

TOP OF THE WORLD



ANTONIO GUTERRES  
UN Secretary General

UNITED NATIONS  
UN may run out of money by end of the month, says Guterres

United Nations: The United Nations is running a deficit of \$230 million, Secretary General Antonio Guterres has said, and may run out of money by the end of October. In a letter intended for the 37,000 employees at the UN secretariat, Guterres said on Monday that unspecified "additional stop-gap measures" would have to be taken to ensure salaries and entitlements are paid. "Member States have paid only 70 per cent of the total amount needed for our regular budget operations in 2019... We run the risk of depleting our backup liquidity reserves by the end of the month," he wrote in the letter.

AFGHANISTAN  
Bomb goes off in classroom, wounds 19

Kabul: An Afghan official said a bomb has gone off inside a classroom in eastern Ghazni province, wounding at least 19 university students. Arif Noori, spokesman for the provincial governor, said 12 of the wounded are female students of Ghazni University, located on the outskirts of the provincial capital, the city of Ghazni. Noori added that two of the wounded are in critical condition. No one immediately claimed responsibility for Tuesday's attack.

THAILAND  
More dead wild elephants found at waterfall; toll 11

Bangkok: Wildlife officials in Thailand say they have discovered the carcasses of five more wild elephants downstream from a waterfall where the bodies of six other elephants were found last weekend. National Parks spokesman Sompote Maneerat says the carcasses were discovered by a drone being used to investigate how the first six elephants plunged to their deaths at the Haew Narok waterfall in Khao Yai National Park in north-eastern Thailand. Park officials say the first group of elephants evidently died when trying to reach a dead calf.

# Britain says Brexit deal essentially impossible, EU slams blame game

German Chancellor made unacceptable demands in phone call with UK PM: Downing Street official

GUY FAULCONBRIDGE, ELIZABETH PIPER & MARINE STRAUSS  
LONDON, BRUSSELS, OCTOBER 8

THE EUROPEAN Union accused Britain of playing a "stupid blame game" over Brexit on Tuesday after a Downing Street source said a deal was essentially impossible because German Chancellor Angela Merkel had made unacceptable demands.

With just 23 days before the United Kingdom is due to leave the bloc, the future of Brexit remains deeply uncertain and both London and Brussels are positioning themselves to avoid blame for a delay or a disorderly no-deal Brexit.

In a sign that Johnson's last-ditch proposals to bridge the impasse have failed, a Downing Street source said Merkel and Johnson spoke on Tuesday morning and she made clear that a deal was "overwhelmingly unlikely".

The Downing Street source said that if Merkel's position on Northern Ireland remaining in the EU's customs union was the bloc's position, then a deal was impossible.

"If this represents a new established position then it means a deal is essentially impossible not



Merkel made clear to Johnson that a deal was 'overwhelmingly unlikely', a Downing Street official said. Reuters

just now but ever," the Downing Street source said. A spokesman for the German chancellor confirmed the call had taken place but declined to comment further.

The EU was scathing. "Boris Johnson, what's at stake is not winning some stupid blame game," European Council President Donald Tusk said on Twitter. "At stake is the future of Europe and the UK as well as the security and interests of our people. You don't want a deal, you don't want an extension, you don't want to revoke, quo vadis?"

Such abrupt remarks indicate the Brexit blame game has begun in earnest, and that now both London and European capitals are preparing for an acrimonious and potentially chaotic Brexit for which neither side wants to be held responsible.

A disorderly Brexit could rip apart the United Kingdom, hurt global growth and shape the future of the European Union which was built on the World War Two ruins of Europe.

Merkel said that for a deal, Northern Ireland would have to



Boris Johnson, what's at stake is not winning some stupid blame game. At stake is the future of Europe and the UK as well as the security and interests of our people."

— DONALD TUSK  
EUROPEAN COUNCIL PRESIDENT

stay in the EU's customs union and full alignment with the EU forever, the Downing Street source said.

The leader of the small Northern Irish party that supports Johnson's government accused the EU and Ireland of trying to trap the British territory in a permanent customs union.

The opposition said Johnson was trying to apportion blame for the failure of the negotiating process.

"This is yet another cynical attempt by Number 10 to sabotage the negotiations," said Keir

Starmer, Brexit spokesman for the Labour Party, adding that the British Parliament needed to unite to stop him.

"Boris Johnson will never take responsibility for his own failure to put forward a credible deal. His strategy from day one has been for a no-deal Brexit."

A separate Downing Street source told Reuters that unless the European Union compromises and does a Brexit deal shortly, then the United Kingdom will leave without a deal.

"If the EU doesn't do a deal shortly, then we leave without a deal," the source said. "We are leaving the European Union."

Johnson has consistently said the United Kingdom will leave the EU on Oct. 31 with or without a deal, though a law passed by parliament demands he write a letter to the EU asking for a delay if he cannot strike an exit deal by Oct. 19. He has said he would abide by the law but Britain would leave the EU by the end of the month, without explaining that contradiction.

The Spectator magazine quoted a source in Downing Street as saying Britain would take an aggressive stance towards the EU if Brexit talks break down, possibly even by withholding security cooperation. REUTERS

IMPEACHMENT PROBE



Trump with Gordon Sondland, the US ambassador to the European Union, in Brussels last year. Sondland has become enmeshed in the burgeoning scandal into how the President sought to push the Ukrainians to investigate political rivals. AP

## Trump orders top diplomat not to speak to House investigators

MICHAEL S SCHMIDT & NICHOLAS FANDOS  
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 8

THE TRUMP administration directed a top US diplomat involved in its pressure campaign on Ukraine not to appear Tuesday morning for a scheduled deposition with House Democrats conducting an impeachment inquiry, according to two people briefed on the matter.

The decision to block Gordon Sondland, the US ambassador to the European Union, from speaking with investigators is certain to provoke an immediate conflict with potentially profound consequences for the White House and President Donald Trump.

But in making the decision Tuesday, hours before he was scheduled to sit for a deposition in the basement of the Capitol, the Trump administration appears to be making the calculation that it is better off risking the House's ire than letting Sondland show up and set a precedent for cooperation with an inquiry they have strenuously argued is illegitimate.

Sondland has become enmeshed in the burgeoning scandal into how the President sought to push the Ukrainians to investigate his political rivals. Although Ukraine is not in the union, Trump instructed Sondland — a wealthy hotelier

EXPLAINED  
Dems eye another charge: obstruction

WITH AMBASSADOR Gordon Sondland ordered not to appear before a scheduled deposition with House investigators, Democrats are eyeing multiple plans of action. They are first likely to subpoena the diplomat, but Sondland will be forced to not comply with it due to the State Department order. He can then be held in contempt of the House, but Democrats are more likely to use the instance as evidence of obstruction of justice by the Trump administration, which they see as an impeachable offence. Sondland's lawyer has made it clear that his client was eager to testify, but was "disappointed" he was ordered not to do so.

and campaign contributor — to take a lead in relations between the Trump administration and the country. Democrats consider him a key witness to what transpired between the two countries. NYT

## Senate panel chairman says to probe Giuliani allegations

REUTERS  
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 8

THE REPUBLICAN chairman of the US Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday opened the door to a Senate investigation into unproven allegations regarding Ukraine raised by President Donald Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, inviting the attorney to testify.

"It is time for the Senate to inquire about corruption and other improprieties involving Ukraine," Senator Lindsey Graham said in a series of tweets, mentioning specifically the firing of Ukraine's former prosecutor Viktor Shokin.

Giuliani and his allegations are central to the Democratic impeachment inquiry in the House of Representatives, which followed a July 25 phone call in which President Donald Trump pressed Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to investigate 2020 Democratic presidential candidate



Senator Lindsey Graham is a Trump ally and heads the Senate Judiciary Committee

Joe Biden and his son, Hunter. Senate Democrats welcomed the chance to question Giuliani under oath about his role in pressing Ukraine to investigate the Bidens. The House Intelligence Committee had subpoenaed Giuliani to provide documents on Sept 30. He and others have made claims that when Joe Biden was vice president, he had a prosecutor fired to halt an investigation into a Ukrainian gas company that Hunter Biden was involved in between 2014 and 2018.



A worker cleans graffiti from a Bank of China branch that had been previously boarded up to prevent damages during protests in Hong Kong. Reuters

## Hong Kong leader says not ruling out Beijing help as economy suffers

CLARE JIM & NOAH SIN  
HONG KONG, OCTOBER 8

HONG KONG'S embattled leader Carrie Lam on Tuesday did not rule out asking Beijing for help, as the Asian financial hub struggles to deal with months of often violent anti-government protests that are damaging its economy.

Lam said Beijing wanted Hong Kong to solve its own problems, but under its mini-constitution, known as the Basic Law, Hong Kong could ask Beijing for help.

"If the situation becomes so bad, then no options could be ruled out, if we want Hong Kong



Carrie Lam said Beijing wanted Hong Kong to solve its own problems. Reuters

to at least have another chance," Lam said at weekly news conference after a long weekend of violence crippled the city.

"But at this moment, I and my team, we are still very committed in making sure we can use our own instruments ... to try and restore calm and order in Hong Kong," she said, adding there were no plans to expand emergency laws introduced on Friday.

"But I would appeal (to) everyone in society to join hands to achieve this objective."

The protests, which show no sign of abating, pose the biggest popular challenge to Chinese President Xi Jinping since he came to power in 2012 and are Hong Kong's thorniest political crisis since Britain returned it to China in 1997. REUTERS



South Park, which has lasted 23 seasons, has in recent years focused on political and cultural satire.

that it valued its business in China more than free speech. Whereas the NBA has strug-

gled to respond to the geopolitical fracas, the creators of South Park appeared to relish the fight. The

show's creators, Trey Parker and Matt Stone, put out a fake apology on Monday, poking fun at the NBA while insulting Xi Jinping, China's President.

"Like the NBA, we welcome the Chinese censors into our homes and into our hearts," the tongue-in-cheek statement read. "We too love money more than freedom and democracy. Xi doesn't look just like Winnie the Pooh at all."

That last part makes more sense in the context of the episode, which had two plot lines related to China. Spoilers ahead.

In one, the character Randy Marsh flies to China hoping to expand his marijuana business there, only to be arrested at the

airport. In a work camp, he meets Winnie the Pooh, who, the show explains, was banned after Chinese social media users pointed out his resemblance to Xi.

Meanwhile in Colorado, the South Park children form a band, and a manager wants to make a biopic about them — but insists that their life story be told in a way that will be acceptable to Chinese censors, so they don't lose access to the market. He instructs the boys to cut references to the Dalai Lama (seen by the Chinese government as a separatist), organ transplants (China has been accused of harvesting prisoners' organs) and homosexuality (nothing is

wrong with that subject "unless you want to make money in China," he says).

Eventually, the boys tire of the ordeal. "I want to be proud of who we are, guys, and anyone who would betray their ideals just to make money in China isn't worth a lick of spit," says one of them, Stan.

The NBA is hardly the first international business to make concessions to China's political sensitivities as it seeks access to its lucrative market, or to forcefully apologise after running afoul of them. Movie studios, especially, have worked to ensure that their scripts aren't at odds with state censors, lest they lose billions in potential business. NYT

'WE WELCOME THE CHINESE CENSORS INTO OUR HOMES AND INTO OUR HEARTS,' SHOW'S CREATORS SAY IN MOCK RESPONSE

# South Park is pulled in China after episode mocking govt censors

DANIEL VICTOR  
HONG KONG, OCTOBER 8

SOUTH PARK, the long-running Comedy Central cartoon whose mockery has spared few touchy topics, was erased from major platforms in China after an episode last week taunted Chinese censors and the far-reaching effect they often have on American entertainment.

The government's censors, who routinely quash news and commentary deemed undesirable by the ruling Communist Party, wiped out video clips and discussions of the show, which premiered in 1997 and has lasted 23 seasons. Once known mostly

for the raunchy humour coming from the mouths of its elementary-school-age main characters, the show has in recent seasons focused on political and cultural satire, without abandoning its boundary-pushing ways.

Last week's episode, called "Band in China", appeared to cross a new line for the Chinese authorities. On Baidu Tieba, a popular discussion platform, searches for South Park on Tuesday returned the following message: "According to the relevant law and regulation, this section is temporarily not open."

Searches for the show were also fruitless on Youku, a video hosting service, which similarly cited "the relevant law and reg-

ulation". On Weibo, the country's most popular social network, posts mentioning the show could not be found.

The censorship occurred as the NBA was unintentionally demonstrating how protecting business interests in China can chill speech back in the United States. The basketball league has scrambled to contain a backlash in China since Daryl Morey, the general manager of the Houston Rockets, tweeted support last week for the Hong Kong protests, which are reviled by the Chinese government.

Though the league has supported political expression by its players, it was less supportive of Morey, prompting accusations