

News in brief

◆ **Egypt's public** prosecutors on Wednesday ordered the education minister to stand trial over accusations he failed to follow a court ruling, a lawyer on the case told AFP. The case dates back to 2013, more than a decade before Mohamed Abdellatif was appointed minister, and involves a school in the Upper Egyptian city of Minya that the education ministry had been renting, said Amr Abdel Salam, a lawyer representing the school's owners. He said Egyptian courts had ruled the building must be returned to its owners, but successive governments allegedly kept delaying execution of the order. In December, a formal warning was sent to Abdellatif but he refused to carry it out, the lawyer said. "This forced the school owners to take legal action against him," he added. If found guilty, the minister could be jailed, removed from office and ordered to pay one million Egyptian pounds (\$21,000) in compensation, Abdel Salam said.



Egypt education minister faces trial over ignored court order

Canada's Carney arrives in China for state visit

◆ **Canadian Prime Minister** Mark Carney arrived in Beijing on Wednesday for a state visit, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV said. Carney, who is expected to meet President Xi Jinping for talks on Friday, is the first Canadian leader to visit China in eight years. The two leaders met on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in South Korea in October, which Carney described as a "turning point" in the two nations' strained relationship. Carney's predecessor Justin Trudeau visited China in December 2017. But ties withered in 2018 after the arrest of a senior executive from Chinese tech giant Huawei on a US warrant in Vancouver and China's retaliatory detention of two Canadians on espionage charges.

◆ **President Donald Trump** said Tuesday that the United States would react strongly if authorities in Iran started hanging people in their crackdown on a popular uprising against the government. "We will take very strong action if they do such a thing," he told CBS News in an interview, when asked about hangings potentially beginning on Wednesday. "When they start killing thousands of people -- and now you're telling me about hanging. We'll see how that's going to work out for them," Trump said in a video clip released online. The interview took place as Trump was in the northern US state of Michigan to visit a manufacturing plant and deliver a speech on the economy. In his speech, Trump reiterated a message he had posted earlier on social media, that "help is on its way" for the Iranian protesters. He also said it was unclear what the death toll in Iran actually was.

Trump vows 'very strong action' if Iran hangs protesters



SPOTLIGHT

Visa-free transit announced for Indians travelling to and from UK

TOI | New Delhi

Indians will soon be able to travel to & from the UK via Germany, in a significant development for Lufthansa, Air India and desi globetrotters, Germany has announced visa-free transit for Indians during Chancellor Friedrich Merz's official visit to India. Travel agents and airlines are now awaiting the date from this will be implemented.

Once effective, desi travellers will be able to travel between India and the UK via Germany on Lufthansa. Also, Air India will be able to code share with Lufthansa to & from the UK and increase passenger numbers on its German flights. "Announcement of visa free transit for Indian passport holders for transiting through Germany," govt said in a statement on the 27 outcomes of the Chancellor's India visit. Once implemented, this move will partially undo the impact on Indian (and many other foreign) travellers caused by Brexit six years ago.

At the time of Brexit to "hurt" each others' airlines, the UK and EU mandated a transit visa will be required for travelling to one via the other. Which means, an Indian going from Delhi to London via Frankfurt will require a transit Schengen visa to get on the connecting flight. Similarly, an Indian travelling from Mumbai to Munich via London will re-



quire a transit UK visa to take the connecting flight.

The UK is a huge market for Lufthansa and Air India. Once implemented, this development will again enable Lufthansa to fly travellers (both flying it and code share ones on Air India) from India via its hubs in Germany to the UK. There are also some other visa-free destinations also which Indians can now travel to & from by transiting from Germany, like those in the Caribbean.

Transit visa requirements must be kept in mind while booking tickets. There have been numerous cases when people booked via some unscrupulous agents or online travel agencies (OTAs) by just seeing the lowest price. For instance, travelling from India to Canada on an American carrier (for just transiting via the US) means the passengers must have a US visa.

Similarly, going from India to the US via Canada means a transit visa for the latter is required. Ditto for those travelling from India to the UK via Schengen states and the Schengen States via the UK. Soon Germany will be an exception for the UK.

Trump calls Greenland 'vital' for US as Danish FM braces for Vance talks

Trump says US control of Greenland 'vital' for air defense

● **Greenland's leader** said the island prefers to remain part of Denmark

● **Frederiksen** has warned that an attack on a NATO ally would end the alliance

● **United States** says needs Greenland due to the threat of a takeover by Russia or China

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump insisted yesterday the US needs to take control of Greenland, with NATO's support, just hours before crunch talks about the Arctic island with top Danish, Greenlandic and US officials.

Just hours before the meeting with US Vice President JD Vance was due to start, Trump said that US control of Greenland -- an autonomous territory belonging to NATO ally Denmark -- was "vital" for his planned Golden Dome air and missile defense system.

"NATO becomes far more formidable and effective with Greenland in the hands of the UNITED STATES. Anything less than that is unacceptable," he wrote on social media.

He said NATO "should be leading the way" in building the multi-layer missile defense system. "IF WE DON'T, RUSSIA OR CHINA WILL, AND THAT IS NOT GOING TO HAPPEN!" Trump wrote.

Just prior, Danish Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen had sought to ease US concerns about security in Greenland, telling AFP Denmark was boosting its military presence there and was in talks with allies on "an increased NATO presence in the Arctic."

Trump has repeatedly threatened to take over the vast, strategic and sparsely populated Arctic island, and he has sounded emboldened since ordering a deadly January 3 attack in Venezuela that removed its president.

Danish Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen and his Greenlandic counterpart were to hold talks later Wednesday in Washington with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Vice President JD Vance.

Lokke said he was hoping to "clear up certain misunderstandings." But it remains to be seen if the Trump administration also sees a misunderstanding and if it wants to climb down.

Trump, when asked Tuesday about Greenland's leader saying that the island prefers to remain part of Denmark, said: "Well that's their problem."

"Don't know anything about him, but that's going to be a big problem for him," Trump said.

Trump said on Friday that he wanted Greenland "whether they like it or not" and "if we



Apartment buildings and houses are pictured in Nuuk, Greenland



Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and US President Donald Trump

don't do it the easy way, we're going to do it the hard way."

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has warned that an attack on a NATO ally would end the alliance.

While an agreement with Denmark allows the United States to station as many soldiers as it wants on Greenland, Trump has doubled down on US ownership, telling reporters on Sunday that "we're talking about acquiring not leasing."

The former real estate developer told The New York Times that ownership "is psycholog-

ically needed for success" and "gives you things and elements that you can't get from just signing a document."

Trump maintains the United States needs Greenland due to the threat of a takeover by Russia or China.

The two rival powers have both stepped up activity in the Arctic, where ice is melting due to climate change, but neither claims Greenland, which is home to 57,000 people.

'Bad ally?'

Vance, who slammed Denmark

as a "bad ally" during a visit to Greenland last year, is known for his hard edge, which was on display when he publicly berated Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky during a White House meeting in February.

It has not been announced if the Greenland meeting will be open to the press.

"If the US continues with, 'We have to have Greenland at all cost,' it could be a very short meeting," said Penny Naas, a senior vice president at the German Marshall Fund of the United States, a Washington think tank.

"If there is a slight nuance to it, it could lead to a different conversation," she said.

Denmark increases military presence in Greenland 'from today': defence ministry

Denmark will beef up its military presence in Greenland "from today", the defence ministry said Wednesday, just before high-stakes talks were to start in Washington over US President Donald Trump's threats to take over the Arctic island.

"The Danish armed forces are, from today, deploying capabilities and units related to ... exercise activities. In the period ahead, this will result in an increased military presence in and around Greenland, comprising aircraft, vessels and soldiers, including from NATO allies," the ministry said in a statement.



Denmark is a founding member of NATO and its military joined the United States in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the latter to much criticism.