



15 injured in Florida when a train hit a truck that drove onto tracks after another train passed



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Trump sides with Musk as H-1-B visas roil MAGA camp

The prez-elect's position is in contrast with his earlier calls for immigration curbs

WASHINGTON

DONALD Trump weighed in on Saturday in a bitter debate dividing his traditional supporters and tech barons such as Elon Musk, saying that he backs a special visa programme that helps highly skilled workers enter the country.

"I've always liked the (H-1-B) visas, I have always been in favour of the visas, that's why we have them" at Trump-owned facilities, the president-elect told the New York Post in his first public comments on the matter since it flared up this week. An angry back-and-forth, largely between Silicon Valley's Musk and traditional anti-immigration Trump backers, has erupted in fiery fashion,

with Musk even vowing to "go to war" over the issue.

Trump's insistent calls for sharp curbs on immigration were central to his election victory in November over President Joe Biden. Trump has vowed to deport all undocumented immigrants and limit legal immigration.

But tech entrepreneurs such as Musk - as well as Vivek Ramaswamy, who is set to join Musk in co-chairing a government cost-cutting panel - say the United States produces too few highly skilled graduates, and they fervently champion the H-1-B programme.

Musk, who migrated from South Africa on an H-1-B, posted on Thursday on his X platform that luring elite engineering



A file photo of Donald Trump and Elon Musk in Texas to see the Starship lift off | AP

Looking forward to the inevitable divorce between President Trump and Big Tech. We have to protect President Trump from the technocrats

Laura Loomer, a far-right MAGA figure, who flew with Trump on his campaign plane

talent from abroad was "essential for America to keep winning." Adding acrimony to the debate was a post from Ramaswamy, the son of immigrants from India, who deplored an "American culture" that he said venerates mediocrity, adding that the United States risks having "our asses handed to us by China."

That angered several prominent conservatives who were

backing Trump long before Musk noisily joined their cause this year, going on to pump more than \$250 million into the Republican's campaign. "Looking forward to the inevitable divorce between President Trump and Big Tech," said Laura Loomer, a far-right MAGA figure known for her conspiracy theories, who often flew with Trump on his campaign plane.

"We have to protect President Trump from the technocrats." She and others said Trump should be promoting American workers and further limiting immigration. Musk warned of a "MAGA civil war" over the visas, which he said were critical "for those who want America to win."

Key ally demands Moscow apologise for plane crash

BAKU

AZERBAIJANI President Ilham Aliyev accused Russia on Sunday of firing at an Azerbaijan Airlines passenger jet before it crashed and of initially trying to cover up the cause of the fatal disaster, demanding that Moscow admit guilt.

Aliyev made the accusation in an interview to state media at Baku airport four days after the AZAL plane crashed in Kazakhstan, killing 38 people of the 67 people on board.

Azerbaijani officials have suggested the aircraft was hit by a Russian air-defence system as it tried to land in Grozny, capital of the Russian republic of Chechnya.

Aliyev's unusually forthright accusation of his country's traditional ally came a day after he spoke by phone to Russian President Vladimir Putin. A Kremlin statement on the phone call gave no indication that Putin had claimed responsibility for the crash.



A file photo of Putin with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev | AP

damaged from the outside over Russian territory, near the city of Grozny, and almost lost control," Aliyev told state television. "We also know that electronic warfare systems put our plane out of control... At the same time, as a result of fire from the ground, the tail of the plane was also severely damaged," he said.

Aliyev said that while "of course, our plane was hit by accident", Baku was angry that

Moscow had apparently tried to hide the cause of the crash and demanded its ally admit what happened.

He said it was "regrettable and surprising" that Moscow "put forward theories" that he said, "clearly showed he Russian side wanted to cover up the issue."

"For the first three days, we heard nothing from Russia except some absurd theories," he said.

Netanyahu is getting his prostate removed; Levin named acting PM

TEL AVIV

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is having his prostate removed on Sunday, his office said, a procedure that comes as he manages multiple crises at once, including the ongoing war in Gaza and his own trial for alleged corruption. Netanyahu's office said that Justice Minister Yariv Levin, a close Netanyahu ally, would serve as acting prime minister during the procedure.

With so much at stake in the turbulent region, Netanyahu's health in wartime is a concern for both Israelis and the wider world.

According to Netanyahu's office, the Israeli leader was diagnosed with a urinary tract infection on Wednesday stemming from a benign enlargement of his

prostate. The infection was treated successfully with antibiotics but a procedure on Sunday will remove his prostate.

Complications from prostate enlargement are common in men in their 70s and 80s. Shay Golan, head of the oncology urology service at Israel's Rabin Medical Center, told Israeli Army Radio. Golan spoke in general terms about the procedure and was not involved in Netanyahu's care or treatment.

He said that an enlarged prostate can block proper emptying of the bladder, leading to a build-up of urine that can then lead to an infection or other complications. After medicinal treatment, doctors can recommend a procedure to remove the prostate to prevent future blockages, Golan said.

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