

# King Charles visits 9/11 memorial in New York

● The four-day US tour, clouded by tensions over the Iran war, began in Washington with President Donald Trump warmly greeting the monarch and his wife Queen Camilla.

AFP | New York, United States

King Charles III attended a wreath-laying ceremony at the 9/11 memorial in New York yesterday, the third day of a state visit focused on healing strained ties between Britain and the United States.

The four-day US tour, clouded by tensions over the Iran war, began in Washington with President Donald Trump warmly greeting the monarch and his wife Queen Camilla.

The New York leg will see the royals meet first responders and victims' families in Manhattan as they mark nearly 25 years since the terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people on September 11, 2001.

"This atrocity was a defining moment for America and your pain and shock were felt around the whole world," Charles told the US Congress on Tuesday.

"We stood with you then. And we stand with you now in solemn remembrance of a day that shall never be forgotten," he added in a speech that called for unity among Western powers.

Charles, who is passionate about gardening and the environment, will then visit an urban sustainable farming project providing mentorship to young people and tackling hunger.

Meanwhile, Camilla will celebrate the 100th birthday of fictional teddy bear Winnie the Pooh at the New York Public Library, where she is expected to gift a specially made toy of the character Roo.

Later, Charles will mingle with business leaders, including investors and entrepreneurs, at an event highlighting the transatlantic economic ties.



King Charles III became the oldest person in British history to ascend the throne, taking over in 2022 at the age of 73.



Britain's King Charles III and Queen Camilla visit the 9/11 Memorial alongside former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg (L) and Beth Hillman, CEO of the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, in New York

## You'd be speaking French: King Charles roasts Trump at state dinner

Washington, United States

King Charles III gave US President Donald Trump a taste of his own medicine at a White House state dinner on Tuesday when he joked that without the British, Americans would be speaking French.

As the heads of state traded jokes during their dinner toasts, Charles referenced previous comments by Trump aimed at European allies he accuses of freeloading on defense since World War II.

"You recently commented, Mr. President, that if it were not for the United States, European countries would be speaking German. Dare I say that, if it wasn't for us, you'd be speaking French," Charles quipped.

The king was talking about places with British and French origins in North America, where the rival colonial powers battled for control of the continent before US independence 250 years ago.

At the Davos summit in January, Trump said that without US help in World War II, "you'd be speaking German and a little Japanese."

But the king's lighthearted remark reflected the warm tone as he and Trump bonded over the "special relationship" between London and Washington, despite tensions over the war in Iran.

He made further jokes at



US President Donald Trump and Britain's King Charles III smile as they talk during a State Dinner in the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC

Trump's expense, saying he could not help noticing the "readjustments" to the White House East Wing, which the former real estate tycoon has demolished to build a giant \$400 million ballroom.

"I am sorry to say that we British, of course, made our own attempt at real estate redevelopment of the White House in 1814," he said, when British soldiers torched the building.

Charles also quipped that the dinner was "a very considerable improvement on the Boston Tea Party," when colonists dumped shiploads of taxed British tea into the sea in 1773.

Trump -- an avid fan of the British royals whose mother hailed from Scotland -- saved most of his humor for domestic targets.

"I want to congratulate Charles on having made a fantastic speech today at Congress," Trump said. "He got the Democrats to stand -- I've never been able to do that."

The king meanwhile came bearing a gift, part of a British charm offensive aimed at Trump after he lambasted Prime Minister Keir Starmer over his refusal to help against Iran.

Charles presented the president with the bell from the British submarine HMS Trump, which was launched in 1944 during World War II.

"May it stand as a testimony to our nations' shared history and shining future. And should you ever need to get hold of us, well, just give us a ring," the king said to applause.

## US Supreme Court curbs race-based voting maps in landmark ruling

AFP | Washington, United States

The US Supreme Court yesterday sharply limited the use of race in drawing electoral districts, in a decision that could reshape congressional maps nationwide and boost Republican prospects ahead of midterm elections.

In a 6-3 ruling split along ideological lines, the conservative-dominated court struck down a map that creates a second majority-Black district in Louisiana, finding it amounted to an unconstitutional racial gerrymander despite being drawn to comply with the 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA).

The decision leaves the core of the VRA intact but narrows how it can be applied, and will be seen by civil rights activists as a blow to a landmark law that has already been weakened by previous rulings over the past decade.

Democracy Docket, a voting rights media platform, said the ruling could help secure 27 extra Republican seats, cement-

ing the party's control in the US House of Representatives "for at least a generation."

"Without racial protections, maps could be redrawn with almost no limits," the outlet reported.

It was not immediately clear how much the ruling will affect November's elections, with primaries already underway and legal challenges likely to delay any changes.

Republicans are nonetheless expected to push for new maps in states where time and the law permit.

Writing for the majority, Justice Samuel Alito said that compliance with the VRA "could not justify" the use of race in the case, arguing that Section 2 of the act does not require states to draw districts primarily on racial lines. "That map is an unconstitutional gerrymander, and its use would violate the plaintiffs' constitutional rights," he said, referring to the group of non-Black voters who brought the case.

## Iran's 21 executions

Iran has executed at least 21 people and arrested more than 4,000 since the beginning of the Middle East war, the United Nations said, criticising the Islamic republic's "harsh and brutal" treatment of its people.

Since the US-Israeli

strikes sparked the war in late February, "at least nine people have been executed in connection with the January 2026 protests, ten for alleged membership in opposition groups, and two on espionage charges," the UN's rights office said.

## US lawmakers to grill Pentagon chief on Iran war

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth will face tough questions from lawmakers about the Iran war on Wednesday during his first testimony to Congress since the start of the conflict.

Hegseth's appearance before the House Armed Services Committee will be for a hearing on Trump's \$1.5 trillion defence budget request.

Lawmakers from both parties have previously expressed dissatisfaction with the information provided in classified



briefings on the war, setting up a potentially fiery public hearing in which top US military officer General Dan Caine is also set to testify.

## Trump to put his picture in US passports



AFP | Washington, United States

An image of Donald Trump will soon appear in some US passports, officials said Tuesday, shattering another norm as the president aggressively puts his personal stamp on government institutions.

There are few precedents

anywhere in the world, let alone in a democracy, of displaying sitting leaders' pictures in passports, and Trump would be the first sitting US president featured in Americans' travel documents. The State Department said it would offer the limited-edition passport to mark this year's 250th anniversary of the US Declaration of Independence.

## Man takes sister's exhumed body to bank for withdrawal

AFP | New Delhi, India

An Indian man dug up his sister's body and carried it to a bank branch to prove she was dead after being refused access to her account without a death certificate, the lender has said.

Jitu Munda, from a constitutionally recognised tribal community in the eastern state of

Odisha, went to an Indian Overseas Bank branch on Monday to withdraw money from his deceased sister's account.

But bank staff told him that "withdrawals by a third party are not permitted without proper authorisation", the lender said Tuesday.

Angered by being turned away because he did not have

her death certificate, Munda returned to the branch carrying the "human remains" of his sister, who had been buried days earlier, the bank said.

Television networks broadcast footage of Munda carrying what appeared to be a corpse partially wrapped in plastic, with skeletal legs visible and slung over his shoulder.

"This created a highly distressing situation at the premises," the bank said.

It added that the incident stemmed from a "lack of awareness", and the individual's unwillingness to follow procedures.

"The claim will be settled on priority, once the death certificate is submitted," it added.