

International

Spain says deadly migrant rush 'attack' on its territory

Over 20 migrants, two security force personnel remain in hospital

MADRID: The Spanish prime minister on Saturday described a deadly migrant rush on the enclave of Melilla from Morocco as an attack on Spain's "territorial integrity", as human rights activists demanded an investigation. At least 23 African migrants died in the latest drama on the doors of the European Union, when around 2,000 mostly sub-Saharan African migrants approached the Moroccan border with the tiny territory at dawn on Friday. More than 500 people managed to enter a border control area after cutting a fence with shears, Melilla authorities said in a statement.

Moroccan officials on Friday said 18 migrants had died during the rush or succumbed to their injuries, some of which came from falling from the top of the barrier. On Saturday, they revised the toll upwards to 23 after five of those injured died. More than 20 migrants and two security force personnel remain in hospital Saturday in the cities of Nador and nearby Oujda, they said. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said the incident was a "violent and organised attack by mafias who traffic in human beings, against a Spanish territory". But Morocco's AMDH human rights group said it was "a true catastrophe that shows the consequences of the latest Moroccan-Spanish entente", just weeks after the two sides resolved a year-long diplomatic rift.



AMDH demands a quick serious enquiry

Residents fear attacks
Residents of the Barrio Chino neighbourhood on the Moroccan side of the barrier said they were in

'Investigate this tragedy'

The death toll is by far the worst recorded in years of attempts by migrants to cross into Melilla, one of Spain's North African enclaves which have the EU's only land borders on the continent. Images on Spanish media on Friday showed exhausted migrants lying on the pavement in Melilla, some with bloodied hands and torn clothes. By Saturday, calm had returned to the border area, with Moroccan security forces lightly deployed and no migrants to be seen. The International Organization for Migration and the UN refugee agency expressed "grave concern at the lives lost and the number of injured". The agencies reminded member states of the "need in all circumstances to prioritise the safety of migrants and refugees, to avoid excessive use of force and to respect their fundamental rights."

In Morocco, the AMDH demanded a "comprehensive, quick and serious enquiry", while the Democratic Labour Organisation (ODT) trade union urged the government "to investigate this tragedy and do what is needed" both for migrants and police. In Spain, Sanchez's left-wing coalition partner Podemos also called for a probe.

shock. "This is the most violent attempt to cross into Melilla that I've ever seen," said Rachid Nejari, a waiter in a cafe near the heavily fortified border fence. "I saw migrants armed with sticks and iron bars... I was afraid of being attacked."

Friday's was the first mass incursion since Spain mended a year-long rift by backing Morocco's autonomy plan for the disputed Western Sahara region, scrapping its decades-long stance of neutrality. Sanchez then visited Rabat, and the two governments hailed a "new stage" in relations.

The row had begun when Madrid allowed Brahim Ghali, leader of Western Sahara's pro-independence Polisario Front, to be treated for Covid-19 in a Spanish hospital in April 2021. A month later, some 10,000 migrants surged across the Moroccan border into the Ceuta enclave as border guards looked the other way, in what was widely seen as a punitive gesture by Rabat. Rabat wants Western Sahara to have autonomous status under Moroccan sovereignty but the Polisario insists on a UN-supervised referendum on self-determination as agreed in a 1991 ceasefire deal.

Migration 'security threat'

In the days just before Morocco and Spain patched up their ties, there were several attempted mass crossings of migrants into Melilla, including one involving 2,500 people, the largest such attempt on record. Nearly 500 made it across.

The mending of ties has meant a drop in migrant arrivals in Spain, notably in the Canary Islands. The number of migrants who reached the Canary Islands in April was 70 percent lower than in February, government figures show. Sanchez said



MELILLA, Spain: A Sudanese migrant walks in a temporary centre for migrants and asylum seekers in Melilla, a day after at least 23 African migrants died in a bid by around 2,000 people, mostly sub-Saharan African, to force their way into the northern Morocco Spanish enclave. —AFP

earlier this month that "Spain will not tolerate any use of the tragedy of illegal immigration as a means of pressure." Spain will seek to have "irregular migration" listed as one of the security threats on NATO's southern flank when the alliance gathers for a summit in Madrid on June 29-30. Over the years, thousands of migrants have attempted to gain entry to the Spanish enclaves by climbing the barriers, swimming along the coast or hiding in vehicles. The two territories are protected by fences fortified with barbed wire, video cameras and watchtowers. —AFP

To charge or not to charge: Trump dilemma roiling America

WASHINGTON: A chilling portrait of a US president who knew he'd lost an election but tried to steal it anyway has emerged in testimony on the Capitol assault, posing a perilous question: Should prosecutors indict Donald Trump?

In their comments to the congressional committee investigating the deadly violence, White House and Trump campaign staff, lawyers and even family members have drawn the contours of a possible prosecution, outlining potential presidential misconduct culminating in the riot at the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

The picture they have painted is that it was part of a broader "coup" attempt led by the defeated president and his lawyer John Eastman. "The odds are in favor of the Justice Department indicting Mr. Trump," Kevin O'Brien, a former assistant US attorney in New York who now specializes in white-collar criminal defense, told AFP.

"The legal case is sound and would be compelling to a jury, assuming prosecutors can establish a link between the plans of Trump and John Eastman to thwart the counting of electoral votes on the one hand,

and the insurrection at the Capitol building on the other."

The committee's official line has always been that it will leave charging decisions to the proper authorities. But it has heavily hinted it will accuse Trump of at least two felonies-obstructing Congress's counting of electoral votes, and joining a criminal conspiracy to defraud the United States. And the established facts don't look good for the 76-year-old former reality TV star.

'Clear and present danger'

Trump spent weeks ahead of the violence in Washington duping his followers into thinking the election had been stolen. He encouraged his supporters to descend on the city on January 6, riled up the huge crowd at his "Stop the Steal" rally and instructed them to march on the Capitol as lawmakers were ratifying the election.

The committee has presented a trove of text messages suggesting Trump did nothing to stop the violence for hours as increasingly frantic allies tried to get him to call off the mob. And the House committee's hearings have positioned the violence within a larger

conspiracy to cling to power by intimidating and harassing poll workers, election officials and the federal justice department.

Trump's defenders argue that he genuinely believed the election was stolen and was engaged in a good faith attempt to protect voters. But the live testimony and videotaped depositions at the hearings suggest he knew he'd been fairly defeated, given the sheer number of times he was told so by his closest aides. One of the most credible and impactful witnesses was retired judge J. Michael Luttig, a star in conservative judicial and political circles who testified that Trump presented a "clear and present danger" to US democracy. While there is a degree of consensus outside of Trump's support base that he could reasonably be charged, a more fraught question for Attorney General Merrick Garland is whether he should be.

'Above the law'

For a start, the burden of proof for conviction in a criminal prosecution is considerably higher than the bar for condemning someone in a congressional hearing. "A botched prosecution would make Trump stronger and even help re-elect him," Washington-based Financial Times columnist Edward Luce wrote this week.

"When you strike at a king—even a former



WASHINGTON, United States: A tweet from then president Donald Trump is shown on a screen during the fifth hearing by the House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the US Capitol in the Cannon House Office Building in Washington. —AFP

one—you must kill him." Garland could expect strong public support if he decided to go after Trump, with a new ABC News and Ipsos poll finding almost 60 percent of Americans think the ex-president should face charges.

But Neama Rahmani, a former federal prosecutor in San Diego, said he didn't think

the attorney general had "the stomach" for the fight. "Indicting a former president would be unprecedented, and it takes an aggressive prosecutor that is willing to take on a difficult and politically charged prosecution," Rahmani told AFP. "I don't think Merrick Garland is that prosecutor." —AFP

Summer means suffering for...

Continued from Page 1

But increasingly, it's unbearable even in the shade. In Muscat, workers paving a road with asphalt covered their heads with colorful scarves and hats, while others found shade under date palms in the middle of a two-way street. Passersby held umbrellas to protect themselves from the scorching sun. "In order to complete the eight-hour shift as early as possible, sometimes I start working from six in the morning, stop during the rest period, and then do two more hours," said Muhammad Mukarram, a Bangladeshi construction worker.

The region-wide problem has long drawn concern. Human rights groups have urged Qatar, host of this year's World Cup, to investigate workers' deaths connected to "heat distress". There are no reliable figures on the deaths of migrant workers in Gulf countries, which do not release statistics and have regularly contested estimates released by NGOs and the media. A recent study by the Vital Signs Partnership, a group of human rights organizations mainly from Asian countries, said that "as many as 10,000 migrant workers from south and southeast Asia die in the Gulf every year".

The March 2022 report said that more than half

of the cases were recorded as "natural causes" or "cardiac arrest". In 2020, a study published in the journal Science Advances found that the Gulf has the hottest and most humid weather anywhere on Earth. Scientists have calculated that even with shade and unlimited drinking water, a healthy adult will die if "wet-bulb" temperatures - which take into account factors such as humidity, wind speed and cloud cover - exceed 35 Celsius for six hours.

The study showed that there have only ever been 14 occasions on land when the measure exceeded 35C, all in the past two decades and eight of them in the Gulf. Another study in the journal Nature Climate Change found that "within this century, parts of the... Gulf region could be hit with unprecedented events of deadly heat as a result of climate change".

"If we do not change course, these temperatures will keep rising over the years, reaching a level where outdoor human activities in the Gulf, such as the hajj pilgrimage, would be nearly impossible in summer," Julien Jreissati, program director at Greenpeace MENA, told AFP. Saudi Arabia is preparing to welcome one million pilgrims next month to perform the annual Muslim rituals. "The only solution is to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels which are the main driver of climate change and transition gradually but quickly towards renewable energy," said Jreissati. Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain have pledged to reach net zero domestic carbon emissions in the coming decades, while expanding oil production. — AFP



MANSOURA, Egypt: Alleged murderer Egyptian Mohamed Adel is surrounded by guards as he is taken out after his first trial session at the Mansoura courthouse on June 26, 2022. — AFP

of violence committed by their partners or relatives, or by strangers in public spaces, according to a United Nations survey conducted in 2015. — AFP

Allies 'won't splinter', Biden...

Continued from Page 1

The statements of resolve came as Russia resumed strikes on central Kyiv in the first onslaught on the Ukrainian capital in three weeks - an attack Biden condemned as "more of their barbarism".

Looking to the summit, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba urged the G7 to approve more sanctions on Moscow and more heavy weapons for Ukraine to defeat "Russia's sick imperialism". Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will make the same plea when he joins the meeting via video-link on Monday.

From soaring inflation to a looming food crisis and energy shortages, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, now in its fifth month, has mired the world in a series of crises. The G7 leaders are also confronting the looming threat of recession as well as pressures over climate change. Seeking to turn up the heat on Moscow, the G7 announced it would outlaw imports of Russian gold. The United States said gold was the second largest export for Russia and a significant source of revenue for Putin and his allies.

While Western allies have hammered the Russian economy with unprecedented sanctions, Putin's army has been digging in for a drawn-out war. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron said they now saw an "opportunity to turn the tide" in Ukraine.

Johnson warned that "any attempt to settle the conflict now will only cause enduring instability"

and risked giving "Putin license to manipulate both sovereign countries and international markets in perpetuity", a Downing Street spokesman said. Seeking fresh measures to put the squeeze on Putin, Macron urged producers to cap oil prices to limit Russia profits from soaring energy revenues.

Paris backs a US proposal for a maximum oil price, Macron's office said, but added that "it would be much more powerful if it came from the producing countries". John Kirby, National Security Council spokesman at the White House, said the G7 would be seeking to increase the costs and consequences of the war on Putin and the Russian economy.

At the same time, they will aim to minimize "as much as possible the effect of these rising oil prices and the way (Putin) has weaponized energy". The impact on the economy formed the focus of the G7's opening session, with Scholz citing "sinking growth rates, rising inflation, raw material shortages and supply chain disruptions" as threats to a post-pandemic recovery.

Scarred by a reliance on Russian energy that has hampered several European nations including Germany and Italy from going all out to punish Russia, the G7 was also warily looking at China - which it views as a systemic rival. "The impact that China's coercive economic practices, use of forced labor, intellectual theft - all those are front and center for the G7, and I think you're going to see China very much at the forefront as the G7 goes on," said Kirby.

As the gulf separating Western allies from Russia and China widens, the G7 will also be looking to rally other major players to its side. To this end, Scholz has invited the leaders of Argentina, India, Indonesia, Senegal and South Africa to the Alpine summit. — AFP

Egypt tries man over murder of...

Continued from Page 1

threatening to cut her throat" on the victim's phone. The next hearing is set for Tuesday, the defendant's lawyer, Ahmed Hamad, told AFP.

In a rare occurrence among cases involving violence against women, authorities allowed television cameras to film the hearing on Sunday. On social media, many Jordanian and Egyptian users called for the perpetrator to be sentenced to death, while others said men must "learn to take no for an answer".

Egyptian preacher Mabrouk Attia sparked outrage last week after suggesting that the victim would not have met the same fate had she been veiled. Nearly eight million Egyptian women were victims

ties between it and the government's health ministry is starkly clear.

The sources added the coming period will see international hospitals operating in Kuwait's private sector as part of the government's plan to attract foreign investors in the medical sector. This may lead the private sector to be able to accept large numbers of expat patients. They said the ministry is not considering increasing health fees for residents, but this is linked to future developments, explaining health fees in some sectors may witness a review of their current prices in the next period.

MoH aims to restrict clinics...

Continued from Page 1

sector is still unable to absorb the more than three million residents living in Kuwait, which compels the health ministry to receive and treat expats. Moreover, despite the professionalism of Kuwait's private healthcare sector, the difference in capabili-