

TOPOF THE WORLD



USA
Bernie Sanders undergoes heart procedure

Washington: US presidential candidate Senator Bernie Sanders was hospitalised on Tuesday with chest pains and a blockage in one artery and will suspend his campaign for the White House until further notice, an adviser said. Sanders, 78, was in Las Vegas, Nevada, for 2020 presidential campaign events when he experienced discomfort and was taken to a hospital for evaluation. "Following medical evaluation and testing, he was found to have a blockage in an artery and two stents were successfully inserted," Sanders senior adviser Jeff Weaver said in a statement. "Sen. Sanders is conversing and in good spirits. He will be resting up over the next few days," Weaver said.

WEST ASIA
Palestine issues stamp to honour Gandhi legacy

Ramallah: Palestine has released a commemorative postage stamp on Mahatma Gandhi, honouring his "legacy and values", to mark his 150 birth anniversary. Palestinian Authority's (PA) Minister of Telecommunication and Information Technology Ishaq Seder released the stamp on Tuesday in the presence of Representative of India in PA, Sunil Kumar, at a ceremony held at the ministry here. Seder said, "Palestine's issuance of the commemorative stamp comes in honour of Gandhi's memory, legacy, and values that guided and shall continue to guide humanity."

BRAZIL
Amazon fires fall sharply in Sept

Rio De Janeiro: The number of fires has declined sharply in Brazil's Amazon region an alarming rise in July and August, but state environmental workers say the fight continues as officials still promote economic development in protected natural areas. Fires in the Amazon went down 35.5 per cent in September compared to August, with 19,925 fires, according to data published Tuesday by the National Institute for Space Research.

Iran's Rouhani says French plan for talks with US is broadly acceptable

Plan requires Iran to stop pursuing nuclear weapons, help secure region, while US lifts all sanctions

REUTERS
GENEVA, OCTOBER 2

A PLAN for talks presented to the United States and Iran by French President Emmanuel Macron is broadly acceptable to the Islamic Republic, President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday during a Cabinet meeting that was broadcast live on state TV. He said some wording needed to be changed in the plan, which would require Iran not to pursue nuclear weapons and to help the security of the region and its waterways, while Washington would have to remove all sanctions. It would also allow Iran to immediately resume oil sales. But Rouhani also told the cabinet that mixed messages about sanctions received from the United States while he was attending the United Nations General Assembly in New York last week had undermined the possibility of talks.

TRUMP IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY

House Democrats say will subpoena White House if it doesn't provide info

NICHOLAS FANDOS
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 2

HOUSE DEMOCRATS said Wednesday they planned to subpoena the White House by Friday if it did not comply with broad requests for documents related to President Donald Trump's efforts to pressure Ukraine into investigating Joe Biden and his son, and any attempt by the administration to conceal his actions. Representative Elijah Cummings of Maryland, chairman of the Oversight and Reform Committee, notified his committee of the impending subpoena on Wednesday. He said the White House had thus far ignored Congress' voluntary requests. "I do not take this step lightly," Cummings wrote. "Over the past several weeks, the committees tried several times to obtain voluntary compliance with our requests for documents, but the White House has refused to engage with — or even respond to — the committees." The subpoena threat came as House Democratic leaders were preparing to lay out the next steps in their rapidly unfolding impeachment inquiry, and as lawmakers expected to hear a mysterious bit of new information abruptly offered up by the State Department's independent watchdog. Steven Linick, the State Department's inspector general, is set to brief lawmakers about urgent material he said was relevant to the investigation. What exactly Linick intended to share with Congress remained a matter of intense speculation. **NYT**



French President Emmanuel Macron held talks with his Iranian counterpart, Hassan Rouhani, last month on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session. *Reuters*

He said it was unacceptable for US President Donald Trump to say publicly that he would intensify sanctions while European powers told Iran in private that he was willing to negotiate. "The American president on two occasions ... said explicitly that we want to intensify sanctions. I told these European

friends, so which part should we accept? Should we accept your word that you say America is ready?" Rouhani said. "Or the words of the president of America who in 24 hours said explicitly twice... that I want to intensify sanctions? [The Europeans] didn't have a clear answer."

PUTIN: NO PROOF IRAN BEHIND SAUDI ATTACK

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday that there was no evidence that Iran was responsible for an attack on Saudi oil infrastructure last month and that the United States had not presented any proof of Iran's role. "We condemn these (attacks) but we are against shifting the blame to Iran because there is no proof of that," Putin said, adding that Iranian

President Hassan Rouhani had personally told him Tehran had nothing to do with the attacks. Last month's attack briefly reduced Saudi Arabia's oil output by half, causing a spike in oil prices, but Riyadh has been able to quickly restore production, calming the market. Russia has close ties with both Iran and Saudi Arabia, and Putin credited Moscow-Riyadh cooperation with stabilising global energy prices. **REUTERS**

European powers were continuing efforts to arrange talks, Rouhani said. Germany, Britain and France were among signatories to Iran's 2015 nuclear pact with world powers, which Trump quit last year. Iran's foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Macron's four-point plan for talks

was "presented in his words and does not contain our viewpoints" but that work would continue. "It's necessary that these negotiations continue until the issues are presented in a clear way. We will continue these contacts," Zarif was quoted as saying by the official IRIB news agency.



Schoolmates of a student protester who was shot by police in Hong Kong on Tuesday gather in solidarity with the 18-year-old on Wednesday. *Reuters*

New protests erupt in Hong Kong as anger mounts over shot teen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HONG KONG, OCTOBER 2

FLASH-MOB RALLIES broke out in Hong Kong Wednesday as anger mounted over police shooting a teenage protester who attacked officers in a dramatic escalation of the violent unrest that has engulfed the territory for months. Large crowds of demonstrators held unsanctioned marches through the commercial centre and then in multiple districts throughout the evening, when police fired brief volleys of tear gas in one neighbourhood, chanting anti-police and anti-government slogans. Hundreds of students also staged a sit-in at the school of Tsang Chi-kin, 18, who was shot in the chest by a policeman as he and a group of masked protesters assaulted officers with umbrellas and poles. Police fired brief volleys of



The teen who was shot is in stable condition. *Reuters*

teargas at crowds. The international finance hub has been left reeling from the shooting, the first time a demonstrator has been struck with a live round in nearly four months of increasingly violent pro-democracy protests. Tuesday witnessed the worst clashes of the summer as China celebrate 70 years of Communist Party rule with a massive military parade in Beijing. The spiralling violence underscored seething public anger against Beijing's rule and shifted

the spotlight from China's carefully choreographed birthday party. Running battles raged for hours across multiple locations as hardcore protesters hurled rocks and petrol bombs. Police responded for the most part with tear gas, rubber bullets, and water cannon. As criticism rose, police launched a spirited defence of their colleague saying he feared for his life and the safety of his colleagues. "He only had one option, that is to fire the gun to immediately resolve the danger," deputy commissioner Tang Ping-keung told reporters on Wednesday. The Junior Police Officer's Association also called on authorities to use emergency regulations and impose a curfew as it launched a stinging attack on the city's pro-Beijing leaders. "The Police force has been fighting alone," JPOA chairman Lam Chi-wai said, lamenting the lack of a political solution to the chaos.



UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson leaves the stage after delivering his keynote speech to the Conservative Party annual conference in Manchester. *Reuters*

UK PM pitches final Brexit offer to EU, but warns of no deal

ELIZABETH PIPER, WILLIAM JAMES & KYLIE MACLELLAN
MANCHESTER, OCTOBER 2

BRITISH PRIME Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday made a final Brexit offer to the European Union but said that if Brussels did not engage then Britain would leave on Oct. 31 without a deal. In his closing speech to his Conservatives' annual conference, Johnson stuck to his hard line on Brexit, giving the party faithful some of the first, albeit vague, details of what he described as his "fair and reasonable compromise" to the EU. "We are coming out of the EU on October 31, come what may," Johnson told party members, after expressing "love" for Europe in a speech which focused mostly on domestic issues such as health, the economy and crime. "We are tabling what I believe are constructive and reasonable proposals which provide a compromise for both sides," Johnson said. "Let us be in no doubt that the alternative is no deal." Quitting the EU is Britain's most significant geopolitical move since World War Two. But with less than a month to the scheduled departure date it is still uncertain if it will leave with a deal or without one — or even not leave at all. Johnson said he wanted to get a deal but that he was ready for a no-deal — a scenario that

EXPLAINED
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No-deal Brexit still looms large

BORIS JOHNSON'S 'final' bid to get a deal from the EU has hit roadblocks on the very day it was unveiled. With the government not having a majority in Parliament, it needs Opposition MPs to back a new deal if it emerges from Johnson's new proposals. But Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has already rejected the proposals and called them worse than the previously rejected plan put forth by Theresa May. Johnson's new plan takes the whole of the UK, including Northern Ireland, out of the EU customs union and envisages physical checks on goods passing from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland, which is an EU member. The EU has maintained that such an arrangement could endanger the Irish peace agreement, and is likely to reject it.

would spook financial markets and send shockwaves through the global economy. **REUTERS**

US special envoy in Pak for revival of Afghan peace talks with Taliban

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, OCTOBER 2

US SPECIAL envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad has arrived in Pakistan to discuss revival of the peace talks with the Pakistani leaders and a possible meeting with a Taliban delegation headed by the group's co-founder and chief peace negotiator Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. The visit comes days after Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to the US where he met President Donald Trump and among other issues discussed the revival of negotiations to bring peace in Afghanistan. Khalilzad also met Prime Minister Khan in New York, where he was to attend the UN General Assembly session, and exchanged views about renegotiating with the Taliban. The US and the Taliban had agreed on draft peace plan, but



Zalmay Khalilzad is the US special envoy to Afghanistan

the process was suspended by Trump following the killing of an American soldier in Kabul last month in a suicide attack claimed by the Taliban. Trump stunned the world when he suddenly declared that the Afghan peace talks with the Taliban were "dead". He cancelled a secret meeting with the Taliban and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani at Camp David after the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack in Kabul. **PTI**

LAWSUIT ONE OF THE BIGGEST LEGAL CHALLENGES TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN US IN RECENT YEARS

US judge rules in favour of Harvard on Asian-Americans and race

ANEMONA HARTOCOLLIS
OCTOBER 2

A FEDERAL judge on Tuesday rejected claims that Harvard had intentionally discriminated against Asian-American applicants, in a closely watched case that presented one of the biggest legal challenges to affirmative action in years. The lawsuit came from a group hoping to overturn a long-standing Supreme Court precedent that allows race to be considered as one factor among many in admissions, but prohibits universities from using racial quotas. The group argued that

Harvard had favoured black and Hispanic applicants at the expense of another minority group — a strategic reversal of past affirmative action lawsuits in which the plaintiff complained that white students had been treated unfairly. The judge, Allison D Burroughs, rejected the plaintiff's argument, and said that the university met the strict constitutional standard for considering race in its admissions process. In her decision, Burroughs defended the benefits of diversity, saying it was not yet time to look beyond race in college admissions. "Diversity," she wrote, "will foster the tolerance, acceptance and understanding that

will ultimately make race-conscious admissions obsolete." The case drew widespread scrutiny, including from dozens of other top-ranked colleges that expressed their support in court filings, and from the Justice Department, which backed the plaintiff and is pursuing its own investigation. The decision will be appealed and is widely expected to reach the Supreme Court. The plaintiff, Students for Fair Admissions, represents a group of Asian-American students rejected by Harvard. Led by Edward Blum, a conservative activist who waged previous battles against affirmative action, the students accused the college of violating federal civil rights law by holding Asian-



The case against Harvard drew widespread scrutiny, including from other top-ranked colleges in the US. *NYT*

Americans, who as a group get better test scores and grades than other races, to a higher standard. Harvard did this, they said, in part by downgrading applications

from Asian-Americans based on a subjective rating system that was vulnerable to stereotyping. Students for Fair Admissions made four interrelated claims:

that Harvard intentionally discriminated against Asian-Americans; that it used race as a predominant factor in admissions decisions; that it racially balanced its classes; and that it had considered applicants' race without first exhausting race-neutral alternatives to create diversity. Burroughs cleared the university of all four claims. Still, she said that Harvard's admissions process was "not perfect". The judge suggested that Harvard could do more to guard against the unconscious biases of admissions officers, echoing an argument that the plaintiff made at trial. She noted more explicit guidelines on using race

that were developed for the officers during the litigation, and said the officers could also be made aware of significant statistical disparities related to race. These criticisms are likely to drive a review of admissions at schools across the country, to make sure they are not vulnerable to the same suggestions. Despite the imperfections, she said, the court would not tear down "a very fine admissions program that passes constitutional muster, solely because it could do better". In an email, Larry Bacow, Harvard's president, credited Harvard students who testified during the trial with vividly making the case for diversity

through their own stories. "The power of American higher education stems from a devotion to learning from our differences," he said. "Affirming that promise will make our colleges, and our society, stronger still." Other universities breathed sighs of relief when the decision came out. "We are gratified that this decision unambiguously respects more than four decades of US Supreme Court precedent," Ted Mitchell, president of the American Council on Education, a trade group, said in a statement on Tuesday. But they also recognised that the federal court ruling, while important, is just a step along the way and is far from the final say in the case. **NYT**