



DIDN'T INTEND TO INFLECT PAIN: KATY PERRY 'SADDENED' BY BACKLASH OVER HER SHOE LINE RESEMBLING BLACKFACE



I KNOW I'M NOT THE LAST HARRY POTTER: DANIEL RADCLIFFE PREDICTS FUTURE ADAPTIONS OF THE POPULAR SERIES

## US warns nations against buying Venezuelan oil

Move Comes After Venezuela's Oil Minister Says Sanctions-Hit Country Wants India To Double Its Purchases

Washington: America's tough-talking national security adviser John Bolton has warned countries, including India, against buying Venezuelan oil, saying nations and firms that support the embattled President Nicolas Maduro's "theft" will "not be forgotten".

Bolton's warning through a tweet on Tuesday came a day after Venezuelan oil minister and president of the Latin American state-run oil company PDVSA, Manuel Quevedo, said that his sanctions-hit country wants to sell more crude oil to India. The US has slapped sweeping sanctions on PDVSA with a view to curb Venezuela's crude exports and put pressure on socialist President Maduro to step down.

With the US stopping imports from Venezuela, PDVSA is seeking to retain buyers in other big consuming countries such as China and India. Quevedo, who now holds the rotating presidency of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), is in India to convince refiners to double their oil purchases.

### VENEZUELA IS THIRD LARGEST SUPPLIER OF OIL TO INDIA

300,000 barrels per day (bpd) | Crude oil bought by India  
669,000 bpd | Asia's import of Venezuelan crude in January

\$20bn | Loss faced by Venezuela due to sanctions imposed by US

300bn barrels of crude | Venezuela has world's largest known reserves of oil — bigger than Saudi Arabia's 266bn barrels

Nations and firms that support Maduro's theft of Venezuelan resources will not be forgotten. The US will continue to use all of its powers to preserve the Venezuelan people's assets and we encourage all nations to work together to do the same

— JOHN BOLTON | US NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER



US and most Western countries have recognised President Nicolas Maduro's opponent Juan Guaido as Venezuela's head of state, but India has refused to do so saying 'it is for the people of Venezuela to find political solutions'

"India certainly has a good and healthy relationship with us and all the members

of the OPEC and that will continue. So, we always keep these communications and

relations with all-consuming countries in order to ensure stability and balance will

continue," Quevedo told reporters on the sidelines of the Petrotech conference in Greater Noida on Monday.

"We are selling more than 300,000 barrels per day (bpd) to Indian buyers. We want to double that amount," Quevedo said, adding that the US has caused a loss of about \$20 billion to Venezuela's oil revenue-dependent economy. Venezuela is the third largest supplier of oil to India, which is the world's third-biggest oil consumer.

Reacting to Quevedo's India visit, Bolton said "nations and firms that support Maduro's theft of Venezuelan resources will not be forgotten". "The United States will continue to use all of its powers to preserve the Venezuelan people's assets and we encourage all nations to work together to do the same," he tweeted.

The country's oil exports since the sanctions took effect on January 28 have fallen to 1.15 million bpd of crude and refined products, Refinitiv Eikon data showed, down from about 1.4 million bpd. The Latin American co-

untry has the world's largest known reserves of oil estimated at more than 300 billion barrels — bigger than Saudi Arabia's 266 billion barrels.

President Maduro has called Donald Trump's government a "gang of extremists" and blamed the US for his country's crisis. He is under growing internal and international pressure to call early presidential elections amid a worsening economic crisis and accusations of rapid corruption and human rights violations.

India has not followed the US in recognising Maduro's opponent Juan Guaido as the president and stop dealing with Maduro's administration. "India and Venezuela enjoy close and cordial relations. We are of the view that it is for the people of Venezuela to find political solutions to resolve their differences through constructive dialogue and discussion without resorting to violence," external affairs ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said last month. AGENCIES

## EU adds Saudi to dirty-money blacklist, irks UK

Strasbourg: The European Commission added Saudi Arabia, Panama, Nigeria and other jurisdictions to a blacklist of nations seen as posing a threat because of lax controls on terrorism financing and money laundering, the EU executive said on Wednesday. The move is part of a crackdown on money laundering after several scandals at EU banks but has been criticised by several EU countries including Britain worried about their economic relations with the listed states, notably Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi government media office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Panama said it should be removed from the list because it recently adopted stronger rules against money laundering.

Despite pressure to exclude Riyadh from the list, the commission decided to list the kingdom. Apart from reputational damage, inclusion on the list complicates financial relations with the EU. The bloc's banks will have to carry out additional checks on payments involving entities from listed jurisdictions.

The list now includes 23 jurisdictions, up from 16. The

**The decision by EU Commission has irked several EU states worried about their economic ties with Saudi Arabia. The 28 EU states now have one month to endorse the list**

commission said it added jurisdictions with "strategic deficiencies in their anti-money laundering and countering terrorist financing regimes". Also newcomers to the list are Libya, Botswana, Ghana, Samoa, the Bahamas and the four US territories of American Samoa, US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Guam. The other listed states are Afghanistan, North Korea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and Yemen.

The 28 EU member states now have one month, which can be extended to two, to endorse the list. They could reject it by qualified majority. EU justice commissioner Vera Jourouva, who proposed the list, told a news conference that she was confident states would not block it. REUTERS

## Bombing kills 20 Revolutionary Guards in Iran

Tehran: A suicide bombing targeting a bus carrying personnel of Iran's elite paramilitary Revolutionary Guard force killed at least 20 people and wounded 20 in the country's southern, state media reported. An al-Qaida-linked Sunni extremist group operating across the border in Pakistan reportedly claimed the assault.

The bombing came on the same day a US-led conference in Warsaw was to include discussions on what America describes as Iran's malign influence across the wider Middle East. It also comes two days after Iran marked the 40th anniversary of its 1979 Islamic Revolution and four decades of tense relations with the West.

The state-run IRNA news agency, citing what it described as an "informed source", reported the attack on the Guard in Iran's Sistan and Baluchistan province.

The Guard is a major economic and military power in Iran, answerable only to the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. It later issued a statement saying a vehicle loaded with explosives targeted a bus carrying border

### US: Ex-intel official defected to Iran, revealed secrets

A former US Air Force counterintelligence specialist who defected to Iran has been charged with revealing classified information to the Tehran government, including the code name and secret mission of a Pentagon programme. The justice department said on Wednesday that Monica Elfriede Witt, 39, defected in 2013 after attending a conference in Iran. She is currently at-large, along with four Iranian hackers who, prosecutors say, used the information she provided to target her former colleagues in the US intelligence community. The four Iranians were acting on behalf of the government-linked Iranian Revolutionary Guard, prosecutors said. AP

guards affiliated with its force.

Both official and semi-official Iranian media outlets blamed Wednesday's bombing on Jaish al-Adl, or "Army of Justice", saying the group had claimed the attack. AP

### 'Tech cos haven't done enough to protect online abuse victims'

Twitter Inc CEO Jack Dorsey said on Tuesday that Silicon Valley companies, including his own, have not done enough to protect victims of online abuse, calling it a "huge fail". Interviewed via Twitter by Kara Swisher, co-founder of the tech news site Recode, Dorsey tweeted that he would give himself a 'C' grade for what Swisher termed "tech responsibility".

"We've made progress, but it has been scattered and not felt enough," he tweeted in response to Swisher's questions. "Changing the experience hasn't been meaningful enough. And we've put most of the burden on the victims of abuse (that's a huge fail)."

Twitter has faced criticism for abusive posts and inaccurate news stories on its service. It has been investing to improve what Dorsey has described as the "collective health" of Twitter. Dorsey said he does not like how Twitter tends to incentivise outrage and short-term thinking, and that the lack of diversity in the firm hasn't helped in combating such problems. REUTERS

## A 'not so happy' Trump mulls signing border deal

Washington: Under mounting pressure from his own party, President Donald Trump appeared to be grudgingly leaning toward accepting an agreement that would head off a threatened second government shutdown but provide just a fraction of the money he's been demanding for his Mexican border wall.

Trump said on Tuesday he would need more time to study the plan, but he also declared he was not expecting another shutdown this weekend when funding for parts of the government would run out. He strongly signalled he planned to scrounge up additional dollars for the wall by raiding other federal coffers to deliver on the signature promise of his presidential campaign.

"I can't say I'm happy. I can't say I'm thrilled," Trump said of the proposed deal. "But the wall is getting built, regardless. It doesn't matter because we're doing other things beyond what we're talking about here." Trump sounded more conciliatory in a Tuesday tweet, thanking "all Republicans for the work you have done in dealing with the Radical Left on Border Security."

Accepting the deal, worked out by negotiators from both



US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that if he does sign the deal, he would consider supplementing the wall by moving money from what he described as less important areas of government

parties, would be a disappointment for a president who has repeatedly insisted he needs \$5.7 billion for a barrier along the US-Mexico border, saying it is paramount for national security. Trump turned down a similar deal in December, forcing the 35-day shutdown that left thousands of federal workers without paychecks.

Lawmakers tentatively agreed on Monday to a deal that would provide nearly \$1.4 billion for border barriers and keep the government funded for the rest of the fiscal year, which ends on September 30. The deal would allow 88km of new fencing but far less than the 345km the White Ho-

use demanded in December.

A presidential rejection of the deal could plunge Congress into a new crisis, as lawmakers have no clear Plan B. Speaking at a cabinet meeting, Trump said of a possible shutdown: "I don't think it's going to happen." Still, he made clear that, if he does sign on to the deal, he is strongly considering supplementing it by moving money from what he described as less important areas of government. "We have a lot of money in this country and we're using some of that money — a small percentage of that money — to build the wall, which we desperately need." AP

## Students sue to open Yale fraternities to women

Hartford: Three women who attend Yale University sued the school and nine all-male fraternities Tuesday, seeking to force the social organisations to admit women in response to alleged sexual assault, harassment and discrimination.

The class-action lawsuit, filed in federal court in Connecticut, calls for an order banning fraternities from considering gender in admission decisions; fully integrating women in fraternity governance and alumni networks; and requiring Yale to prohibit student organisations from engaging in discrimination and harassment. The students also say women are being shut out of the social and economic benefits offered by all-male fraternities, including access to vast alumni net-

works that can help land coveted jobs. While there are sororities, their power and influence pales in comparison with fraternities, the lawsuit says.

"It's not only breeding a very toxic sexual culture but also is giving undue economic and professional benefits to the male fraternity members," said one of the plaintiffs, Ry Walker, a 20-year-old junior majoring in astrophysics and African-American studies. The other two plaintiffs are junior Anna McNeil and sophomore Eliana Singer. Their lawyers say they believe this is the first-ever lawsuit by students against a university seeking to "gender integrate" fraternities.

A Yale spokesman, Tom Conroy, said he did not have a comment on the lawsuit. AP

## Saudi sends over 100 guards to Pak ahead of crown prince visit

Omer Farooq Khan | TNN

Islamabad: Days ahead of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to Pakistan, as many as 123 Saudi Arabian Royal Guards arrived in Islamabad to ensure his security in the country. Official sources said the guards, who landed in Islamabad on Tuesday night, will be continuously on duty for the security of Mohammed bin Salman, commonly known as MbS.

He will arrive in Pakistan on February 16 for a two-day visit, the Saudi ambassador here said. The crown prince is expected to stay at the PM's House, where a gym has also been set up for him. To ensure foolproof security, arrange-



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman will arrive in Pakistan on February 16 for a two-day visit

300 cars in the city, solely reserved for them, during the course of their visit," reported Geo News, a local TV station.

"A team of doctors and a delegation of Saudi media persons who will cover Mohammed bin Salman's tour have also reached Islamabad," it added. Diplomatic sources have informed that a trade deal worth \$14 billion would be signed between Pakistan and the Saudi Kingdom during the visit. The trade deal would be the biggest foreign investment in the country's history. Last year, PM Imran Khan had visited Riyadh where he tried to persuade potential investors and secure funds to overcome Pakistan's balance of payment crisis.

### AROUND THE WORLD

#### Russia teen refits car to drive it backward, held

A Russian teenager has refitted his car to drive it backward, and got a shoutout from Tesla's CEO Elon Musk. But this didn't stop the police from stripping him of the car registration. The 18-year-old was stopped earlier this week driving the battered Lada backward. The teenager showed in a video posted on social media that he had refitted the car, removing what was underneath the hood to where the trunk normally is, and reversed the driver's seat. The video, posted on Twitter by the Russian television station NTV, got a shoutout on Monday from Musk's verified account who said, in Russian, that it was "awesome". Local police, however, were not impressed and fined the teenager for driving backward, illegal refitting the car and driving without insurance.

Reuters

City	Delta	Indigo	Jet Airways	Qatar Airways	SriLankan	Swire	Tiger Airways	Vistara
DELHI	12	8	15	10	5	3	2	7
MUMBAI	15	10	18	12	7	4	3	9
BANGALORE	10	6	12	8	4	2	1	5
CHENNAI	8	5	10	6	3	1	1	4
KOLKATA	6	4	8	5	2	1	1	3



STRIKE OVER PAY GROUNDS BELGIUM AIR TRAFFIC: Belgian airports cancelled almost all flights on Wednesday as a national strike over pay and working conditions halted activity at ports, hit public transport and led to factory blockades. Air traffic control body Skyes shut Belgian airspace for 24 hours from 2100 GMT on Tuesday as it could not guarantee enough staff would turn up. Belgian airspace is among the busiest in Europe and the strike would hit some 60,000 travellers

admitted, they don't know where the cars are.

**Insta deletes gay comic strip in Indonesia after outrage**  
Instagram on Wednesday shut down an account that published comic strips about the struggles of a gay Muslim in Indonesia after it sparked a backlash in the world's biggest Islamic nation. The move comes after

Indonesia's communications ministry sent a letter to the social media giant warning that the "pornographic" content violated an electronic information law. The now-deleted account, which had about 6,000 followers, published a dozen posts depicting a gay Muslim man named Alpanuto who talked about discrimination and his life in a conservative family.

## Climate change could wipe out Bengal tigers in 50 yrs



Tiger habitats in the Sundarbans will vanish by 2070, researchers said

Melbourne: Sundarbans — the iconic Bengal tiger's last coastal stronghold and the world's biggest mangrove forest — could be destroyed by climate change and rising sea levels over the next 50 years, scientists say. Spanning more than 10,000 square kilometres, the Sundarbans region of Bangladesh and India is the biggest mangrove forest on Earth, and also the most critical area for the endangered Bengal tiger, researchers said. "Fewer than 4,000 Bengal tigers are alive today," said Bill Laurance, a professor at the James Cook University in

Australia. "That's a really low number for the world's biggest cat, which used to be far more abundant but today is mainly confined to small areas of India and Bangladesh," Laurance said.

"What is most terrifying is that our analyses suggest tiger habitats in the Sundarbans will vanish entirely by 2070," said Sharif Mukul, an assistant professor at Independent University Bangladesh.

The researchers used computer simulations to assess the future suitability of the low-lying Sundarbans region for tigers and their prey

species, using mainstream estimates of climatic trends from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Their analyses included factors such as extreme weather events and sea-level rise.

"Beyond climate change, the Sundarbans are under growing pressure from industrial developments, new roads, and greater poaching," said Laurance. "So, tigers are getting a double whammy — greater human encroachment on the one hand and a worsening climate and associated sea-level rises on the other," he said. PTI

#### Papua New Guinea admits APEC Maseratis missing

Several of the Maseratis bought for last year's summit of Asia-Pacific leaders have gone missing, Papua New Guinea admitted on Tuesday, as it launched a probe to track them down. The government of the impoverished nation faced harsh criticism for high spending — including buying a fleet of sports cars which sell for around US\$150,000 each — for the November APEC summit, but promised to recoup some of the cost by selling them on. Now, police have