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TOPOF THE WORLD



Imran Khan with Prince William and his wife Kate Middleton in Islamabad. AP

PAKISTAN

William, Kate meet Imran

Islamabad: Prince William and his wife Kate Middleton on Tuesday met Pakistan PM Imran Khan and President Arif Alvi as they began their visit to the country, described as the “most complex” royal trip to date. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, both 37, were received by Khan at the Prime Minister House, where a lunch was hosted for the guests, Dawn News reported. The royal couple appreciated the initiatives undertaken by the Pakistan government to combat climate change and to alleviate poverty, a statement said.

UAE

Putin in UAE, first visit since 2007

Dubai: Russian President Vladimir Putin has arrived in the United Arab Emirates on his first visit to the oil-rich nation in over a decade. Putin landed Tuesday in Abu Dhabi after earlier visiting Saudi Arabia. He was met at the airport by Abu Dhabi's powerful crown prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. While in Saudi Arabia, one topic of discussion was oil production. Russia is now working with OPEC, as are other nations not part of the cartel, to control production to help raise energy prices.

NIGERIA

Buhari orders crackdown

Kano: Nigeria's president on Tuesday ordered a crackdown on abuse at Islamic schools, after a second police raid in less than a month revealed men and boys subjected to beatings, abuse and squalid conditions. Nearly 300 had been held captive at a school in the Daura area of Katsina, the home town of President Muhammadu Buhari, where police said they discovered “inhuman and degrading treatment” following a raid on Monday to free the remaining students. Late last month, police freed hundreds from similarly degrading conditions in neighbouring Kaduna state.

USA

Columbus statues defaced

Providence: Several Christopher Columbus statues were vandalised with red paint and messages against the 15th century Italian navigator Monday when the US holiday named for one of the first Europeans to reach the Americas was being celebrated. Native American advocates have pressed states to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day over concerns that Columbus spurred centuries of genocide against indigenous populations in the Americas. Nearly 10 states observed some version of Indigenous Peoples Day. **AGENCIES**

John Bolton called Giuliani a hand grenade, says ex-White House aide

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 15

NATIONAL SECURITY adviser John Bolton was so alarmed by Rudy Giuliani's back-channel activities in Ukraine that he described President Donald Trump's personal lawyer as a “hand grenade who is going to blow everybody up,” according to a former White House aide.

The aide, Fiona Hill, testified for more than 10 hours on Monday as part of the Democrats' impeachment probe into Trump's dealings with Ukraine. She detailed Bolton's concerns to lawmakers and told them that she had at least two meetings with National Security Council lawyer John Eisenberg about the matter at Bolton's request, according to a person fa-



Fiona Hill testified for more than 10 hours as part of the impeachment probe. Reuters

miliar with the testimony who requested anonymity to discuss the confidential interview.

Those meetings took place in early July, weeks before a July 25 phone call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, in which Trump urged

that Zelenskiy investigate political rival Joe Biden's family and Ukraine's own involvement in the 2016 presidential election.

Giuliani is Trump's personal lawyer and was heavily involved in the effort to pressure Ukraine on the investigations.

Hill said she had strongly and repeatedly objected to the ouster earlier this year of the former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, according to the person familiar with the testimony. Yovanovitch testified to the impeachment investigators Friday that Trump pressured the State Department to fire her.

Hill's interview, like the others conducted by House impeachment investigators, took place behind closed doors. On Tuesday, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State George Kent was testifying.

GIULIANI ADMITS \$500,000 FROM PARNAS' FIRM

Washington: President Donald Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani has acknowledged he earned \$500,000 for work for a company run by a business associate who has been charged with federal campaign finance violations. Giuliani said he received two payments totaling \$500,000 related to the work for Lev Parnas' company, Fraud Guarantee, which is based in Boca Raton, Florida. **AP**



FIRST MAN TO WALK IN SPACE

RUSSIA BIDS FAREWELL TO LEONOV

Hundreds of people including Russian and US astronauts and top officials bid farewell Tuesday to Alexei Leonov, a legendary Soviet cosmonaut who was the first man to perform a spacewalk.

TRUMP SANCTIONS FAIL TO SLOW TURKEY ASSAULT

Russia moves to fill US void in northern Syria

LETERIS PITARAKIS & BASSEM MROUE

CEYLANPINAR, OCTOBER 15

RUSSIA MOVED to fill the void left by the United States in northern Syria on Tuesday, deploying troops to keep apart advancing Syrian government forces and Turkish troops. At the same time, tensions grew within NATO as Turkey defied growing condemnation of its invasion from its Western allies.

Now in its seventh day, Turkey's offensive against Kurdish fighters has caused tens of thousands to flee their homes, has upended alliances and is redrawing the map of northern Syria for yet another time in the 8-year-old war.

Russia moved quickly to further entrench its role as a power broker after President Donald Trump ordered the pullout of American forces in northeastern Syria. The American move effectively abandoned the Kurdish fighters who were allied with the U.S. and cleared the way for Turkey's invasion aimed at crushing them.

Desperate for a new protector, the Kurdish administration struck a deal with the Russia-backed government of Syrian President Bashar Assad, whose forces on Sunday began moving into Kurdish-administered areas to shield them against Turkey.



Turkey-backed Syrian opposition fighters target Kurdish forces, in Syria's northern region of Manbij. AP



TURKEY'S SYRIA OFFENSIVE

Syrian troops waved flags in the streets after they rolled into Manbij, a flashpoint town west of the Euphrates River that Turkey had been aiming to capture and wrest from Kurdish

control. Video by Russian journalists with the troops showed what appeared to be an abandoned outpost where U.S. forces had been stationed.

“No one is interested” in fighting between Syrian government troops and Turkish forces, said Alexander Lavrentyev, Moscow's envoy for Syria. Russia “is not going to allow it,” he told Russian state news agencies.

Despite the Syrian and Russian deployments, Turkey insisted it would capture Manbij. Asked on Sky News if Turkey's military was willing to fight Assad's army, Vice President Fuat Oktay said, “We hope it's not going to happen, but again we are determined to get control over Manbij.” **AP**



A rally in Barcelona after 12 separatist leaders were convicted of illegally promoting Catalonia region's independence. Reuters

Catalans keep up pressure for split from Spain after leaders get jail terms

JOAN FAUS

BARCELONA, OCTOBER 15

DEMONSTRATORS BLOCKED a train station and several motorways in Spain's Catalonia region on Tuesday, a second day of protests over Monday's jailing of nine separatists by the supreme court over their role in a failed secession bid.

Police intervened to remove the protesters, who had turned out in smaller numbers than on Monday, while a rally in central Barcelona closed a main thoroughfare to traffic and pro-independence leaders vowed to keep pushing for a new referendum.

Various other rallies were planned for later in the day and pro-independence labour union confederation IAC announced a

general strike in Catalonia on Friday against labour laws which unions say infringe workers' rights.

Oriol Junqueras was given the longest sentence, of 13 years, for his role in organising the 2017 referendum, which was ruled illegal. He told Reuters in his first interview after the sentence that it would only galvanize the independence movement.

“We're not going to stop thinking what we think, ideals can't be derailed by (jail) sentences,” he said, asserting that a new plebiscite was “inevitable”.

The head of the regional government, Quim Torra, defended the mass protests over sentencing he described as unacceptable.

“A new stage begins where we take the initiative and put the implementation of the right to self-determination back in the

centre” of our proposals, Torra said, urging Madrid to pay heed and start talks to that effect.

On Monday, demonstrators blocked railways and thousands descended on Barcelona's international airport, where some clashed with police, after Junqueras and eight others were convicted of sedition and jailed for nine to 13 years. A spokesman for the airport said it had cancelled 110 flights on Monday and a further 45 on Tuesday due to Monday's disruption.

Acting foreign minister Josep Borrell acknowledged the issue will not end with the sentencing: “Yesterday, today and tomorrow, it remains a political problem that has to be solved,” he said, calling for dialogue within the framework of the constitution. **REUTERS**



Defining factor for Nov 10 polls

THE VERDICT is likely to be a central issue before the vote on November 10 and politics for years to come, with very different views emerging in Madrid and Catalonia. It will be difficult for Spain's caretaker PM Pedro Sanchez to balance political equations considering attacks from his rivals on the left and right over the verdict.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLOMBO, OCTOBER 15

A FORMER Sri Lankan defense chief who is a front-runner in next month's presidential election said Tuesday that if he wins, he won't recognise an agreement the government made with the UN human rights council to investigate alleged war crimes during the nation's civil war.

If Gotabaya Rajapaksa wins the November 16 election and follows through with his comments, it would be a severe setback to Sri Lanka's post-war reconciliation process. “We will always work with the United Nations, but I can't recognise what they have signed” with past Sri Lankan governments, Rajapaksa said at a news conference.

“We have already rejected that, as a party we have rejected that agreement and in public we have rejected that. ... On this issue, our



Gotabaya Rajapaksa talks to the media in Colombo. AP

policies and the present government policies are far apart,” he said.

Rajapaksa was the top defense official during the last few years of the long civil war, which ended in 2009, serving under his brother, then-President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Abraham Sumanthiran, a lawmaker from the Tamil National Alliance, the main political party representing minority Tamils, said Rajapaksa's stand can't be accepted. “Whichever party, it is bound by the undertaking,” he said.

Unfounded to suggest Hong Kong becoming police state: Carrie Lam

JOHN LEICESTER

HONG KONG, OCTOBER 15

HONG KONG'S leader said Tuesday that “it's totally irresponsible and unfounded” to suggest the semi-autonomous Chinese territory is becoming a police state as her government grapples with protests now in their fifth month.

In a spirited defense of Hong Kong's 30,000-strong police force and her handling of the protests in response to criticism from visiting U.S. senators, Carrie Lam challenged the notion that



During a protest in Hong Kong on Tuesday. Reuters

the territory is losing its freedoms, unique in China, as police battle demonstrators in the streets.

“I would challenge every politician to ask themselves if

the large extent of violent acts, and all those petrol bombs and arson and deadly attacks on policemen, happened in their own country, what would they do? What would their policemen do?” Lam said. “So my simple response is: To describe Hong Kong as a police state is totally unfounded.”

Her comments came as a Hong Kong court addressed one of the most startling cases of violence so far, involving an 18-year-old charged with intentional wounding for a slashing attack on a police officer Sunday. **AP**

EU: Brexit deal still possible this week, UK must act now to seal agreement

RAF CASERT & JILL LAWLESS

LUXEMBOURG, OCTOBER 15

EUROPEAN UNION officials were hoping Tuesday that — after more than three years of false starts and sudden reversals — a Brexit deal with Britain might be in sight within hours.

The bloc said that it might be possible to strike a divorce deal by Thursday's EU leaders' summit, which comes just two weeks before the UK's scheduled departure date of October 31.



Anti-Brexit protesters outside parliament in London. Reuters

One major proviso: The British government must make more compromises to seal an agree-

ment in the coming hours.

Britain and the EU have been here before — within sight of a deal only to see it dashed — but a surge in the British pound Tuesday indicated hope that this time could be different. The currency rose against the dollar to its highest level in months.

Even though many questions remain, diplomats made it clear that both sides were within touching distance of a deal for the first time since a UK withdrawal plan fell apart in the British House of Commons in March.

Martin Schirdewan, a

German member of the European Parliament's Brexit Steering Group, said an agreement is “now within our grasp” following a breakthrough in negotiations.

Sick of Brexit: Sturgeon

Meanwhile, Scottish National Party (SNP) leader Nicola Sturgeon said Scotland must hold another independence referendum in 2020 and will soon request the powers needed to hold it legally. Sturgeon, who is also Scotland's First Minister, said she was “sick of Brexit.” **AP**

BRITISH WRITER BECOMES FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO WIN THE AWARD

Jury breaks rules, Booker Prize awarded jointly to Atwood, Evaristo

ADITI KHANNA

LONDON, OCTOBER 15

CANADIAN AUTHOR Margaret Atwood and British writer Bernardine Evaristo jointly won the prestigious 2019 Booker Prize on Monday after judges broke the rules by declaring a tie, the first since 1992.

British Indian novelist Salman Rushdie's tragicomic *Quichotte* was among the six

books shortlisted for the prize. Atwood, 79, is the oldest ever Booker winner, while Evaristo, 60, is the first black woman to win the award since its creation in 1969.

The Booker rules say the prize must not be divided, but the judges insisted they “couldn't separate” Atwood's *The Testament* and *Girl, Woman, Other* by Evaristo.

The rules were changed after the last tie in 1992, and organisers told this year's judges that



Judges declared a tie between Canadian author Margaret Atwood and British writer Bernardine Evaristo. Reuters

they were not allowed to pick two winners.

But after five hours of deliberations, Peter Florence, the chair of the five-member judging panel, said: “It was our decision to flout the rules.”

The judges said they strongly wanted both the authors to split the GBP 50,000 award at a gala ceremony at Guildhall here.

“The more we talked about them, the more we found we loved them both so much we wanted them both to win,”

Florence said.

Atwood expressed her joy at sharing the award with a younger writer.

Atwood joked to her co-winner: “I would have thought I would have been too elderly, and I kind of don't need the attention, so I'm very glad that you're getting some.”

“It would have been quite embarrassing for me... if I had been alone here, so I'm very pleased that you're here too,” she said.

Evaristo said, “We black

British women know that if we don't write ourselves into literature no one else will.”

“It's so incredible to share this with Margaret Atwood, who's such a legend and so generous,” she said, after the shock joint win was announced.

The others shortlisted included Lucy Ellmann for *Ducks, Newburyport*, Chigozie Obioma for *An Orchestra of Minorities*, and Elif Shafak for *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World*. **PTI**