

IN BRIEF



Trump can waive sanctions: Erdogan

ISTANBUL
U.S. President Donald Trump has the authority to waive sanctions on Turkey for its purchase of the Russian S-400 air defence systems and should find a "middle ground" in the dispute, President Tayyip Erdogan was quoted as saying on Sunday. REUTERS

U.S. grants visa to Iran's Zarif for UN meeting

WASHINGTON
The U.S. has granted a visa to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to attend a UN meeting in New York this week, two sources familiar with the matter said on Sunday, saying Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had approved the decision. REUTERS

Small-aircraft crash kills nine in Sweden

STOCKHOLM
Nine people died on Sunday when a small aircraft being used for tourism crashed in northwest Sweden, the regional authority said. According to Swedish media reports, the plane was carrying people for a parachute jump. AFP

British leaks say Trump ditched Iran nuclear deal to spite Obama

He was 'set upon an act of diplomatic vandalism', says memo from former U.K. envoy

BENJAMIN MUELLER
LONDON

It was just hours after Boris Johnson, then Britain's Foreign Secretary, returned to London from a whirlwind trip last year to try to persuade the White House to abide by the Iran nuclear accord.

Kim Darroch, then the British Ambassador to the United States, fired off a withering assessment of President Donald Trump's wish to quit the deal. Mr. Trump, he wrote in leaked diplomatic cables that were published on Saturday, was "set upon an act of diplomatic vandalism, seemingly for ideological and personality reasons — it was Obama's deal."

The Vice-President, the National Security Adviser and the Secretary of State had all failed to "articulate why the President was determined to withdraw, beyond his campaign promises," Sir Kim wrote. And the U.S. government had no plan for what would follow.

"Even when you pressed," Sir Kim wrote to Mr. Johnson, "none had anything



Signs of discord: The cables offered a window into Britain's frantic effort to save the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018 — and the Trump administration's indifference to its entreaties.

much to say about the day after, or a Plan B, beyond reimposition of U.S. sanctions."

With Iran and the U.S. locked in an escalating standoff, the leaked cables offered a window into Britain's frantic effort to save the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018 — and the Trump administration's indifference to its entreaties. Published by a British tabloid, *The Mail on Sunday*, the cables are the second batch of leaked documents that led to Sir Kim's resignation last week.

Sir Kim resigned after Mr. Trump vowed to stop dealing with the Ambassador, and after Mr. Johnson, now

the front-runner to succeed Prime Minister Theresa May, refused to say he would keep Sir Kim in his post. Mr. Johnson's position drew fierce criticism from his opponent in the Prime Minister race, Jeremy Hunt, the current Foreign Secretary, as well as from some of the Conservative Party members.

Johnson's support

On Friday night, Mr. Johnson acknowledged in a BBC interview that his failure to stand behind Sir Kim had been part of the reason the Ambassador decided to resign. Heckled that same night at a campaign event,

Mr. Johnson said for the first time that he wished he had publicly supported Sir Kim.

"I probably should have been more emphatic that [Sir] Kim personally had my full support," he said.

The leak has prompted an investigation by a counterterrorism unit of the Metropolitan Police, as well as a bitter dispute over the right of *The Mail on Sunday* to publish the files. Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu, the leader of the counterterrorism unit, warned before the latest release that publishing any further documents "may also be a criminal matter." He asked newspapers to turn over any leaked documents to the police.

Journalists, lawmakers and both candidates for PM leapt to the defence of *The Mail on Sunday*, saying the warning from the police jeopardised the workings of a free press. "I defend to the hilt the right of the press to publish those leaks if they receive them & judge them to be in the public interest: that is their job," Mr. Hunt said on Twitter. NY TIMES

Former Bangladesh military dictator Ershad passes away

He ran the country for nearly a decade before being ousted in 1990

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Former military ruler and President of Bangladesh Hussain Muhammad Ershad passed away on Sunday. He was 89.

From an officer of the Pakistan Army to a military dictator who was later deposed in Bangladesh, the nattily dressed General Ershad was a major witness to South Asia's politics for seven decades.

Born in West Bengal's Cooch Behar district (then Rangpur of undivided India) in 1930, Ershad was commissioned into the Pakistan Army, when Bangladesh was part of Pakistan, as a Sector Commander. Following his return to Bangladesh after the country's independence, Ershad quickly rose through the ranks in the Bangladesh Army.

He spent his formative years as an Army personnel in India — around the time Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated in 1975 — in the



Hussain Muhammad Ershad

country's Defence College and developed deep links with India's ruling elite. He was particularly close to members of the deep state in many countries in South Asia, including India.

Complex relationship

He shared a complex professional relationship with General Ziaur Rahman, the late President of Bangladesh. Rahman brought Ershad back from India and promoted him in the Army. But Ershad later turned against Rahman.

Former Bangladesh Prime Minister and wife of Ziaur Rahman, Khaleda Zia, had alleged that Ershad played a role in her husband's assassination. Ershad was also accused of killing an Army officer. The case is yet to be reopened by the current Awami League government,

which was in a coalition with Ershad's Jatiya Party.

After Rahman's death, Ershad usurped power in a military coup, replacing the elected government. He ruled the country first as a military dictator, staying behind the scene, and then took over the presidency in 1983. Ershad continued to rule the country till 1990, when he was forced to quit in a pro-democracy mass upsurge.

Despite being imprisoned subsequently on several charges, Ershad emerged as one of the most powerful political leaders. He was elected to Parliament several times as his constituency in north Bangladesh remained loyal to him.

Following the Bangladesh Nationalist Party's decision to boycott poll in 2014, Ershad's Jatiya Party got the status of the Opposition party in Parliament, which it retained after the 2018 election.

Ershad is often credited for the division of Bangladesh's large districts, creating *upazilas* [subdistricts]. He will also be remembered for introducing Islam as the State religion in a country with strong secular fabric.

'Next Dalai Lama must be chosen within China'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LHASA/ BEIJING

The successor of the Dalai Lama has to be decided within China and any interference by India will impact bilateral ties, Chinese authorities have said.

In first clear assertion on the sensitive issue, Chinese officials and experts said the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama must be approved by the Chinese government and the

selection should take place within the country based on a more than 200 year-old historical process.

"The reincarnation of Dalai Lama is a historical, religious and political issue. There are established historical institutions and formalities for the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama," Wang Neng Sheng, an official in the rank of Vice-Minister in Tibet, told a group of Indian journalists



Dalai Lama

in Lhasa. The Dalai Lama is 84 years old now and the issue of his successor has gained prominence in the

last couple of years in the wake of his health issues.

"The Dalai Lama's reincarnation is not decided by his personal wish or by some group of people living in other countries," he added.

'Draw of lots'

Mr. Wang, the Director General at the government of Tibet Autonomous Region, said the current Dalai Lama was recognised by Beijing

and his successor must be found through the "draw of lots in golden urn process" within China.

Echoing Mr. Wang's views, Zha Luo, director at Beijing-based China Tibetology Research Centre, a government-run influential think tank, said any refusal by India to recognise the next Dalai Lama to be chosen within China will impact bilateral ties.

'Pak. should pay foreign firm \$6bn'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan will have to pay almost \$6 billion in damages to a foreign gold mining firm whose dig was shut down by the government in 2011, the World Bank said on Sunday.

The consortium Tethyan Copper company is the largest Foreign Direct Investment mining project in the country.

More than a decade ago the group found vast gold

and copper deposits at Reko Diq, in the turbulent southwestern Baluchistan province, and had planned a hugely lucrative open-pit mine. But the project came to a standstill in 2011 after the local government refused to renew the consortium's lease, and in 2013 Pakistan's top court declared it invalid.

On Friday, the World Bank's international arbitration tribunal committee

awarded \$5.84 billion in damages to Tethyan, according to a statement from the company, because of the government's decision to shut down the mine.

Pakistan Attorney General Anwar Mansoor Khan said in a statement they had noted the decision "with disappointment". Legal experts were "studying the award and reflecting upon its financial and legal implications," the statement continued.

+ 60 dead in Nepal floods

Heavy rainfall affects central and eastern parts of the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KATHMANDU

Floods and landslides caused by incessant rains in Nepal have till now claimed 60 lives and left 38 others injured, the police said on Sunday.

Thirty five people are reported missing in rain-related incidents that have thrown normal life out of gear in the central and eastern parts of the country.

Heavy rainfall since Thursday has hit more than 25 districts, affecting 10,385 households.

The Nepal Army and police personnel have so far rescued 1,104 people from several places across the country with 185 alone from Kathmandu. According to the Nepal Police, a total of 27,380 police personnel have been deployed across the country for search and



Moving to safety: A man carrying a child on his back wades a flooded street in Kathmandu on Saturday. •PTI

rescue operations.

The Flood Forecasting Section (FFS) said the rainfall would continue for two to three days in most places across the country, *The Himalayan Times* reported.

The Meteorological Forecasting Division (MFD) warned the public to remain

on high alert and said that air and road traffic could be affected due to low visibility.

Heavy rainfall has led the water level in the rivers to rise. FFS said that water level in Bagmati, Kamala, Saptakoshi and its tributary, the Sunkoshi, has crossed the danger mark.

Clashes break out after rally in Hong Kong

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

Riot police and protesters fought running battles in a Hong Kong shopping mall on Sunday night as unrest caused by a widely loathed plan to allow extraditions to mainland China showed no sign of abating.

The police used pepper spray and batons against small groups of protesters, who responded by hurling bottles and other projectiles, in a night of fresh violence in the international hub.

Sunday's clashes took place at the end of another huge rally — this time in Sha Tin a district that lies between the main urban sprawl around the harbour and the Chinese border. Violence broke out briefly in the afternoon after the rally as protesters seized a junction and built barricades, causing an hours-long stand-off with the riot police. But the worst clashes happened late evening inside a shopping mall where hundreds of protesters fled after the police moved on the barricades and then charged into the shopping complex. Once inside, chaos erupted as protesters launched a barrage of projectiles at the police from above.

At least one officer was seen knocked unconscious. The police with shields and batons charged up to higher floors and made multiple arrests.

Hong Kong has been rocked by more than a month of huge, largely peaceful protests — as well as a series of separate violent confrontations with police — sparked by a law that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China. The bill has since been suspended, but that has done little to quell public anger which has evolved into a wider movement calling for democratic reforms.

Leave the U.S., Trump tells Democratic Congresswomen

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday told unnamed Democratic Congresswomen to "go back" where they came from, prompting senior members of the party to brand him a "racist" and a xenophobe.

In a tweet, Mr. Trump referred to "Progressive Democrat Congresswomen," which appeared to be a reference to a group of outspoken relatively young, liberal women, all first-time members of the House of Representatives. These include Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Minnesota Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan.

Mr. Trump did not say whom he was referring to but said they "originally came from countries whose



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

governments are a complete and total catastrophe, the worst, most corrupt and inept anywhere in the world."

He accused the women of "viciously telling the people of the United States, the greatest and most powerful Nation on earth, how our government is to be run.

"Why don't they go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came?"

Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, who was born in New York, has ancestry from Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory. Ms. Tlaib, who

was born in Detroit, is the first American of Palestinian descent elected to Congress. Ms. Omar, who as a child came to the U.S. from Somalia, is the first black Muslim woman in Congress.

"That's a racist tweet," Assistant House Speaker Ben Ray Lujan, the highest-ranking Latino member of Congress, said on Fox News Sunday. "These are American citizens elected by voters."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has warned her party to avoid the "menace" of liberal policies pushed by Ms. Ocasio-Cortez and the other progressives, if the Democrats hope to beat Mr. Trump in the 2020 election.

But on Twitter on Sunday she criticised Mr. Trump's "attack" "I reject @realDonaldTrump's xenophobic comments meant to divide our nation," she said.