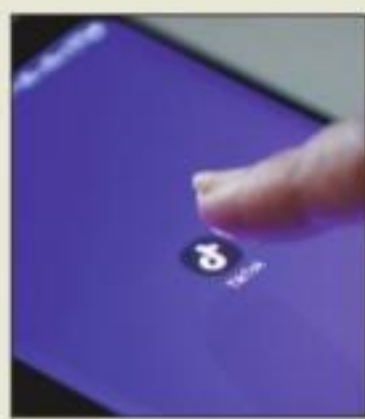


# 17 THE WORLD

## TOP OF THE WORLD



### CHINA TikTok 'sorry' for taking down Xinjiang clip

**Beijing:** Chinese-owned app TikTok has admitted it briefly removed a viral video that condemned Beijing's crackdown on Muslims in Xinjiang and apologised to the US teen who posted the clip. In a post that has been seen 1.6 million times, Ferossa Aziz begins talking about eyelash curling but quickly switches to decrying China's mass detention of Uighurs and other minorities. Aziz said she had been blocked from posting on the app for a month after uploading the clip, then noted the video was taken down. As her posts on various platforms racked up millions of views, TikTok said it had not blocked her and her videos were still available. But later, the company admitted having removed the video "due to a human moderation error".

### ALBANIA Death toll in earthquake goes up to 40

**Durres:** Rescue teams desperately sought survivors under rubble in Albania's western town of Durres on Thursday hoping to pull out toddler twins alive, two days after a 6.4 magnitude quake killed at least 40 people. Spared by killer quakes since 1979, Albania lacks rescue know-how. Italy, Greece, Romania and others rushed teams in and they are searching for survivors as 530 aftershocks, some with a magnitude over 5, kept rocking buildings and scaring people. In the northern town of Thumane, where 22 people died, searches were halted after all victims were pulled out.

### NEW ZEALAND PM apologises for 1979 air disaster

**Wellington:** Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern offered an official apology Thursday on the 40th anniversary of New Zealand's worst peacetime disaster, the Mount Erebus air crash in which 257 people died. An Air New Zealand DC-10 on a sightseeing flight over Antarctica slammed into remote Mount Erebus during "whiteout" conditions on the frozen continent on November 28, 1979, killing all on board. "That loss, in and of itself, was huge. It sent ripples across the country... but that loss and grief was compounded. It was undeniably worsened by the events that followed," Ardern said.

### KOREAN PENINSULA N Korea fires 2 unidentified projectiles: Seoul

**Seoul:** North Korea fired two "unidentified projectiles" on Thursday — the Thanksgiving holiday in the US — Seoul said, as nuclear talks between Pyongyang and Washington remain deadlocked. The brief statement from the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Pyongyang fired two projectiles eastwards from South Hamgyong province which came down in the Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea.

# Pak SC strikes down 3-year extension for Bajwa, allows him 6 more months

## Imran govt told to justify within six months why it granted the Army Chief a three-year extension

**ASIF SHAHZAD & ALASDAIR PAL**  
ISLAMABAD, NOVEMBER 28

**PAKISTAN'S TOP** court on Thursday gave the government six months to justify why it granted a controversial extension to the country's Army Chief, in a rare case that pits the judiciary against the government and the military. The Cabinet of Prime Minister Imran Khan approved a three-year extension for General Qamar Javed Bajwa in August, citing a worsening national security situation in the region over its rivalry with India. But in a surprise ruling on Tuesday, the Supreme Court suspended the extension, citing a series of irregularities and ordering the government and the army to produce legal provisions and detailed arguments on the reasoning behind the move. On Thursday the court granted a temporary six-month



The Cabinet had approved a three-year extension for General Qamar Javed Bajwa in August, citing a worsening national security situation in the region. Reuters

extension to Bajwa's tenure, due to end at midnight, but said the government must pass legislation through Parliament in that time to clarify the section of Pakistan's constitution governing the armed forces. "We are showing judicial restraint although there is no provision in law to grant an extension," Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa told the court. "We leave this matter to Parliament to make law regarding this." Khan welcomed the verdict on Thursday. "Today must be a great disappointment to those who ex-

pected the country to be destabilised by a clash of institutions," he said in a tweet.

But despite giving a temporary reprieve over its handling of the extension, the episode could weaken the authority of the coalition government, led by Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, that now has to pass what is likely to be complex legislation on the military through Parliament.

The civilian government has enjoyed good relations with the armed forces, in contrast to the previous government of Khan's main rival Nawaz Sharif.

It has also led to questions about the future of Bajwa, who has led the military through a period of escalating tensions with India and western neighbour Afghanistan.

The abrupt decision of the court to suspend Bajwa's extension, and the government's reaction, has been branded "a comedy of errors" by Pakistan's

media, which is rarely critical of the military.

"This is without a doubt the most shambolic episode in the PTI government's tenure so far," said an editorial in Dawn, the country's leading English-language newspaper on Thursday. "Surely there are other officers more than capable of leading the Army. General Bajwa's next step will determine whether he is thinking of himself or his institution."

Bajwa was commissioned as an Army officer in 1980. As a general, he has served as a field commander of units stationed in regions where India and Pakistan have fought two wars since both won independence from Britain in 1947.

Upon his appointment by Sharif in 2016, a government minister said Bajwa was picked because of his low-key style, and felt the general would be more willing to cede control of key areas to the government. REUTERS

# US: 90 more students, mostly Indians, held from fake university

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 28

**FEDERAL LAW** enforcement agencies have arrested 90 foreign students, mostly from India, enrolled in a fake university established by the US government to check immigration fraud, a media report has said.

The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has so far arrested more than 250 students, who were lured to enroll in the now-closed University of Farmington in the Detroit metropolitan area by the Department of Homeland Security.

The ICE had in March arrested 161 students from the fake university established by it. When it was closed in March, there were 600 students, mostly Indians, enrolled in it.

The latest news of arrest of additional 90 students in recent months, first reported by the Detroit Free Press, has resulted in outrage with #AbolishICE hashtag gaining ground social media platforms on Wednesday.

According to an ICE spokesperson of the 250 students arrested so far, "nearly 80 per cent were granted voluntary departure and departed the United States."

Federal prosecutors claim that the students knew that this was a fake university and enrolled in it to continue living in the US.

Senator Elizabeth Warren, a leading Democratic presidential candidate, described the move as "cruel". "This is cruel and appalling," she said in a tweet. "These students simply dreamed of getting the high-quality higher edu-

## EXPLAINED A fake university set up by the govt

THE WEBSITE of the University of Farmington displayed pictures of "students" on its lawn and in its library. It was on a US Department of Homeland Security list of certified colleges for students from abroad. But more than 250 students were arrested for enrolling in it on valid student visas. This is because the university was a fake one set up by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). ICE says the students knowingly enrolled in a fake university to stay and work in the US on a student visa. However, critics of ICE say the government entrapped the students with a seemingly legitimate university. They also argue this was an inefficient way to detect visa fraud as the university enrolled only 600 students, just a fraction of the more than 300,000 student visas the US issues annually.

cation America can offer. ICE deceived and entrapped them, just to deport them," Warren said.

Eight recruiters have been indicted for conspiracy to commit visa fraud and harbouring "aliens" for profit by the US Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan.

## 27 IRAQI PROTESTERS KILLED AFTER IRAN MISSION TORCHED



The Iranian consulate in Najaf, Iraq, after Iraqi demonstrators stormed and set fire to it. Reuters

■ **Security forces in Iraq shot dead 27 anti-government protesters in a 24-hour period, amid spiralling violence in the capital and the country's south, as Iran condemned the burning of its consulate.**

■ **Security forces Thursday fired live ammunition, killing four protesters and wounding 22 on the strategic Ahrar Bridge in Baghdad.**

■ **Violence across Iraq went on through the night, with troops killing 23 protesters since Wednesday. Protesters had set fire to the Iranian consulate in Najaf on Wednesday, in one of the worst attacks targeting Iranian interests in Iraq in the latest unrest.**

## British Sikh candidate slams election rival over remarks about his turban

**ADITI KHANNA**  
LONDON, NOVEMBER 28

**A BRITISH Sikh** candidate contesting the December 12 UK general election for the Opposition Labour Party has accused his Conservative Party rival of insulting remarks that targeted his turban during an event in the West Midlands region of England.

Kuldip Sahota, contesting the Ludlow constituency in Shropshire, demanded a Conservative Party investigation after Philip Dunne said he was "speaking through his turban" during an exchange about the region's education budgets, attracting gasps from the audience.

"I was shocked and deeply hurt that someone who was an MP for 14 years would make such a derogatory comment about the Sikh faith. This is extremely insulting to the Sikh community," said Sahota.

"These are the kind of offensive comments I remember receiving in the 1970s. They have no place in modern Britain and they certainly have no place in our Parliament. I hope the Conservatives will investigate the matter immediately," he said.

Dunne, a former minister, issued a statement apologising for the remarks after it attracted criticism on social media. "I apologised to Kuldip Sahota for my comments last night. I apologise again unreservedly for the offence caused," said Dunne. PTI

## China warns US after Trump signs Bill backing HK protesters

**JESSIE PANG & CATE CADELL**  
HONG KONG, BEIJING, NOVEMBER 28

**CHINA WARNED** the United States on Thursday that it would take "firm counter measures" in response to US legislation backing anti-government protesters in Hong Kong, and said attempts to interfere in the Chinese-ruled city were doomed to fail.

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday signed into law congressional legislation which supported the protesters, despite angry objections from Beijing,



Protesters in Hong Kong staged a 'thanksgiving' rally, with many holding US flags. Reuters

with which he is seeking a deal to end a damaging trade war.

Protesters in Hong Kong responded by staging a "thanksgiving" rally, with hundreds of people, some draped in US flags, gathering in the heart of the city.

The law requires the State Department to certify, at least annually, that Hong Kong is autonomous enough to justify favourable trading terms that have helped it become a financial centre. REUTERS

## EU Parliament announces symbolic climate emergency ahead of Dec summit

**JONAS EKBLUM**  
BRUSSELS, NOVEMBER 28

**EUROPEAN UNION** lawmakers declared a "climate emergency" on Thursday in a symbolic vote that heightens pressure for action against global warming at an upcoming summit.

With increasingly erratic weather patterns from wildfires in Australia to floods in Europe being linked to climate change, governments are under scrutiny to find urgent solutions at the UN summit in Spain on December 2-13.

After a debate on Monday night, the European Union (EU) legislature voted in favour of the declaration with 429 lawmakers for, 225 against and 19 abstaining. "It is not about politics, it is a matter of our common responsibility," said parliament's environment committee chairman Pascal Canfin of the Renew Europe group. Dissenters objected to the word "emergency", saying it was too drastic, and "urgency" would suffice. REUTERS

## Maldives ex-president sentenced to 5 yrs in jail

**MOHAMED JUNAYD**  
MALE, NOVEMBER 28

**FORMER MALDIVES** president Abdulla Yameen was convicted and sentenced to five years in prison for money laundering on Thursday — as dozens of his supporters gathered outside the court



Abdulla Yameen

saying his was innocent.

Yameen, who ran the Maldives with an iron hand for five years, unexpectedly lost an election last year and has since faced investigations over a number of deals sealed during his tenure.

He was accused of receiving \$1 million of government money through a private com-

pany as part of a deal to lease a number of tropical islands for hotel development — charges he has repeatedly dismissed.

Judge Ali Rasheed, who headed a panel trying the case, said it had been established beyond doubt that Yameen took money he knew was embezzled from the state. REUTERS

## AFTER THE RAJAPAKSAS RETURNED TO POWER

# Sri Lankan critics fear a crackdown is underway, and some flee

**MARIA ABI-HABIB & SAMEER YASIR**  
NOVEMBER 28

**FEARS OF** a potential crackdown on critics of the newly returned Rajapaksa political dynasty in Sri Lanka are rising just days after the election, as officials and journalists who investigated the Rajapaksas for human rights abuses and corruption began trying to flee the country, officials said.

In a case that raised particular alarm, a Sri Lankan employee of the Swiss Embassy in Colombo was abducted Monday by

unidentified men and forced to hand over sensitive embassy information, Switzerland's foreign ministry said. Officials in Colombo said the men forced her to unlock her cellphone data, which contained information about Sri Lankans who have recently sought asylum in Switzerland and the names of Sri Lankans who aided them as they fled the country because they feared for their safety after Gotabaya Rajapaksa won the presidency in elections this month.

On the same day, Rajapaksa imposed a blanket travel ban on more than 700 members of the



Gotabaya Rajapaksa won the presidency earlier this month

Sri Lankan police unit that had been investigating the family. And other police officers raided a news

outlet critical of the Rajapaksas and forced several journalists to hand their computers over for

analysis, in what the police said was an investigation into accusations of hate speech.

On Wednesday, a spokesman for Rajapaksa at first denied the abduction of the Swiss Embassy employee, and then hours later said that "defence authorities have decided to look into those allegations to ascertain the truth". More broadly, government officials said there was no intent to quash investigations of the Rajapaksas.

In the abduction case, the diplomatic officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of security concerns, said the men held the embassy em-

ployee for several hours and then, before releasing her, threatened to kill her if she told anyone.

The officials said the men appeared to be focused on finding information about a Sri Lankan detective who had been investigating Rajapaksa. The detective fled to Switzerland with his family Sunday. It was not clear whether the men were connected to Rajapaksa or were acting on their own as supporters of the popular leader and his political dynasty.

A spokesman for the Swiss Foreign Ministry, Pierre-Alain Eltschinger, told *The New York Times*, "We can confirm that a lo-

cal employee of the embassy was detained against her will on the street and threatened at length by unidentified men in order to force her to disclose embassy-related information."

"Switzerland regards this incident as a very serious and unacceptable attack," he said, adding that the Swiss government was "demanding an immediate and complete investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident."

The Rajapaksa family had held power for a decade until 2015, when they were voted out of office. NYT