

'Crackdown on demonstrators in Iran protests killed over 4,029'

DUBAI, Jan 20 (AP)

A CRACKDOWN on demonstrators taking part in nationwide protests in Iran killed at least 4,029 people, activists said on Tuesday. The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency offered the toll, saying more than 26,000 people have been detained in the crackdown as well. It said of the dead, 3,786 were demonstrators, 188 security forces, 28 children and 35 were people not demonstrating.

The agency has been accurate in previous rounds of unrest in Iran and relies on a network of activists on the ground to confirm each death.

It fears many more may have been killed.

The AP has been unable to independently confirm the toll.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi had his invitation to speak at the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland, withdrawn over the killings.

"Although he was invited last

fall, the tragic loss of lives of civilians in Iran over the past few weeks means that it is not right for the Iranian Government to be represented at Davos this year," the forum said.

Araghchi denounced the decision, saying the forum "cancelled my appearance in Davos on the basis of lies and political pressure from Islam and its US-based proxies and apologists." The Munich Security Conference separately withdrew its invitation for Iranian government officials over the crackdown.

Iranian officials have not given a clear death toll, although on Saturday, the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the protests had left "several thousand" people dead and blamed the United States for the deaths.

ANALYSTS WARN THAT IRAN CRISIS CARRIES POTENTIAL NUCLEAR RISKS: IN THE wake of spiralling tensions between the United States and Iran over Tehran's violent crackdown on



Protesters participate in a demonstration in support of nationwide mass protests in Iran against the government, in Berlin. (AP/file pic)

protests, analysts warn that the internal upheaval affecting the Iranian theocracy could carry nuclear proliferation risks.

While in recent days US President Donald Trump seemed to have backed away from a military strike on Iran, he called Saturday for an end to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's nearly 40-year reign in Iran.

Trump's comments came in

response to Khamenei branding Trump a "criminal" for supporting protesters in Iran, and blamed demonstrators for causing thousands of deaths.

Meanwhile, a US aircraft carrier, which days earlier had been in the South China Sea, passed Singapore overnight to enter the Strait of Malacca — putting it on a route that could bring it to the Middle East.

Internet shutdown squeezes Iran's ailing businesses hurt by crashing currency

DUBAI, Jan 20 (AP)

IRANIANS have been struggling for nearly two weeks with the longest, most comprehensive internet shutdown in the history of the Islamic Republic — one that has not only restricted their access to information and the outside world, but is also throttling many businesses that rely on online advertising.

Authorities shut down internet access on Jan 8 as nationwide protests led to a brutal crackdown that activists say has killed over 4,000 people, with more feared dead.

Since then, there has been minimal access to the outside world, with connectivity in recent days restored only for

some domestic websites.

Google also began partially functioning as a search engine, with most search results inaccessible. Officials have offered no firm timeline for the internet to return, leading to fears by businesses across the country about their future.

One pet shop owner in Tehran, who spoke on the condition of anonymity like others for fear of reprisals, said his business had faltered by 90% since the protests. "Before that, I mainly worked on Instagram and Telegram which I don't have access to anymore. The government has proposed two domestic alternatives. The point is our customers are not there — they don't use it."

The internet outage compounds economic pain already suffered by Iranians. The protests, which appear to have halted under a bloody suppression by authorities, began Dec 28 over Iran's rial currency falling to over 1.4 million to \$1.

Ten years ago, the rial traded at 32,000 to \$1. Before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, it traded at 70 to \$1.

The currency's downward spiral pushed up inflation, increasing the cost of food and other daily necessities.

The pressure on Iranians' pockets was compounded by changes to gasoline prices that were also introduced in December, further fuelling anger.

DRDO eyes next-gen electronic warfare to propel India as global defence leader: Top official

BENGALURU, Jan 20 (PTI)

THE DRDO is focusing on next-generation electronic warfare technologies, spectrum dominance, and indigenous fighter aircraft programmes, with a strong emphasis on self-reliance and future warfare domains, its Director General (Electronics and Communication Systems), B K Das, said on Tuesday.

Speaking to PTI, Das said the event aimed to bring together all stakeholders in electronic warfare—including industry, academia and research institutions—to work towards a common objective in a rapidly evolving conflict domain.

“The main focus is to bring together the entire electronic warfare ecosystem of the country—industry, academia and

research institutions—to work towards a common cause in this emerging domain of warfare,” he said. Das said global participation and indigenous technology development under the ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ initiative were gaining momentum.

On future projects, he stated that the DRDO was working on advanced technologies that would redefine warfare in the coming decades.

“The futuristic focus areas include spectrum dominance with cognitive learning, along with new technologies such as photonics and quantum technologies,” he said, adding that these would provide flexibility, agility and decisive power in electronic warfare.

Photonics is the science and technology of light that focus-

es on the generation, manipulation, detection and use of photons, integrating optics and electronics to enable breakthroughs in telecommunications, medicine, computing and other advanced technologies.

On budgetary support, Das said funding had never been a constraint for the organisation.

“The budget has never been an issue for DRDO. We have always been well supported by the Ministry,” he said, adding that the focus remained on cutting-edge technologies to make India a global defence technology leader by 2047.

Speaking on indigenous fighter aircraft programmes, he said India must dominate the skies with platforms, weapons and sensors developed domestically.

Trump slams UK deal to hand over Chagos Islands to Mauritius

LONDON, Jan 20 (AP)

THE British Government on Tuesday defended its decision to hand sovereignty the Chagos Islands to Mauritius after US President Donald Trump attacked the plan, which his administration had previously supported.

Trump said that relinquishing the remote Indian Ocean archipelago, home to a strategically

important American naval and bomber base, was an act of stupidity that shows why he needs to take over Greenland.

"Shockingly, our brilliant' NATO Ally, the United Kingdom, is currently planning to give away the Island of Diego Garcia, the site of a vital US Military Base, to Mauritius, and to do so FOR NO REASON WHATSOEVER," he said in a post on his social media platform Truth Social.

"There is no doubt that China and Russia have noticed this act of total weakness.

"The UK giving away extremely important land is an act of GREAT STUPIDITY, and is another in a very long line of National Security reasons why Greenland has to be acquired," Trump said.

The United Kingdom and Mauritius signed a deal in May to give Mauritius sovereignty over the islands, though the UK will

lease back Diego Garcia where the US base is located, for at least 99 years.

The US Government welcomed the agreement at the time, saying it "secures the long-term, stable, and effective operation of the joint US-UK military facility at Diego Garcia."

UK Cabinet Minister Darren Jones said Tuesday that the agreement would "secure that military base for the next 100 years."

But it has met strong opposition from British opposition parties, who that giving up the islands, which have been British territory for two centuries, puts them at risk of interference by China and Russia.

Islanders who were displaced from the islands to make way for the US base say they weren't consulted and worry the deal will make it harder for them to go home.

EU on cusp of historic trade deal with India: Ursula

Besides firming up the free trade agreement, the two sides may unveil a defence framework pact and a strategic agenda at the summit on 27th.

DAVOS, Jan 20 (PTI)

THE European Union is on the cusp of signing a historic trade agreement with India that is being called 'the mother of all deals', European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced on Tuesday, asserting it will create a market for 2 billion people or about one-fourth of the global GDP.

In a special address here at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, she said the real would crucially provide a first-mover advantage for Europe with one of the world's fastest-growing and most dynamic continents.

"Right after Davos, I will travel to India. There is still work to do. But we are on the cusp of a historic trade agreement. Some



call it the mother of all deals," she said.

"Europe wants to do business with the growth centres of today and the economic powerhouses of this century.

"From Latin America to the Indo-Pacific and far beyond, Europe will always choose the world. And the world is ready to choose Europe," she said.

President of the European Council, Antonio Costa and von der Leyen will be in India from January 25 to 27 to grace the Republic Day celebrations as chief guests and hold summit talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The two sides are set to announce the conclusion of negotiations on the much-awaited free trade agreement at the India-EU summit on January

27. European Commission President said the EU is also working on a new free trade agreement with Australia.

"We are also advancing with the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, the UAE – and more," she added.

She also said Europe will always stand with Ukraine until there is a just and lasting peace.

The European Union is India's biggest trade partner, with bilateral trade in goods recording USD 135 billion in the financial year 2023-24. The free trade agreement is expected to significantly enhance trade ties.

The proposed agreement is expected to bring a qualitative change in deepening the overall bilateral ties in a range of sectors, as well as at a time when the world is witnessing trade disruptions in view of Washington's tariff policy.

Besides firming up the free trade agreement, the two sides are likely to unveil a defence framework pact and a strategic agenda at the summit.

India and the European Union have been strategic partners since 2004.

The ambitious FTA is being
(Contd on page 5)

No going back on Greenland: Trump

Tells NATO Chief that Greenland is imperative for national, world security

WASHINGTON, Jan 20 (ANI)

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump held a telephone conversation with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte about Greenland and said that he would meet several parties in Davos. He reiterated his stance on Greenland, calling it integral for American and world security at large.

The US President shared the details of the conversation in a post on Truth Social on Tuesday.

He said, "I had a very good telephone call with Mark Rutte, the Secretary General of NATO, concerning Greenland. I agreed to a meeting of the various parties in Davos, Switzerland. As I expressed to everyone, very plainly, Greenland is imperative for National and World Security. There can be no going back -- On that, everyone agrees!"

Trump reiterated his statement of ensuring global peace through strength and claimed that the United States stands as the most powerful country due to the "rebuilding" by Trump in his first term as the President.

"The United States of America is the most powerful Country anywhere on the Globe, by far. Much of the reason for this is a rebuilding of our Military dur-



A person walks through a snow-covered street in Nuuk, Greenland on Monday (AP/PTI)

ing my First Term, which rebuilding continues at even more expedited pace. We are the only POWER that can ensure PEACE throughout the World -- And it is done, quite simply, through STRENGTH!"

This comes as the US is set to deploy a North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) aircraft at the Pituffik space base, Greenland, as tensions rise over President Donald Trump's move to acquire the semi-autonomous Danish territory. NORAD said that the aircraft will arrive at the base to support various long-planned

activities. They also said that this action is taken in coordination with Denmark and Greenland.

Previously, Trump threatened to impose tariffs on Denmark and other European countries, including the UK, unless they agree to sell Greenland.

In his post, Trump claimed the move is necessary for national security, citing China's and Russia's interest in the territory.

He offered to negotiate with the European nations but warned of escalating tariffs of 10 percent from February 1, 2026, and 25 percent from June 1, 2026, if a deal wasn't reached.

Trump shares new map of America including Canada, Venezuela, Greenland

WASHINGTON, Jan 20 (ANI)

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Tuesday shared a post on his Truth Social platform showing an old photograph of himself with other European leaders with the US flag depicting Canada, Greenland and Venezuela as a part of the United States.

In the post, Trump is seen seated inside the Oval Office, with NATO leaders including French President Emmanuel Macron, Italy's Giorgia Meloni, UK PM Keir Starmer, and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, among others. In another post, Trump is seen flanked by its Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio hoisting a US flag in Greenland, with a milepost that reads, "Greenland US Territory Est 2026". (X)



Pic posted by Trump shows the US President flanked by its Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio hoisting a US flag in Greenland, with a milepost that reads, "Greenland US Territory Est 2026". (X)

Shortly after the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, Trump said that the United States will help the South American country "until such time as we can do a safe, proper, and judicious transition".