

Top US court curbs rights of immigrants

AFP, Washington

The US Supreme Court on Tuesday curbed the ability of immigrants held in long-term detention during deportation proceedings to argue for their release in a ruling in sync with President Donald Trump's get-tough approach toward immigration.

The court's conservative justices carried the day in the 5-3 decision that overturned a lower court's ruling that required that immigrants held by the US government awaiting the outcome of deportation proceedings get a bond hearing after six months of detention to seek their release.

The ruling could lead to indefinite detentions of certain classes of immigrants, including some with legal status who the government wants to deport.

The court's five conservatives were in the majority in the ruling written by Justice Samuel Alito. Three liberals dissented, including Justice Stephen Breyer, who sharply criticized the decision. Another liberal, Justice Elena Kagan, did not participate.

Class action litigation brought by the American Civil Liberties Union challenged the government's practice of placing immigrants facing deportation proceedings in detention for months or years without being able to argue for release.

Breyer said that forbidding bail would likely violate the US Constitution's guarantee of due process under the law.

The case assumed added importance in light of the Trump administration's decision to ramp up immigration enforcement, with growing numbers of people likely to end up in detention awaiting deportation.



Indian fans watch as the funeral cortege of the late Bollywood actress Sridevi Kapoor passes through Mumbai, yesterday. Thousands of heartbroken fans lined the streets of Mumbai as India said farewell to Bollywood legend Sridevi Kapoor following her shock death from accidental drowning in a Dubai hotel bathtub aged just 54.

PHOTO: AFP

NEWSIN brief

Saudi Crown Prince to visit US March 19-22

REUTERS, Riyadh

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is expected to travel to the United States for a short visit from March 19 to 22, a Saudi government source said yesterday. Earlier, the White House said Trump discussed Iran's "destabilising activities" and other security and economic issues in separate telephone calls with senior Saudi and Emirati leaders on

China to build nuke-powered carrier

REUTERS, Beijing

China is developing technologies to build a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, state media reported yesterday, as Beijing pushes forward with an ambitious military modernisation programme. Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged in October last year to turn China's military into a world-class fighting force by 2050.

Bridegroom killed in celebratory fire

AFP, New Delhi

A bridegroom in New Delhi has been killed by a stray bullet after a member of his wedding party opened fire to celebrate the occasion, police said yesterday. Deepak Kumar, 21, was shot while leading the party to his bride's home in the Indian capital on Tuesday evening.

Chidambaram's son arrested over graft

AFP, New Delhi

Indian federal police arrested the son of former finance minister P Chidambaram yesterday, but the agency which has been investigating suspected criminal misconduct related to approvals of investment deals, did not reveal the charges. Karti Chidambaram was detained at the airport in the southern city of Chennai and will be appear in court later in the day, Abhishek Dayal, spokesman of the Central Bureau of Investigation said.

Be a political group

Afghan leader offers talks with Taliban 'without preconditions'

AGENCIES

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani offered recognition of the Taliban as a legitimate political group on as part of a proposed political process that he said could lead to talks aimed at ending more than 16 years of war.

The offer, made at the start of an international conference aimed at creating a platform for peace talks, adds to a series of signals from both the Western-backed government and the Taliban suggesting a greater willingness to consider dialogue.

Ghani proposed a ceasefire and a release of prisoners as part of a range of options including new elections, involving the militants, and a constitutional review as part of a pact with the Taliban.

"We are making this offer without preconditions in order to lead to a peace agreement," Ghani said in opening remarks to the conference attended by officials from around 25 countries involved in the so-called Kabul Process.

In return for Ghani's offer, the Taliban would have to recognise the Afghan government and respect the rule of law, he said.

The comments represented a significant shift for Ghani, who in the past has regularly called the Taliban "terrorists" and "rebels" although he has also offered to talk with parts of the movement that accepted peace.

The Taliban, fighting to restore Islamic rule after their 2001 ouster by US-led troops, have offered to begin talks

with the United States but have so far refused direct talks with Kabul. It was unclear whether they would be prepared to shift their stance, despite growing international pressure.

However Ghani, who recently helped launch the latest stage in a major regional gas pipeline from Turkmenistan, said the momentum for peace was building from neighbouring countries that increasingly saw the necessity of a stable Afghanistan.

Taliban officials have acknowledged that they have faced pressure from friendly countries to accept talks and said their recent offers to talk to the United States reflected concern that they could be seen to be standing in the way of peace.

Ghani said the process would be accompanied by coordinated diplomatic support including a global effort to persuade neighbouring Pakistan, which Kabul has regularly accused of aiding the Taliban, of the advantages of a stable Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, General Joe Votel, who heads the US military's Central Command, on Tuesday said he has started to see "positive indicators" from the Pakistan military, weeks after President Donald Trump ordered the suspension of US military aid to Islamabad.

US officials believe Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency and other military bodies have long helped fund and arm the Taliban for ideological reasons, but also to counter rising Indian influence in Afghanistan, whose government is backed by the US.

Islamabad denies those allegations.

Anti-Semitic incidents rise 60 percent in a year in US

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Anti-Semitic incidents in the US surged nearly 60 per cent in 2017 – the largest increase of any year on record, according to a new report.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a nonprofit dedicated to fighting anti-Semitism, documented 1,986 such incidents across the US last year. The number marked an increase of 57 per cent since 2016 – the largest single-year increase since the ADL started collecting data in 1979.

Incidents included instances of vandalism, harassment, and assault reported by victims, law enforcement, and the media, according to the organisation's press release. General expressions of white supremacy and instances of discrimination against Jewish people were not included, unless they involved explicit anti-Semitic harassment.

The report noted a marked rise in the number of incidents at elementary and high schools over the past two years. More than

450 incidents were reported at K-12 schools in 2017, and 204 incidents were documented on university campuses.

Among other things, the incidents included vandalism with swastikas and phrases like "Hitler was not wrong," and "Kill all Jews". In another incident, a student was reportedly harassed by classmates with jokes about the Holocaust.

Anti-Semitic hate crimes in the UK also reached a record high last year, according to Community Security Trust. The anti-Semitism monitoring organisation recorded 1,382 such incidents nationwide in 2017.

Anti-Semitic incidents spiked at the beginning of the year, in the months following President Donald Trump's inauguration. In fact, a previous ADL report found an 86 per cent increase in incidents in the first three months of 2017.

Some have tied the rise in anti-Semitic incidents to Trump and his embrace of white-nationalist figures like former presidential adviser Steve Bannon.



Clinton affair was 'abuse of power'

AFP, Washington

Former White House intern Monica Lewinsky says she has been reexamining her affair with president Bill Clinton through the "new lens" of the #MeToo movement and has concluded it constituted a "gross abuse of power."

Lewinsky, 44, in an essay published in the latest issue of Vanity Fair magazine, also recounted a recent chance meeting with Ken Starr, the special prosecutor whose investigation led to the revelation of her sexual relationship with Clinton and his subsequent impeachment nearly 20 years ago.

Lewinsky said she was diagnosed several years ago with post-traumatic stress disorder, "mainly from the ordeal of having been publicly outed and ostracised."

Lewinsky said she had received a message recently from "one of the brave women leading the #MeToo movement" saying "I'm so sorry you were so alone."

"Those seven words undid me," Lewinsky wrote. "They landed in a way that cracked me open and brought me to tears."

Lewinsky said there are "many more women and men whose voices and stories need to be heard before mine."

"There are even some people who feel my White House experiences don't have a place in this movement, as what transpired between Bill Clinton and myself was not sexual assault, although we now recognize that it constituted a gross abuse of power," she said.



A man walks down a snow covered street in South London, Britain, yesterday. Countries across Europe shut schools and rushed people to shelter homeless yesterday as a deadly blast of Siberian weather dubbed the "Beast from the East" kept the mercury far below zero. At least 46 people died since Friday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

PROPOSED POST-BREXIT CUSTOMS UNION WITH N IRELAND

Angry UK PM rejects EU draft

Warns she will 'never' allow the bloc to 'undermine' UK's integrity

AFP, Brussels

British Prime Minister Theresa May angrily rejected a draft divorce treaty unveiled by the EU on Wednesday, saying she would never allow the bloc to undermine her country's "constitutional integrity".

May lashed out at the proposal to keep British-ruled Northern Ireland in a customs union if there is no better solution to avoid a hard border with EU-member Ireland.

The European Union's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier insisted that the plan was not designed to "provoke", and denied that it threatened the sovereignty of the UK.

The EU's draft withdrawal agreement spells out the details of a provisional deal sealed in December by May and European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker, which largely fudged the Irish question.

"The draft legal text will, if implemented, undermine the UK common market and threaten the constitutional integrity of the UK by creating a customs and regulatory border down the Irish Sea and no UK prime minister could ever agree to it," May told parliament.

May added that she will "be making it crystal clear to

President Juncker and others that we would never" agree to Northern Ireland having different customs rules to the rest of the United Kingdom.

The 120-page EU draft agreement says that in the absence of another plan, "a common regulatory area comprising the Union and the United Kingdom in respect of Northern Ireland" would be set up.

This would involve a "an area without internal borders in which the free movement of goods is ensured and north-south cooperation protected," it says.

Barnier said it was merely a "fallback" in case Britain's two preferred options -- hi-tech frictionless border controls, or a solution linked to a future EU-UK trade deal -- both fell through.

Ireland and the EU have called for any Brexit agreement to avoid a hard border including customs checks, in order to protect the 1998 Good Friday agreement in Northern Ireland, which ended three decades of bloody sectarian violence.

Barnier meanwhile warned that negotiations on Britain's departure in March 2019 must accelerate in order to succeed.

Barnier on Tuesday said the bloc ruled out an "open-ended" phase mooted by Britain and wanted a "short" transition ending on December 31, 2020.



Republicans reject new limits on guns

AFP, Washington

Republican leaders of the US Congress said on Tuesday they would not raise the minimum age for gun buyers, in a sign that one of President Donald Trump's proposals likely will not get far on Capitol Hill after a deadly Florida school shooting.

The second-deadliest shooting at a US public school has reignited the long-running national debate over gun rights, pitting many of the students who survived the Feb. 14 high school shooting in Parkland, Florida, against powerful gun rights groups like the National Rifle Association. Several of those students visited lawmakers on Capitol Hill on Tuesday to press Congress to enact new restrictions on gun ownership.

Republicans in Congress have rejected those efforts after similar mass shootings in the past.

"We shouldn't be banning guns from law-abiding citizens. We should be focusing on making sure that citizens who should not get guns in the first place don't get those guns," House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan told a news conference.

Brazilian passports for N Korean Kims!

REUTERS, London

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his late father Kim Jong Il used fraudulently obtained Brazilian passports to apply for visas to visit Western countries in the 1990s, five senior Western European security sources told Reuters.

While North Korea's ruling family is known to have used travel documents obtained under false pretences, there are few specific examples. The photocopies of the Brazilian passports seen by Reuters have not been published before.

"They used these Brazilian passports, which clearly show the photographs of Kim Jong Un and Kim Jong Il, to attempt to obtain visas from foreign embassies," one senior Western security source said on condition of anonymity.

"This shows the desire for travel and points to the ruling family's attempts to build a possible escape route," the security source said.

A Brazilian source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the two passports in question were legitimate documents when sent out as blanks for consulates to issue.

Four other senior Western European security sources confirmed that the two Brazilian passports with photos of the Kims in the names of Josef Pwag and Ijong Tchoi were used to apply for visas in at least two Western countries.

It was unclear whether any visas were issued. The passports may also have been used to travel to Brazil, Japan and Hong Kong, the security sources said.

Meanwhile, the US special envoy for North Korea plans to retire tomorrow, the State Department said just hours after President Donald Trump again rejected talks to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis unless conditions are met.

Yun's departure leaves the State Department without a point person for North Korea policy at a time Pyongyang has signalled it may be willing to talk to the United States after a period of diplomatic contacts with South Korea during the Winter Olympics.



Obituary



Shamsun Nahar Ahmed died for cardiac arrest on 27 February 2018 at 1:20am at capital's Square Hospital (Innaillahi.....Rajion) at the age of 92. She was wife of former Chief Engineer (PWD), late Shujauddin Ahmed. Her Namaze Janaza was held at Lalmatia C-Block Jame Mosque after Zohor prayer on 27 February and later buried at Banani graveyard by the side of her husband. She was teacher of Muslim Girls High School, Dhaka. She was member of the then APWA, Dhaka Ladies Club & Haimontika. Her Quikhwani will be held on 2 March, Friday after Asr prayer at her residence: House No: 27, Road No: 16 (Old 27), Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1209. Her relations, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the Quikhwani and pray for the departed soul.

Request For Doa by

Daughters Nasreen Sultana & Nargis Sultana
Son-in-laws Mohd. Mosharraf Hussain & Md. Monowar Hossain Chowdhury
-Grandsons, Granddaughters, Grand-son-in-laws & Granddaughter-in-laws