



Army gets a new chief

General Dhiraj Seth (left) takes over as the 31st Chief of the Army Staff from General Upendra Dwivedi, in New Delhi on Tuesday. X/@ADGPI [REPORT, PAGE 7](#)

US Supreme Court clears way for transgender sports ban

Reuters

Washington, June 30

THE US Supreme Court cleared the way on Tuesday for states to impose restrictions on transgender student athletes, upholding laws in West Virginia and Idaho banning them from female sports teams — a contentious issue enmeshed in the nation's culture wars.

The justices overturned decisions by lower courts siding with transgender students who challenged the bans in the two states as violating the US

Constitution and a federal anti-discrimination law. The Idaho and West Virginia laws designate sports teams at public schools including universities according to "biological sex" and bar "students of the male sex" from female teams.

Twenty-five other states have similar laws on the books.

The court decided 9-0 that the state laws do not violate the Title IX civil rights statute that bars discrimination in education "on the basis of sex."

The justices, however, divided along ideological lines —



US Supreme Court in Washington

with the six conservative justices in the majority — in deciding that the measures also do not violate the Constitution's 14th

Amendment guarantee of equal protection under the law.

The three liberal justices said a factual dispute in the West Virginia case should have precluded resolving that issue.

The ruling was authored by conservative Justice Brett Kavanaugh. "Consistent with Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause, we hold that the states may maintain women's and girls' sports for biological females. They may determine eligibility for women's and girls' sports based on biological sex. The Constitution and Title IX do not

require an overhaul of women's and girls' sports throughout America," Kavanaugh wrote.

Republican President Donald Trump's administration, which has cracked down on transgender rights, backed the states in the litigation. Writing on Truth Social, Trump said: "BIG WIN: The United States Supreme Court just RULED AGAINST MEN PLAYING IN WOMEN'S SPORTS. Wow! That takes that ridiculous situation off the table!!!"

Idaho and West Virginia said the laws preserve fair and safe

competition for women and girls, while critics see the measures as part of a broader assault on the rights of transgender Americans. The students who challenged the measures said they discriminate based on a person's sex or status as transgender in violation of the 14th Amendment and Title IX.

"Sports are different from, say, a typical employment... where equal protection often may require the government generally treat an individual without regard to the individual's sex," Kavanaugh wrote.

E-OCI CARD ALSO INTRODUCED

‘Will strengthen govt capacity to monitor foreign donation in real time’: Shah launches FCRA 2.0

Express News Service

New Delhi, June 30

IN A move aimed at strengthening the “government’s capacity to monitor foreign donations in real time”, Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the FCRA 2.0 portal on Tuesday. He also launched the electronic Overseas Citizen of India (e-OCI) card, saying it will bring “great convenience” to more than 50 lakh OCI cardholders.

Shah said the two digital platforms would reduce paperwork, improve citizen services and strengthen oversight of foreign contributions and OCI-related processes.

At the launch event held in New Delhi, Shah said the two platforms would make governance more efficient and transparent, while also addressing long-pending difficulties faced by stakeholders, especially organisations dealing with foreign contributions under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA). “Both these initiatives started today will en-



Home Minister Amit Shah with Home Secretary Govind Mohan at the launch of the FCRA 2.0 Portal in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

hance facilities for citizens and, in particular, will resolve the difficulties faced by those receiving donations through the FCRA portal,” he said.

Shah said the revamped FCRA system would simplify compliance procedures for registered organisations and strengthen the government’s capacity to monitor foreign donations in real time. “Prior to 2014, the FCRA system was entangled in files and procedures and was beyond proper oversight, which is critical for both national security and development. After the

(NDA) government was formed, the system was strengthened. The renewal of the FCRA portal today will greatly enhance ease of operations for organisations,” he added.

Shah claimed that due to the FCRA law, monitoring on foreign contributions “coming with wrong intentions” will increase.

On e-OCI card, he said, “...it will bring great convenience to more than 50 lakh OCI cardholders. After 20 years, when a new passport is issued, there will be no need to re-issue the OCI booklet...”

UNITED KINGDOM

Starmer unveils \$20bn defence boost to prepare for future wars



Kier Starmer

minister this month. Healey had accused Starmer of failing to secure enough money to keep Britain safe.

PRIME MINISTER Keir Starmer pledged on Tuesday to spend an extra \$20 billion to modernise Britain's depleted armed forces in a long-delayed investment plan that is designed to prepare for wars of the future and mark his legacy. Starmer said the increased spending over the next four years went further than a previous draft that prompted his ally, John Healey, to resign as defence

REUTERS

JARED KUSHNER & STEVE WITKOFF IN DOHA TO SAVE PEACE MoU

Qatar: No high level US-Iran dialogue, only technical talks

White House said Trump envoys will hold key meetings, but no sign so far

Reuters
Doha, June 30

TOP US envoys who have arrived in Doha will not hold a high-level meeting with Iran, a Qatari official said on Tuesday, casting doubt on the progress of efforts to bring a lasting halt to the Iran war and fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Instead, there will be technical talks this week on issues including regional security that could later be elevated to senior level, Qatar's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed Al Ansari told a media briefing.

The arrival of US President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and envoy Steve Witkoff in Doha on Tuesday followed exchanges of fire over the weekend that tested the June 17 interim accord between the United States and Iran. The 14-point pact allowed 60 days for the two sides to negotiate a permanent truce in the conflict, which began with US and Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28, and to resolve thorny issues including the future of Iran's nuclear programme.

The conflict disrupted global trade in oil and other goods, exposed Gulf states to Iranian drone and missile fire and killed thousands of people, mostly in Iran and Lebanon.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said dialogue with mediator Qatar on the implementation of the interim deal, including



People walk past a billboard depicting Iran's late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei embracing late senior Iranian military commander General Qassem Soleimani, in Tehran on Tuesday. REUTERS

on the release of frozen Iranian assets, was likely to take place in Doha on Wednesday.

"No meeting at any level with the American side has been scheduled for the coming days," he said. The White House had said on Monday that Kushner and Witkoff would hold "high-level meetings", with technical discussions to continue on the sidelines.

The exact timing of the technical talks was not immediately clear.

"We have a track on the nuclear side, you have a track on the economic and state performance issue, you have a track on security and the regional security," said Ansari.

Iran has since sought to exert control over the strait alongside

Oman, which lies across the waterway, saying it plans to charge fees to ships and obstructing vessels that stray outside defined paths. Baghaei said on Tuesday that Tehran would "do whatever is necessary to safeguard its interests" over the strait.

Since last Thursday, the US has accused Iran of hitting at least two commercial ships with missiles or drones, and it bombed Iranian military facilities in response.

Iran in turn launched missiles and drones at US military sites in Kuwait and Bahrain on Sunday, with both sides accusing each other of breaking the ceasefire. Trump and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent are both urging gasoline retailers to lower prices.

'Israel won't leave yet': Netanyahu in south Lebanon

Tel Aviv: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Tuesday visited Lebanese territory occupied by the Israeli military, telling soldiers that Israel would not withdraw from the country's south as long as Iran-backed Hezbollah continued to pose a threat.

"Our insistence is that we will not leave southern Lebanon until the threat is removed... and as long as Hezbollah remains here, armed and threatening us, we will remain here," he said. REUTERS

In setback for Trump, US top court upholds birthright citizenship

6-3 ruling; Trump urges Congress to act, says 'too bad for our country'

Andrew Chung

Washington, June 30

HANDING PRESIDENT Donald Trump a stinging defeat, the US Supreme Court on Tuesday rejected his attempt to restrict birthright citizenship in the United States — a right long woven into the fabric of American society — scuttling one of his top priorities in his crack-down on immigration.

The 6-3 ruling marked the second time this year that the court has invalidated a major Trump initiative, following its February decision to strike down his sweeping global tariffs.

The Justices upheld a lower court's decision that blocked

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EXPLAINED

The impact

Ahead of the ruling, experts had estimated that US President Donald Trump's directive could affect the legal status of as many as 250,000 babies born each year, and could require the families of millions more to prove the citizenship status of their newborns.

Starmer pledges £15 bn to modernise U.K.'s defence forces

Reuters

LONDON

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer pledged on Tuesday to spend an extra £15 billion to modernise Britain's depleted armed forces in a long-delayed investment plan that is designed to prepare for the wars of the future and mark his legacy.

In what is most likely his last major policy announcement, Mr. Starmer said the Defence Investment Plan went further than a

previous draft that prompted his ally, John Healey, to resign as Defence Minister this month. Mr. Healey had accused Mr. Starmer of failing to secure enough money to keep Britain safe.

Mr. Starmer will take his plan – which foresees spending of nearly £80 billion a year by 2029 – to Ankara for a NATO meeting on July 7 to 8, where he will want to signal that Britain was on the path to meet its commitment to reach defence spending of 3.5% of GDP by 2035.

Surge in ship traffic across Hormuz as Iran, Oman talk

With the Joint Hormuz Committee set up to finalise future framework for ship transits, tracker agencies reported rise in transits across the strait, including west-bound ships for loading cargo

M. Kalyanaraman

CHENNAI

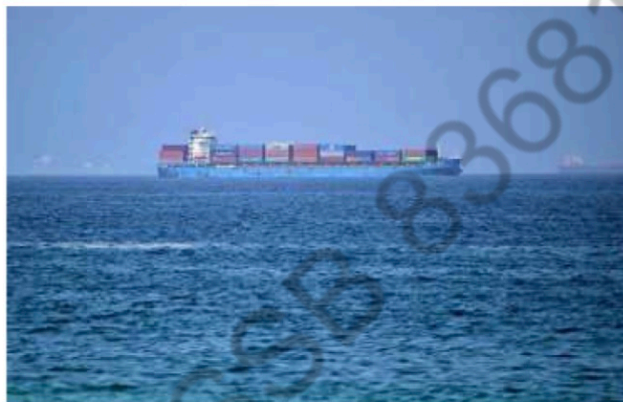
With Iran and Oman setting up a Joint Hormuz Committee to come up with a framework for the management of the Strait of Hormuz, tracker agencies have reported a surge in transits across the strait, including west-bound ships entering the strait for loading cargo.

Early last week, Iran and Oman's ministers met and agreed to set up a joint committee.

But Iran, saying its role in managing the strait was not being recognised, launched a drone attack on a ship transiting through the Omani route.

On Thursday (June 25), the foreign ministers of Iran and Oman spoke on the phone and agreed to move forward on talks.

On Monday (June 29), Kazem Gharibabadi, Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, met with Abdulaziz Al Hi-



Smooth sail: Ships not related to Iran accounted for almost the entire increase in traffic. AFP

nai, Oman's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, to mark the first meeting of the Joint Hormuz Committee in Muscat, Oman. Mr. Gharibabadi posted on X that he discussed with his Omani counterpart the future management of the strait and the sovereignty of coastal states.

Despite a surge in attacks by both sides last week, ship transits over the week of June 22-28 increased 70% over the previous week, as per Lloyd's

List data. More than 240 ship transits happened last week, compared to some 130 the previous week.

Almost all the increase came across the non-Iranian route, presumably along Oman, and these had no links to Iran. Four Indian ships that had applied for permission from both the nations for transiting continue to be anchored inside the Gulf, as per marinetraffic.com

Ships not related to Iran accounted for almost the

entire increase in traffic, indicating that both the northern Iranian and the southern Omani routes are now popular among ship-pers seeking to evacuate. Significantly, Lloyd's List records 85 ships moving into Persian Gulf last week.

The MoU calls for 60 days of toll-free traffic, following which a mutually agreed framework will need to be put in place.

While Iran has indicated a preference for tolls, Oman, last week, signed on to a Gulf Cooperation Council statement that called for no tolls.

In 1968, the two sides proposed an inbound and outbound channel with a buffer in between, in the middle of the strait, for ship transit; this became the norm and was accepted by the International Maritime Organization, but there was no mention of sovereignty, tolls, or governance then. Iran has said it has mined these channels during the current war.