

Trump's Call To Freeze Current Frontlines "Good Compromise": Zelensky

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday backed US leader Donald Trump's proposal to make the current front line the basis for negotiations with Russia, but doubted his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin would accept it.

Trump "proposed 'Stay where we stay and begin conversation'," Zelensky told reporters during a brief visit to Oslo.

"I think that was a good compromise, but I'm not sure that Putin will support it, and I said it to the president," he said.

Efforts to bring an end to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, launched in 2022, appear to have once again hit a standstill.

In recent days, Trump has urged both Moscow and Kyiv to stop the war at their current battle lines.

Trump said Tuesday he had shelved plans for a summit in Budapest with Putin in the coming weeks because he did not want a "wasted" meeting.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov meanwhile, said Wednesday that preparations for a summit between Putin and Trump "are continuing".

Satya Nadella Takes Home Nearly \$100 Million As Microsoft Stock Climbs

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella earned \$96.5 million in fiscal 2025, up 22 per cent from \$79.1 million last year. The package includes \$84 million in stock awards, \$9.5 million in cash incentives, and a \$2.5 million base salary, with 90 per cent tied to stock performance.

Nadella, who became Microsoft's CEO in 2014, has overseen the company's transformation into a global leader in artificial intelligence and cloud computing. His leadership has driven, including high-profile acquisitions like LinkedIn, GitHub, and Activision Blizzard, and a long-term partnership with OpenAI that has integrated generative AI features across Microsoft products.

Microsoft shares have climbed 23 per cent so far in 2025. The company's stock has more than doubled over the past three years. Microsoft is set to report its fiscal first-quarter results next week. In its last quarterly report, the company posted better-than-expected earnings and revenue, with sales rising 18 per cent, its fastest growth in over three years, led by the Azure cloud division and growing demand for AI infrastructure.

Other senior executives also received pay increases. Chief Financial Officer Amy Hood earned \$29.5 million, while Judson Althoff, recently appointed head of Microsoft's commercial business, received \$28.2 million.

Microsoft has faced workforce challenges, including the layoff of more than 15,000 employees in 2025 and the termination of employees protesting the company's contracts with Israel. Nadella acknowledged in a July memo to staff that the job cuts had "been weighing heavily" on him.

In FY 2024, Nadella's total compensation jumped 63 per cent to \$79.1 million, up from \$48.5 million in 2023, driven largely by stock awards. His stock-based pay rose to about \$71 million from \$39 million the previous year, as Microsoft's market value crossed \$3 trillion. The company's shares gained around 31 per cent during the fiscal year, boosted by Microsoft's investment in OpenAI and its growing lead in generative AI.

Sri Lankan Politician Assassinated In Office, Gunman Fired Multiple Shots

Sri Lanka: A Sri Lankan opposition politician was shot dead in his office on Wednesday, police said, the latest in a wave of assassinations and the first to target a political figure.

Lasantha Wickramasekara, 38, the council chairman of the coastal city of Weligama, was meeting with constituents when a gunman burst in and fired multiple times with a revolver.

The Trans Struggle Caused By Pakistan's Cultural Taboos, Religious Norms



In Pakistan, where gender affirmation surgery was recently legalised, Bunty is one of the few trans women who could afford to get it done safely. Despite winning the right to medically transition in 2018, many transgender people in the Muslim-majority nation still turn to unqualified surgeons because of a lack of trained doctors, high costs, and cultural taboos.

Bunty, who no longer uses her family name since her transition, said she went to the only doctor in Lahore who performs breast augmentation surgery for trans women -- a qualified, experienced professional.

While the procedure was successful, she said it took place in an "underground" manner and cost twice the normal rate for a cisgender woman. "I was kept at the hospital for only two hours, and then I was forced to leave so that no one would find out," she told AFP. "I was in extreme pain."

It was the latest ignominy for Bunty, who said she was shunned by her family over her gender identity, then sacked from the job that funded her hospital bills, pushing her into sex work.

She said the hospital did not want news of her procedure to spread among doctors and patients who might disapprove.

"Gender transitioning is still controversial. Doctors fear they will be judged," said Mudassir Mahboob, a doctor who carries out legal gender-affirmation surgeries.

Mahboob said he chose to work in the capital, Islamabad, to avoid causing controversy in his deeply conservative home province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He has operated on patients who have asked him to repair damage done to them by unscrupulous backstreet "doctors". One of them, "who got castrated by a so-called practitioner, came to me and asked me to fix what went wrong", he

said.

'Have fear of God'

Reem Sharif, a member of a communal household known as a "dera" for trans people, said there were only two doctors in Pakistan openly offering legal, safe gender affirmation procedures.

Public hospitals often turn away those who enquire about such services, citing religion, Sharif said.

"They would say: 'Have fear of God, how can you try to do this?'" she told AFP, surrounded by other trans women putting on makeup and fixing their hair. "Gender transition is legal according to the law, but practically it is not, and (it) is not accepted in society."

No reliable data exists on the number of transgender people in Pakistan.

The country has long recognised a third sex, known as "khawaja sira", who for centuries have played a spiritual role in society, offering blessings at weddings and births.

The 2018 law aimed to strengthen political and social rights for transgender people, whose wider integration was being met with increasing violence. Despite being lauded around the world, the law drew domestic backlash from right-wing religious groups, which spread disinformation that it would lead to same-sex marriage in a country where homosexuality is illegal.

9-Month-Old Baby Rescued From Poland's Highest Peak After Parents Attempt Dangerous Climb

A Lithuanian couple is facing backlash after attempting to climb Poland's Mount Rysy with their nine-month-old baby in hazardous weather. The couple, unprepared for the climb, needed a guide's help to rescue their child, sparking outrage over their decision to put the baby at risk. According to TVP World, the infant's parents had attempted to hike up the 2,500-metre-high mountain, straddling the Poland-Slovakia border, without realising the severe risks involved.

At the time, the trail was covered in hard snow and ice, requiring proper equipment, experience, and vigilance. Despite warnings from guide Stoch, a Slovak rescuer, and Chata pod Rysami staff, the parents continued climbing with their baby.

After reaching the summit, the couple realised the descent was too risky and asked guide Stoch for crampons and assistance. He declined, explaining that tying the group together could have put everyone in danger--if one person slipped, it could have pulled the rest down as well.

Stoch then urged the couple to contact rescue services, as it was the only safe solution, but they declined, citing a lack of travel insurance. Recognising the severity of the situation.

" Hamas Could Be Put Out In 2 Minutes": Trump Warns Against Ceasefire Violation

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Tuesday described Hamas as "violent people" and stated they "could be put out in two minutes," while noting that the group was being given an opportunity to uphold the ceasefire agreement.

Speaking at a Diwali celebration at the White House, Trump highlighted the broader context of his peace efforts, saying, "We are forging peace all over the world... We're getting everybody to get along. I just got a call from the Middle East. We're doing very well there. We have many countries signed on to peace in the Middle East, and nobody thought they'd ever see that happening." Turning specifically to the situation with Hamas, Trump reiterated the group's violent nature and the US's approach, stating, "The Hamas situation, they're pretty violent people. We could put that out in two minutes. We're giving them a chance. They agreed that they'd be very good and straight. They wouldn't be killing people." He emphasised that swift action would follow if the ceasefire was violated: "If they don't honour the deal, they'll be taken care of very quickly. It is total peace in the Middle East; we have levels of friendship with everybody. Every country that



hated each other now loves each other. Nobody ever saw anything like it..."

This firm stance echoed his warning from October 21, when Trump had cautioned Hamas not to breach the Gaza peace plan, expressing hope that the group would act responsibly and adding that "if they do not, an end to Hamas will be fast, furious and brutal." The President made the statement in a post on his social media platform, Truth Social, outlining the support of US allies in the region. In his post, Trump wrote, "Numerous of our NOW GREAT ALLIES in the Middle East, and areas surrounding the Middle East, have explicitly and strongly, with great enthusiasm, informed me that they would welcome the opportunity, at my request, to go into GAZA with a heavy force and 'straighten our Hamas' if Hamas continues to act badly, in violation of their agreement with us. The love and spirit for the

Middle East has not been seen like this in a thousand years! It is a beautiful thing to behold! I told these countries, and Israel, 'NOT YET!' There is still hope that Hamas will do what is right." He further added, "If they do not, an end to Hamas will be FAST, FURIOUS, & BRUTAL! I would like to thank all of those countries that called to help. Also, I would like to thank the great and powerful country of Indonesia, and its wonderful leader, for all of the help they have shown and given to the Middle East, and to the U.S.A. TO EVERYONE, thank you for your attention to this matter." Meanwhile, both Israel and Hamas reaffirmed their commitment to the US-mediated ceasefire despite recent weekend clashes. On Monday, Israel confirmed that Hamas had transferred the body of one hostage, bringing the total number of returned bodies to 13 out of the 28 promised.

Amid Drug Violence In Mexico, Security Firms On Alert For World Cup 2026

MEXICO CITY: Gunshots rang out in a Mexico City warehouse as Leopoldo Cerdeira emptied a cartridge into a car door propped up on a stand.

The reason for the smoky handgun and scattering of bullet casings littered over the floor was that Cerdeira wanted to demonstrate the quality of his vehicles' armour plating in order to rent them out to wealthy foreign visitors coming to Mexico for the 2026 World Cup.

The head of security firm Ruhe proudly displayed how the bullets had been blocked by the solid synthetic layer that coats the entirety of his fleet of 70 vehicles.

This Mexican entrepreneur is ready for the World Cup, which his nation will co-host with the United States and Canada from June 11 to July 19 next year.

"Our bookings are for tourists, people who have money, who come to see the matches but are afraid because they have heard bad things about Mexico," said Cerdeira at his company's headquarters.

Louvre Robbers' "Dhoom"-Style Escape On Scooters, AI Video Goes Viral

The Louvre in Paris reopened for visitors on Wednesday morning, three days after it was shuttered following an audacious daylight heist where thieves fled with precious royal jewellery worth over \$100 million in just seven minutes. However, the scene of the heist -- the jewel-lined Apollo Room -- stayed closed as authorities hunted for the gang of 'experienced criminals' who pulled off the smash-and-grab just 250 metres (270 yards) from Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece Mona Lisa.

According to authorities, the gang spent less than four minutes inside the Louvre. They used a freight lift wheeled to the Seine-facing facade to force open a window, smashed two display cases and stole the museum's most priceless treasures. Alarms drew Louvre agents to the gallery, forcing the intruders to bolt - but the theft was already done. Just minutes later, they reportedly fled on two scooters.

The scooters in question were reportedly Yamaha TMax. A witness named Samir, who was riding a bicycle nearby at the time, told the TF1 channel that he saw two men "get on the hoist, break the window and enter... it took 30 seconds". He said he saw four of



ny's headquarters.

Cerdeira's luxury cars recently transported a FIFA delegation visiting Mexico, and the fleet, reserved for the Mexican Formula 1 Grand Prix at the end of the month, will increase to 80 vehicles for the global footballing showpiece.

But there is far more to the Mexican security industry than what are essentially personal, luxury armoured vehicles.

Drivers, armed escorts, bomb protection, bullet-proof vests and armoured briefcases are just some of the other products offered by a sector that profits from the criminal violence plaguing Mexico -- a country with some 30,000 murders per year.

Much of this bloodshed is linked to Mexico's infamous drug cartels.

"The country's insecurity has led to the growth of our industry," said Gabriel Hernandez, head of Armoring Group, which sells bulletproof cars and clothing for civilians and military personnel in Mexico, Spain and the United States.

Next year's World Cup will see three Mexican cities host matches, with millions expected to flock to Mexico City, northern industrial city Monterrey and the booming home of tequila and Mariachi music, Guadalajara.

The opening match will be held in Mexico City, where 40,000 additional

CCTV cameras have been installed, and the use of drones will be restricted in the three cities.

Local authorities say they are doing their utmost to ensure security for the World Cup, and while the capital -- where Pelé's Brazil lifted their third world title in 1970 and Diego Maradona's Argentina their second in 1986 -- is usually spared from attacks by drug traffickers, the same cannot be said of the other host cities.

'World Cup Truce'

Guadalajara is the centre of operations for the Jalisco Nueva Generacion Cartel (CJNG), a group designated as terrorists by the United States, which has promised a reward of \$12 million for the arrest of its leader, Nemesio Oseguera, known as El Mencho.

To reassure clients beyond armour plating, there are car handles that can deliver electric shocks, wheels that can release a dose of pepper spray and tyres that can last for 80 kilometres (50 miles) after being punctured.

"Go Back To UK": US Congressman To Journalist Mehdi Hasan On Islamic Prayer Call

US Congressman Brandon Gill has come under massive criticism for asking Mehdi Hasan to "go back to the UK" after the British-American journalist defended the Islamic prayer call in America.

This began when Hasan, editor-in-chief and CEO of Zeteo, addressed American Christians, saying, "If you can play your church bell, you can play the call to prayer. We are as American as anyone else, and we don't take any BS from anyone."

Gill responded on X by mocking the former Al Jazeera host, writing within quotes, "We can move here en masse and fundamentally transform the landscape of American public life."

Hasan then pointed out Gill's connection to immigrant families, writing, "Your wife is an Indian American, the daughter of an Indian immigrant."

Gill replied, "My wife is a Christian and doesn't want to hear your oppressive Muslim prayer calls, either. If you want to live in a Muslim country, go back to the UK." My wife is a Christian and doesn't want to hear your oppressive Muslim prayer calls, either.

A user on X wrote, "Church bells and the Muslim Adhan (call to prayer), when used by private religious institutions outdoors, are both protected as free religious expression under the First Amendment of the US Constitution, provided they are not government-sponsored. Local noise ordinances may apply but cannot single out



religious expression for restriction."

Another wrote, "Odd sort of a Christian that, who doesn't show tolerance and compassion? Not very Christ-like behaviour."

Someone said, "How is a call to prayer - PRAYER - oppressive unless you are hateful?" This was not the first time Gill faced flak for his incendiary remarks. The Texas Congressman previously targeted Indian-origin Democrat Zohran Mamdani, a New York City mayoral candidate, after an old video showed him eating rice with his hands.

Gill wrote, "Civilised people in America don't eat like this. If you refuse to adopt Western customs, go back to the Third World." The post drew outrage on social media, with many pointing out the hypocrisy given that Gill was married to Danielle D'Souza Gill, the Indian-American daughter of right-wing commentator Dinesh D'Souza. Users also shared photos of Gill and his father-in-law eating with their hands.

Following the backlash, Danielle D'Souza Gill distanced herself from Indian dining traditions. She wrote, "I did not grow up eating rice with my hands and have always used a fork."

'Stealth Husband' Of Japan's New PM Sanae Takaichi Vows Quiet Support



JAPAN: The spouse of Japan's first woman Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi hopes to support her by being a "stealth husband", cooking meals but staying out of the spotlight.

"Unlike in the West, it is better for a partner to stay out of the spotlight," Fukui Television quoted Taku Yamamoto, 73, as saying on Tuesday after Takaichi became premier.

He said it was essential that Takaichi, who won the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leadership this month, can "pursue her vision of Prime Minister".

"I want to provide solid support as 'a stealth husband' to ensure that my presence does not become an obstacle to that," he added, according to the Asahi newspaper, Fuji Television and other media.

Yamamoto, a former

LDP lawmaker, married Takaichi in 2004, but the couple divorced in 2017 citing "differences in political views".

They re-married in 2021, after Yamamoto reportedly supported Takaichi when she ran unsuccessfully for the LDP leadership contest that year. In the subsequent snap election he lost his seat.

Licence to cook

Takaichi's views on gender place the 64-year-old on the right of an already conservative LDP.

She named only two other women to her cabinet, with Satsuki Katayama as finance minister and Kimi Onoda as economic security minister.

Takaichi opposes revisiting a 19th-century law requiring married couples to share the same surname, a rule that overwhelmingly results in women taking

their husband's name.

This is despite the difficulties that the law has given the couple.

During Takaichi and Yamamoto's first marriage, she took his name for official purposes. In the second, he took hers.

They live in a housing complex for members of parliament in Tokyo, where Takaichi helps care for Yamamoto after he suffered a stroke this year and was also diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2024, reports said.

Media reports said that he first proposed to Takaichi in 2004 over the phone.

He told her that "as I have a chef's licence, I'll make sure you eat delicious food throughout your life," Jiji Press reported.

Takaichi, an admirer of Margaret Thatcher and a heavy metal drummer in her youth, said that he "was a rather unsociable person, someone I would say I wasn't very comfortable to be with." But he won her over, saying "if you're seriously looking for a marriage partner, I'm divorced so I'll run as a candidate," Takaichi said on her website.

Finding Jewels And Brazen Thieves In Louvre Heist Is A Race Against Time

The glittering sapphires, emeralds, and diamonds that once adorned France's royals could well be gone forever, experts say after a brazen, four-minute heist in broad daylight left the nation stunned and the government struggling to explain a new debacle at the Louvre.

Each stolen piece - an emerald necklace and earrings, two crowns, two brooches, a sapphire necklace and a single earring - represents the pinnacle of 19th century "haute joaillerie," or fine jewelry.

For the royals, they were more than decoration. The pieces were political statements of France's wealth, power and cultural import. They are so significant that they were among treasures saved from the government's 1887 auction of most royal jewels.

The Louvre reopened Wednesday for the first time since the heist Sunday morning, although the Apollo Gallery where the theft occurred remained closed.

Laure Beccua, the Paris prosecutor whose office is leading the investigation, said Tuesday that in monetary terms, the stolen jew-

elry is worth an estimated \$102 million (88 million euros) - a valuation that doesn't include historical worth. About 100 investigators are involved in the police hunt for the suspects and the gems, she said.

The theft of the crown jewels left the French government scrambling - again - to explain the latest embarrassment at the Louvre, which is plagued by overcrowding and outdated facilities. Activists in 2024 threw a can of soup at the Mona Lisa. And in June, the museum was brought to a halt by its own striking staff, who complained about mass tourism.

President Emmanuel Macron has announced that the Mona Lisa, stolen by a former museum worker in 1911 and recovered two years later, will get its own room under a major renovation.

Now the sparkling jewels, artifacts of a French culture of long ago, are likely being secretly dismantled and sold off in a rush as individual pieces that may or may not be identifiable as part of the French crown jewels, experts say.