

WHAT HAPPENS TO 'DREAMERS'?

The Trump administration on Tuesday ordered the end of the "Dreamers" program that allowed illegal immigrants who came to the United States as children to remain in the country. That move threatens the futures of some 800,000 people, many now in schools, with jobs and families in the United States.

WHAT IS THE 'DREAMERS' PROGRAM?

In a presidential order in June 2012, president Barack Obama launched DACA - Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals - that aimed to provide a stable future for people who arrived in the country illegally as children and stayed. Dubbed "Dreamers," they were granted under presidential order the right to remain and study or work legally, renewing their status regularly.

WHY END DACA?

Trump argued that DACA protected people who broke US laws, was unfair to legal immigrants, and encouraged Congress's power to make immigration laws. The administration also argued that legal challenges by a number of states made DACA and a 2014 sister program, DAPA, untenable.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW?

Encouraged by Obama's move, about 800,000 people registered under DACA, confident that they would be safe from expulsion. Now the government has access to all their personal data, making it hard for most to hide. About 200,000 of them will see their resident permits expire by the end of 2017. Another 275,000 expire in 2018, and the rest between January and August 2019. Under Trump's order, those with permits are safe until their expiry. People with permits until August 2018 can apply to renew them before October 5. But new applications will not be accepted. One DACA permit expires, individuals will not have the legal right to work, and theoretically could be deported any time - though current policy only threatens illegal immigrants who have committed serious crimes.

The White House has indicated that the six-month grace period gives Congress an opportunity, if it wants, to come up with legislation that could replace DACA and strengthen its legal foundations.



Young immigrants, activists and supporters of the DACA program march through downtown Los Angeles, California on Tuesday after the Trump administration formally announced it will end the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program, giving Congress six months to act.

LEGAL BATTLE OVER REFUGEE QUOTAS East Europeans lose at EU court

The EU yesterday won a high-level legal battle against eastern European countries that have refused to admit thousands of asylum seekers based on mandatory quotas for the bloc's member states.

The European Court of Justice, the 28-nation bloc's top court, threw out the challenge from Hungary and Slovakia against a scheme Brussels launched two years ago to ease the burden on Greece and Italy.

The European Union has been grappling with the worst migrant crisis since World War II, with more than one million people fleeing war, persecution and poverty in the Middle East and Africa.

"The court dismisses the actions brought by Slovakia and Hungary against the provisional mechanism for the mandatory relocation of asylum seekers," the Luxembourg-based court said.

"That mechanism actually contributes to enabling Greece and Italy to deal with the impact of the 2015 migration crisis and is proportionate."

The continuing crisis peaked in 2015. More than 1.6 million people have landed on Greek and Italian shores.

The verdict was welcomed by the European Commission. However, Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto slammed the verdict as "irresponsible," saying it "threatens the security of all of Europe."

The top court's press office told AFP there is "no onward appeal for Hungary and Slovakia" when asked about Szijarto's vow that Budapest will use "all legal means" to fight the scheme.

Nightmare for 'Dreamers'

Anger boils as Obama calls Trump's repeal of amnesty 'wrong'

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump yesterday ended an amnesty for 800,000 people brought illegally to the United States as minors, throwing their future in serious doubt and triggering fierce condemnation from across the political spectrum. Business leaders, unions, religious groups, opposition Democrats and many within Trump's own Republican party joined forces to criticize the phased end of protections for people who arrived in the United States under the age of 16.

So-called "Dreamers" - many Hispanic, now in their twenties - will have somewhere between six and around 24 months before they become illegal and subject to potential deportation.

Trump last insisted he had "great heart for the folks we are talking about, a great love for them" and called on Congress to pass wide-ranging immigration reform - something lawmakers have tried and failed to do for decades. The president vowed to "revisit" the issue if Congress fails.

Trump had argued that the amnesty introduced by Barack Obama in 2012 was an unconstitutional overreach of presidential powers and would likely be struck down by the courts eventually. The announcement prompted ex-president Obama to make a rare re-entry onto the political stage to decry the decision as "wrong," "self-defeating" and "cruel."

About 800,000 people took up the offer to get two-year

renewable permits under the DACA scheme, but a similar number opted to stay in the shadows largely because of uncertainty over policy once Obama left office.

Trump, who ran for office on a hard-right immigration and law and order platform, painted his decision as an effort to put natural-born Americans first.

The Mexican government, majors from across the US and the Service Employees International Union were among those who issued statements of condemnation.

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops called the decision "repugnant" and said "today, our nation has done the opposite of how Scripture calls us to respond."

Opponents hinted that they may challenge Trump's decision in the courts.

Even Trump allies in business and the Republican Party voiced concern, arguing the policy would damage the economy and was not in keeping with US values.

Much of the business world, especially the high-tech firms of California's Silicon Valley, stood firmly against a DACA repeal. The program offers the equivalent of a renewable residence permit to young people who were under the age of 16 when they arrived and have no criminal record.

Top congressional Republican Paul Ryan called on lawmakers to step in - although the chances of a badly divided Congress reaching a long-expected agreement on immigration reform in months appear dim.



Irma batters Caribbean islands

AFP, Miami

Monster Hurricane Irma slammed into the French Caribbean islands yesterday after making landfall in Barbuda, packing ferocious winds and causing major flooding in low-lying areas.

As the rare Category Five storm barreled its way across the Caribbean, it brought gusting winds of up to 185 miles per hour (294 kilometers per hour), weather experts said.

After making landfall just before 06:00 GMT in Barbuda, part of the twin island nation of Antigua and Barbuda, the hurricane swept on to French-run Saint-Barthelemy, also known as St Barts, and Saint Martin, an island divided between France and the Netherlands.

The French weather office said Irma was "a historic hurricane (with) an unprecedented intensity over the Atlantic," with a French minister saying it had already "caused major damage" across the two

territories.

Coastal areas were being "battered extremely violently" by the sea, with the weather office logging winds of 244 kph (151 mph) before its monitoring equipment was destroyed by the hurricane.

With the islands on maximum alert ahead of the arrival of the strongest storm ever recorded in the Atlantic, France had raised the alarm over the fate of some 7,000 people who refused to seek shelter.

France's minister for overseas territories said the storm had likely underestimated the power of the storm.

Dutch national broadcaster NOS also reported "enormous damage" on Saint Martin, with residents speaking of widespread destruction.

Saba Island and St Eustatius, two other Dutch-run territories in the south-west, also hit by the massive hurricane, which is beating a path northwest, was also expected to hit the larger French islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique.



POSSIBLE UN CENSURE OVER ROHINGYA

Myanmar courts China, Russia

REUTERS, Yangon

Myanmar said yesterday it is negotiating with China and Russia to help it block any UN Security Council censure over the violence that has forced an exodus of nearly 150,000 Rohingya Muslims to Bangladesh in less than two weeks.

Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi blamed "terrorists" for "a huge iceberg of misinformation" on the strife in the northwestern state of Rakhine but, in a statement, she made no mention of the Rohingyas who have fled.

She has come under increasing pressure from countries with Muslim populations, including Indonesia, where thousands led by Islamist groups held a rally in Jakarta yesterday, to demand that diplomatic ties with Buddhist-majority Myanmar be cut.

In a rare letter to the UN Security Council on Tuesday, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed concern that the violence could spiral into a "humanitarian catastrophe."

He warned there was a risk of ethnic cleansing in Myanmar that could destabilise the region.

Myanmar National Security Adviser Thaung Tun told a

Saudi denies warming ties with Iran

AFP, London

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir on Tuesday denied any warming of relations with regional rival Iran after Tehran thanked Riyadh for its handling of the annual hajj pilgrimage.

"If Iran wants to have good relations with Saudi Arabia, it has to change its policies. It has to respect international law," Jubeir told a press conference in London.

"The hajj is a religious obligation, it has nothing to do with politics," he added, referring to the pilgrimage.

Despite the remarks, some 86,000 countries having severed diplomatic relations in January 2016 after Iranians stormed the Saudi embassy in Tehran, some 86,000 Iranian pilgrims took part in the hajj last week.



Indian protesters hold placards in a rally condemning the killing of journalist Gauri Lankesh, in Mumbai yesterday. Indian activists, politicians and journalists demanded a full investigation into the murder of Gauri, a newspaper editor and outspoken critic of the ruling Hindu nationalist party.

NEWSIN brief

Catalonia, Madrid set to clash over referendum

AFP, Barcelona

Catalonia is expected to pass a law yesterday laying the groundwork for an independence referendum on October 1 which is fiercely opposed by Madrid, setting a course for Spain's deepest political crisis in decades. Pro-separatist lawmakers, who control the regional assembly, are expected to pass the bill, ignoring a ruling by Spain's Constitutional Court that has deemed the proposed law unconstitutional.

India SC allows abortion for child rape victim

AFP, Mumbai

India's top court yesterday allowed a 13-year-old rape survivor to have a late abortion after lawyers said she carried the baby to full term would cause her trauma and agony. The girl is 32 weeks pregnant, well beyond India's 20-week legal limit after which terminations are only allowed when there is a danger to the life of the mother or the baby. Local media reports say one of her father's colleagues has been arrested on charges of rape.

Louvre in Abu Dhabi

AFP, Abu Dhabi

The Louvre Abu Dhabi will finally open its doors to the public yesterday, bringing to the Gulf Mesopotamian artifacts and post-impressionist masterpieces in the first Louvre. The museum is described as the "first universal museum" in the Arab world. The museum has been a decade in the making and is opening five years behind schedule.

Syria govt behind sarin gas attack in April: UN

Report held regime responsible for 23 other attacks

AFP, Geneva

United Nations war crimes investigators yesterday said they had evidence that Syrian government forces were behind a chemical attack that killed dozens of people in Khan Sheikhoun in April.

All evidence available leads the Commission to conclude that there are reasonable grounds to believe Syrian forces dropped an aerial bomb dispersing sarin in Khan Sheikhoun, the report said.

At least 83 people, a third of them children, were killed and nearly 300 wounded in the attack on Khan Sheikhoun, a town in the opposition-held northern province of Idlib, it said.

Rights, a Britain-based monitor, has previously given a death toll of at least 87.

Syria's government has denied involvement and claims it no longer possesses chemical weapons after a 2013 agreement under which it pledged to surrender its chemical arsenal.

A fact-finding mission by the UN's chemical watchdog, the OPCW, concluded earlier this year that sarin gas was used in the attack, but did not assign blame.

But yesterday's report is the first from the UN to officially lay the blame for the attack on Damascus.

The report also found the Syrian government responsible for at least 23 other chemical attacks in the war-ravaged country since March 2013.

The investigators, who have never been granted access to Syria, said they based their findings on photographs of bomb remnants, satellite imagery and eyewitness testimony.

Stop cow vigilantes

India's top court tells govt

AFP, New Delhi

India's top court yesterday proposed measures to stem what it called growing violence by vigilantes who claim to be protecting cows, revered as holy by Hindus.

India is reeling from a spate of horrific lynchings by Hindu extremists mostly targeting the country's Muslim minority, who have historically eaten beef.

The Supreme Court was responding to a private petition from Tushar Gandhi, the great grandson of India's independence hero Mahatma Gandhi.

It said state governments should appoint senior police officers tasked specifically with curbing such attacks.

There should be a planned strategy to stop growing violence in this sphere," said the judges, headed by India's Chief Justice Dipak Misra.

The slaughter of cows and the possession or consumption of beef is banned in most Indian states, with some imposing life sentences for breaking the law.

Janata Party has promised to completely outlaw cow slaughter across India, and has been accused of turning a blind eye to attacks carried out in the name of protecting the animals.

The latest was just last month when villagers in eastern India beat two Muslims to death as they transported cattle.

Police said the villagers in the eastern state of West Bengal blocked the road, forcing the men to stop before dragging them out of their vehicle and killing them.

