

TOP OF THE WORLD



Jane Buckingham outside a court in Boston. Reuters

USA

Parenting book author gets jail in admissions scam

Boston: A marketing executive who authored a parenting advice book was sentenced on Wednesday to three weeks in prison for taking part in a vast US college admissions cheating and fraud scheme in order to help her son gain an unfair advantage. Jane Buckingham, 51, received less than the six-month prison term federal prosecutors in Boston sought after she admitted to paying \$50,000 to have a corrupt test proctor secretly take the ACT college entrance exam on her son's behalf. Buckingham is the author of *The Modern Girl's Guide to Motherhood*.

PAKISTAN

Filmmaker says he was raped, stirs MeToo debate

Islamabad: Acclaimed Pakistani filmmaker Jamshed Mahmood Raza added new momentum to the country's #MeToo movement after airing allegations that he was raped by an unnamed media tycoon. The director tweeted about the alleged assault that happened 13 years ago. "Why im so strongly supporting #metoo? cuz i know exactly how it happens now, inside a room then outside courts inside courts and how a survivor hides confides cuz i was brutally raped by a very powerful person in our media world, (sic)" he posted.

HONG KONG

Businessman pays nearly \$1 mn for parking spot

Hong Kong: Hong Kong might be heading for recession after months of violent protests but that hasn't stopped one businessman from forking out almost \$1 million for a parking spot. The sum paid by Johnny Cheung Shun-yea highlights the inequality that has helped fuel nearly five months of protests in the financial hub, where one in five people live below the poverty line. The HK\$7.6 million (\$970,000) price tag is over 30 times the average annual wage in Hong Kong and about the same as a one-bed apartment in London's Chelsea area.



SPAIN EXHUMES FRANCO'S REMAINS

Franco's relatives carry his coffin out of the Basilica of the Valley of the Fallen in San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Spain, Thursday. Reuters

■ Spain has exhumed the remains of dictator General Francisco Franco from his grandiose mausoleum outside Madrid and flown them by helicopter for reburial in a small family crypt north of the capital.

■ Many in Spain considered the mausoleum that Franco built an affront to the thousands who died in Spain's Civil War and his subsequent regime as well as to Spain's standing as a modern democracy.

■ Spain PM Pedro Sánchez said the move "puts an end to a moral affront that is the exaltation of dictator in a public place". The body was taken by helicopter to Mingorrubio cemetery where his wife is buried.

UK PM calls for Dec 12 election in bid to break Brexit deadlock

KATE HOLTON & ELIZABETH PIPER
LONDON, OCTOBER 24

PRIME MINISTER Boris Johnson called on Thursday for a general election on December 12 to break Britain's Brexit impasse, a goal the leader has sought but so far failed to push through Parliament.

Johnson said in a letter to opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn he would hand Parliament more time to approve his Brexit deal but MPs must back a December election, the PM's third attempt to try to force a snap poll.

Just a week before Britain was due to leave the European Union, the bloc looked set to grant Johnson a Brexit delay, something he has repeatedly said he does not want but was forced to request by the country's divided Parliament.

An election is seen by his team as the only way of breaking the deadlock over Brexit after Parliament voted in favour of

EXPLAINED

Boris's third bid for snap polls has a better chance than the last 2

THE OPPOSITION Labour party has made clear that it would only back an election after a no-deal Brexit is ruled out. Johnson's last two attempts to hold snap elections were voted down by MPs at a time when it was not even clear if he would be able to agree to a Brexit deal with the EU. But Johnson now has his deal and MPs gave it their approval in principle. If, as expected, the EU gives the UK a long Brexit extension, that gives Parliament time to properly scrutinise the deal. This still does not rule out a no-deal Brexit, but opinion polls show voters are losing patience with Labour shying away from elections, and this could force the opposition's hand.

his deal, but then, just minutes later, rejected his preferred timetable which would have met his October 31 deadline.

But he has twice failed to win the votes in Parliament for an election, where he needs the support of two-thirds of MPs. Labour has said it will only back an election when it is sure he cannot lead UK

out of the EU without a deal.

"We will make available all possible time between now and 6 November for the (Withdrawal Agreement Bill) to be discussed and voted through... this means we could get Brexit done before the election on 12 December," Johnson wrote in a letter to Corbyn. **REUTERS**

Pak dismisses prosecution team in treason case against Musharraf

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, OCTOBER 24

THE PAKISTAN government on Thursday abruptly dismissed the prosecution team in the treason case against former military ruler Pervez Musharraf, prompting the court to express its displeasure, according to a media report.

The prosecution team was hired in November 2013, during the tenure of PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif.

A special court, which was hearing the treason case against the ailing 76-year-old former president, adjourned the session without any proceedings on Thursday and was informed that the government has dismissed the prosecution team, the *Express Tribune* reported.



Sharif diagnosed with acute immune disorder

Lahore: Pakistan's jailed former PM Nawaz Sharif has been diagnosed with acute immune thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP), an immune disorder which leads to an abrupt and sharp drop in blood platelets, according to a medical board treating him said on Thursday.

The 69-year-old was rushed to the Services Hospital here from the National Accountability Bureau's Lahore office late on Monday night after a massive drop in his platelet count. Sharif's condition is improving as his platelets count increased to 20,000 from 7,000, doctors treating him said. **PTI**

SAUDI ARABIA

PRINCE FAISAL NAMED FOREIGN MINISTER

Saudi Arabia appointed a prince with diplomatic experience in Western capitals as foreign minister in a partial Cabinet reshuffle as the kingdom tries to mend its image and prepares to take over the Group of 20 presidency. Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud had served for several months as envoy to Germany and earlier as political adviser at the Washington embassy.



UK police: 39 found dead in truck are Chinese nationals

MEGAN SPECIA & ELIAN PELTIER
LONDON, OCTOBER 24

THE 39 people found dead in a refrigerated truck trailer in south-eastern England were believed to be Chinese citizens, the police said on Thursday, shedding new light on what appeared to be the latest case of human trafficking gone tragically wrong.

Eight of the dead are women and 31 are men, according to a statement from Essex Police. They said that each body would undergo a full coroner's examination to identify the victim and establish the cause of death, a process that would take time.

"Our work continues today, and for the foreseeable future, to be focused on providing the victims and their loved ones with an investigation that is filled with dignity, compassion and respect for those who have died," the statement said.

The tragedy bears striking similarities to a case in 2000 in which 58 Chinese migrants were found dead, also in a refrigerated truck, in Dover, Britain's busiest port. Then as now, the container had been shipped across the English Channel from Zeebrugge, Belgium.

Syria alleges Turkey-led forces attacked its soldiers

BASSEM MROUE
BEIRUT, OCTOBER 24

TURKISH FORCES and their allies attacked Syrian government troops in northeastern Syria on Thursday, killing some of them, and they also clashed with Kurdish-led fighters, the state news agency in Damascus and a war monitoring group said.

While all sides in the conflict have said they are abiding by a ceasefire as they implement a Russian-Turkish agreement that divides up the border region, frictions could undermine the effort for a resolution on the border, which US forces were abruptly ordered to leave earlier this month.

Syria's state-run SANA news agency said Turkish troops and its allied fighters attacked Syrian army positions outside the town of Tal Tamr. Separately, the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said three of its fighters were killed in fighting with Turkish-backed forces.

Syrian forces, Russian military advisers and military police are being deployed in a zone 30 km deep along much of the northeastern border, under an agreement reached Tuesday by Russia and Turkey. **AP**

China-Afghan-Pak diplomacy takes cricket route

SOWMIYA ASHOK
BEIJING, OCTOBER 24

A MONTH after the foreign ministers of China, Pakistan and Afghanistan mooted the idea of a friendly game of cricket, a group of young cricketers from Pakistan and Afghanistan landed in Beijing last week to ride on a high-speed train to play cricket in a middle school in Jinan in China's eastern province of Shandong.

The "China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Youth Cricket Friendship Games" organised October 16-24

was the follow-up to the third session of China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue last month. It was in Islamabad on September 7 that Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi along with his Afghan and Chinese counterparts, Salahuddin Rabbani and Wang Yi, "welcomed plans to hold a trilateral friendly cricket tournament" in China.

According to local media reports in Shandong, the match was held "to promote friendly exchanges, solidarity and mutual trust" and "to promote the con-



Floral tributes at the Watרגlade Industrial Park in Thurrock, Essex, on Thursday, a day after 39 bodies were found inside a truck on the industrial estate. AP

In the 2000 case, men and women suffocated in sweltering heat after the truck's refrigeration system was turned off and a vent closed. Amazingly, two men survived the ordeal. A Dutch driver was eventually sentenced to 14 years in prison for his involvement.

The driver of the truck found on Wednesday, a 25-year-old man from Northern Ireland, was arrested on suspicion of murder.

Information about him began to emerge on Thursday, when he was identified by elected officials and the British news media as Morris Robinson,

who also went by the name Mo. A member of the Northern Ireland assembly, Paul Berry, confirmed the driver's identity on Thursday and said he had spoken with the family shortly after the arrest.

"Something like this which has been thrust upon them at this stage is obviously very devastating for them," Berry said, describing the Robinsons as "very well-respected" and "a lovely family." But he also added that the thoughts of those in the community were focused on "the families of the 39 victims who have tragically lost their lives." **NYT**

Madrasa head among 16 sentenced to death for Bangla teen's killing

ANISUR RAHMAN
DHAKA, OCTOBER 24

SIXTEEN PEOPLE, including the head of a madrasa, were sentenced to death by a Bangladeshi court on Thursday for burning alive an 18-year-old woman student for refusing to withdraw a sexual harassment complaint.

The murder took place in April when a group of people poured kerosene over Nusrat Jahan Rafi and set her on fire on the roof of the madrasa in south-eastern Feni, some 162 kilometres from Dhaka.

"They (the convicts) will be hanged by the neck until their death," Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal Judge Mamunur Rashid pronounced the judgement.

The incident had sparked na-



The accused inside a prison van after they were given death sentences in a murder case in Feni, Bangladesh. Reuters

tionwide public outrage and mass demonstrations across Bangladesh with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ordering expedited investigation in the quickest possible time. She also met Rafi's family and vowed to bring the killers to justice.

Police earlier said their investigation revealed the madrasa's principal Siraj Uddoula, who was already in jail on sexual harassment charges, ordered his cohorts to kill Rafi if she refused to withdraw the allegation she had made against him. **PTI**

RISING SUBWAY FARES AND TAX ON WHATSAPP CALLS AMONG GRIEVANCES THAT SPARKED MAJOR UPROAR

From Chile to Lebanon, protests flare as wallet stress turns into massive unrest

DECLAN WALSH & MAX FISHER
LONDON, OCTOBER 24

IN CHILE, the spark was an increase in subway fares. In Lebanon, it was a tax on WhatsApp calls. The government of Saudi Arabia moved against hookah pipes.

Small pocketbook items became the focus of popular fury across the globe in recent weeks, as frustrated citizens filled the streets for unexpected protests that tapped into a wellspring of bubbling frustration at a class of political elites seen as irredeemably corrupt and hopelessly unjust or both. They followed mass demonstrations in

Bolivia, Spain, Iraq and Russia and before that the Czech Republic, Algeria, Sudan and Kazakhstan in what has been a steady drumbeat of unrest over the past few months.

At first glance, many of the demonstrations were linked by little more than tactics. Weeks of unrelenting civil disobedience in Hong Kong set the template for a confrontational approach driven by vastly different economic or political demands.

Yet in many of the restive countries, experts discern a pattern: a louder-than-usual howl against elites in countries where democracy is a source of disappointment, corruption is seen as brazen, and a tiny political class lives large while the younger

generation struggles to get by.

"It's young people who have had enough," said Ali Soufan, chief executive of The Soufan Group, a security intelligence consultancy. "This new generation are not buying into what they see as the corrupt order of the political and economic elite in their own countries. They want a change."

Few were as surprised as the leaders of those countries.

On Thursday, President Sebastián Piñera of Chile boasted that his country was an oasis of stability in Latin America. "We are ready to do everything to not fall into populism, into demagoguery," he said in an interview published in *The Financial Times*.

The next day, protesters attacked factories, torched subway



Protesters in Santiago, Chile. NYT

stations and looted supermarkets in Chile's worst upheaval in decades, eventually forcing Piñera to deploy troops to the streets. By Wednesday, at least 15 people

were dead, and a rattled Piñera had spoken of "war against a powerful and implacable enemy."

In Lebanon, Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri survived recent em-

barassing revelations about a \$16 million gift to a bikini model whom he met at a luxury resort in Seychelles in 2013, a move that, for some critics, epitomized Lebanon's ruling class. Then last week he announced the tax on WhatsApp calls, setting off a revolt.

Decades of discontent over inequality, stagnation and corruption erupted into the open, drawing as much as a quarter of the country into euphoric anti-government demonstrations driven by chants of "Revolution!"

With one of the highest levels of public debt and intractably low employment, Lebanon seems incapable of providing basic public services like electricity, clean drinking water or reliable internet service. Austerity measures

have hollowed out the middle class, while the richest 0.1% of the population — which includes many politicians — earns a tenth of the country's national income, much of it, critics said, from plundering the country's resources.

On Monday, Hariri scrapped the planned tax, announcing a hasty reform package to rescue the country's sclerotic economy and pledging to recover public trust.

Although the recent scattering of mass protests appears dramatic, scholars said it is a continuation of a rising trend. For decades, societies across the world have become far likelier to pursue sweeping political change by taking to the streets.

But as protest movements grow, their success rates are

plunging. Only 20 years ago, 70% of protests demanding systemic political change achieved it — a figure that had been growing steadily since the 1950s, according to a study by Erica Chenoweth, a Harvard political scientist.

In the mid-2000s, that trend reversed. Success rates now stand at 30%, the study said, a decline Chenoweth called "staggering."

These two trends are closely linked. As protests become more frequent but likelier to flounder, they stretch on and on, becoming more contentious, more visible — and more apt to return to the streets when their demands go unmet. The result may be a world where popular uprisings lose their prominence, becoming simply part of the landscape. **NYT**