

16 THE WORLD

TOP OF THE WORLD



Alexei Leonov conducted the first spacewalk in 1965

RUSSIA

Leonov, first man to perform spacewalk, dies

Moscow: Alexei Leonov, a Soviet-era cosmonaut who was the first man to conduct a spacewalk in 1965, died in Moscow on Friday aged 85 after a long illness. The Russian space agency Roscosmos said it was saddened to announce the death of "cosmonaut No 11" who was twice decorated with the country's top honour, the Hero of the Soviet Union. Leonov was a close friend of Yuri Gagarin, who became the first human to go to outer space in 1961. Four years later, Leonov made history when he left a spacecraft during the Voskhod 2 mission for a spacewalk that lasted 12 minutes and nine seconds.

BREXIT

EU, Britain to hold 'intense' negotiations

Brussels: The 27 countries staying in the European Union after Britain leaves gave the go-ahead on Friday for their chief negotiator to hold another round of intense and secret negotiations with London in a bid to secure a deal, two senior diplomatic sources said. Michel Barnier and his British counterpart Stephen Barclay had earlier held what both sides called a "constructive" meeting in Brussels as Britain's scheduled departure date of Oct 31 grew closer. Their meeting followed a burst of optimism after the British and Irish Prime Ministers said on Thursday they had found "a pathway" to a possible deal.

POLAND

Free transport in city for readers of Nobel laureate

Warsaw: Public transport will be free through the weekend for anyone carrying a book by Poland's newly minted Nobel literature laureate Olga Tokarczuk in her western city of Wroclaw, local officials said Friday. "As soon as we heard the news Thursday that Olga Tokarczuk won the Nobel, we wanted to share our joy with all the residents of our city which recently made the writer an honorary citizen," a city hall spokesman said. Tokarczuk splits her time between Wroclaw and the village of Krajanow.

IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY

Former US ambassador to Ukraine says Trump pushed for her ouster

Appears for deposition in House despite administration declaring no cooperation

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 11

FORMER US Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch told lawmakers Friday that President Donald Trump pressured the State Department to oust her from her position. Yovanovitch said in an opening statement obtained by *The Associated Press* that she was "abruptly" recalled in May and told the president had lost confidence in her. She said she was told by an official that there was a "concerted campaign against me" and that Trump had pressured officials to remove her for almost a year. "Although I understand that I served at the pleasure of the President, I was nevertheless incredulous that the US government chose to remove an ambassador based, as best as I can tell, on unfounded and false claims by people with clearly questionable motives," she wrote in the statement.



Zuma has been charged with fraud, racketeering

South Africa's Zuma to face corruption trial, court rules

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PIETERMARITZBURG, OCTOBER 11

SOUTH AFRICA'S scandal-plagued former president Jacob Zuma will face a corruption trial, a court ruled on Friday, dismissing his application for a permanent stay of prosecution.

Zuma, who is accused of taking bribes from French defence company Thales in the 1990s, sought to have the case permanently dropped in March, saying it was politically motivated and that the years of delay would result in an unfair trial.

But the trial is now expected to begin on Tuesday after High Court Judge Bhikisiza Mnguni ruled that Zuma's "application for the permanent stay is dismissed with costs". The judge agreed with the prosecution that parts of Zuma's arguments to have the case thrown out were "scandalous and or vexatious". Zuma, 77, has been charged with 16 counts of fraud, racketeering and money laundering relating to a multi-million-dollar arms deal dating back to before he took office in 2009.

The charges were first brought in 2005. They were dropped by prosecutors in 2009, shortly before Zuma became president, and reinstated in 2016.

He is alleged to have taken the bribes during his time as a provincial economy minister and later as deputy president of the ruling African National Congress in the 1990s.



Marie Yovanovitch (centre), arrives at Capitol Hill. AP

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Yovanovitch is now a State

Department fellow at Georgetown University. Trump said earlier this week he would block all officials from testifying. It was unclear if Yovanovitch's appearance signalled a shift in that strategy.

In a July 25 phone call, which triggered the impeachment inquiry, Trump told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that Yovanovitch was "bad news," according to a partial transcript released by the White House.

I was... incredulous that the US government chose to remove an ambassador based, as best as I can tell, on unfounded and false claims by people with clearly questionable motives."

— MARIE YOVANOVITCH
FORMER U.S. ENVOY TO UKRAINE

Businessmen with ties to Giuliani lobbied a US congressman in 2018 for help ousting Yovanovitch, according to an indictment made public Thursday following the men's arrest. It alleges that the men leveraged a flurry of GOP political donations to force Yovanovitch's removal, an effort prosecutors say was aided by laundered foreign money.

MORE SETBACKS FOR PRESIDENT

FINANCIAL RECORDS
A federal appeals court ruled Friday that Trump's financial records must be turned over to the House of Representatives.

GIULIANI AIDES
Two businessmen who helped Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani probe Joe Biden were arrested over illegally funnelling money to a pro-Trump election committee.

EU ENVOY
The EU envoy to the EU, Gordon Sondland, will testify to Congress next week despite a State Department order not to, his lawyer said Friday.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE: 100,000 TOLD TO EVACUATE



Firefighters battle a wind-driven wildfire in Sylmar, California, on Friday. Reuters

■ Los Angeles authorities say about 100,000 people have been ordered to evacuate their homes because of a wildfire on the northern edge of the city in the San Fernando Valley area.

■ Authorities say the wind-driven wildfire burning along the northern tier of the city has damaged at least 25 homes and that 23,000 residences are under evacuation orders.

■ There is zero per cent containment and the fire continues to threaten homes in the city as well as unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County, authorities said.

Iran says its tanker hit by two missiles off Saudi Arabia coast

NASSER KARIMI & JON GAMBRELL
TEHRAN, OCTOBER 11

TWO MISSILES struck an Iranian tanker traveling through the Red Sea off the coast of Saudi Arabia on Friday, Iranian officials said, the latest incident in the region amid months of heightened tensions between Tehran and the US.

There was no word from Saudi Arabia on the reported attack and Saudi officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Oil prices spiked by two per cent on the news.

"This latest incident, if confirmed to be an act of aggression, is highly likely to be part of the wider narrative of deteriorating relations between Saudi and the US and Iran," private maritime security firm Dryad Maritime warned.

"It is likely that the region ... will face another period of increasing maritime threats, as the

EXPLAINED Episode comes as Iran, Saudis try to defuse tensions

IRAN'S CLAIM of a tanker being hit by missiles off Saudi Arabia comes at a time when the two countries have been making quiet moves to defuse tensions between the two countries. Multiple attacks on Saudi and UAE tankers in the past few months have been blamed on Iran, bringing the region to the brink of war. However, according to a *New York Times* report, Riyadh had reached out to Iraq and Pakistan in a bid to start talks with Tehran. Iran has publicly welcomed the move. Even after Friday's tanker attack, Iran was careful not to blame Saudi Arabia for the missiles that it said hit its ship.

Iranian and Saudi geopolitical stand-off continues," it added.

Iranian state television said the explosion damaged two storerooms aboard the oil tanker and caused an oil leak into the Red Sea near the Saudi port city of Jiddah. The leak was later stopped, IRNA reported.

The state-run IRNA news agency, quoting Iran's National

Iranian Tanker Co., identified the stricken vessel as the *Sabiti*. It turned on its tracking devices late Friday morning in the Red Sea, putting its location some 130 kilometres southwest of Jiddah, according to data from MarineTraffic.com. The ship is carrying some 1 million barrels of crude oil, according to an analysis from data firm Refinitiv. AP

Five stabbed in Manchester mall, man held on terror charges

DANICA KIRKA
LONDON, OCTOBER 11

A MAN wielding a large knife who allegedly lunged at shoppers and chased unarmed police in a northwestern England mall was arrested Friday on suspicion of terrorism.

Five people were hurt, three of whom needed hospital treatment for stab wounds, and the 41-year-old suspect was detained. Police do not believe anyone else was involved in the attack at the Amdale Centre in Manchester.

"We do not know the motivation for this terrible attack," Greater Manchester Police Assistant Chief Constable Russ Jackson said. "It appears random, is certainly brutal and of course extremely frightening for anyone who witnessed it."

The suspect was first detained on assault charges but was later arrested on a charge of "the commission, preparation and instigation of an act of terrorism". AP



Members of the Free Syrian Army — rebel forces aligned with Turkey — in the Turkish border town of Ceylanpinar on Friday as they joined the offensive against Syrian Kurds. Reuters

Turkish forces push deeper into Syria, with deaths rising

Ankara says military moved 30 km into Syria, 342 Kurdish militiamen killed

MEHMET GUZEL
AKCAKALE, OCTOBER 11

TURKISH FORCES pushed deeper into northeastern Syria on Friday, the third day of Ankara's offensive against US-allied Syrian Kurdish fighters, as casualties mounted, international criticism of the campaign intensified and thousands of civilians fled the violence.

Turkey said it captured more Kurdish-held villages in the border region, while a camp for displaced residents about 12 kilometres from the frontier was evacuated after artillery shells landed nearby amid intense clashes. Aid agencies have warned of a humanitarian crisis, with nearly a half-million people at risk near the border.

US President Donald Trump cleared the way for Turkey's air and ground assault after he pulled American troops from their positions near the border.

Plumes of black smoke billowed Friday from the Syrian border town of Tal Abyad as Turkey continued bombarding the area in an offensive that was progressing "successfully as planned," Turkish Defence Ministry said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has said the military intends to move 30 kilometers into northern Syria and that its operation will last until all "terrorists are neutralized." NATO member Turkey considers the Syrian Kurdish fighters to be terrorists linked to a Kurdish insurgency inside Turkey and says the

EU SLAMS ERDOGAN OVER THREAT OF NEW REFUGEE SURGE

Nicosia: EU Council President Donald Tusk condemned as attempted "blackmail" Friday a threat by the Turkish President to allow millions of refugees to head to Europe if the bloc criticises Ankara's offensive in Syria.

"Turkey must understand that our main concern is that their actions may lead to another humanitarian catastrophe, which would be unacceptable," Tusk said.

Erdogan made his comments on Thursday in the face of mounting condemnation from Europe of Ankara's long-threatened operation to enforce a buffer zone in Syria to accommodate some of the 3.6 million refugees living in Turkey. "Hey EU, wake up. I say it again: if you try to frame our operation there as an invasion, our task is simple: we will open the doors and send 3.6 million migrants to you," the Turkish leader said. PTI

offensive is a counterterrorism operation necessary for its own national security. The Defense Ministry statement reported the death of two Turkish soldiers, and said 342 "terrorists" — Ankara's term for Syrian Kurdish militiamen — have been killed so far. AP

IN 3RD GRAFT CASE AGAINST PAK EX-PM

Sharif arrested, remanded to anti-graft body custody

M ZULQERAIN
LAHORE, OCTOBER 11

PAKISTAN'S JAILED former prime minister Nawaz Sharif was on Friday remanded into the custody of the country's anti-graft body for 14 days after he was arrested in a money laundering case, the third corruption case against him.

A National Accountability Bureau (NAB) team took Sharif, 69, into its custody from Kot Lakhpat jail Lahore where he is serving a seven-year imprisonment in the Al Azizia Mills corruption case and presented him before the judge of an accountability court for his physical remand.

NAB prosecutor Hafiz Asadullah Awan sought 15-day



physical remand of Sharif, arguing that the suspect is involved in money laundering under the garb of sale and purchase of the shares of the Chaudhry Sugar Mills.

NAB has accused Sharif of being a beneficiary of Chaudhry Sugar Mills and his daughter, Maryam, who was arrested in August along with her cousin, of holding over 12 million shares in the sugar mills. PTI

AUTHORITIES RUNNING OUT OF OPTION IN FIGHT AGAINST IS-ALLIED GROUP

Thousands of Nigerian hunters prepare offensive against Boko Haram

HARUNA UMAR
MAIDUGURI, OCTOBER 11

THOUSANDS OF Nigerian hunters, armed with charmed amulets and intimate knowledge of harsh terrain, are preparing an offensive against the Boko Haram extremists who have ravaged the northeast for a decade, calling it "high time" they help soldiers end the deadly insurgency.

Nigeria's government discouraged a similar offensive five years ago, calling it a suicide mission. This time it has the backing of the

governor of Borno state, which has suffered the worst of the Boko Haram attacks.

It is a sign that Nigerian authorities, who have repeatedly claimed the defeat of Boko Haram, might be running out of options against the Islamic extremists and a recent offshoot that has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group.

Borno state's new Governor Babagana Zulum, who inherited the conflict after winning election earlier this year, said he is tired of applying conventional strategies against an extremist

group that has killed and abducted tens of thousands of people and displaced millions.

The unrest has created a vast humanitarian crisis.

The governor recently approved the sourcing of at least 10,000 hunters to help end the fighting.

While Nigeria's military would not comment, government spokesman Isa Gusau confirmed that the governor has decided to "aggressively explore every lawful means necessary in trying to put an end to the insurgency" after consultations with



A group of hunters gather at a camp in Maiduguri, Nigeria. AP

key stakeholders including elders and traditional rulers.

"We need all the prayers we can get, given the task ahead," Gusau said.

The hunters are separate from the civilian self-defence forces that have sprung up in northeastern Nigeria to combat the Boko Haram insurgency. Usually inheriting their vocation, the hunters are seen as the only group with intimate knowledge of the forests and other terrain in the vast region near Lake Chad. They see their charms and amulets as protection from attack.

An *Associated Press* reporter this week visited the camp where about 2,000 hunters have been waiting ahead of their march into the Sambisa forest and other Boko Haram hideouts.

More than 5,000 are being mobilized from Nigeria and regional countries including Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad, said one leader of the hunters, Baba Maigiwa.

"The majority of our men have returned to their various states and communities to go and bid their families farewell" but are on their way back to the Borno capi-

tal, Maiduguri, said another leader, Abdulkareem Umar.

"We are here because the governor is passionate about ending this madness called Boko Haram," he said.

"I remember about five years ago when we, on our own, converged here in Maiduguri with the intention of storming Sambisa forest to confront Boko Haram, but we did not get the backing of the government and the military. As law-abiding citizens, we had to withdraw. But as this is happening now, it means it is time." AP