



NORWAY
UHLENBECK 1ST WOMAN TO WIN ABEL PRIZE
 The Abel Prize in mathematics was awarded to Karen Uhlenbeck of the United States for her work on partial differential equations, the first woman to win the award, the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters said. "Karen Uhlenbeck receives the Abel Prize 2019 for her fundamental work in geometric analysis and gauge theory, which has dramatically changed the mathematical landscape," said Abel Committee chairman Hans Munthe-Kaas.

TOP OF THE WORLD



USA
Tabloid bought Bezos texts from girlfriend's brother: report

Washington: The National Enquirer bought revealing messages between Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos and his then-secret girlfriend for \$200,000 from her brother, The Wall Street Journal reported Monday. The tabloid accessed the text messages, and in January reported that Bezos had an extramarital affair with former news anchor and entertainment reporter Lauren Sanchez — a leak that led to his divorce. The Wall Street Journal reported that Michael Sanchez sold the text messages, citing people familiar with the matter. Sanchez told the newspaper he did not want to "dignify" the reporting on the deal and called it "old rumours," it reported.

CANADA
Jagmeet Singh is 1st non-white chief of opp party

Ottawa: Indian-origin Jagmeet Singh has created political history in Canada when he made his debut in the House of Commons as the first non white-leader of a major opposition party in the country. The arrival of the New Democratic Party leader into the House on Monday was cheered by all members. Singh, 40, was elected in federal by-elections held on February 25. His first words as an elected lawmaker were about last week's terrorist attack on two mosques in New Zealand.

USA
SC postpones Sharif bail verdict to March 26

Islamabad: Pakistan's Supreme Court Tuesday postponed the verdict of jailed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's application seeking bail on medical grounds till March 26, according to media reports. Sharif filed an appeal on March 6 against a judgment by the Islamabad High Court (IHC) which on February 25 rejected his bail application on medical grounds in the Al-Azizia steel mills case. During the hearing on Tuesday, a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa issued a notice to National Accountability Bureau to submit reply in the matter in the next hearing fixed for March 26.

THAILAND
Thai Tycoon convicted in poaching case

Kanchanaburi: A Thai tycoon accused of killing a black leopard was sentenced to 16 months in jail on other poaching-related charges Tuesday but allowed to go free pending an appeal, in a case that has caused an outcry in a country fed up with impunity for powerful figures. Construction magnate Premchai Karnasuta, whose company is behind major infrastructure projects such as Bangkok's monorail and its airport, was arrested by rangers in a national park in February 2018.

NEW ZEALAND STARTS RELEASING BODIES OF CHRISTCHURCH VICTIMS

You'll never hear me speak his name: Ardern vows to deny killer notoriety

KRISTEN GELINEAU & JULIET WILLIAMS
 CHRISTCHURCH, MARCH 19

NEW ZEALAND'S prime minister declared Tuesday she would do everything in her power to deny the accused mosque gunman a platform for elevating his white supremacist views, after the man dismissed his lawyer and opted to represent himself at his trial in the killings of 50 people.

"I agree that it is absolutely something that we need to acknowledge, and do what we can to prevent the notoriety that this individual seeks," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern told reporters. "He obviously had a range of reasons for committing this atrocious terrorist attack. Lifting his profile was one of them. And that's something that we can absolutely deny him."

Later, in a passionate speech



A mourner near the Linwood mosque in Christchurch. AP

to Parliament, she urged the public to follow her lead and to avoid giving the gunman fame. "I implore you: Speak the names of those who were lost, rather than the name of the man who took them," she said. "He may have sought notoriety, but we in New Zealand will give him nothing, not even his name." Meanwhile, Christchurch was beginning to return to a semblance

Dutch shooting probe: Focus on possible terror motive

ALEKSANDER FURTULA & MIKE CORDER
 UTRECHT, MARCH 19

DUTCH PROSECUTORS said Tuesday they are taking very seriously the possibility that the deadly shooting on a tram in the central city of Utrecht was an act of terror.

The nature of the Monday's attack and a note found in a suspected getaway car suggest a possible terror motive, prosecutors said in a statement, but they add that other possible motives also are being investigated.

They did not elaborate on what was written in the note found in the car.

The statement also said that investigations so far have not established any relationship at

all between the main suspect, Gokmen Tanis, and the shooting victims.

Prosecutors confirmed that three people died: a 19-year-old woman from the neighbouring town of Vianen, and two men aged 28 and 49 from Utrecht.

Three others were seriously wounded and four more suffered light injuries, according to prosecutors.

Tanis, a 37-year-old man of Turkish descent, was being held on suspicion of "manslaughter with terrorist intent," though authorities have not ruled out other possible motives.

He was arrested Monday evening after an hours-long manhunt that nearly paralyzed the Netherlands' fourth-largest city and sent shockwaves through this nation. AP

Will support Pak's territorial integrity, no matter what: China

SOWMIYA ASHOK
 BEIJING, MARCH 19

REAFFIRMING ITS support to Pakistan, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi Tuesday pledged to uphold Pakistan's sovereign independence and territorial integrity saying its commitment will remain despite changes in the international landscape.

Speaking in Beijing at the first-ever China-Pakistan Foreign Minister-level strategic dialogue, Wang said: "No matter how things change in the world and in the region, China will firmly support Pakistan in upholding its sovereign independence and territorial integrity and dignity."

Wang was with his Pakistan counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who acknowledged China's support to his country in "difficult times" and thanked Beijing for its support to Pakistan.

Their remarks come weeks after India carried out airstrikes in Pakistan's Balakot following a Jaish-e-Mohammad suicide attack on a convoy in Pulwama on February 14, which killed 40 CRPF personnel. The attack and the subsequent airstrikes have heightened tensions along the Line of Control. The Foreign Ministers' meeting was held less than a week after China put a technical hold on the proposal to list Jaish chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist in the UN Security Council 1267 committee for the fourth time.

Qureshi also said that the two countries discussed the situation after the Pulwama incident. "I also briefed the Foreign Minister (Wang) on the rapidly deteriorating situation on the Indian side of Kashmir, intensification of human rights violations, especially after Pulwama," he said. "Pakistan appreciates the role that China has played, once again, in standing by Pakistan in these difficult times."

Referring to Kashmir, Qureshi

EXPLAINED
CPEC, Belt and Road on Beijing's mind

China's remarks underscoring firm support to Pakistan come in the backdrop of heightened tension between India-Pakistan since the February 14 Pulwama terror attack and the Belt and Road Forum (BRF) in Beijing next month. This is the second Forum and India chose to skip the first BRF in 2017 in protest against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship Belt and Road Initiative project. India has said the CPEC runs through the disputed PoK. How Delhi engages with Beijing in April remains to be seen.

said: "This is a concern because that leads to a reaction, and that reaction at times creates tensions in the region that must be avoided. I think there is a need for a new assessment on how the situation on the Indian side of Kashmir should be handled by the Indians."

With China set to host the second Belt and Road Forum in Beijing next month, Qureshi said: "The Chinese government was very generous in supporting Pakistan. We had good discussions... We are committed to the expeditious implementation of CPEC," Qureshi said.



Nursultan Nazarbayev is the only president independent Kazakhstan has had. Reuters

Kazakhstan's President to step down after 30 yrs in power

ASSOCIATED PRESS
 MOSCOW, MARCH 19

PRESIDENT NURSULTAN Nazarbayev, the only leader that independent Kazakhstan has ever known, abruptly announced his resignation Tuesday after three decades in power.

In a televised address to the oil-rich nation, the 78-year-old Nazarbayev said he has made the "difficult" decision to terminate his authority as president, effective Wednesday.

He did not give a specific reason, but noted that he would have marked 30 years on the job later this year. He said he sees his mission as ensuring the transition of power to a new generation. "It was an honour for me to serve the people," he said. "I have worked hard to fulfill the nation's will."

Nazarbayev will retain considerable political power. He said he will remain chairman of the nation's Security Council and the head of the ruling Nur Otan party.

"I will serve you until the end of my days," he said.

He said that Upper House Speaker Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will serve as the interim head of state in line with the constitution until a new election can be held.



People carry their personal belongings in Beira, Mozambique, after the region was struck by Cyclone Idai. AP

1,000 feared dead in Mozambique storm

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
 BEIRA, MARCH 19

MORE THAN a thousand people are feared to have died in a cyclone that smashed into Mozambique last week, while scores were killed and more than 200 are missing in neighbouring Zimbabwe.

The city of Beira in central Mozambique bore Cyclone Idai's full wrath on Thursday before the storm barreled on to neighbouring Zimbabwe, unleashing fierce winds and flash floods and washing away roads and houses.

"For the moment we have registered 84 deaths officially, but when we flew over the area... this morning to understand what's going on, everything indicates that we could register more than 1,000 deaths," Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi said in a nationwide

3 dead, 1 missing in US floods

AT LEAST one person was missing on Monday after devastating floods across the US Midwest that killed three others and inflicted hundreds of millions of dollars in damage in what Nebraska's governor called a disaster of historic proportions. As floodwaters began to recede in much of the area inundated by the aftermath of a storm dubbed a "bomb cy-

clone", Nebraska officials were taking in the damage in a state where 64 of the 93 counties have declared emergencies.

Damage to the state's livestock sector was estimated at about \$400 million, while the full impact on the spring planting season was not yet clear, said Steve Wellman, director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. REUTERS

address. "This is a real humanitarian disaster," he said. "More than 100,000 people are in danger."

Survivors have taken refuge in trees while awaiting help, the president added. Aerial photographs released by a Christian non-profit organ-

isation, the Mission Aviation Fellowship, showed groups of people stuck on rooftops with flood waters up to window level.

"The scale of damage... (in) Beira is massive and horrifying," the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent

Societies (IFRC) said. Ninety per cent of the city of some 530,000 people and its surrounding area has been "damaged or destroyed," it said. "The situation is terrible. The scale of devastation is enormous," the IFRC's Jamie LeSueur said. "Almost everything is destroyed. Communication lines have been completely cut and roads have been destroyed. Some affected communities are not accessible."

A large dam burst on Sunday and cut off the last road to Beira. Sofala province governor Alberto Mondlane warned that the "biggest threat we have now, even bigger than the cyclone, is floods because it's raining more and more". Emma Beaty, coordinator of a grouping of NGOs known as Cosaco, said: "We've never had something of this magnitude before in Mozambique."

IN THE GREEN ZONE, FOREIGNERS LEAD A SHELTERED LIFE, STOKING RESENTMENT AMONG AFGHANS LIVING OUTSIDE

Kabul's expanding foreigner 'bubble' trades safety for isolation

ABDUL QADIR SEDIQI, ROD NICKEL & RUPAM JAIN
 KABUL, MARCH 19

KABUL'S GREEN zone is a place where diplomats fly in cheese-cake from New York and cases of wine from Europe, but many of those residing inside the heavily fortified enclave are not allowed to walk without an armed guard even for a distance of 100 metres.

The walled-off compound of embassies and newsrooms, which is set to expand dramatically, imposes extreme limitations on its sheltered residents and stokes resentment among Afghans living outside.

"The best possible argument to be in Afghanistan is to be a sort of introvert," said Czech Republic Ambassador Petr Stepanek. "You don't expect a blossoming social life." Kabul's central green zone is

set in the affluent Wazir Akbar Khan neighbourhood. Trees pre-dating decades of war still stretch above the razor-wire topped walls that line once-tony streets patrolled by police and private security.

It grew from a cluster of fortified embassies after the Taliban's 2001 overthrow by US-led forces. In 2017, a truck bomb near the German embassy, one of the green zone's entry points, killed or wounded hundreds, prompting further enlargement.

Its rapid expansion reflects the Taliban's increasing attacks on Kabul in recent years, in a strategy shift to counter its disadvantages against US-backed air power outside the capital.

Kabul police commander Sayed Mohammad Roshandil said in an interview that the green zone has been a major success. Since the Germany embassy attack, there have been no security



An Afghan police officer keeps watch in Kabul. Reuters

breaches of the zone, which spans three police districts, he said. A maximum of 150 trucks are allowed inside per day, with drivers verified by biometric scanners.

Police are now preparing to create a "blue zone" to surround the fortified area by between 1.5 and

four kilometres, said Roshandil. The number of closed-circuit cameras throughout Kabul would more than double to 800 within the same period, he said, helped by a \$42 million contribution from the Australian government.

But beyond the grey concrete "T-walls" that surround the

green zone, some Afghans resent the dangers and hassles they say such secure enclaves create.

Taxi driver Mohammad Taher, 37, avoids the area around the green zone because of police checkpoints that grind traffic to a halt, though he adds that Afghans working in the foreign offices collect "huge salaries", giving the economy a much-needed boost.

"Sometimes I feel that they are living a life completely different from us," said Tamim, 28, a shopkeeper, of the "western style of life" inside the green zone.

Afghans living near the Green Village compound in eastern Kabul, another fortified zone that is home to international companies and charities, bore the brunt of casualties and damage after a bomb-laden car blew up nearby in January.

"We villagers cannot tolerate this camp here because our lives

are in danger," said Noor Alam, 46, a shopkeeper and resident of nearby Qala-e-Chaman Qabelbay. "The presence of foreign camps close to the common residential area is like a death threat to the people."

But Roshandil, the police commander, said residents near green zones were better off. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the green zone provided government and foreign officials mere "psychological relief".

"The green zone is not that safe as they think," he said, adding that past Taliban attacks on it have succeeded. If the militant group agrees to a peace deal and fighting stops, the Taliban would insist that its walls were removed, Mujahid said.

The development of the green zone, including NATO's military base, in the middle of a crowded city demonstrated

"sheer disrespect" for the security of local people, said Thomas Ruttig, co-director of Afghanistan Analysts Network, an independent think-tank.

For those on the inside, the green zone features comforts that are rare elsewhere in Kabul. Generators fire up during the city's frequent power cuts, living quarters are well-heated in winter and, during hot summers, swimming pools offer relief.

In an officially dry country, liquor flows at most embassies. Pet peacocks stroll the grounds of a United Nations compound.

But green zone embassies offer little of the freedom common to most diplomatic postings. "Even though I get out almost every day, the places we can go are limited. It's very difficult to get a feeling" for what regular Afghans think, said German Ambassador to Afghanistan Peter Prugel. REUTERS