



QUOTE
OF THE
DAY

HAPPINESS IN INTELLIGENT PEOPLE
IS THE RAREST THING I KNOW
ERNEST HEMINGWAY, THE
GARDEN OF EDEN

News in brief

◆ The US State Department

said it would revoke the visa of Colombia's leftist President Gustavo Petro, who returned to Bogota on Saturday after being accused of "incendiary actions" during a pro-Palestinian street protest in New York. Petro was in New York for the UN General Assembly, where he fiercely rebuked US President Donald Trump's administration and called for a criminal inquiry into recent US strikes on alleged drug trafficking boats in the Caribbean in his Tuesday address. The Colombian leader shared video on social media of himself speaking through megaphone to a large crowd on Friday, calling on "nations of the world" to contribute soldiers for an army "larger than that of the United States." "That is why, from here in New York, I ask all soldiers in the United States Army not to point their rifles at humanity. Disobey Trump's order! Obey the order of humanity!" Petro said.



US to revoke Colombian president's visa over 'incendiary actions'

◆ Netanyahu to meet Trump as Israel faces isolation over Gaza war

ending the war in the Palestinian territory during discussions with Arab and Muslim leaders on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. On Sunday, Trump hinted at "something special" to come in Middle East talks, adding in a post on his Truth Social platform: "WE WILL GET IT DONE!!!" On Friday, Trump had told reporters in Washington "I think we have a deal" on Gaza, even as Netanyahu, speaking at the UN, vowed to "finish the job" in Israel's war against Hamas.

◆ A visit to Egypt by Washington's top envoy to Israel, Mike Huckabee, has been postponed, a US official said yesterday. Earlier, a US embassy spokesperson had said that Huckabee would be visiting Cairo for talks with Egyptian officials, making what media reports said would have been a rare trip by a sitting US envoy. "The trip has been postponed," the official said, without providing further details. Media reports said the talks had been expected to focus on the Gaza war, which has strained relations between Israel and Cairo. Egypt, along with the United States and Qatar, has been mediating between Israel and Hamas in efforts to end the war. Cairo has criticised Israel's ongoing air and ground assault in Gaza City, where the United Nations estimated a million people resided before the offensive began. Since the war broke out in October 2023, Egypt has repeatedly warned that the fighting risks driving hundreds of thousands of Palestinians across its border into the Sinai Peninsula.

US envoy to Israel's rare trip to Egypt postponed: US official



SPOTLIGHT

China sentences former agricultural minister to death

AFP | Beijing, China

China's former agricultural minister was sentenced to death yesterday on corruption charges, with a two-year reprieve, a court statement said.

Tang Renjian accepted cash and property bribes totalling more than 268 million yuan (\$38 million) between 2007 and 2024, the People's Court of Changchun in northeast Jilin province said in a statement.

The court ruled that the bribes "caused particularly severe losses to the interests of the state and the people, and therefore warranted the death penalty", adding that Tang had confessed to his crimes and expressed remorse.

Tang's sentencing is the latest in President Xi Jinping's sweeping anti-graft campaign that has brought down several high-level figures.

Supporters of Xi's anti-corruption drive say the campaign promotes clean governance, but critics argue it provides the president with the power to purge political rivals.

Tang previously served as governor of the northwestern province of Gansu, as well as the vice chairman of southern



Tang Renjian

autonomous region Guangxi. His downfall follows similar graft investigations into former defence ministers Li Shangfu and Wei Fenghe.

Li was removed from office just seven months into the job, and later expelled from the Chinese Communist Party for offences including suspected bribery, state media said.

His successor Dong Jun was also reportedly placed under investigation on corruption charges.

Aides charged after rally stampede kills 40

Panic spread after supporters who had climbed into a tree fell onto the crowd below

● Vijay was addressing the rally in Karur district when the crowd surged suddenly, forcing him to halt his speech

● 10,000 people were expected but about 27,000 had turned up

● Nine children were among the dead

● A survivor, identified as Karthick, said that the disaster could have been prevented "if people were not forced to wait for hours together"

AFP | Chennai, India

Police charged three close aides of a popular actor and politician with culpable homicide and negligence yesterday after a stampede at his rally in southern India killed at least 40 people, officials said.

Some 27,000 people thronged a public road in Tamil Nadu state in the hope of seeing the politician, known by the single name of Vijay, on Saturday but panic broke out, triggering a deadly crush.

Police filed a case against three senior members of Vijay's party, whom they identified as Bussy Anand, G.R. Nirmal Kumar and V.P. Mathiyazhagan.

"A case has been registered and the investigation will reveal all who are involved," senior police officer S. Davidson Devasirvatham told reporters.

All three have been charged with "culpable homicide not amounting to murder" and negligent conduct endangering human life.

Witnesses cited hours of delays, insufficient police presence and people falling from a tree branch onto the audience as reasons contributing to the crush.

Vijay was addressing the rally in Karur district when the crowd surged suddenly, forcing him to halt his speech.

Videos on social media showed him tossing water bottles to supporters shortly before the panic broke out.

"I am at a loss for words to express the pain my heart endures," the 51-year-old star said in a statement on Sunday.

"This is indeed an irreparable loss for us," he said, adding that he would pay two million rupees (\$22,000) to each of the victims' families as compensation.

Senior district official M. Thangavel said 40 people had been killed in the stampede, raising an earlier toll of 39.

Nine children were among the dead.



A general view shows scattered shoes after a stampede that broke out last evening during a political rally in the Karur district, in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu



Relatives mourn after receiving the dead body of a victim



Relatives mourn after receiving the dead body of a victim

Huge crowds

State police chief G. Venkataraman said crowds had been waiting for hours after the public was told that Vijay would arrive at the venue by noon.

"The crowds started coming in from 11 am. He came at 7:40 pm," Venkataraman told reporters. "The people lacked sufficient food and water under the hot

sun."

He said 10,000 people were expected but about 27,000 had turned up.

Survivor B. Kanishka said he was "pushed down by the crowd all of a sudden".

"There was absolutely no space to move," he told the Hindu newspaper. "I subsequently fainted."

Others said poor organisation

and an hours-long wait left people restless before the gathering spiralled out of control.

Another survivor, identified as Karthick, told the paper that the disaster could have been prevented "if people were not forced to wait for hours together".

"Poor planning and execution of the programme and lack of police personnel at the spot were also the reason," he said.