Region of Ghana, local media reported. Sources said four men have reportedly died underground when the mining pit collapsed at Akyem Wenchi, a community in the Denkyem-bour district, while 20 others who were said to be alive are trapped underground. The cause of the collapse remains unclear. Rescue efforts are underway with the assistance of local residents.

**3 dead, 7 injured as passenger bus targeted in Balochistan**  
Kalat: At least three people were killed and seven others sustained injuries after unidentified assailants opened gunfire on a passenger coach travelling from Karachi to Quetta near a checkpoint in Balochistan's Kalat, police said on Wednesday. This is the second such attack in less than a week in the restive province, which has witnessed a deadly year with scores of fatalities due to terrorist attacks, Geo news reported.

**Afghan security forces capture ammo cache containing 13k assault rifle rounds**  
Spin Boldak: Afghan security forces have discovered 13,000 rounds of munition for assault rifles in the Spin Boldak border town of southern Kandahar province and arrested one person on charge of attempting to smuggle the munition, an army spokesman said today. Acting on a tip-off, security forces raided a market and discovered the ammunition from a parked car and took into custody a smuggler, spokesperson Ahmad Shukib said.

**Over 20k Afghan refugees return to Afghanistan in one day**  
Kabul: More than 20,000 Afghan refugees returned to their homeland from Iran and Pakistan in a single day, the state-run Radio and Television of Afghanistan said today. A total of 20,966 Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan yesterday, with majority of them hailing from Iran, with 20,042 being from Iran and 924 from Pakistan, the report said. All the returnees have received necessary assistance at crossing points.

**UK to extend visas for Ukrainian refugees for another 18 months: Starmer**  
Moscow: Ukrainian refugees in the United Kingdom will be able to extend their work visas for another 18 months, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said. "We do need to provide certainty and security for Ukrainians in the United Kingdom, and we will provide an additional 18 months' permission to remain in the UK as well as continued rights to live, work and study here," Starmer said in the UK parliament yesterday. He recalled that more than 300,000 refugees arrived in the UK under a special visa regime for Ukrainians. The UK has eased the visa regime for Ukrainians amid Russia's special military operation in Ukraine.

## 180 delegates from China-ASEAN meet to explore AI potential to boost women empowerment

Nanning (UNI)  
Over 180 delegates from across China and ASEAN countries convened in Nanning, the capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region yesterday, to explore AI's transformative potential to boost women's development.  
The programme titled 'Empowerment, Sharing, Innovation: Artificial Intelligence and Women's Development,' the 2025 Exchange and Cooperation Forum on Women's Development with ASEAN marked its 9th edition since its debut as the China-ASEAN Women's Forum in 2006.  
"This convening reflects the growing urgency to place women at the centre of technological transformation within ASEAN, China, and the broader global community," said Sok Chan Chhorvy, Secretary of State, Ministry of Women's Affairs of Cambodia, during the event's opening ceremony.

## Yemen's Houthis claim attack on Israel's Ben Gurion Airport

Sanaa: Yemen's Houthi armed group said on Wednesday night that they targeted Israel's Ben Gurion Airport with a ballistic missile and two drones in a new attack carried out earlier in the day.  
Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea said the attack forced the air traffic of the Israeli airport to halt temporarily and led thousands of Israelis to run to shelters. "The attack achieved its goal," Sarea said in a televised statement aired by Houthi-run al-Masirah satellite TV channel.  
He said that the group fired two other bomb-laden drones toward the Negev desert, targeting what he said an "Israeli military target." The Houthi group also hinted that it can target the Israeli nuclear installation located in the Negev desert, about eight miles southeast of the city of Dimona.

## Bangladesh authorities halt demolition of century-old-building cited as Satyajit Ray's ancestral home amid public outcry

Dhaka (UNI)  
Bangladeshi authorities have halted the demolition of legendary Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray's ancestral home in Mymensingh, after massive public uproar.  
The century-old-property, which has long fallen into disrepair was scheduled for demolition, but was stopped by Deputy Commissioner Mofidul Alam, who strangely enough said that the property in question is not the ancestral home of Ray, reports Daily Star.  
The DC said, "We have taken opinions from senior residents, archaeologists and researchers in the city. Based on their input, we have come to this conclusion that the



house is not the ancestral home of Satyajit Ray."  
He added that Rai Bahadur Ranada Prasad Shaha, the eminent philanthropist, occasionally resided in that house, and that Ray's ancestral home was a short distance away.  
The house, located on Harik-



More details on new innovative offerings within our Coca-Cola product range will be shared soon," said a brief statement by Coca-Cola.

## Trump says Coca-Cola agrees to switch back to real cane sugar in Coke

New York (UNI)  
Atlanta-based soft drink giant The Coca-Cola Company will switch back to real cane sugar in its namesake soda, Coke, within the United States, U.S. President Donald Trump said Wednesday on social media.  
"I have been speaking to Coca-Cola about using REAL Cane Sugar in Coke in the United States, and they have agreed to do so," Trump said on Truth Social.  
"We appreciate President Trump's enthusiasm for our iconic Coca-Cola brand.

Coca-Cola adopted high-fructose corn syrup in the 1980s in a cost-cutting effort. It was reported that the change in ingredients would reduce the shelf life of Coke and increase manufacturing costs.  
The use of sweeteners such as high-fructose corn syrup has been criticized by U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.  
Currently, Coca-Cola offers a cane sugar version of its soda known as "Mexican Coke" in the United States.

## Turkey urges end to Israel's 'aggressive actions' against Syria - Source

Ankara (UNI)  
Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on Wednesday held a telephone conversation with Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud to discuss the Israeli attacks on Syria and called for an end to the "aggressive actions" immediately, a source in the Turkish Foreign Ministry told Sputnik.  
Earlier in the day, Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz warned that if the Syrian government did not cease its attacks on the Druze community in Suwayda, it would face "painful strikes." The Syria TV broadcaster reported that Israel had launched another airstrike on the building of the General Staff of the Syrian army and the Presidential Palace area in Damascus. The Syrian Health Ministry said one civilian was killed and 18

others injured as a result of Israeli airstrikes.  
"Today [July 16], Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan had a telephone conversation with Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud. During the conversation, the ministers discussed Israeli attacks aimed at destabilizing the region. It was emphasized that the strikes on Syria are undermining efforts to restore stability in that country, and such aggressive actions must be halted as soon as possible," the source said.  
Meanwhile, Fidan told reporters in Washington that Turkey remains in close contact with regional players, including Jordan and US Special Envoy for Syria Tom Barrack, and has relayed Ankara's concerns to Israel through its intelligence channels.

## Hague group suspends defense trade with Israel

Bogota: The Hague Group, comprising of about 30 countries took "coordinated legal and diplomatic measures" against Israel, announcing a suspension of trade in weapons and military goods with the Jewish state, as well as a ban on Israeli ships.  
"We hereby announce the following measures ... Prevent the provision or transfer of arms, munitions, military fuel, related military equipment, and dual-use items to Israel ... Prevent the transit, docking, and servicing of vessels at any port ... Prevent the carriage of arms, munitions, military fuel, related military equipment, and dual-use items to Israel on vessels bearing our flag," a joint statement read yesterday.

## Babies made using 3 people's DNA born free of hereditary disease

London (UNI)  
By employing the pioneering technique, eight babies have been born in the UK using genetic material from three people to prevent devastating and often fatal conditions, doctors said today.  
The method, pioneered by UK scientists, combines the egg and sperm from a mum and dad with a second egg from a donor woman.  
Although the technique has been legal here for a decade, it is only now that the first proof is leading to children born free of incurable mitochondrial disease, reports BBC.  
These conditions are



normally passed from mother to child. This can cause severe disability and some babies die within days of being born. Couples know they are at risk if previous children, family members or the mother

has been affected. Children born through the three-person technique inherit most of their DNA, their genetic blueprint, from their parents, but also get a tiny amount, about 0.1 percent, from the

second woman. This is a change that is passed down the generations.  
Mitochondria are tiny structures inside nearly every one of our cells. They are the reason we breathe as they use oxygen to convert food into the form of energy our bodies use as fuel.  
About one in 5,000 babies are born with mitochondrial disease. As mitochondria are passed down only from mother to child, this pioneering fertility technique uses both parents and a woman who donates her healthy mitochondria.  
Under this technique, the scientists have fer-

tilised eggs from both the mother and the donor in the lab with the dad's sperm.  
The embryos develop until the DNA from the sperm and egg form a pair of structures called the pro-nuclei, containing the blueprints for building the human body, such as hair colour and height.  
Then, the pro-nuclei are removed from both embryos and the parents' DNA is inserted into the embryo packed with healthy mitochondria.  
The resulting child is genetically related to their parents but should be free from mitochondrial disease.