

# INTERNATIONAL

VENEZUELA REGIME CHANGE

## Trump takes huge political gamble

Democratic party leaders call US operations 'reckless'

AFP, Washington

Donald Trump crowed over the US military triumph in Venezuela on Saturday, but his sudden enthusiasm for intervention abroad puts him in a political minefield back home.

Trump has railed against US entanglements abroad for years. When he branded the post 9/11 Iraq invasion "a stupid thing" a decade ago, he was setting out a central tenet of the nationalist, isolationist MAGA ideology that would win him the White House.

So, Saturday's operation by special forces to swoop into Caracas and seize Venezuela's leader Nicholas Maduro was doubly risky.

The service members in the complex assault -- including troops ferried in by helicopter, jets bombing sites around



Jesus Linares, 48, stands with a local resident as he looks at his damaged apartment building in Catia La Mar, Venezuela, yesterday, following a US strike.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## OPERATION ABSOLUTE RESOLVE How the US captured Nicolás Maduro

REUTERS, Washington

At a press conference earlier on Saturday, General Dan Caine described in detail how the US carried out its attack on Venezuela and captured President Nicolas Maduro. Here are the key points that were mentioned:

-- Air, ground, space, maritime and intelligence personnel coordinated over a period of months to plan the mission.

-- At 22:46 ET on 2 January (0346 GMT) Donald Trump gave the mission the go-ahead.

-- Operation 'Absolute Resolve' saw 150 aircraft launched towards Venezuela from 20 different bases across the Western Hemisphere.

-- An extraction force made up of helicopters and a ground team approached Maduro's compound in Venezuela at 01:01 ET (02:01 local time) on 3 January to capture the leader and his wife.

-- The force was protected overhead by F-22, F-35, F/A-18, EA-18, E-2 aircraft, B-1 bombers and drones.

-- Helicopters came under fire and



one was hit -- although it "remained flyable" during the rest of the mission.

-- Maduro and his wife embarked on the USS Iwo Jima at some time after 03:39 ET (08:39 GMT).

-- As the troops left Venezuelan territory, Caine said, they were involved in "multiple self defense engagements."

-- By 3:20 am EST, the helicopters were over water, with Maduro and his wife on board.

-- Almost exactly seven hours after Trump announced the operation on Truth Social, he made another post.

-- This time it was a photograph of the captured Venezuelan leader blindfolded, handcuffed and wearing grey sweatpants.

-- "Nicolás Maduro on board the USS Iwo Jima," Trump wrote, referring to the amphibious assault ship.

-- Trump said the Venezuelan leader had tried to reach a safe room but was unable to close the door. "He got bum rushed so fast that he didn't get into that," Trump said. Some US forces were hit, Trump said, but none were killed.

## 16 dead in Iran during week of protests

Says rights group; 582 arrested

REUTERS, Dabai

At least 16 people have been killed during a week of unrest in Iran, rights groups said yesterday, as protests over soaring inflation spread across the country prompting violent clashes between demonstrators and security forces.

Deaths and arrests have been reported through the week both by state media and rights groups, though the numbers have differed.

US President Donald Trump has threatened to come to the protesters' aid if they face violence, saying on Friday "we are locked and loaded and ready to go."

That warning prompted threats of retaliation against US forces in the region from senior Iranian officials and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

## Bangladesh won't travel

FROM PAGE 1  
Cricket in India (BCCI) -- a move that sparked widespread criticism.

"The Board reviewed the situation in detail, taking into account developments over the last 24 hours and expressed deep concern over the overall circumstances surrounding the participation of the Bangladesh National Team in matches scheduled to be played in India.

"Following a thorough assessment of the prevailing situation and the growing concerns regarding the safety and security of the Bangladesh contingent in India, and considering the advice from the Bangladesh government, the Board of Directors resolved that the Bangladesh national team will not travel to India for the tournament under the current conditions," the press release read.

The decision not to send the team to India was applauded by Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Nazrul.

"I welcome this decision, taken in response to the Indian cricket board's extreme communal policies," the adviser wrote in a social media post hours before the official confirmation from the BCB.

On all four dates, three matches are already scheduled per day in the morning, afternoon and evening across two venues in India and one in Sri Lanka.

However, the Indian media reported a BCCI official saying that changing the schedule so close to the tournament would be a "logistical nightmare."

"You can't just change games at someone's whims and fancies. It is a logistical nightmare. Think about opposition teams. Their air tickets and hotels are booked," NDTV quoted the BCCI official, who sought anonymity.

"Also, on all days, there are three games each, which means one game is in Sri Lanka. There is broadcast crew. So it will be easier said than done," he added.

It would require a major reshuffling of the tournament fixtures, and the BCB said it is currently awaiting the ICC's response in this regard.

The Pakistan team will feature in the World Cup without setting foot in India, playing all their matches in Sri Lanka, owing to the geopolitical tensions between the nations.

Asif Nazrul had also asked the information and broadcasting adviser not to broadcast the IPL in Bangladesh.

In response, Information and Broadcasting Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday relayed that the government is reviewing the legal grounds and procedures before taking the IPL off air in the country, adding, "We also need to take a position in this situation."

Mustafizur's removal from IPL came on the heels of mounting pressure on KKR and its majority owner Shah Rukh Khan from ruling BJP politicians and religious leaders, citing what they claimed was a lack of safety for minorities in Bangladesh.

Mustafizur fetched INR



the city, and an armada of Navy ships off the coast -- got away without losing a single soldier.

But for Trump, the domestic political risks are only just starting. Not surprisingly, Democratic Party leaders swiftly attacked. The senior Democratic senator, Chuck Schumer, called the operation "reckless."

"Second unjustified war in my life time. This war is illegal," Senator Ruben Gallego, an Iraq veteran, said. "There is no reason for us to be at war with Venezuela."

Many in the Republican Party that Trump dominates came out to applaud.

The White House spokeswoman ramped up enthusiasm with a social media post in the early hours of Saturday featuring strong arm, fist and fire emojis. And Senator Tom Cotton was quickly on board.

Mike Johnson, the Republican speaker of the House of Representatives and a key cog in the Trump political machine, quickly sought to scotch questions over the military operation's legality.

"Today's military action in Venezuela was a decisive and justified operation that will protect American lives," he said.

But there are signs of disquiet among Republicans.

Soon after news first broke that the extraordinary raid on Caracas was underway, conservative Senator Mike Lee wrote on X that he was looking "forward to learning what, if anything, might constitutionally justify this action."

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## ROs cancel 723 nominations

FROM PAGE 1

Among political parties, nomination papers of 28 Communist Party of Bangladesh aspirants, including General Secretary Abdullah Al Kali Ratan in Cumilla 5, were scrapped for signature inconsistencies. At least seven Jamaat aspirants and three BNP aspirants were also disqualified.

BNP candidate Mahbubur Rahman Liton (Mymensingh 7) was disqualified for incomplete case information, while party aspirant Fahim Chowdhury (Sherpur 2) was rejected over dual citizenship. BNP nominee TS Ayub (Jashore 4) was disqualified for being a loan defaulter.

Jamaat candidates faced similar grounds: Mahbub Alam (Kurigram 3) and AKM Fazul Haq (Chattogram 9) were rejected for dual citizenship; Mosleh Uddin Farid (Jashore 2) for credit card default; Mujibur Rahman Azadi (Jamalpur 3) for irregularities in proposer and supporter forms; Abdul Haque (Dhaka 2) for loan default; Yusuf Sohel (Cumilla 3) for incomplete affidavit; and Hamidur Rahman Azad (Cox's Bazar 2) for failing to provide case

details.

Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar, in a statement, alleged yesterday that candidatures were rejected on "trivial issues" and claimed the actions were instigated by a certain quarter.

The nomination of Mujibul Haque Chunnu, executive president of a Jatiya Party faction, was scrapped for loan default. Earlier, Anisul Islam Mahmud (Chattogram 5), chairman of the same faction, was disqualified over a mismatch in signatures of party authorities.

In Dhaka, Nagarik Oikyo President Mahmudur Rahman Manna's nomination for Dhaka 12 was declared valid, though his Bogura 2 nomination was rejected. Bangladesh Labour Party Chairman Mustafizur Rahman Iran's nomination for Jhalokathi 1 was cancelled, but his Dhaka 12 nomination was upheld.

Independent aspirants Hasnat Quaiyim (Kishoreganj 5) of Rastho Sangskar Andolan and Tasmin Jara (Dhaka 9), who recently resigned from NCP, also had their nominations cancelled. Both said they would appeal to the EC.

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