



**MEANWHILE**  
**STATUE OF BUSH'S SERVICE DOG TO GO ON DISPLAY**  
 A life-size statue of former US president George H W Bush's service dog will go on display next month at the presidential library in College Station, Texas. Sully, a three-year-old labrador, assisted Bush during the last six months of his life before the former president's death in 2018 at the age of 94. The dog became famous after he was photographed next to Bush's casket.

**TOP OF THE WORLD**



Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit

**THAILAND**  
**Court removes maverick MP from Parliament**

**Bangkok:** Thailand's Constitutional Court ruled Wednesday that the maverick leader of a new political party that violated election laws and cannot keep his seat in Parliament. The court said Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, chief of the Future Forward Party, violated a rule barring owners of media firms from running for Parliament. The court rejected his claim that he sold his holding in a media production company before the deadline needed to be a candidate. The ruling was expected. Thanathorn's party has been a thorn in the side of the establishment, in whose favour the courts have consistently ruled.

**IMPEACHMENT HEARINGS**

**Envoy says Ukraine pressure was at Trump's order: It was no secret**

Clear quid pro quo linking White House visit for Ukraine President and probes into Dems: Sondland

**PETER BAKER**  
 NOVEMBER 20

GORDON SONDLAND, the Republican megadonor turned ambassador to the European Union, told the House Intelligence Committee on Wednesday that he and other advisers to US President Donald Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate Democrats "because the President directed us to do so". In much-anticipated testimony opening the fourth day of public impeachment hearings, Sondland said that he, Energy Secretary Rick Perry and Kurt Volker, the special envoy for Ukraine, were reluctant to work with Rudy Giuliani, the President's personal attorney, on the pressure campaign and agreed only at Trump's insistence. "Secretary Perry, Ambassador Volker and I worked with Mr Rudy Giuliani on Ukraine matters at the express direction of the President of the United States," Sondland told the committee.



Gordon Sondland, US ambassador to the European Union, at the impeachment inquiry hearing in Washington. *NYT*

"We did not want to work with Mr Giuliani. Simply put, we were playing the hand we were dealt." With no alternative, he said, "we followed the President's orders." Sondland confirmed what has already been known, that there was a clear "quid pro quo" linking a coveted White House meeting for Ukraine's President to the investigations Trump wanted undertaken into Democrats. And he said he was concerned about "a potential quid pro quo" linking \$391 million in security aid suspended by Trump to the desired investigations. Sondland acknowledged that

**KEY QUOTES FROM THE TESTIMONY**

**'QUID PRO QUO'**  
 "Was there a 'quid pro quo'? As I testified previously, with regard to the requested White House call and White House meeting, the answer is yes."  
**'EVERYONE IN LOOP'**  
 "Everyone was in the loop (about Trump's Ukraine policy). It was no secret. Everyone was informed via email on July 19, days before the Presidential call."  
**'WE FOLLOWED THE PRESIDENT'S ORDERS'**  
 "Secretary Perry, Ambassador Volker and I worked with Mr Rudy Giuliani on Ukraine matters at the express direction of the President... We did not want to work with Mr Giuliani... We understood that if we refused to work with Mr Giuliani, we would lose a very important opportunity to cement relations between the US and Ukraine."

he told a senior Ukrainian official that to get Trump to release the frozen US security aid, the Kyiv government would likely have to publicly commit to investigating a conspiracy theory involving Democrats in the 2016 election as well as former Vice President Joe Biden and his son's

**Gotabaya to appoint brother Mahinda as Sri Lanka PM after Wickremesinghe quits**

**SHIHAR ANEEZ**  
 COLOMBO, NOVEMBER 20

Sri Lanka's newly elected president is set to name his brother and current opposition leader Mahinda Rajapaksa as interim prime minister, a party spokesman said on Wednesday, just hours after the sitting premier said he plans to step down.

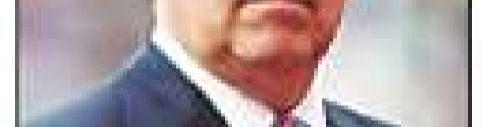


Mahinda Rajapaksa will be sworn in as prime minister and assume office Thursday

Premier Ranil Wickremesinghe said he planned to tender his resignation on Thursday, after his party's candidate lost in a presidential election to Mahinda's younger brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa over the weekend. Mahinda Rajapaksa will be sworn in as prime minister and assume office on Thursday, Keheliya Rambukwella, a spokesman for the Mahinda-led Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), told *Reuters*. This will see two brothers holding the top positions in the government of Sri Lanka for the first time in its history. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, also a member of the SLPP, defeated the candidate from Wickremesinghe's party on Nov 16. Gotabaya had earlier served as defence chief under his brother Mahinda, who himself served as president from 2005-2015. "I have decided to resign from the Prime Minister's post to give space for the new President to form his own government," Wickremesinghe said earlier on Wednesday. Government leaders said a parliamentary election is expected around April and Mahinda is expected to be his party's prime ministerial candidate. The recent presidential election was largely overshadowed by Sri Lanka's deepest economic slump in more than 15 years, which followed attacks on hotels and churches on Easter Sunday that killed more than 250 people. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attacks, which damaged Sri Lanka's important tourism sector. *REUTERS*

**PAKISTAN**  
**Sedition case on 17 students over 'anti-Pak' slogans**

**Lahore:** Police in Pakistan's Punjab province have registered a sedition case against 17 students of the prestigious Sindh University for allegedly raising slogans against Pakistan and defacing walls with anti-government messages during a protest. Jamshoro police registered the case against the students on the complaint of Ghulam Qadir Panhwar, the security head of the campus. The students rejected the allegations against them and said they had staged the protest against water shortage in the hostel.



**Britain's Prince Andrew to step back from public duties after Epstein furore**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
 LONDON, NOVEMBER 20

PRINCE ANDREW on Wednesday said he was cancelling his public engagements, as the outcry from the British royal's friendship with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein showed no sign of abating. Queen Elizabeth II's second son has been under pressure since a television interview broadcast Saturday in which he defended his links to the disgraced financier, who was found dead in prison in August. An increasing number of organisations and initiatives backed by Andrew have said they were not renewing or would review their support because of the revelations. Andrew, 59, said in an emailed statement he now recognised his links to Epstein had become a "major disruption" to the royal family and the charities and organisations associated with it. "Therefore, I have asked Her Majesty (the Queen) if I may step back from public duties for the foreseeable future, and she has given her permission," he added. "I continue to unequivocally regret my ill-judged association with Jeffrey Epstein. His suicide has left many unanswered questions, particularly for his victims, and I deeply sympathise with everyone who has been affected and wants some form of closure," he added.

**Hong Kong students' sewer escape thwarted as rows with UK, US grow**

**MARIUS ZAHARIA & JESSIE PANG**  
 HONG KONG, NOVEMBER 20

SOME ANTI-GOVERNMENT protesters trapped inside a Hong Kong university on Wednesday tried to flee through the sewers, where one student said she saw snakes, but firemen prevented further escape bids by blocking a metal manhole into the system. *Reuters* witnesses said fewer than 100 protesters remained inside the Polytechnic University, ring-fenced 24 hours a day by riot police and barricades, after more than 1,000 were arrested from late on Monday. Some surrendered while others were grabbed in escape attempts that



Protesters look inside a sewer for an escape route. *Reuters*

included trying to clamber down ropes to waiting motorbikes. Some protesters, wearing waterproof boots and carrying torches, resurfaced inside the campus after unsuccessfully probing the sewers — where fast-rising

water levels are also a hazard — for a way out during the night. Police said four people were arrested for removing a manhole cover outside the campus and two climbing out. Firefighters, whom the students let on to the campus, were in place to stop any further such attempts to flee, blocking the only feasible entrance into the sewer system in an underground car park on the campus. Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam has called for a humane end to a siege that saw the most intense clashes since the protests escalated more than five months ago. Cheng, a former employee of Britain's Hong Kong consulate, who said secret police beat him seeking information about the protest movement. "We were shocked and appalled by the mistreatment he suffered while in Chinese detention, which amounts to torture," Raab said. "Human Rights and Democracy Act" The US Senate unanimously passed the "Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act", which requires the secretary of state to certify at least once a year that Hong Kong retains enough autonomy to qualify for special trading consideration and would impose sanctions on officials responsible for rights abuses. *REUTERS*

**GERMANY**  
**Son of German ex-president stabbed to death**

**Frankfurt Am Main:** An assailant has stabbed to death the son of former German president Richard von Weizsaecker in attack at a Berlin hospital that left one other person seriously injured, police said Wednesday. The motive for the attack on Fritz von Weizsaecker, 59, on Tuesday evening was unclear. Von Weizsaecker, a doctor, had just delivered a lecture on liver diseases at the Schlosspark hospital in the western Berlin neighbourhood of Charlottenburg when he was stabbed, a police spokesman said. He died at the scene despite efforts to save him.

**Tories alter Twitter name during debate, slammed**

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
 LONDON, NOVEMBER 20

BRITAIN'S CONSERVATIVE Party was accused Wednesday of trying to deceive voters by changing the name of its press office Twitter account to "factcheckUK" during a televised election debate between Prime Minister Boris Johnson and opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn. Rebranded to resemble a neutral fact-checking account, it posted a series of tweets supporting Johnson during Tuesday's debate. It later reverted to the name "CCHQ Press" and restored the party logo to its profile. Organisations that seek to combat political misinformation cried foul. "It was an attempt to mislead voters," Will Moy, chief executive of the London-based fact-checking website Full Fact, told the BBC. "And I think it is inappropriate



Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn at the debate. *AP*

and misleading for a serious political party to behave that way." Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab defended the party's actions, saying the Twitter account was clearly linked to the Conservatives. "We make no apology for having an instant rebuttal to all the nonsense and lies put out," Raab told the BBC.

**LEIBERMAN REFUSES TO BACK NETANYAHU, GANTZ**  
**Israel likely to hold unprecedented third election in less than a year**

**ARON HELLER**  
 JERUSALEM, NOVEMBER 20

ISRAELI KINGMAKER politician Avigdor Lieberman on Wednesday refused to endorse a candidate for prime minister, pushing the country toward a new election for the third time in less than a year. Lieberman's comments came ahead of a midnight deadline for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rival, Benny Gantz, to form a coalition. Without Lieberman, Gantz appears unable to secure the required majority in parliament to be prime minister. If Israel is forced into a third election, it would be entering uncharted waters, with opinion polls already predicting a very similar deadlock. But a new campaign could benefit the embat-



Avigdor Lieberman heads a small ultranationalist party

tled Netanyahu, who is expected to be indicted on corruption charges in the coming weeks. Netanyahu would be best-positioned to fight any charges from the prime minister's office. Lieberman, who heads a small secular, ultranationalist party, triggered the September election after refusing to join Netanyahu's coalition following earlier elections in April. *AP*

**Suu Kyi to contest Rohingya genocide case at world court**

**SHOON NAING**  
 YANGON, NOVEMBER 20

AUNG SAN Suu Kyi will appear before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to contest a case filed by Gambia accusing Myanmar of genocide against its Rohingya Muslim minority, her government said on Wednesday. More than 730,000 Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh since a 2017 crackdown by Myanmar's military, which UN investigators say was carried out with "genocidal intent". Myanmar denies accusations of genocide.



Suu Kyi will Myanmar's team to The Hague

"Myanmar has retained prominent international lawyers to contest the case submitted by Gambia," the ministry for state counselor Suu Kyi's office said. "The State Counselor, in her capacity as Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, will lead a team to the Hague, Netherlands, to defend the national interest of Myanmar at the ICJ," it said. *REUTERS*

**EXPLAINED**  
**Graft charges may change next polls**

WITH NETANYAHU and Gantz unable to get the support needed to form a government with the deadline looming, a third election within a span of 12 months is looming on Israel. Polls indicate yet another deadlock between Netanyahu and Gantz even after that election. However, if Netanyahu is indicted on corruption charges before that, as is expected, it could deal a blow to his chances at the ballot box.

**Israeli strikes kill 11 'fighters' in Syria: monitor**

**Jerusalem:** The Israeli army carried out a "wide-scale" attack against Iranian forces and Syrian army targets in Syria Wednesday, killing at least 11 "fighters", the Israeli Army and a monitoring group said. In a rare confirmation of their operations in Syria, the Israeli army said they carried out dozens on strikes against the Iranian elite Quds Force and the Syrian military, in response to four rockets fired at Israel a day before. At least 11 "fighters" were killed in the strikes, said UK-based monitoring group the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Seven were foreigners, its head Rami Abdel Rahman said, though he could not confirm whether they were all Iranian. Iran has fought alongside Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces in the country's civil war, heightening Israeli concern over the presence of its arch foe along its border. *PTI*

**US CONGRESSWOMAN WRITES TO JUDGES ASKING FOR 'A SYSTEM OF COMPASSION TO BE APPLIED' IN HIS SENTENCING**

**Man who threatened to shoot Ilhan Omar pleads guilty, she calls for leniency**

**ED SHANAHAN**  
 NOVEMBER 20

IT BEGAN with a hate-filled call to Representative Ilhan Omar's Washington office in March, officials said. "Do you work for the Muslim Brotherhood?" Patrick W Carlineo Jr asked a member of Omar's staff on that call, according to a criminal complaint. "Why are you working for her, she's a (expletive) terrorist. Somebody ought to put a bullet in her skull. Back in the day, our forefathers would have put a bullet in her (expletive)."

"I'll put a bullet in her (expletive) skull," the staff member also recalled Carlineo, 55, saying, according to the complaint. On Monday, Carlineo, of Addison, New York, pleaded guilty to threatening to kill Omar, a Minnesota Democrat and one of the first Muslim women elected to Congress, and to possessing guns illegally. Omar responded to Carlineo's guilty plea in Federal District Court in Buffalo by urging leniency when he is sentenced. In a letter she posted on Twitter on Tuesday, Omar addressed the judge who will sen-

tence him, asking "for a system of compassion to be applied." "Threatening assassination of a public official in our country is dangerous to both the individual and our republic," Omar wrote, describing the crimes that Carlineo admitted to as "grave" and adding that "threats of political violence and hate speech" were "not unique" to him. "They are an increasing feature in our public sphere," Omar, a Somali refugee whose family received asylum in the United States when she was a teenager, added. "We will not defeat it with anger and exclusion. We



Ilhan Omar was among four freshman lawmakers who Trump said should "go back" to the countries they came from. *NYT*

will defeat it with compassion." A member of her party's progressive wing, Omar — the first woman to wear a hijab on the House floor — has been denounced in some quarters, including by some Democrats, for embracing the boycott-Israel movement and criticizing supporters of the Jewish state. She has also emerged as a frequent foil for President

Donald Trump. She was among four female freshman lawmakers who Trump said in July should "go back" to the countries they came from. In an interview with the FBI at his home about a week after he called Omar's office, Carlineo described himself as a patriot who loved Trump and hated "radical Muslims in our government", the criminal complaint says. He also told an FBI agent that he believed Omar supported Islamic militant groups, such as Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, and that her election to Congress was illegitimate.

In the interview, the complaint says, he acknowledged calling Omar's office and said that he knew why the FBI, which investigated the matter with the US Capitol Police, was interested in talking to him. Shown an email containing the text of the call, he initially denied that the words were his, but later "went on to say that he may have said something" similar, the complaint says. (He had left his name and contact information with Omar's staff, the complaint says). About a week later, authorities found a loaded .45-caliber

handgun, three rifles, two shotguns and hundreds of rounds of ammunition at Carlineo's home, prosecutors said. Because of a 1998 felony conviction, he is prohibited from owning a firearm. Carlineo is scheduled to be sentenced on Feb 14. He faces up to 10 years in prison. He remains free until sentencing under conditions that include a curfew and a restriction against travelling outside western New York. Barbara Burns, a spokeswoman for the US Attorney's Office in Buffalo, declined to comment on Omar's sentencing request. *NYT*