

90%

of those responsible for killing 1,109 journalists around the world from 2006 to 2018 have not been convicted, as per a report by UNESCO. It also said 55 per cent of killings happened in non-conflict zones, highlighting the trend of newsmen being targeted for reporting on politics, crime and corruption

TOP OF THE WORLD



Nawaz Sharif

PAKISTAN

Ailing ex-PM Sharif's health improves

Lahore: Pakistan's former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's health has shown signs of improvement as his platelet count rose to 51,000 even though his blood pressure and sugar level is still high, according to a media report on Friday. The 69-year-old Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo, who is admitted in Services Hospital here, was on Thursday examined by a medical board. Sharif's platelets on Thursday increased from 35,000 to 51,000, showing improvement in his condition, doctors said, as per Dawn.



Supporters of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl offer prayers during an anti-government march in Islamabad on Friday. AP

'THE GORBACHEV OF PAKISTAN MUST GO'

Azadi March: Cleric gives Imran two-day ultimatum to step down

Gone are the days when one used to use Islam to gain power, this is a new Pakistan: Imran Khan

SAJJAD HUSSAIN ISLAMABAD, NOVEMBER 1

PAKISTAN'S HARD-LINE cleric Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Friday gave Prime Minister Imran Khan a two-day ultimatum to resign, saying the "Gorbachev of Pakistan" must step down without testing the patience of peaceful protesters.

Addressing a massive protest rally, dubbed 'Azadi March', held here to topple the incumbent government, Rehman said only people of Pakistan and not any "institution" had the right to govern the country. The much-hyped rally led by the right-wing opposition leader's Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) reached its final destination Islamabad on Thursday after it set off from the Sindh province and left Lahore on Wednesday.

Along with Rehman, leaders of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan



Fazlur Rehman, president of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) and Shehbaz Sharif, brother of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif at the protest rally. Reuters

People's Party (PPP), and Awami National Party (ANP) participated in the march held to topple Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government led by Prime Minister Khan.

"The elections of 25 July were fraud elections. We neither accept the results nor the government that came into power after

those elections. We gave this government one year but now we cannot give them any more time," he said.

He said the Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government has destroyed the economy while endangering the very existence of the country.

"The Gorbachev of Pakistan

EXPLAINED 2014 and 2019: The two Azadi marches

THE 2019 Azadi March is not the first in the country: in 2014, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan had taken out a similar Azadi March, also termed "tsunami march".

The 2014 and 2019 protest marches, both of which saw large numbers of people participate, have some elements in common. The protest led by Khan had levied allegations of election rigging and corruption, among other charges, against the Nawaz Sharif regime. Five years later, Khan now faces similar charges, with opposition leaders alleging that the July 25 polls were "fraud elections".

must go. We give (Khan) two days to resign, otherwise, we will decide about the future," he said.

Prime Minister Khan, while addressing a rally in Gilgit-Baltistan, told protesters that when they run out of food, more will be sent to them, but their leaders should not expect any relief. "Gone are the days when one

used to use Islam to gain power. This is a new Pakistan. Sit however long you want..." he said.

"I will put all of them into jail," he said, in an apparent reference to former premier Nawaz Sharif, his brother Shehbaz, former President Asif Ali Zardari and former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi. PTI

NIGERIA

15 people found chained up in church rescued

Lagos: Police in Nigeria said they rescued 15 people chained up in a church in Lagos during the latest raid in a nationwide crackdown on religious institutions accused of abuse. Detectives "stormed a prayer house used as a detention camp" on Wednesday evening and discovered 15 men and women aged between 19 and 50 chained by the legs, Lagos police spokesman Bala Elkana said. The pastor of the church, "prophet" Sunday Joseph Ojo, and 10 others were arrested, Elkana said late Thursday.

UNITED KINGDOM

Keith Vaz suspended for six months

London: The UK Parliament Thursday suspended one Indian-origin MP Keith Vaz for six months after he was found to have "expressed willingness" to purchase cocaine for male prostitutes. MPs approved the suspension after the Parliament Standards Committee concluded in its report that the 62-year-old Goan-origin Labour Party MP for Leicester East had "expressed willingness" to purchase cocaine for male prostitutes. The watchdog said there was "convincing evidence" that Vaz was "evasive or unhelpful" during an investigation into his conduct.

US targets Iran's construction sector with new sanctions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 1

THE UNITED States on Thursday extended its sanctions on Iran by taking aim at its construction sector, which Washington linked to the country's Revolutionary Guards.

The sanctions, it said, would also target "four strategic materials as being used in connection with Iran's nuclear, military, or ballistic missile programs."

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo imposed the sanctions after the construction sector was identified as "being controlled directly or indirectly by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)," spokes-

"Rather than dig itself deeper, US should abandon failed policies & return to JCPOA (the 2015 nuclear deal)"

MOHAMMAD ZARIF IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

woman Morgan Ortagus said. The latest sanctions "will help preserve oversight of Iran's civil nuclear program, reduce proliferation risks and constrain Iran's ability to shorten its 'breakout time' to a nuclear weapon", Ortagus said.

Turkey, Russia begin joint patrols in northeast Syria

BULENT USTA SEVIMLI, NOVEMBER 1

TURKISH AND Russian troops began their first joint ground patrols in northeast Syria on Friday under a deal between the two countries that forced a Kurdish militia away from territory near Turkey's border.

Turkey and allied Syrian rebels launched a cross-border offensive on Oct. 9 against the Kurdish YPG militia, seizing control of 120 km (75 miles) of land along the frontier.

Last week, Ankara and Moscow agreed to remove the militia fighters to a depth of at least 30 km (19 miles) south of the border and Russia has told Turkey that the YPG left the strip. Turkish armoured vehicles



Military vehicles on the Turkish-Syrian border

on Friday drove through country roads across the border to join their Russian counterparts, according to Reuters television footage filmed from the Turkish side of the border.

Ground and air units were involved in the patrol in the area of

the Syrian border town of Darbasiya, the Turkish Defence Ministry said on Twitter, showing photos of soldiers studying a map and of four armoured vehicles.

The 110-km joint patrol with Russian military police, consisting of nine military vehicles, was starting at Darbasiya and travelling west along the border, the Russian Defence Ministry said.

Overnight, the Turkish Defence Ministry said Turkey had handed over to the Russians 18 men, believed to be Syrian government soldiers, who were detained in Syria near the Turkish border this week. It said the move was coordinated with Russia but did not say who they were handed to. The 18 men were seized on Tuesday during operations southeast of the Syrian town of Ras al Ain. REUTERS

LAYS OUT PLAN TO BOOST PATRIOTISM

Won't tolerate dissent in Hong Kong, says China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BEIJING, NOVEMBER 1

CHINA WARNED Friday it would not tolerate any challenge to Hong Kong's governing system, as it laid out plans to boost patriotism in the city and change how its leader is chosen or removed after months of pro-democracy protests.

The unrest in the semi-autonomous city was an important topic at a major, four-day meeting of the Communist Party chaired by President Xi Jinping this week in Beijing, said Shen Chunyao, director of the Hong Kong, Macau and Basic Law Commission.

All eyes have been on whether the party leadership will assert more control over the situation if the demonstrations spin out of control. Shen said party leaders agreed to "further improve the central government's system of governance over the region" and maintain its "long-term prosperity and stability."

China, he added, will "never tolerate any act that challenges the bottom line of 'one country, two systems', never tolerate any act that splits the country and endangers national security, and resolutely prevent and contain foreign forces' interference in Hong Kong and Macau business."

Hong Kong's chief executive is not directly elected, a source of major friction and a headache for the leaders because they have no popular mandate. Currently the leader is chosen by a committee.



Protesters in masks. Reuters

TARGETING PRO-DEM PROTESTERS

An anonymous website is targeting Hong Kong pro-democracy figures using Russia-based servers and promoted by powerful groups linked to China's Communist Party — and there is almost no way to stop it

About 200 people seen as supporting Hong Kong's protest have been "doxed" — had their details posted online — by HK Leaks, since it emerged in August

More than two million people follow Facebook pages that have shared HK Leaks posts and the site has received more than 175,000 unique page views, as per sources

Trump backs 'fantastic' Boris over 'bad' Corbyn

ADITI KHANNA LONDON, NOVEMBER 1

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump ruffled a few feathers in the UK with an intervention on the country's upcoming General Election by backing his "friend" UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and categorising Opposition Labour Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn as "so bad" for Britain.

In an interview with LBC Radio with host and far-right Brexit Party Leader Nigel Farage on the phone overnight on Thursday, Trump pushed for an alliance between the Conservatives and Farage's party as an "unstoppable" force for the December 12 polls.

"I have great relationships with many of the leaders, including Boris who's a fantastic man - I think he's the exact right guy for the times," Trump said. "I know that you and him will end up doing something that could be terrific - if you and he get together it's [an] unstoppable force," he said.

In reference to Corbyn, the US President was scathing.

"Corbyn would be so bad for your country, he'd be so bad, he'd take you in such a bad way. He'd take you into such bad places. But your country has tremendous potential, it's a great country," Trump said.

DROP BREXIT DEAL AND I'LL HELP YOU WIN: FARAGE TO PM

London: British euroskeptic politician Nigel Farage tried to ramp up pressure on Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Friday, saying his Brexit Party would run against Conservatives unless Johnson abandons his deal with the European Union. "Boris tell us this is a great new deal. It is not. It is a bad old treaty and simply it is not Brexit," Farage said.

Farage said that if Johnson agreed to abandon his deal, the Brexit Party would form a "non-aggression pact" with the Conservatives, standing aside in many areas. "I believe the only way to solve this is to build a 'leave' alliance across this country," Farage said. PTI

The remarks prompted Corbyn to take to Twitter to accuse the US President of "trying to interfere" in Britain's internal affairs to get "his friend Boris Johnson elected". PTI

'HOW DO WE MAKE PROGRESS? HOW CAN WE PRODUCE INVENTIONS IN THIS ENVIRONMENT?'

In China's universities, students keep tabs on ideological leanings of professors

JAVIER C. HERNÁNDEZ CHENGDU, NOVEMBER 1

WITH A neon-red backpack and white Adidas shoes, he looks like any other undergraduate on the campus of Sichuan University in southwestern China. But Peng Wei, a 21-year-old chemistry major, has a special mission: He is both student and spy.

Peng is one of a growing number of "student information officers" who keep tabs on their professors' ideological views. They are there to help root out teachers who show any sign of disloyalty to President Xi Jinping

and the ruling Communist Party. "It's our duty to make sure that the learning environment is pure," Peng said, "and that professors are following the rules."

In a throwback to the Mao Zedong era, Chinese universities are deploying students as watchdogs against their teachers, part of a sweeping campaign by Xi to eliminate dissent and turn universities into party strongholds.

The use of student informers has surged under Xi, China's most powerful leader in decades, with hundreds of universities now employing the practice, according to interviews with more than two dozen professors and students.



You Shengdong was fired after students reported him for questioning President Xi's trademark slogan. NYT

"Everyone feels they are in danger," said You Shengdong, a

longtime economics professor at Xiamen University in eastern

China who was fired last year after students reported him for criticising one of Xi's favorite propaganda slogans. "How do we make progress," You asked, "how can we produce inventions in this environment?"

Universities are posting advertisements recruiting students to spy on their teachers, with some aiming to have one in every classroom. It has created a chilling effect that some have compared to the ideological purification campaigns of the decadelong Cultural Revolution, in which radical students attacked Mao's perceived enemies. At a time when Xi is seeking

to ward off supposed threats to social stability and to silence pockets of opposition to his authoritarian policies, students are increasingly playing a key role by monitoring how teachers view Xi, the party and ideas like democracy. In exchange, they are promised rewards like scholarships, higher grades and advancement within prestigious Communist Party groups.

"Teachers can be reported for anything," said Tang Yun, a veteran literature professor at Chongqing Normal University in southwestern China. Tang, 56, was speaking from experience. While teaching a

class earlier this year, he criticised a popular, folksy phrase Xi uses often — "roll up your sleeves and work hard" — as coarse. A student complained, prompting officials at Chongqing Normal to strip him of his teaching credentials and reassign him to the library.

You, the economics professor who had been fired from Xiamen University, said students reported him for questioning Xi's trademark slogan, the "Chinese dream," a vision of prosperity and strength for the nation.

You, 71, who has since relocated to New York, said his students began referring to him as

extreme and "anti-Communist." His classroom was equipped with a video camera, which is standard at many Chinese universities.

Carl Minzner, a professor of law at Fordham University in New York, said the rise of student informers was part of Xi's efforts to make the party "a leading force in state and society alike."

"Xi's goal is to reintroduce that element of self-censorship so that people start to think twice about speaking," he said. "When political orthodoxy takes over, that's how the collective mind of society begins to close down." NYT