



NEW DOCUMENTARY ON MJ FEATURING TWO ALLEGED  
CHILD ABUSE VICTIMS SLAMMED BY SINGER'S ESTATE

AL PACINO IS IN NEGOTIATIONS TO JOIN THE  
CAST OF AMAZON DRAMA SERIES 'THE HUNT'

## White House mulls using disaster funds to build wall

Shutdown Forces Miami Airport To Shut Terminal Early  
As TSA Screeners Skip Work; ATC Union Sues Govt

How many from  
Pakistan, Trump  
seeks info on  
immigrants held

Washington: US President Donald Trump during a tour of the southern border in Texas asked a law enforcement official how many Pakistanis were arrested early this week trying to illegally enter America as he was told that individuals from several South Asian nations attempted to cross the porous border with Mexico.

Trump asked the question when a law enforcement official listed out the name of the countries whose citizens were nabbed at the border a day earlier. "So far this sector has apprehended folks from 41 different countries. Just yesterday, we apprehended 133 people from countries other than Central America and Mexico. That includes individuals from India. We apprehended some Pakistanis, Romania,..." the law enforcement official told Trump. "How many Pakistanis?" Trump asked, interrupting the official. "It was two yesterday," the official replied. **PTI**

**Syria withdrawal  
begins as US  
pulls out cargo**

Qamishli (Syria)/Washington: The US-led coalition battling Islamic State added to confusion surrounding the US withdrawal from Syria on Friday by declaring that it had started the pullout process but US officials later clarified that only equipment, not troops, had exited the country. US President Trump's announcement last month that he had decided to withdraw the 2,000 US troops there stunned allies who have joined Washington in the battle against Islamic State militants in Syria. US Colonel Sean Ryan, a coalition spokesman, said the coalition "has begun the process of our deliberate withdrawal from Syria". "Out of concern for operational security, we will not discuss specific timelines, locations or troop movements," Ryan said. After media reports suggesting the departure of US forces had begun, US officials said that no troops had yet withdrawn and stressed that the battle against IS was continuing. **REUTERS**

### 21 DAYS & COUNTING...

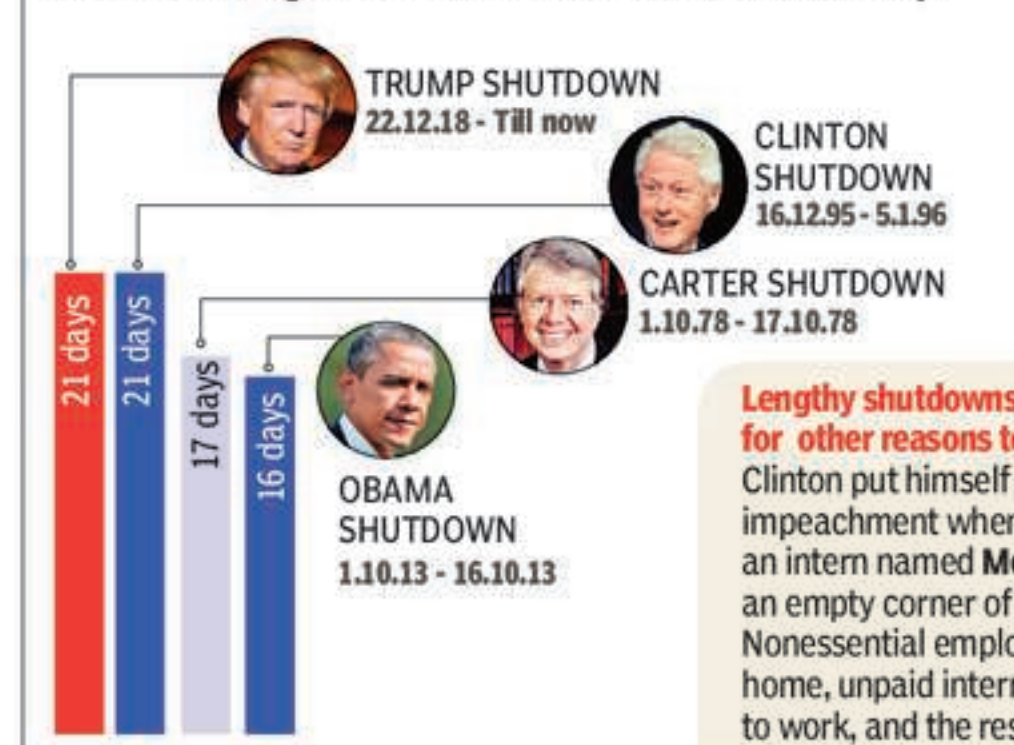
8,00,000 | Federal workers miss first paycheck

4,20,000 | Employees whose work is 'essential' working without pay. Law enforcement officers, FBI agents, judges, Nasa engineers, weather forecasters and office staff among them



#### US SET FOR RECORD SHUTDOWN TODAY

The partial shutdown of the US government entered 21st day on Friday, tying it with the longest shutdown to date. A 1995-1996 shutdown during Bill Clinton's administration lasted 21 days



McAllen (Texas): US President Donald Trump travelled to the border on Thursday to warn of crime and chaos on the frontier, as White House officials considered diverting emergency aid from storm- and fire-ravaged Puerto Rico, Florida, Texas and California to build a border barrier, perhaps under an emergency declaration.

The White House has directed the Army Corps of Engineers to determine whether it could divert for wall construction \$13.9 billion allocated last year after devastating hurricanes and wildfires, according to congressional and defence department officials with knowledge of the matter.

As the shutdown neared record Day 22, Trump used a visit to a border facility in McAllen to blame the protracted shut-

down on Democrats, charging that their opposition to a wall was responsible for brutal crime and violence. "You'll have crime in Iowa, you'll have crime in New Hampshire, you'll have crime in New York" without a wall, he warned. "We could stop that cold," he added.

The shutdown has forced 800,000 workers to go without pay and placed federal benefits for millions more in jeopardy, with the fallout being felt across the US. Miami International Airport will close a terminal early for three days because of a shortage of Transportation Security Administration screeners, airport spokesman Greg Chin said. "Due to an increased number of TSA screeners not reporting to work, we have decided to take this precautionary step and relocate

about 12 flights to adjoining concourses in the afternoons."

On Friday, the National Air Traffic Controllers Association sued the federal government for forcing its members to work without pay during the government shutdown. It's at least the third lawsuit filed by government workers since the shutdown began 21 days ago.

Meanwhile, the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives voted to restore funding for federal agencies that have been shut down. But a full resumption of operations did not appear in sight because Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell has said he will not bring the House bill up for a vote. Republicans who control the Senate have so far insisted that any spending bills include money for his wall. **NYT & AGENCIES**

**US girl, missing  
for months  
after parents'  
murder, found**

A 21-year-old Wisconsin man was charged on Friday with holding a 13-year-old girl captive for three months after murdering her parents, one day after the teen managed to escape and was discovered by a woman walking her dog. Thousands of volunteers and hundreds of law enforcement officers had searched around the clock around the small town of Barron after Jayme Closs' parents were found shot dead in their home, the front door open and the girl gone.

Relying on what Barron County Sheriff Chris Fitzgerald called "the will of a kid to survive," a disheveled Closs escaped a house in the tiny town of Gordon where she had been held captive and found a woman with her dog on Thursday. The woman and Closs hurried to a neighbour's house on Thursday to call authorities. "This is Jayme Closs," the woman said when the neighbor opened the door, according to the Star Tribune of Minneapolis. "Call 911!"

Both the woman and the neighbour recognized the teen immediately due to the enormous public campaign after her disappearance, Fitzgerald said. Less than 15 minutes later, Jake Patterson, 21, was in custody after police pulled over his vehicle, based on Closs' description. Patterson, an unemployed resident of Gordon, has been charged with murder and kidnapping. James and Denise Closs were discovered shot dead in their home on Oct 15. **REUTERS**

## Pak SC refuses to close Bhutto case against ex-Army, ISI chiefs

Omer Farooq Khan | TNN

Islamabad: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Friday rejected recommendation of a probing body to close a case about the involvement of former army and ISI chiefs in financial scams aimed at rigging 1990 elections to keep former slain PM Benazir Bhutto out of power.

According to the petition filed by late air chief marshal Asghar Khan in 1996, former army chief General Aslam Beg, ex-ISI chief Lt Gen (retired) Asad Durrani and former president Ghulam Ishaq Khan had hatched a conspiracy to ensure Bhutto's defeat in the 1990 elections.

The two senior army officers and then-president had doled out Rs 140 million among several politicians, including former PM Nawaz

Sharif, to rig the 1990 polls against Bhutto, the petition alleges. A political alliance consisting of nine parties, including the Pakistan Muslim League and Jamaat-e-Islami, had won the 1990 polls, with Nawaz Sharif elected as PM. The alliance, known as the Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI),

#### 'POLL RIGGING'

was allegedly formed and funded by the accused in the case.

On October 19, 2012, the Supreme Court had issued a 141-page verdict, ordering legal proceedings against Gen Beg and Asad Durrani, directing the Federal Investigation Agency to initiate a transparent investigation and subsequent trial if sufficient evidence was found against the former army officers. Last month, the FIA had recommended to the

apex court to close the files, citing lack of evidence. Following FIA's suggestion, the court had notified Asghar Khan's heirs about their reaction but the family had opposed the closure of the case.

A two-member bench headed by Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar resumed hearing of the case earlier on Friday regarding non-implementation of its 2012 verdict. Rejecting the FIA's recommendation to close the case, the chief justice remarked that the court would not let Asghar Khan's efforts go waste. Before adjourning the case, the SC ordered that a notice be sent to the defence secretary and asked him to apprise the court on what progress had been made in the investigation. The court ordered the reply to be submitted within a week and adjourned the case till January 25.

## Canada grants asylum to Saudi teenager

Bangkok: An 18-year-old Saudi woman who fled her family saying she feared for her life left Thailand on Friday en route to Canada. PM Justin Trudeau said she has been accepted as a refugee by Canada.

"Canada has been unequivocal that we'll stand up for human rights and women's rights around the world," Trudeau said. "When the United Nations made a request of us that we grant miss (Rahaf Mohammed) al-Qunun's asylum, we accepted."



Rahaf Mohammed al-Qunun

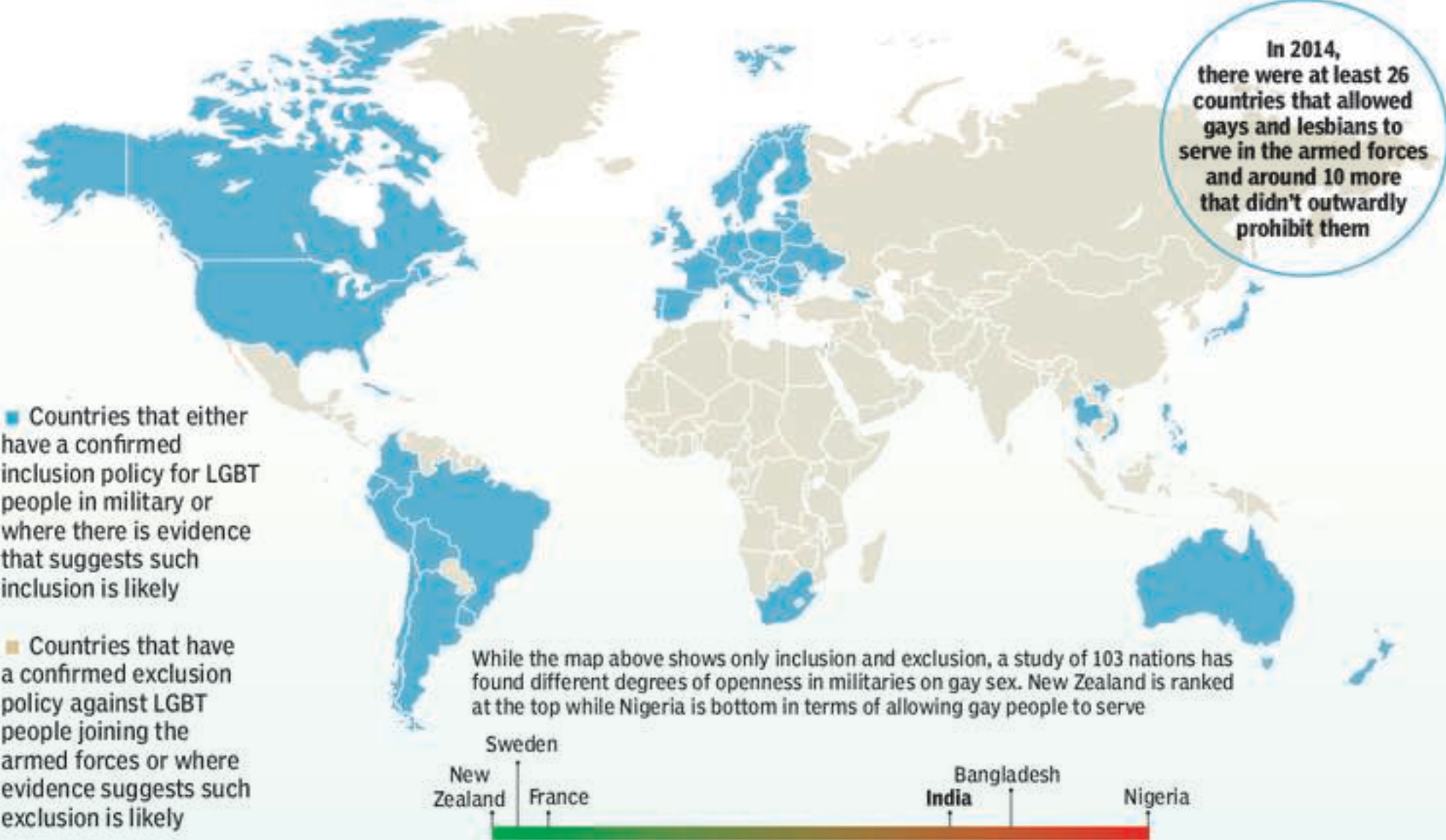
The saga of Rahaf grabbed international attention this week after she barricaded herself in a Bangkok airport hotel room to resist being sent

home to her family, which denies any abuse. A Korean Air flight carrying Rahaf left Bangkok for Seoul on Friday night at 11:37pm Bangkok time, an airport official said.

Rahaf will board a connecting flight to Toronto from Seoul's Incheon airport. "It was her wish to go to Canada," Thailand's immigration chief Surachate Hakparn said. "She still refuses to meet with her father and brother, and they are going to be travelling back tonight as well..."

## THE COUNTRIES THAT ALLOW GAY PEOPLE TO SERVE IN ARMY

Months after Supreme Court decriminalised consensual gay sex between adults, Army chief Gen Bipin Rawat has reignited the debate around gay rights by insisting that homosexuality is not permissible in the military. But armies around the world have reviewed their rules and quite a few now allow LGBT people to enlist for military service



**US**  
Under then President Bill Clinton in mid 1990s, "Don't ask, don't tell" (DADT), became the US military's policy on military service by lesbian, gay and bisexual people. But President Barack Obama repealed that policy and, in September 2011, "homosexual conduct" was removed as a ground for administrative separation

**UK**  
In January 2000, UK lifted its ban on gay and lesbian citizens from joining the armed forces

**ARGENTINA**  
New rule adopted in 2009 states that members of the military can no longer "be imprisoned for engaging in homosexual acts"

**AUSTRALIA**  
Gay persons can serve openly after the ban on them from joining the military was lifted in 1992

**SOUTH AFRICA**  
The SA military introduced the Policy on Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action in 1998 that eliminated discrimination against gays and lesbians

In 2014, there were at least 26 countries that allowed gays and lesbians to serve in the armed forces and around 10 more that didn't outwardly prohibit them

#### THE CASE IN INDIA

India's military is governed by its own laws that restrict certain constitutional rights enjoyed by civilians. Under the Army Act, homosexuality is a punishable offence, with jail term of up to 10 years

**China offers  
'green card'  
to Elon Musk**

Beijing: Tesla boss Elon Musk has been offered a "green card", China said on Thursday, a privilege enjoyed by an elite group of foreigners, including several Nobel laureates and a former NBA star. Musk was in China for the ground-breaking of Tesla's first overseas factory, which will allow it to sell vehicles directly in the world's largest market for electric vehicles. Musk met with Premier Li Keqiang on Wednesday in Beijing. "I hope to build Tesla's Shanghai factory into a global example," Musk told Li, according to a readout. "I really love China, I'm willing to visit here more often." Li replied: "If this is what you truly have in mind, we can give you a 'Chinese green card'." Tesla declined to comment on the offer. **AFP**

**Google board  
sued over 'cover  
up' of misconduct**

San Francisco: Two shareholder lawsuits filed this week accused the board of Google parent Alphabet Inc of playing a direct role in covering up misconduct claims against two executives. The firm declined to comment.

The allegations stem primarily from large severance payments to Andy Rubin, who led Google's Android mobile operating division until 2014, and Amit Singhal, head of Google's search unit until 2016. Rubin and Singhal have denied the claims. Google CEO Sundar Pichai apologized last year to employees for the companies' past handling of misconduct cases. **REUTERS**

## Indian firms can now access China's cancer drug market

Saibal Dasgupta | TNN

Beijing: In a move that might open up opportunities for Indian pharmaceutical firms, China has opened its vast market of government hospitals to foreign companies manufacturing cancer drugs.

The government has included 17 cancer drugs manufactured by foreign companies in its national basic insurance programme. Half of the thousands of government-run hospitals have been asked to use these imported drugs for treating cancer of the lungs, rectum and kidney.

This is a major opportunity for the Indian pharmaceutical sector, which has been seeking access to the Chinese market. India-made drugs are relatively cheap compared to those made in the West, giving Indian com-

**China recently allowed the wide screening of a movie on smuggling of cancer drugs from India. One character was shown criticising the govt policy, a rare occasion where the Chinese govt has allowed criticism**

panies a clear edge. The move comes after a public outcry against the non-availability and extremely high prices of foreign-made cancer drugs, forcing patients and their relatives to use smuggled medicines. Government-imposed restrictions led to the creation of a vast black market for cancer medicines that were smuggled from other countries, including India.

The government recently allowed a movie, *Dying to Survive*, to be widely screened across China. The movie showed how cancer drugs smuggled from India had become widely popular in China despite regular police crackdowns. One character in the movie was seen bitterly criticising government policy, a rare occasion where the Chinese government has allowed criticism of its policies.

At least 129 cancer hospitals and 1,257 tertiary hospitals have already begun to take advantage of the government's decision, which was taken some months ago but publicly announced only now. "Availability of cheap drugs has greatly eased the financial burden of some cancer patients," state media quoted a National Health Commission spokesperson as saying.

### AROUND THE WORLD

**Surgeon removes kidney he thought was a tumour**

The Florida Board of Medicine says a West Palm Beach surgeon has agreed to pay a \$3,000 fine for removing a woman's healthy kidney that he thought was a tumour. The Palm Beach Post reports Ramon Vazquez was responsible for cutting Maureen Pacheco open in 2016 so two other surgeons could perform a back operation. Pacheco had a kidney that never ascended into her abdomen, and Vazquez believed it was a cancerous tumour near her pelvis and removed it without her consent. Vazquez has said that he didn't review her medical records before the surgery. Pacheco later sued the two primary doctors, who each settled for \$250,000.

**Feuding rappers seek to take dispute to boxing ring**  
Two French rappers who fought a running battle inside a Paris airport with their entourages over the summer are seeking to take their dispute into a boxing ring in Belgium. Booba, one of France's most successful rap artists, announced on social media a "light-heavyweight category" bout at the Palais 12 venue in Brussels on April 5. Fabrizio Gentile, who manages the Palais 12 program agenda, said Friday that "we have in-



**WINTER GAMES:** A boy on a sledge races down the Wasserkuppe mountain in the Rhoen region near Fulda, Germany, on Friday

deed received a request and we are considering it." He declined to say whether a boxing ring had been requested.

**Python covered with more than 500 ticks rescued**  
A python was rescued by snake catchers in Australia which was found covered in over 500 ticks. A professional handler removed the snake and took it for treatment at a wildlife clinic, the report said. A video posted online showed the reptile, which was believed to be ill, coated in the parasites in a backyard swimming pool on the Gold Coast in

Queensland, the BBC reported on Friday. Vets believe the snake had been trying to drown the ticks in the pool. **Woman breaks into police station, wanted to date cop**  
Police say a woman smashed her way into a closed Pennsylvania police station looking for an officer she'd been sexually harassing ever since he arrested her. Police say 27-year-old Ashley Keister of Nanticoke had been under investigation. She had sent sexually harassing messages to the officer on social media and would call 911 just to talk to him.