

1576

Henry of Navarre (later Henry IV of France) abjures Catholicism at Tours

1885

King Leopold II of Belgium establishes the Congo as a personal colonial possession



1945

US troops under General Douglas MacArthur enter Manila in the Philippines after a month long battle, ending three years of Japanese military occupation

1969

United States population reaches 200 million

## 118-member diplomatic delegation from 77 countries arrives at Maha Kumbh Mela



118-Member delegation from 77 countries arrives in Prayagraj

ANI | Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh) [India]

A 118-member delegation which includes Heads of Mission (HoM) and their spouses as well as diplomats from a total of 77 countries, arrived at Maha Kumbh Mela Kshetra on Saturday.

Speaking to ANI, Slovak Ambassador to India, Robert Maxian, congratulated the Indian government for organizing the event. "I am very excited. I want to congratulate your government for organising this great spiritual event... I am a fan of India. India is like my second home," he said.

Mariano Caucino, Ambassador of Argentina to India, also expressed his happiness at being able participate in the ceremony.

"I am very happy to take part in this important ceremony and follow the traditions," he said..

Upon the the arrival of the foreign diplomats, the BJP lead-

er Sidharth Nath Singh said, "Ambassadors, High Commissioners have come to participate in the Maha Kumbh. We have to welcome them. Everyone is excited."

Stella Nkomo, Zimbabwe ambassador to India described this as a "once-in-a-lifetime experience," adding that "Diplomatic life is also about pursuing cultural and public diplomacy. This is a cultural diplomacy where we seek to understand India deeply... We are grateful to the Uttar Pradesh state for hosting us."

Christian Villarreal, Bolivia Head of Mission in India, said, "... The Minister of External Affairs has the capacity to invite us once a year to the main celebrations of India. I had the privilege to be invited to Diwali 1.5 years ago, but nothing compares to this occasion. Not even my sons will be able to visit such an event which happens once in 144 years..."

Over 5.42 million devotees

took dip on Saturday in the sacred confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and mystical Saraswati in the ongoing Mahakumbh in Prayagraj.

Among these, over 1 million Kalpavasis and 4.42 million pilgrims have taken a dip in the Triveni waters today.

As of January 31, over 314.6 million have already taken a dip in the sacred confluence of three rivers since the commencement of the event.

The MahaKumbh Mela (the festival of the sacred pitcher) is anchored in Hindu mythology. It is the world's largest public gathering and collective act of faith. This congregation, primarily, includes Ascetics, Saints, Sadhus, Sadhvis, Kalpvasis and Pilgrims from all walks of life, as per the Maha Kumbh website.

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 that began at Prayagraj on January 13 is set to continue till February 26. The Maha Kumbh is held after every 144 years. (ANI)

## China imposes tariffs on US energy, autos in trade war retaliation

AFP | Beijing, China

China said yesterday it would impose tariffs on imports of US energy, vehicles and equipment, firing a return salvo in an escalating trade war between the world's two biggest economies.

US President Donald Trump on Saturday announced sweeping measures against major trade partners Canada and Mexico, with goods from China hit with an additional 10 percent tariff on top of the duties they already endure.

Minutes after they came into effect, Beijing unveiled levies of 15 percent on imports of coal and liquefied natural gas from the United States, while crude oil, agricultural machinery, big-engined vehicles, and pickup trucks face 10 percent duties.

China is a major market for US energy exports and according to Beijing customs data, imports of oil, coal and LNG totalled more than \$7 billion last year.

But that is dwarfed by China's imports from more friendly powers such as Russia, from which it purchased \$94 billion-worth last year.

Beijing said the measures were in response to the "unilateral tariff hike" by Washington.



Cars wait in line to enter the United States at a border crossing at the Canada-US border in Blackpool, Quebec, Canada

The US decision, China said, "seriously violates World Trade Organization rules, does nothing to resolve its own problems, and disrupts normal economic and trade cooperation between China and the United States".

With that in mind, Beijing said it would file a complaint with the WTO over the "malicious" levies.

Alongside its tariffs, China announced a probe into US tech giant Google and the addition of US fashion group PVH Corp. -- which owns Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein -- and biotech

giant Illumina to a list of "unreliable entities".

Beijing also unveiled fresh export controls on rare metals and chemicals including tungsten, tellurium, bismuth, and molybdenum, used in a range of industrial appliances.

"I think the retaliation is not aggressive, as China only targets some US products, in response to the US tariff on all China's exports to the US," Zhang Zhiwei of Pinpoint Asset Management said in a note.

"This is likely only the beginning of a long process for the two countries to negotiate"

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TOP  
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TWEETS

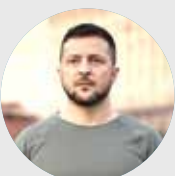
01



Heartiest congratulations to Prime Minister @Bart\_DeWever on assuming office. I look forward to working together to further strengthen India-Belgium ties and enhance our collaboration on global matters. Wishing you a successful tenure ahead.

@narendramodi

02



North Korean troops are actively learning from this war, and that's a major global threat. They arrived unprepared, but like Russian forces, they are not allowed to retreat—commanders execute their own soldiers for trying. Yet, they are adapting, gaining real battlefield experience, and absorbing critical military knowledge.

@ZelenskyyUa

03



Every minute, 40 people are diagnosed with #cancer globally, and embark on a journey to overcome it. On #WorldCancerDay, we honour the courage of those affected, celebrate scientific progress to treat the disease, and affirm our commitment to #HealthForAll.

@DrTedros

04



My preferred title is just 'Tech Support'

@elonmusk

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stance)

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

## Hail the BDF – our advocate for peace



CAPTAIN MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD

Why would a peace-advocating country like Bahrain have a defense force? That is like asking why a body-builder has clothes in his wardrobe. You can build muscle but there will be times when you have to protect your body from the elements or occasions which demand that you are dressed in more than figure-hugging shorts!

Similarly, Bahrain has always advocated dialogue and democracy as the way forward but keeping a ready defense force that is well-trained and equipped to defend the nation is a duty. It underscores that Bahrain takes peace seriously and that the men and women of the BDF will lay their life down for their beloved nation and the values which it espouses.

The world today is a complex tangle of political and economic interests. To cut through the noise, countries use diplomacy as well as force. When the men and women of the BDF step out the fight for us, they are not just engaging in skirmishes with the so-called "enemy". They are defending our values and our right to peace and progress.

Today we celebrate BDF Day and honour our soldiers – those who keep our borders on land, air and sea safe and those who have fallen while valiantly defending our freedom. Our leadership in their wisdom, have always ensured that our BDF is well-armed and taken care of. Since 2002, Bahrain has been designated a major Non-NATO Ally, which provides a number of benefits reserved to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and allied nations, including potential participation in cooperative research and development.

But an effective armed forces is not just about state-of-the-art equipment and discipline. It is about the people understanding concepts of loyalty, patriotism and adding these values to the courage and discipline of their profession. And my heart swells with pride at the powerful values of our BDF personnel. Today, the BDF is being called upon to engage in border security, maritime security, military preparedness, cybersecurity, and counterterrorism.

In recent years, as Bahrain was called upon to protect the region from the scourge of piracy and anti-regional skirmishes, we have also seen some martyrs who laid their lives down for us all. I take this opportunity to bow to their memory.

The BDF is our key to a stable, secure, and prosperous Bahrain and Middle East. Going forward, I am sure that the BDF will acquit itself powerfully in a new age military with AI and robotic warfare with the same zeal and patriotic fervour as always.

Today we celebrate  
BDF Day and  
honour our soldiers  
– those who keep  
our borders on  
land, air and sea  
safe and those who  
have fallen while  
valiantly defending  
our freedom. Our  
leadership in their  
wisdom, have  
always ensured  
that our BDF  
is well-armed  
and taken care  
of. Since 2002,  
Bahrain has been  
designated a major  
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Organization  
(NATO) and  
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development.

(Captain Mahmood Al Mahmood is the Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Tribune and the President of the Arab-African Unity Organisation for Relief, Human Rights and Counterterrorism)