



An Iranian soldier fires a rocket during a military drill in Makran beach on the Gulf of Oman, near the Hormuz Strait, yesterday. The drills involve submarines and drones "practising information-gathering operations against attacking forces, as well as reconnaissance operations," Admiral Habibollah Sayyari told the official IRNA news agency. Tehran holds annual war games in the Strait of Hormuz, the conduit for some 30 percent of all crude oil traded by sea.

PHOTO: AFP

Trump's tax returns released

REUTERS

A Democratic-controlled US House of Representatives committee yesterday released six years of former President Donald Trump's tax returns to the public in an extraordinary move days before Republicans are due to take control of the chamber.

Release of Trump's redacted returns for 2015 through 2020 caps a multi year battle between the Republican former president and Democratic lawmakers that was settled only last month by the US Supreme Court.

It is the latest blow for Trump, 76, who was impeached twice by the Democratic-led House only to be acquitted both times by the US Senate, and now faces multiple legal woes as he mounts a 2024 reelection bid.

Trump, who took office in 2017, was the first presidential candidate in decades not to release his taxes. He sued the committee to try to keep them private but the US high court ruled in the committee's favor.

In a report last week, the committee outlined its findings from its examination of the documents, saying the Internal Revenue Service broke its own rules by not auditing Trump for three out of four years while he was president. Details previously released by the panel showed Trump paid no income tax in 2020, his final full year in office, despite millions of dollars in earnings from his sprawling business empire.

The records show Trump's income and tax liability fluctuated dramatically from 2015 through 2020, during his first presidential bid and subsequent term in office. They show Trump and his wife Melania Trump claimed large deductions and losses and paid little or no income tax in several of those years.

Democrats were on a tight timeline to find a way to handle the returns once they obtained them, given that Republicans will take control of the House on Tuesday after winning a slim majority in November's midterm elections.

The Democratic-controlled House passed a bill before it left on its winter recess that would mandate that the tax-collecting Internal Revenue Service complete audits of presidents' tax filings within 90 days of their inaugurations.

Ramp up Russia-China military cooperation

Putin urges Xi, hails efforts to counter West's influence

AGENCIES

Russian leader Vladimir Putin yesterday told Chinese President Xi Jinping he was keen to ramp up military cooperation and hailed the two countries' efforts to counter Western influence.

Battered by unprecedented Western sanctions over Moscow's assault against Ukraine, Putin has hoped to strengthen political and military ties with China.

Moscow's offensive in Ukraine is a sensitive issue for Beijing.

China has sought to position itself as neutral over the conflict but has offered diplomatic backing to its strategic ally Russia.

"We aim to strengthen cooperation between the armed forces of Russia and China," Putin told Xi by video link at the start of the talks, calling the Chinese leader a "dear friend".

The Kremlin chief also hailed the efforts of Moscow and Beijing to counter "unprecedented Western pressure and provocations".

"In the context of growing geopolitical tensions, the importance is growing of the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership as a stabilising factor," Putin said.

"We share the same views on the causes, course and logic of

the ongoing transformation of the global geopolitical landscape," he added.

Xi Jinping told Putin that the road to peace talks on Ukraine would not be smooth and that China would continue to uphold its "objective and fair stance" on the

Xi, however, made clear on Friday the ideological affinity between Beijing and Moscow when it came to opposing what both view as the hegemonic U.S.-led West.

"Facts have repeatedly proved that containment and suppression are unpopular, and sanctions and



interference are doomed to failure," Xi told Putin.

"China is ready to work with Russia and all progressive forces around the world that oppose hegemonism and power politics... and firmly defend the sovereignty, security and development interests of both countries and international justice."

The Russian leader said he was expecting Xi in Moscow on a state visit next spring.



Qin Gang becomes China's new FM

Wang Yi to take a bigger role

REUTERS, Beijing

China has appointed Qin Gang, a trusted aide of President Xi Jinping, as its new foreign minister, state radio reported yesterday.

Qin, 56, and currently China's ambassador to the United States, replaces Wang Yi, who has been foreign minister for the past decade. Wang, 69, was promoted to the politburo of the Chinese Communist Party in October and is expected to play a bigger role in foreign policy.

A rising star in the foreign ministry, Qin rose through various positions including as the ministry's spokesman and postings at the Chinese embassy in Britain.

He served as Xi's chief protocol officer between 2014 and 2018.

Following his appointment, Qin will return to Beijing from Washington after 17 months as China's 11th ambassador to the United States.

In an essay published in American bi-monthly magazine the National Interest this week, Qin gave an overview of China's position on foreign policy and reiterated that China-US relations were not a zero-sum game.

BAN ON WOMEN IN NGOS UN won't halt aid to Afghanistan

AFP, United Nations



The United Nations said Thursday it would not stop providing help to Afghanistan despite the Taliban ban on women working in the country's aid sector. "Let me make it very clear that the

United Nations and humanitarian partners are very committed to the delivery of life-saving services to the people of Afghanistan," the UN Resident Coordinator in Afghanistan, Ramiz Alakbarov, told reporters. "Aid is never conditional. You cannot condition providing food or health assistance to a starving person, or a dying person." He said the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator and other UN officials will visit Afghanistan in the coming weeks to discuss the situation with the country's Taliban rulers.

Netanyahu returns

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's hawkish veteran Benjamin Netanyahu was sworn in as prime minister Thursday after a stint in opposition, heading what analysts call the most right-wing government in the country's history. Netanyahu, 73, who is fighting corruption charges in court, had already served as premier longer than anyone in Israeli history, leading the country from 1996-1999 and 2009-2021. In his first cabinet meeting Thursday evening, Netanyahu said his key missions were "to thwart Iran's efforts to develop a nuclear weapons arsenal" and "restore security and sovereignty within Israel". He also voiced hopes of "expanding the circle of peace" with Arab countries, following US-brokered normalisation agreements with the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco. His former Israeli intelligence minister Eli Cohen, an architect of the normalisation agreements, was named as foreign minister.

Huge crowd for weekend ride

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QUEUE FOR MRT PASS

While people have to spend several hours to get tickets at stations, those who have MRT passes can easily enter the station and board train. For this, the demand for MRT passes has increased.

The authorities are issuing MRT passes from 3:00pm to 9:00pm and there was a long queue for that at the Agargaon Station before 3:00pm yesterday.

"I had to stand in a line for two and a half hours to get a ticket on the first day of the service. So, I came here to manage an MRT pass," said Shamim Ahsan.

He said it earlier took him around

two and a half hours to reach his Gazipur office from Shewrapara. Now he can reach Diabari within 13 minutes and then its just an hour's ride to work.

"It will be very easy for me if the government arranges bus service from Diabari to Gazipur. We will get full benefit of the service," said Shamim.

Meanwhile, a video clip went viral on social media yesterday that showed some people entering the Uttara North Station to get an MRT pass (Tk 500) scaling the locked collapsible gate of the station.

Contacted, Moudud Hawlader, officer-in-charge of Turag Police Station, said they know about the incident.

Jubo League leader hacked

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to six people injured from both groups, including Anisur, who received critical injuries to his head from sharp weapons.

When he was taken to the Chatmohar Upazila Health Complex, on-duty doctors declared him dead. Later, police sent his body to the Pabna General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Of the other injured, one Jakirul Sardar was also shifted to the Pabna General Hospital after his condition turned critical.

Three people, including the

victim's rival Ainul Haque, were detained for interrogation and extra police personnel were deployed in the area following the incident.

"We currently have the situation under control," the OC said.

Speaking on the matter, Parshodanga Union Parishad Chairman Azahar Ali, said, "We tried to solve the long-standing land dispute between Anis and Ainul several times in the past but failed to come to a common ground in each attempt."

"Following the violent clash, a tense situation prevails in the area," the chairman said.

Tributes pour

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there is always a new path," the CBF wrote. "The King gave us a new Brazil and we can only thank him for his legacy."

In New York, where Pele received a \$1 million-a-year salary to play in the fledgling North American Soccer League in 1975, fans thanked him for opening up the United States to the "beautiful game."

"Pele helped transform the domestic landscape of the sport of soccer," the New York Cosmos said in a statement. "Where once there had been baseball diamonds, now there were also soccer pitches."

Outside of soccer, sporting greats paid tribute, with Jamaica's eight-times Olympic sprint champion Usain Bolt writing on Twitter: "A Sporting Legend. Rest in Peace King Pele."

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach called him "a great sporting icon."

"He was a true believer in the Olympic values," said Bach. "It was a privilege to present the Olympic Order to him."

Women more

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or feeling by just looking at the area around their eyes.

While previous studies found women on average scored greater than men on "theory of mind" tests, most of them were limited to relatively small samples without much diversity in terms of geography, culture or age.

Adani firms up NDTV takeover

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close acolyte of Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi, often publicly supporting his policies.

His business empire first began buying up NDTV shares in August, a move its founders Prannoy and Radhika Roy said had come without their involvement or consent.

But after months of negotiations, the Roy family agreed to sell most of their remaining equity, and the Adani Group said in a Friday stock market disclosure that its subsidiary RRPR had bought a 27.26 percent stake in the company.

The latest purchase gives Adani's conglomerate a 64.71 percent stake in NDTV, renowned for inviting

government critics and its hard-hitting reporting in a TV news landscape dominated by pro-Modi coverage.

Adani has pledged to guarantee the channel's editorial independence but also told the Financial Times last month that journalists should acknowledge when the government was performing well.

"Independence means if government has done something wrong, you say it's wrong," Adani told the British broadsheet.

"But at the same time, you should have courage when the government is doing the right thing every day. You have to also say that."

Under Modi, India has slipped

10 places in the Reporters Without Borders global press freedom ranking and is now 150 out of 180 surveyed countries.

Critical reporters often find themselves behind bars and hounded on social media by supporters of Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Adani this year overtook fellow Indian Mukesh Ambani to become Asia's richest man, behind France's luxury goods mogul Bernard Arnault and Tesla boss Elon Musk.

But his group's growth into capital-intensive businesses has raised alarm, with analysts from Fitch Group's CreditSights warning in August that it was "deeply overleveraged".

Junta jails Suu Kyi for 33yrs

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hearings and Suu Kyi's lawyers have been blocked from speaking to the media.

The road leading to the prison holding Suu Kyi in the military-built capital Naypyidaw was clear of traffic ahead of the verdict, said an AFP correspondent in the city.

Former Myanmar president Win Myint, who was co-accused with Suu Kyi in the latest trial, received the same sentence, the source said, adding that both would appeal.

The United States condemned Myanmar's junta and demanded her release.

"The Burma military regime's final sentencing of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi is an affront to justice and the rule of law," a State Department spokesperson said, using Myanmar's former name and the veteran leader's title before she was ousted in February 2021.

The European Union condemned the "purely politically motivated" trials by the ruling junta.

"These trials were carried forward with no respect for due legal procedure or necessary judicial guarantees and are a clear attempt to exclude democratically elected leaders from political life," an EU

spokesman said. He also slammed the sentencing of ex-president Win Myint, Suu Kyi's co-accused, to a total of 12 years in prison.

Since her trial began, Suu Kyi has been seen only once -- in grainy state media photos from a bare courtroom -- and has been reliant on lawyers to relay messages to the world.

Many in Myanmar's democracy struggle, which Suu Kyi has dominated for decades, have abandoned her core principle of non-violence, with "People's Defence Forces" clashing regularly with the military across the country.