



TWITTERATI

@REALDONALDTRUMP, ON NASA'S PROJECTS

For all of the money we are spending, NASA should NOT be talking about going to the Moon — We did that 50 years ago. They should be focused on the much bigger things we are doing, including Mars (of which the Moon is a part), Defense and Science!

TOP OF THE WORLD

Onus of Indo-Pak peace on Pakistan, says White House

LALIT K JHA
WASHINGTON, JUNE 8

AMIDST NEW peace overtures from the Imran Khan government after the re-election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the White House has made it clear to Pakistan that the onus for sustained peace in South Asia was on it by putting the terror groups out of business.

Khan has written a second letter to Prime Minister Modi after his re-election, saying that Pakistan wants talks with India to resolve all differences, including on the Kashmir issue.

However, India has rejected Pakistan's offer of talks, maintaining that terror and talks cannot go together and said that no bilateral meeting has been planned between the two premiers on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Summit (SCO) in Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek on June 13-14.

"Until these groups are put out of business, it's going to be very difficult for India and Pakistan to achieve a sustained peace. So the onus is on Pakistan to ensure that they crack down on these groups," said the White House official.

The US is looking for sustained and irreversible steps that

What the United States is really looking for in Pakistan are arrests and prosecutions and not allowing these groups to operate and move around freely, acquire weapons, cross into India, carry out attacks"

— A SENIOR WHITE HOUSE OFFICIAL

shut down their operations, said the official.

A senior State Department official said that in the wake of the Pulwama terrorist attack, the US has seen Pakistan taking some initial actions against designated terrorist organisations and more steps to enhance counter terrorism financing measures.

"We have always agreed that the underlying causes of the tensions between India and Pakistan needed to be addressed. And the underlying tension has been the role of terrorist forces that have sanctuary on Pakistani soil. So we certainly encourage the creation of an environment that will lead to a dialogue," the official said. PTI



Narendra Modi and Imran Khan are to be at the Shanghai Cooperation Summit (SCO) in Bishkek on June 13, 14. Archive

ON PAKISTAN'S ACTION AGAINST TERROR

'NEED PRACTICAL STEPS' Pakistan needs to take practical steps to demonstrate that it is countering terrorist financing and extremists that are located on their territory, a senior State Department Official told reporters last week

WATCHDOG WATCH LIST Paris-based international terror financing watchdog

FATF in June last year placed Pakistan onto its watch list in a bid to push the country to halt support for militant groups

'FAILURE TO STOP FUNDS' In February, the FATF decided to continue the 'Grey' listing of Pakistan for its failure to stop funding of terrorist groups such as the JeM and the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)

Trump calls off plan to impose tariffs on Mexico

MICHAEL D SHEAR, ANA SWANSON & AZAM AHMED
WASHINGTON, JUNE 8

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump backed off his plan to impose tariffs on all Mexican goods and announced via Twitter Friday night that the United States had reached an agreement with Mexico to reduce the flow of migrants to the southwestern border.

Trump tweeted the announcement only hours after returning from Europe and following several days of intense and sometimes difficult negotiations between American and Mexican officials in Washington.

The president's threat that he would impose potentially crippling tariffs on the United States' largest trading partner and one of its closest allies brought both countries to the brink of an economic and diplomatic crisis — only to be yanked back from the precipice nine days later.

In an unusual show of force against their own party's president, Republican senators had threatened to try to block the tariffs if Trump moved ahead with them, and had demanded a face-to-face meeting with the president before any action.

According to a U.S.-Mexico Joint Declaration distributed late



President Donald Trump greets supporters in Washington. AP

Friday, Mexico agreed to "take unprecedented steps to increase enforcement to curb irregular migration," including the deployment of its national guard throughout the country to stop migrants from reaching the United States.

The declaration, distributed by the State Department, said Mexico had also agreed to accept an expansion of a Trump administration program that makes some migrants wait in Mexico while their asylum claims are heard in the United States.

"The United States looks forward to working alongside Mexico to fulfill these commitments so that we can stem the tide of illegal migration across our southern border and to make our border strong and secure," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement.

EXPLAINED

Settled, for how long?

MEXICAN president López Obrador has promised his voters sweeping economic reforms at a time when Mexico's economy is considerably weakened — which increases the need for good trade ties with the US. But the current solution is conditional on Mexico's actions yielding results that are to Trump's satisfaction.

SUDAN
Two rebel leaders held

Stockholm: A powerful explosion ripped through two apartment buildings in a Swedish city on Friday, slightly injuring 25 people, officials said. The cause of the blast wasn't immediately known. The explosion blew out dozens of windows and destroyed balconies in the buildings in central Linköping. One of the buildings has four stories, while the other has four floors. "As for now, we don't have any information to believe this is terror-related," said police spokesman Bjorn Oberg.

UNITED KINGDOM

Five held for 'homophobic attack'

London: Police in London have arrested five suspects on suspicion of punching two women on a bus because they are lesbians. Authorities didn't identify the victims in the May 30 attack. But one of the victims posted an image on her Facebook page showing her bloodied face and that of her girlfriend's. She said in the post that they were on the upper deck of the bus when a gang of "hooligans" demanded that they kiss. The women tried to reason with them, but the incident escalated. Police said Saturday all of suspects are between 15 and 18 years old.

TURKEY

'Neutralised' 43 Kurdish militants: Govt

Islamabad: Turkey's Defence Ministry said Saturday 43 members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) had been "neutralised" as part of an operation Ankara launched in northern Iraq 13 days ago. The Turkish military launched what it dubbed "Operation Claw" in a kurk region on June 27 with artillery and air strikes followed by operations by commando brigades. Ankara said the aim was to destroy shelters and caves used by the PKK and "neutralise" its members — a term it uses to refer to deaths, but also to those wounded or captured.

Bangladeshi immigrant charged with planning Times Square attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW YORK, JUNE 8

A BANGLADESHI immigrant, who allegedly heaped praise on the Islamic State group and Osama bin Laden, has been charged Friday after he was accused of plotting a grenade attack on the bustling tourist-clogged Times Square in the US, authorities said.

Ashiqul Alam, 22, was arrested Thursday after arranging through an undercover agent to buy a pair of semiautomatic pistols with obliterated serial numbers and surveilled the popular Manhattan district to identify the best place for the attack, the the Justice Department said in a statement.

Alam who underwent an eye surgery to improve his vision was nervous about his eyeglasses falling off his face during the terror strike and creating an embarrassing debacle," according to federal charging documents.

Alam and the undercover agent went on several reconnaissance runs there. Alam said a successful attack would make them "legends", it said.

The documents said Alam expressed his desire to destroy the new World Trade Center with 'probably a rocket launcher, like a huge one'



'A TURNING POINT FOR HONG KONG'

Students in chains at a protest in Hong Kong on Saturday. They are against a proposed extradition law which would allow Hong Kong to hand over fugitives to the jurisdictions that the city doesn't currently have an extradition agreement with, including mainland China, where a fair trial might not be guaranteed. AP

Sirisena fires intelligence chief after criticism over Easter Sunday bombings

RANGA SIRILAL
COLOMBO, JUNE 8

SRI LANKAN President Maithripala Sirisena has fired the country's chief of national intelligence after he suggested the leader knew about warnings that deadly Easter bombings were in the works.

Indian intelligence agents sent several warnings to Sri Lankan authorities that a plot was underway, but Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe have both said they were not briefed about the warnings before the April 21 attacks, claimed by Islamic state,



Maithripala Sirisena

which killed over 250 people.

A Parliamentary select committee led by allies of Sirisena's rival Wickremesinghe is investigating possible lapses that allowed the Islamist militants to target hotels and churches.

In his May 29 testimony to parliament, intelligence boss Sisira Mendis said security council meetings were irregular, making it difficult to properly protect the island nation.

Mendis said that when he brought up the warnings during a meeting on April 9, director of the State Intelligence Service Nilantha Jayawardena, the direct link to the president, told him Sirisena had already been briefed.

On Friday, a day after two other critical testimonies, Sirisena announced Mendis's removal in a move that could escalate political tensions over the parliamentary probe.

US Ambassador says Israel has right to annex parts of West Bank

DAVID M HALBFINGER
JERUSALEM, JUNE 8

ISRAEL HAS a right to annex at least some, but "unlikely all," of the West Bank, the US ambassador, David Friedman, said in an interview, opening the door to U.S. acceptance of what would be an enormously provocative act.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has promised to begin annexing Jewish settlements in the West Bank, a move that would violate international law and could be a fatal blow to a two-state solution.

"Under certain circum-

"We really don't have a view until we understand how much, on what terms, why does it make sense, why is it good for Israel, why is it good for the region, why does it not create more problems than it solves"

— DAVID FRIEDMAN

stances," Friedman said, "I think Israel has the right to retain some, but unlikely all, of the West Bank."

In a wide-ranging interview

RECENT US-IRAN EXCHANGES

■ Trump said on Thursday Iran was failing as a nation, under pressure of his sanctions, and repeated his call for talks with Tehran.

■ Mousavi on Friday dismissed Trump's comments as "repetitive, groundless and paradoxical" and said they did not merit a response.

Hatami noted the presence of American warships in the region Saturday and said the Islamic Republic's enemies are afraid of conflict because of the country's advanced offensive and defensive power, said a news agency.

'HE WAS REFUSING TO LET ME WORK BECAUSE I REFUSED TO MARRY HIM'

A #MeToo wave hits global football as women's World Cup begins

TARIQ PANJA
PARIS, JUNE 8

AS WORLD soccer opens its most important championship for women this week, it is confronting a range of accusations that men with influence over women in the sport repeatedly have used their positions to harass or abuse them.

Since the start of this year, coaches and administrators in at least five countries on four continents have been accused by players and colleagues of sexual misconduct, inappropriate behavior and even rape.

Now, an internal investiga-



Ahmad Ahmad was accused of harassing several women

tion has begun into a vice president of FIFA, world soccer's governing body, after he was accused, among other transgressions, of dismissing an employee in 2017 after she rejected his romantic advances. The of-

ficial, Ahmad Ahmad, president of Africa's soccer confederation and a close ally of the FIFA president, Gianni Infantino, has denied the accusation and separate claims that he sexually harassed several other women.

The harassment allegations against Ahmad are the first to be made against the leader of one of soccer's six regional governing bodies. Ahmad also has been accused of misusing confederation funds and entering into questionable contracts, potential offenses that led to his being detained by French authorities in Paris on Thursday. He was later released without being charged.

"I think there's a lot to be done to ensure proper safeguarding" of women's players, said Moya Dodd, an Australian soccer official who once served on FIFA's governing council. "We simply don't know how big the problem is unless we have proper policies and safe-reporting mechanisms to test that question."

In some of the cases, the abuse of women's players was known to more senior soccer officials, who did not act to stop it.

This was the case, too, with the accusations of inappropriate behavior by Ahmad. In the most detailed accusation against him, a public relations

consultant from Mali, Mariam Diakite, said she was fired by Ahmad for rejecting his advances. Although she was later reinstated after soccer officials intervened, she learned, after her incident was included in an ethics complaint filed with FIFA this year, that at least four other women had made similar claims.

Ahmad called her accusations "smears on my character" and part of a personal vendetta against him he said was being orchestrated by a former senior employee of the African soccer federation.

Diakite, 34, said she had a confrontation with Ahmad in a

hotel suite during a conference she was hired to organise in Rabat, Morocco, in 2017. He informed her he was terminating her because he had intimidated officials that the pair were in a romantic relationship and that it would be a conflict of interest if she carried on working.

But Diakite said that while he sought one, there was no romantic relationship.

"He was refusing to let me work because I refused to marry him," Diakite said. "When you are a president and you've got people whose dream is to work in football and you say, 'Come to my room and I give you a job,' is that not abuse of power?" NYT

Former Afghan football president banned for life

New York: The former president of the Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF) has been banned for life after FIFA's ethics committee found him guilty of abusing his position and sexually abusing female players, the global soccer body said on Saturday.

Keramuddin Keram, also a former FIFA Standing Committee member, was ac-

used by at least five Afghan female football players of repeated sexual abuse between 2013-18, FIFA said in a statement.

He was also fined 1,000,000 Swiss francs (\$1.01 million).

The AFF could not immediately be reached for comment. It has previously rejected the allegations as "groundless". ENS