

US "Proactively" Reaching Out To China For Talks On Tariffs: Report

United States officials have reached out to their Chinese counterparts for talks on vast tariffs that have hammered markets and global supply chains, a Beijing-backed outlet said on Thursday citing sources.

Punishing US tariffs that have reached 145 percent on many Chinese products came into force in April, while Beijing has responded with fresh 125 percent duties on imports from the United States.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly claimed that China has reached out for talks on the tariffs -- claims Beijing has vehemently denied.

On Thursday Yuyuan Tiantian, a Chinese outlet linked to state broadcaster CCTV, said citing sources that Washington was "proactively" reaching out to China via "multiple channels" for talks on the tariffs.

"From a negotiation standpoint the US is currently the more anxious party," the outlet, which blends analysis with news reporting, said on the X-like platform Weibo.

"The Trump administration is facing multiple pressures," it added.

AFP has reached out to China's foreign ministry for comment.

Beijing has repeatedly urged the United States to engage in dialogue in a "fair, respectful and reciprocal" manner.

But it has also said it will fight a trade war to the bitter end if needed, with a video posted on social media this week by its foreign ministry vowing to "never kneel down!"

Porn Star Killed UK Couple, Dumped Their Body Parts In Suitcases

LONDON: A porn star allegedly decapitated and dismembered a couple, stored their severed heads in a freezer before dumping their remains in suitcases at an England bridge.

Porn actor Yostin Andres Mosquera, 35, is currently on trial for the murders of Paul Longworth, 71, and Albert Alfonso, 62, at their Shepherd's Bush apartment in West London on July 8, 2024, The Guardian reported.

The prosecutor claimed that Mosquera, a Colombian national, was spotted on the night of July 10 in Bristol, 100 miles to the west, with a large red suitcase on the city's well-known Clifton Suspension Bridge.

According to prosecutor Deanna Heer KC, Mosquera claimed he was engaged in having "extreme sex" with Alfonso at the time of the alleged attack, which was recorded on camera.

Prosecutors claimed in the Old Bailey court in London on Wednesday that Longworth was initially struck in the back of the head with a hammer, breaking his skull in the process.

Alfonso died from multiple stab wounds to his face and body, The Guardian reported. Prosecutors claimed that Mosquera made a video of himself singing and dancing following the killings.

He was approached by a cyclist on July 10 night who thought he might be a lost traveller. He informed the rider that the luggage contained auto parts, but the prosecutor claimed that it contained Longworth and Alfonso's severed and mutilated body parts.

Additional body parts were discovered in an enormous silver trunk Mosquera was carrying, and the heads of the couple were discovered in a chest freezer at their West London flat, The New York Post reported.

Prosecutors claimed that Mosquera attempted to steal money from the couple after the murders by transferring over \$5,000 to his own online account.

He is also charged with creating a PowerPoint document containing the couple's financial details and taking over \$1,000 in cash from ATMs before the transactions got rejected.

Mosquera often visited the British couple, where he was compensated for performing sexual activities with Alfonso.

Students Sue Texas University, Governor For Pro-Palestine Protest Arrests



Four current and former University of Texas at Austin students sued the college and Texas Governor Greg Abbott on Wednesday, alleging they faced unlawful arrest and retaliatory discipline for demonstrating against Israel's assault on Gaza.

The lawsuit is among a wave of legal actions against US universities, law enforcement and state leaders over their handling of pro-Palestinian student protests that erupted in the Spring of 2024.

Filed in US District Court in San Antonio by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) on behalf of the students, the lawsuit accuses UT Austin President Jay Hartzell, Abbott and law enforcement officers of intentionally suppressing pro-Palestinian speech at an April 24, 2024, campus protest.

According to the filing, Abbott, with the consent of Hartzell, ordered state

police in riot gear to carry out mass arrests, violating protesters' First Amendment rights to assemble and express their opinions.

In response to the lawsuit, UT Austin spokesperson Mike Rosen referred to statements the university made after the arrests saying it acted to preserve campus safety, enforce protest rules, and that most arrests were of people from outside the university.

Abbott's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In a social media post during the arrests, Abbott said: "Antisemitism will not be tolerated in Texas."

Two students named in the suit said they wanted to protect others from the physical and mental harm they had suffered.

"It is reclaiming our narrative because we were treated as antisemitic criminals," said Arwyn Heilrayne, a second-year student, who experienced a

panic attack after she was knocked to the ground by police and had her wrists tightly zip-tied.

She has since had to leave an internship at the state legislature and been diagnosed with PTSD as a result of her arrest, she said.

Mia Cisco said suing the university took on a new urgency as she watched the Trump administration try to deport foreign students for their pro-Palestinian advocacy.

"It's really vital and crucial right now to make sure that we say that it's not okay," said Cisco, a third-year student, who had her hijab forcibly removed by police following her arrest.

Dozens of demonstrators were taken into custody at the protest then released two days later after the Travis County Attorney's Office said charges were dropped due to a lack of probable cause.

All students arrested faced university disciplinary action, according to the lawsuit.

ADC Director Abed Ayoub saw most Americans, especially Texans, backing free speech for pro-Palestinian protesters.

"Governor Abbott and others are underestimating how much Americans value their First Amendment rights," said Ayoub.

Putin Says Reverting To Stalingrad Name Up To City Residents

MOSCOW: Kremlin leader Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday it was up to residents of Volgograd to decide whether the city should revert to the name of Stalingrad, as it was called when Soviet forces defeated Nazi invaders in World War Two's bloodiest battle. Ahead of next week's commemorations of the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet Union and its allies over Nazi Germany, the issue has been raised of restoring the wartime name of the southern Russian city.

Putin, quoted by state news agency RIA, was asked at a forum about restoring the city's former name - a sensitive issue in view of the association with the horrors of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin's nearly three-decade rule.

But he said the idea was "logical" in view of the historical significance of the battle. "This is for residents to decide. We can think about it. Residents will have to be asked," RIA quoted him as saying. "There is certainly logic in this. If you remove the ideology of this as much as possible, the name is of course linked to victory. But we still have to clarify what a majority of residents think." Putin issued a decree on Tuesday renaming Volgograd airport Stalingrad "in order to perpetuate the Victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War".

Israel's 'Largest' Wildfires Rage Outside Jerusalem, Residents Evacuated

JERUSALEM: Large wildfires raging on the outskirts of Jerusalem have forced Israeli authorities to evacuate thousands of residents in just 24 hours as the country appealed for international assistance to help fight the fire. At least 13 people have been injured so far, with no reports of any deaths yet.

The huge fire broke out on Israel's Memorial Day for fallen soldiers.

Videos and pictures on social media showed the fires burning along the main Route 1 Jerusalem to Tel Aviv highway, with thick smoke billowing over the surrounding hillsides. Many people were seen abandoning their cars and running away from the flames.

According to Israeli media, over 160 rescue and fire teams are engaged in firefighting operations. Dozens of aircraft and helicopters are trying to contain the fire and the country's military is also assisting the search and rescue operations, it said. However, dry weather conditions and high winds are causing difficulties. The Israeli fire services, in a statement last evening, called the fire one of the "largest-ever" in Israel and said that people are banned from national parks and forests in areas where the fires are blazing. Many roads, including Route 1 where the fire



erupted, have also been closed.

"The fire in the Jerusalem Hills may be the largest there has ever been in this country. Regarding our activity, it will continue for a very long time. We are far from having control," the commander of the Fire and Rescue Service's Jerusalem District, Shmulik Friedman, said. Mr Friedman added that the fires may continue to worsen as winds were expected to pick up and reach speeds of up to 90-100 kilometers per hour (56-62 mph), reported the Times of Israel.

The Israeli Air Force has reportedly deployed C-130J Super Hercules heavy transport planes - which can hold up to 18,000 liters of firefighting materials - in the operations. At least two planes have dropped fire retardant material over the fires last night.

Reportedly, nearly 3,000 acres of land is burned in the fire. Independence Day ceremony cancelled,

Netanyahu's warning

The scheduled Independence Day ceremony in Israel, including the main state event due to be held in Jerusalem, were cancelled on Wednesday due to the wildfires. The ceremony was then recorded and screened for the people of Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned that the wildfires could reach Jerusalem.

"The western wind can push the fire easily toward the outskirts of (Jerusalem) - and even into the city itself," he said in a video sent by his office.

Israel seeks global assistance

Israel has appealed for international assistance to help fight the raging wildfires.

Shortly after, Ukraine said it would send a plane to help fight the wildfires.

Spain, France, Romania, Croatia, and Italy have also committed to sending planes.

Investment Fund, Control Of Rare Metals: Inside US-Ukraine Crucial Mineral Deal

WASHINGTON: After months of tense negotiations, the United States and Ukraine have signed an "economic partnership agreement" on the joint exploitation of Kyiv's energy and mineral resources, which are vital for new technologies and largely untapped. The US will also establish an investment fund in Ukraine to spur its economic recovery from its war with Russia as part of the deal.

The minerals deal has been the subject of tense negotiations for months since US President Donald Trump returned to the White House in January, and nearly fell through hours before it was signed. US President Donald Trump had initially demanded rights to Ukraine's mineral wealth as compensation for an estimated \$175 billion in aid provided to Ukraine since the beginning of the war. After initial hesitation, Ukraine accepted a minerals accord as a way to secure long-term investment by the United States, as Trump tries to drastically scale back US security commitments around the world. It marks a breakthrough in Washington-Kyiv ties after they nadired following a public showdown between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during their meeting at the White House in February.

Prince William To Strip Meghan Markle's Royal Title After He Becomes King: Report

Prince William is reportedly planning to strip Prince Harry and Meghan Markle of their HRH titles when he becomes king due to concerns that Meghan has breached an agreement with the late Queen Elizabeth II. The agreement, made in 2020, stipulated that the couple would not use their HRH titles as they stepped down as working members of the royal family. A royal insider told the Daily Beast, "Charles might be happy to put up with this, but William won't" - referring to Meghan Markle's use of her HRH title alongside her lifestyle products.

"He loathes and despises Harry and Meghan with every bone in his body, he believes they have betrayed everything the family stands for and the idea that they are using their royal status as a calling card will enrage him," the insider added.

Meghan Markle recently used the HRH title in personal correspondence, including a gift basket sent to podcaster Jamie Kern Lima with a card reading "With the Compliments of HRH The Duchess of Sussex". The Sussexes' team claimed they don't use HRH titles, while sources close to the couple



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Announcing the signing of the deal in Washington, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent says it shows "both sides' commitment to lasting peace and prosperity in Ukraine." "This agreement signals clearly to Russia that the Trump administration is committed to a peace process centred on a free, sovereign and prosperous Ukraine over the long term," Bessent said.

What's Inside US Ukraine Mineral Deal

According to Ukrainian First Deputy Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko, the accord allowed Kyiv to "determine what and where to extract" and that its subsoil remains owned by Ukraine.

Ukraine is rich in natural

resources, including rare earth metals, which are used in consumer electronics, electric vehicles and military applications, among others. Global rare-earth mining is currently dominated by China, which is locked in a trade war with the US after Trump's sharp tariff increases. Ukraine also has large reserves of iron, uranium and natural gas.

Svyrydenko said Ukraine has no debt obligations to the United States under the agreement, a key point in the lengthy negotiations between the two countries. The deal, she said, also complied with Ukraine's constitution and Ukraine's campaign to join the European Union, key elements in Ukraine's negotiating position. It would ensure revenue by establishing contracts on a "take-or-pay" basis.

Importantly, the Agreement sends a signal to global partners that long-term cooperation with Ukraine-- over decades - is not only possible but reliable," Svyrydenko said on X.

Tesla Looks For New CEO As Elon Musk Focuses On Politics: Report

Tesla's board is actively considering a leadership transition as early as March this year, according to a report. This comes at the heels of a sharp decline in the electric vehicle maker's stock and mounting investor unease over CEO Elon Musk's increasing involvement in political affairs, The Wall Street Journal reported on April 30, citing sources familiar with the matter.

The board's concerns were reportedly triggered by Musk's deepening engagement with the Donald Trump administration, where he has taken a leading role in the White House's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). While discussions around succession plans are serious, the progress remains unclear, the report added.

Tesla's stock has seen a turbulent year, plunging as much as 45 per cent before showing some recovery alongside broader market gains, according to a CNN report. The prolonged slump in share price appears to have tested the patience of board members, particularly as Musk devoted increasing time to government duties rather than core business operations, CNN reported.

Last week, in response to rising criticism, Musk said he would scale back his responsibilities in Washington and redirect his attention to his businesses.

The move followed backlash from investors who have grown frustrated with



the Tesla CEO's work at DOGE, where he has overseen controversial job-cutting initiatives within the federal workforce, reported Reuters.

At the same time, Tesla's vehicle lineup has aged without major refreshes, and sales have continued to decline. Musk's outspoken support for far-right political movements in Europe has triggered protests and vandalism targeting Tesla showrooms and charging stations across the United States and Europe, according to the same report.

According to WSJ, Tesla's board members met Musk, urging him to make a public commitment to focus more on Tesla. It remains unclear whether Musk - who also sits on the board - was aware of the succession plan. Tesla's financial performance has added further urgency to the situation. The company posted a staggering 71 per cent drop in first-quarter earnings, with sales and profit taking a substantial hit. The earnings announcement, made last week, coincided with Musk's declaration that he would step back from his government role and return to Tesla.

"UK Must Stand With Our Friends": Indian-Origin MP Condemns Pahalgam Attack



Indian-origin UK MP Priti Patel on Thursday condemned the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam that killed 26 people, calling it an "act of terrorism".

Speaking at the UK Parliament, Ms Patel urged the Britain government to support India during the difficult times and pressed on working together to tackle the terrorist threats.

"Speaker, my condolences, thoughts and prayers are also with all those affected by this murderous, violent terrorism that has taken place in Pahalgam. And I recognise that for India and the communities in the UK in particular, this has been a really difficult week. This was an act of terrorism and we should call it out for exactly for what it is. And it is part of a long-standing pattern of attacks on civilians, visitors to the region and also minority communities," Ms Patel said.

The MP recalled the India-UK strategic relationship from the New Delhi declaration in 2002 to the UK India 2030 roadmap.

"We have a series of long-standing security and counterterrorism partnerships with India going back to the New Delhi Declaration in 2002 and the India-UK Strategic Partnership in 2016, the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership announced in 2022, and the UK India 2030 roadmap agreed under the last government. So, under that, security arrangements have been absolutely watertight, which is why we must always be in lockstep with our friends in India," she

said.

Ms Patel questioned the UK government over what information it has on those responsible for carrying out the terrorist attacks.

"Does the government believe the LeT, the terrorist group proscribed in the UK, bears responsibility, or is the government aware of any cross-border links to Pakistan of the perpetrators of this terrorist act? We know the Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week, but has the UK provided any specific support in response to this terror attack and taken any practical steps to assist our friends in India?" she questioned. The Indian-origin MP also pointed out the timing of the attack - when US Vice President JD Vance and his family were on a tour to India.

"Has the Government got a view on whether this is a coincidence or does it demonstrate a pattern of targeted and deliberately timed attacks?" Ms Patel asked. Ms Patel also raised concerns about the security implications of the attack on the UK, adding that the terrorist group may have been engaged with Hamas.

US Man Arrested For Child Abuse, Starvation And Sex Trafficking Young Girls

A young girl from the US has accused a 64-year-old Wisconsin man of sexual abuse, including being chained in a basement for several years, starved and mutilated. She told the authorities that she was given only a piece of bread to eat and forced to drink water from a puddle on the ground, PEOPLE reported.

According to the court documents obtained by the outlet, David Boyd is accused of abusing two young girls when they were less than 10 years of age. The abuse allegedly began in 2020 in Brown Deer and continued until 2024 before one of the victims opened up to her foster parents about the abuse.

They claimed that Boyd was their great-godmother's boyfriend. One of the victims alleged that he took her to his home in Milwaukee, where he chained her to a pole in the basement. In a sketch, she detailed her confinement.

The young girl created an image of a pole next to a washer and dryer. She then made a stick figure, which she labelled as "me," showing a chain around the neck. At the foot of the stick figure, she showed a piece of bread

and below that she drew waves, which she described as water that she had to drink from a puddle.

Boyd is accused not only of physically abusing the girl but also of trafficking her to several men on several occasions. Recalling an incident, she alleged that one day she was forced to choose the order in which men would sexually assault her. She revealed it stopped only when Boyd's daughter called him from downstairs.

Boyd started sexually assaulting her when she was 5 in 2015 and it continued until she was 12 years old. It stopped only after she moved away, she said. After the complaint was filed against the man, the authorities started an investigation and also revealed that they found knives at his home and hooked chains hanging from the ceiling of his basement.

According to court documents, Boyd is accused of two charges of repeatedly sexually assaulting the same child, one count of child abuse, one count of false imprisonment, one count of child trafficking, and one count of using a dangerous weapon.