

# 15 THE WORLD

TOPOF THE WORLD



Canada's Minister of Diversity, Bardish Chagger, with PM Justin Trudeau. Reuters

CANADA  
4 Indian-origin ministers in new Trudeau Cabinet

Ottawa: For the first time, a Hindu woman lawmaker has been inducted into a Canadian Cabinet as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau unveiled his "strong and skilled" team of 37 ministers which also includes three Sikh MPs. Trudeau unveiled his Cabinet with the induction of seven new faces, including Anita Anand, a former law professor at the University of Toronto. The three other Indian-origin MPs, all Sikhs, inducted into the Cabinet are Navdeep Bains (42), Bardish Chagger (39) and Harjit Sajjan (49).

USA  
Court-martialed Navy SEAL faces expulsion after Trump clears him

A US Navy SEAL acquitted of murder in a war crimes trial but convicted of posing for pictures with the corpse of an Iraqi detainee now faces proceedings to expel him from special forces, days after President Donald Trump reversed his demotion in rank. Special Operations Chief Edward Gallagher, 40, received formal notice on Wednesday that a "trident review board" has been convened to weigh his fitness to remain in the SEALs, said Captain Tamara Lawrence, spokeswoman for the US naval special warfare command.

AUSTRALIA  
PM denies climate link as smoke chokes Sydney

Sydney: Australia's Prime Minister on Thursday denied his climate policies had caused unprecedented bushfires ravaging the country and insisted his government was doing enough to tackle global warming. As blazes that have scorched swathes of countryside continued to spread and the country's largest city was cloaked in hazardous smoke, conservative leader Scott Morrison defended his climate record, saying Australia was "doing our bit". His comments came after weeks spent refusing to speak about the link between climate change and deadly fires.

RAJAPKSA FAMILY STAGES COMEBACK

## Gotabaya swears in brother Mahinda as Sri Lanka's PM



Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa (right) greets his brother Mahinda after appointing him as Prime Minister at the presidential secretariat in Colombo on Thursday. AP

SHIHAR ANEEZ  
COLOMBO, NOVEMBER 21

SRI LANKA'S NEWLY elected president Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Thursday swore in his elder brother, former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, as prime minister, cementing the powerful family's political comeback. The appointment of Mahinda Rajapaksa, 74, came hours after the former premier Ranil Wickremesinghe tendered his resignation following the defeat of his party's candidate in a presidential election to Gotabaya Rajapaksa over the weekend. It is the first time in Sri Lanka history that two siblings have held the two top political positions, although Mahinda is

COURT DROPS CORRUPTION CHARGES AGAINST GOTABAYA, ORDERS TRAVEL BAN TO BE LIFTED

Colombo: Sri Lanka's newly-elected President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was on Thursday absolved of all corruption charges linked to the embezzlement of nearly \$185,000 by a high court which also lifted the overseas travel ban on him and released his impounded passport. Gotabaya will embark on his first foreign tour with a visit to India on November 29. The Special High Court in September last year imposed a travel ban on Rajapaksa and six others in a corruption case. The corruption charges that were dropped were related to the alleged misappropriation of public funds for the construction of the D A Rajapaksa Memorial and Museum. PTI

only in charge of a caretaker government until parliamentary elections next year. In a ceremony in the capital Colombo on Thursday, Gotabaya swore in his brother as their respective wives, sons and daughters-in-law looked on. "I wish to congratulate and extend my warmest wishes to

Hon Mahinda Rajapaksa, Prime Minister of the Democratic, Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka," Gotabaya tweeted afterwards.

Gotabaya, 70, had earlier served as defence chief under his brother Mahinda, who himself served as president from 2005-2015. Mahinda, who had been Sri Lanka's opposition leader since January, has held the prime minister's post twice before. He is set to be his party's PM candidate in a parliamentary election expected around April. "The Rajapaksa brand, as evidenced by the election, remains extremely strong," said Akhil Bery, Eurasia's South Asia analyst, adding that Mahinda is perceived to be even more popular than his younger brother. REUTERS

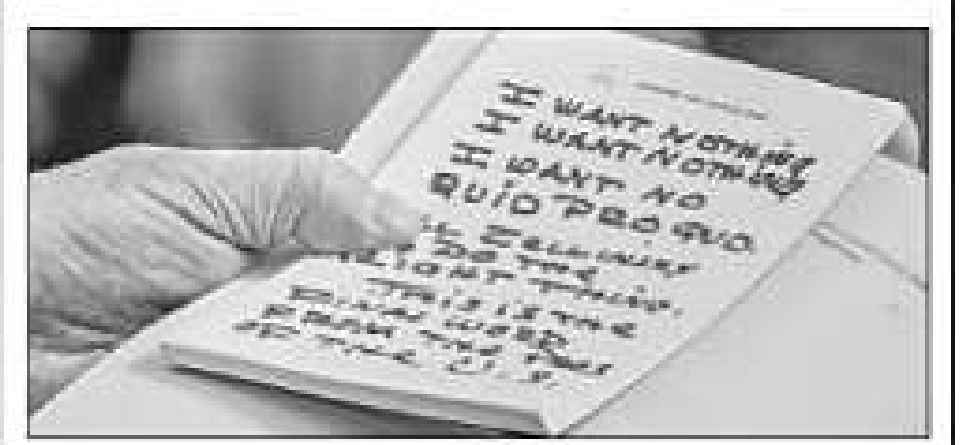
IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY

## Trump's ex-aide to GOP: Russia benefits from 'fiction' on Ukraine

AP & REUTERS  
WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 21

KEY IMPEACHMENT witnesses said Thursday it was clear Donald Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani was pursuing political investigations of Democrats in Ukraine at Trump's direction. Their testimony undercuts the President's argument he only wanted to root out Ukrainian corruption. State Department official David Holmes said he understood that Giuliani's push to investigate "Burisma," the Ukraine gas company where Joe Biden's son Hunter served on the board, was code for the former vice president and his family. Former White House adviser Fiona Hill warned that Giuliani had been making "explosive" and "incendiary" claims. "He was clearly pushing forward issues and ideas that would, you know, probably come back to haunt us and in fact," Hill testified. "I think that's where we are today." The House probe focuses on allegations that Trump sought investigations of Joe Biden and his son — and the discredited idea that Ukraine rather than Russia interfered in the 2016 US election — in return for US military aid that

TRUMP STATES HIS CASE, NOTES IN HAND



AFTER TESTIMONY by the US ambassador to the EU, Gordon Sondland, that the Ukraine pressure campaign was carried out under the President's orders, Trump spoke to reporters outside the White House with the help of some notes. "I WANT NOTHING," he read from stationery marked ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE in notes captured by photographers. "I WANT NO QUID PRO QUO." Once he finished reading his papers, he did not stay to engage with reporters as he often does.

Ukraine, and for a White House visit that the new Ukrainian President wanted. Hill a former White House Russia analyst, warned Republican lawmakers to quit pushing the "fictional" Ukraine-interference narrative as they deferred Trump in the inquiry. "In the course of this investi-

Boy, 12, youngest to be convicted in HK protests

KJM VARMA  
BEIJING, NOVEMBER 21

A 12-YEAR-OLD boy became the youngest protester to be convicted in the six-month-long pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong as a court in the former British colony reserved orders to place him under counselling and supervision for up to three years. The probation order, if clamped, would also leave the minor with a criminal record, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Thursday. Since the pro-democracy protests began about six months ago over the Hong Kong government's attempts to bring an Extradition Bill, this round of protests have caught the attention of China and the world for their mass public participation, specially the youth and students. The protests are continuing even though the government has withdrawn the Extradition Bill. Over 4,500 people mostly students have been arrested so far in the protests. The protesters are demanding Chief Executive Carrie Lam's resignation, inquiry into police brutalities and universal franchise with freedom for all locals to contest elections. PTI

IRAN  
ENVIRONMENTALISTS GIVEN PRISON TERMS

Six environmental conservationists accused of "spying" on Iranian military sites have received sentences of up to 10 years in prison, according to state news agency IRNA and Shargh daily. Sentences "from four to 10 years" have been issued for some of the case's suspects, IRNA quoted judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili as saying.

## Israel's Netanyahu charged in series of corruption cases

Not required by law to resign, but he will find it much more difficult to hold on to power amid struggle to form new govt

DAVID M HALBFINGER  
JERUSALEM, NOVEMBER 21

PRIME MINISTER Benjamin Netanyahu was indicted Thursday on bribery, fraud and breach of trust charges in a set of long-running corruption cases, immediately throwing his political future into doubt and heightening the uncertainty and chaos surrounding Israel's fitful, yearlong struggle to choose its next leader. Netanyahu, 70, who in July became the longest-serving prime minister in Israel's history, now also has the distinction of being the first to be indicted while in office. The cases against Netanyahu involve allegations of giving or offering lucrative official favours to several media tycoons in exchange for either favourable coverage in news outlets or gifts worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. He has rejected the charges as false and politically motivated. Netanyahu is not legally required to step down. But with Israel's political system already in uncharted territory, having failed to settle upon a new prime minister despite two elections



Benjamin Netanyahu has become the first sitting PM of Israel to be indicted

and three attempts at forming a government since April, the criminal case against him could make it far more difficult for him to retain power. After his chief rival, Benny Gantz, said Wednesday that he was unable to form a government, that task shifted to Parliament. If no lawmaker is successful in assembling a 61-seat majority over the next three weeks, a third round of elections will be called. While Netanyahu has maintained strong support from his political base so far, while criminal charges against him were still uncertain, polls have shown that a formal indictment would change many minds. NYT

EXPLAINED  
E.  
What are the cases?

THE CORRUPTION charges against Netanyahu stem from cases known as Case 1000, Case 2000 and Case 4000. CASE 1000: This case revolves around the allegation that Netanyahu received expensive gifts from Israeli billionaire and film producer Arnon Milchan in exchange for political favours. CASE 2000: In this case, it is alleged that Netanyahu struck a deal with the publisher of one of Israel's biggest newspapers for favourable coverage in return for legislation that would hurt the newspaper's biggest competitor. CASE 4000: This is considered the most serious case, and it involves allegations that Netanyahu helped telecom giant Bezeq in exchange for favourable coverage on the firm's Walla News website.

## Indian couple accused of spying in Germany goes on trial: report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BERLIN, NOVEMBER 21

AN INDIAN couple accused of spying on Kashmiri and Sikh groups in Germany and sharing information with Indian intelligence agents went on trial on Thursday in Frankfurt on charges that carry a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, a media report said on Thursday. Manmohan S and his wife Kanwaljit K were charged with

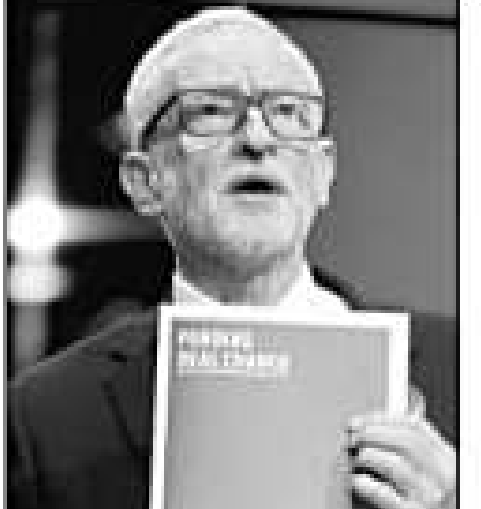
foreign secret service agent activity in Germany in April this year. The trial of the two Indians accused of spying on Kashmiri and Sikh groups in Germany began at the Higher Regional Court in Frankfurt, Germany's public international broadcaster Deutsche Welle reported. Starting from January 2015, Manmohan, 50, had allegedly obtained information on Kashmiri separatist and Sikh groups operating in Germany and passed it on to officials of

India's intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), posted at the Indian Consulate in Frankfurt, the report said. From July 2017, his wife Kanwaljit, 51, is also suspected of taking part in the intelligence gathering, the report said, adding that in return for their service, the couple allegedly received a total of \$7,974 from RAW. Further hearings are scheduled until Dec 12. If convicted, they may be jailed for up to 10 years.

## UK's Labour pledges Jallianwala Bagh apology in manifesto

ADITI KHANNA  
LONDON, NOVEMBER 21

BRITAIN'S OPPOSITION Labour Party on Thursday launched its manifesto for the December 12 general election with a pledge to institute an audit into the country's colonial past, which would include an apology to India for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar 100 years ago. Former British prime minister Theresa May had stopped short of a formal apology earlier this year when she expressed "deep regret" for the colonial era attack on Vaisakhi to coincide with its 100th anniversary this year. In the 107-page manifesto titled 'It's Time for Real Change' launched by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, the party has pledged to go further on the issue and apologise. The document also commits Labour to constitute a judge-led inquiry into Britain's "injustices of the past", including a public review of the country's role in Operation Blue Star — referred to as the "Amritsar massacre". "We will issue a formal apology for the Jallianwala Bagh



Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn with his party's election manifesto. Reuters

massacre, and hold a public review into Britain's role in the Amritsar massacre," notes the manifesto under the sub-head "Effective Diplomacy". In 2014, declassified UK government documents had revealed that British military advice was given to Indian forces prior to Indian Army intervention at the Golden Temple. There have been calls for a public inquiry into the exact nature of that advice from some British Sikh groups over the years. PTI

## Five Indians held for trying to enter US illegally

YOSHITA SINGH  
NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 21

FIVE INDIAN nationals have been taken into custody by the US patrol agents in New York for trying to enter America illegally, authorities said. The US Border Patrol agents assigned to the Ogdensburg Border Patrol Station in New York apprehended the five persons from India and a suspected smuggler on November 15 after the smuggler attempted to evade a temporary immigration checkpoint. The agency said a vehicle driven by a US citizen evaded an immigration checkpoint near Morristown, New York. Agents were able to locate the vehicle as it turned into a parking lot of a local business in Ogdensburg. It added that the occupants exited the vehicle and ran inside the business. Border patrol agents pursued and were able to apprehend the driver and five persons from India who do not have immigration documentation allowing them to remain in the US legally. All persons were taken into custody and transported to the Ogdensburg Border Patrol Station for further processing. PTI

A SOVIET CLUSTER BOMB KILLED 3 BOYS ON A NOW-PEACEFUL MOUNTAIN

## Afghanistan's curse: A bomb from two wars ago crushes a family today

THOMAS GIBBONS-NEFF & FATIMA FAIZI  
DAHANA-E-AHANGARAN, NOVEMBER 21

THE THREE boys were buried on the southern face of the mountain in May. The side-by-side graves of the brothers Amir Khan and Liaqat are marked with a green flag. Mujtaba's grave is covered in a rocky mound and light from the morning sun. It was a Soviet bomb, dropped from an aircraft decades before in

1986, that killed them this spring in Bamiyan Province. The crudely welded silver cylinder, just bigger than a soda can, was one of many others ejected from a cluster bomb as it fell through the sky before resting in a shaded rocky ravine for 33 years. Accounts of children finding old bombs and accidentally setting them off have become a central part of Afghanistan's story, horrifying in how frequently it is repeated. The deaths of the boys in Bamiyan, a relative haven from the fighting all



Afghan officials search for unexploded landmines. Reuters file

around the country, are a particularly cruel example of the hidden dangers in Afghanistan. War after war, piling on each other for decades, has left Afghanistan covered in more than 1,000 square miles of mines, unexploded munitions, roadside bombs and shattered firing ranges, according to Afghan government data. Many hazards have been marked, cordoned off, cleared or avoided. But many also remain undiscovered. In 2018 alone, around 118 civilians were wounded or

Each one, the result of an often-forgotten battle or error, has the power to permanently devastate families and their communities. That was the case on the mountain that looms over the boys' village: Dahana-e-Ahangaran, a small collection of compounds forming a peninsula of green trees and potato fields along a single dirt road into the surrounding hills. Before May 17, when the bomb exploded, the sandstone mountain was a playground, a place for families to hike or gather,

the American-supported insurgents who were fighting Soviet invaders. The mountain's elevation, boulders and view of the surrounding valleys made for ample protection against the military convoys navigating the single road below. Bakhsht says he does not recall much of the fighting other than that the insurgents had the high ground and the Soviets did not. He does not remember the plane that dropped the bomb that would one day kill his sons and their friend. NYT