



YELLOW VESTS RETURN

Rioters in Paris torched motorbikes and set barricades ablaze on the upmarket Boulevard Saint Germain on Saturday, as protests against high living costs and the perceived indifference of President Emmanuel Macron turned violent on the fringes.

TOP OF THE WORLD



Amber Heard

UK Was petrified of monster, Heard says of Depp

London: Amid her divorce with Johnny Depp, Amber Heard once said she was “petrified” of her husband’s “other personality”, which was called “the monster”, according to documents obtained by The Hollywood Reporter. In a deposition given by Heard to Depp’s attorney in August 2016 as part of their divorce proceedings, she said: “Johnny and I refer to his other personality, the part of him that is present when he beats me up -- we call that the monster and have called [that] the monster for many years. She added: “I was petrified of the monster.” Heard and Depp’s divorce was finalised in January 2017. Heard has accused her former husband of domestic violence, which Depp has denied.

US Jogger pepper sprays dog, its owner bites her

Oakland: Authorities arrested a woman Friday for biting a jogger who pepper-sprayed her dog at a San Francisco Bay Area park. The dog of 19-year-old Alma Cadwalader tried to attack the jogger Thursday on a trail in Anthony Chabot Regional Park in Castro Valley. The jogger used pepper spray to fend off the animal. Police said Cadwalader then confronted the jogger, biting her forearm, leaving “significant wounds”.

SOUTH KOREA Defector gives advice to another

Seoul: A former North Korean diplomat who staged a high-profile defection to the South urged an old colleague who has gone missing in Italy to defect to Seoul. Jo Song Gil, the 44-year-old who was until recently North Korea’s acting ambassador to Italy, disappeared with his wife after leaving the embassy without notice in early November. Jo has sought asylum in the US and is under the protection of Italian intelligence. In an open letter, Thae Yong Ho, Pyongyang’s former deputy ambassador to Britain, who defected to South Korea in 2016, urged Jo to follow in his footsteps.

TURKEY Church splits with Russia

Istanbul: The spiritual head of Orthodox Christians worldwide formally granted independence to the Ukrainian church Saturday, marking an historic split from Russia which Ukrainian leaders see as vital to the country’s security. The decree, granting “autocephaly”, was signed by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at a service with the head of the Ukrainian church Metropolitan Epiphany and President Petro Poroshenko in Istanbul.

Foreign students in top universities should stay and help US grow: Trump

US President says bad policy forcing talented people to leave

LALIT K JHA WASHINGTON, JANUARY 5

RUING THAT talented foreign students are leaving the US after studying in the country’s best educational institutions, President Donald Trump has said he wants people with merit to stay in America and help the growth of companies here. Addressing a press conference on Friday, the President said the US is “losing out on great minds” as the country has a “ridiculous” immigration policy.

He said he wants to end loopholes in the legal immigration system so as to attract more people based on merit. Trump said his administration wants people to come into the country legally and on merit.

Indian dies after falling from cliff in Ireland while taking selfie

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LONDON, JANUARY 5

AN INDIAN student died after falling from cliffs in Ireland while clicking a ‘selfie’, media reports said. The man, whose identity was not immediately known, is said to be an Indian national studying in Dublin, The Irish Sun reported.

He was visiting the popular tourist attraction on Friday afternoon when the incident happened south of the main viewing areas near the visitor centre. There were hundreds of people when the man fell from the Cliffs. Search and rescue officials were mobilised as soon as an alarm was raised.

His body was recovered with the help of a helicopter. He was pronounced dead at around 5.35 PM (local time), the report said. Officials interviewed a number of eye-witnesses and confirmed that at this stage, they are treating the incident as a tragic accident.

JASON HOROWITZ ROME, JANUARY 5

MATTEO SALVINI likes spreading Nutella on his morning bread. He winds down with a bowl of Barilla pasta and a glass of Barolo wine. He heeds the words of wisdom inside the wrappers of Perugina Bacio chocolates. He drinks Moretti beer.



There are legal ways to come to this country, and legal immigration has made this country great.” DONALD TRUMP

40 million

The number of people living in the US who were born in another country, accounting for one-fifth of the world’s migrants in 2016. The US has more immigrants than any other country in the world. The population is also very diverse, with nearly every country represented among US immigrants.

TRUMP SLAMMED the immigration system, saying talented students who get educated at the best American universities are not allowed to remain and work in the US.

allow them to stay in our country,” he said. “So, they end up going back to China and Japan and so many other countries all over the world, and we don’t keep them. They get educated at our finest schools, and then we don’t allow them, through a various set of circumstances, to have any guarantees of staying. So we lose out on great minds. We

can’t do that,” he said. Trump was referring to difficulties being faced by foreign students to stay and work in the US after they complete their education in the country. He also said if somebody wants to seek asylum, there’s a way to do that. “There are legal ways to come to this country, and legal immigration has made this country great.” PTI



\$3 MILLION TUNA

A 278-kg bluefin tuna sold for a record \$3.1 million in the year’s first auction at Tokyo’s fish market on Saturday. The buyer was Kiyoshi Kimura, the self-styled ‘King of Tuna’, who owns a Japanese sushi restaurant chain. Reuters

Pakistan demands US hand over Haqqani

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ISLAMABAD, JANUARY 5

PAKISTAN HAS initiated a process of seeking the extradition of its former envoy to the US Hussain Haqqani through the foreign office on embezzlement charges after it failed to get it through Interpol. Dawn reported Saturday.



Hussain Haqqani

produce Haqqani, a prominent critic of Pakistan’s military and political leadership, before it in January last year, but the Interpol has refused to issue an arrest warrant against him. Haqqani, 62, was Pakistan’s Ambassador to the US from May 27, 2008 to November 22, 2011, which is considered as one of the most tumultuous periods of the US-Pakistan relationship. As part of the extradition process, Pakistan’s Interior ministry has

also transferred a 355-page extradition dossier to the foreign office. In 2018, Pakistan’s Supreme Court issued an arrest warrant against Haqqani after he failed to appear before it in the ‘Memogate’ case. Haqqani was in the centre of the controversy over allegedly sending a memorandum to the US military chief Admiral Mike Mullen in 2011 seeking his direct intervention to avert a possible overthrow of the PPP government by the military.

US-Indian lawmaker backs Trump

MICHAEL TACKETT & SHERYL GAY STOLBERG WASHINGTON, JANUARY 5

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump threatened on Friday to keep the federal government partly closed for “months or even years” if he did not get \$5.6 billion for his wall at the southern border, and he warned that he was considering declaring a national emergency to build it without congressional approval. “I may do it,” Trump said. “But we can call a national emergency and build it very quickly. And it’s another way of doing it. But if we can do it through a negotiated process, we’re giving that a shot.”

Trump and Democratic leaders emerged from a two-hour meeting in the White House Situation Room without a deal to reopen government agencies that have been shuttered for two weeks, and the two sides offered sharply contrasting views of where they stood. By day’s end, the two sides appeared to be still locked in a stalemate. Democrats called the meeting

“contentious” while the president and Republican leaders in the House called it “productive.” The impasse, heading into its third week, has closed parts of nine federal agencies, including the Interior Department and the IRS, and left 800,000 federal employees either furloughed or working without pay. NYT



China’s first domestically developed aircraft carrier departs the port in Dalian, China last week. Reuters

Xi’s 1st order to army in 2019: Be ready for battle

K J M VARMA BEIJING, JANUARY 5

CHINESE PRESIDENT Xi Jinping ordered the army to enhance its combat readiness to make sure it is always ready for a battle, saying risks and challenges are on the rise as the world is facing a period of major changes never seen in a century, state media reported Saturday.

The People’s Liberation Army (PLA), the world’s largest with two million troops, last year doubled the training period for new recruits from three to six months in a bid to improve their combat capabilities. President Xi, who also heads the PLA besides the ruling Communist Party, told a meeting of the Central Military Commission (CMC), the overall high command of the Chinese military, that “the world is facing a period of major changes never seen in a century, and China is still in an important period of strategic opportunity for development”.

Xi is the Chairman of the CMC. He is the only civilian in the high-power military body comprising top defence officials. Preparedness is vital in the era of drastic changes, unpredictable risks, Xi said Friday, official media reported. He ordered the armed forces to continue strengthening their combat preparedness and to make sure they are always ready for battle, state-run China Daily reported.

The entire armed forces should have a correct understanding of China’s security and development trends, enhance their awareness of danger, crisis and war, and make solid efforts on combat preparations in order to accomplish the tasks assigned by the CPC and the people, Xi said.

Regarding combat capability as the only and fundamental criterion, Xi ordered all work, forces and resources to focus on military preparedness and ensure a marked progress in this regard, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. Xi stressed the armed forces’ ability to respond quickly and effectively to contingencies, asking them to upgrade commanding capability of joint operations, foster new combat forces, and improve military training under combat conditions. Party and government departments and agencies at the central and local levels are required to support the de-



Xi Jinping

EXPLAINED

‘High-profile gestures’ with eye on Taiwan

XI’S CALL for battle preparedness comes after President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan sought domestic and international support of the island’s de facto independence — just a few days ago, Xi had warned that unification with China was inevitable. It also came as acting US defence secretary Patrick Shanahan told US forces that he sees China as a key priority. “While we are focused on ongoing operations, Shanahan told the team to remember China, China, China,” reports from Washington quoted a US defence official as saying. Shanghai-based expert Ni Lexiong said the calls in state and military media — “high-profile gestures” — urging battle-readiness were likely intended as a warning to those who sought to obstruct China’s plans for Taiwan reunification.

fence and military development, he said. Xi signed Friday an order to open the annual training session of the armed forces. The order demands that troops hone their combat capability and that military units organise events on a regular basis to verify soldiers’ ability. The armed forces must also strive to strengthen their readiness to respond to emergencies. PTI

POPULIST IN ANTI-ELITE ERA

Salvini’s nutella & kittens, and how to look like a common man



Elisa Isoardi, a television personality and the girlfriend of Matteo Salvini, announced their breakup with this Instagram post, writing, “With immense respect for the true love that was. Thank you Matteo.”

million followers on Instagram, and 943,000 Twitter followers. He expertly wields these platforms to demonise opponents, stoke fears about marauding migrants and accuse bureaucrats in Brussels of every manner of sin. But just as critical for Salvini’s success is maintaining an aura of authenticity, the political gold of this populist age. As part of that approach, he has hinted at a softer, more human side with pizza, pasta, kittens and a just-dumped relationship status. It is an image that Salvini has sculpted over time — and one that has helped propel him from the political fringe to the center stage of Italian politics. He favours frequent and varied posts to draw attention. His method of mixing incendiary rhet-

oric with cheeriness, often in the same posts, has often vexed opponents — but their outrage has generally focused even more attention on Salvini. Last week, his opponents attacked one of his Nutella posts, made on a day when an earthquake in Sicily endangered lives. (“My St Steven’s Day begins with bread and Nutella” Salvini wrote with a “tastes delicious” emoticon, “Yours???”) During this year’s campaign, Elisa Isoardi, a successful and glamorous television personality and Salvini’s girlfriend at the time, posted pictures on Instagram of her ironing his dress shirts. It enforced the traditionalist credibility of Salvini, who has two children by two women, neither of them Isoardi. It drove traffic. NYT