

TOP OF THE WORLD



Hafiz Saeed. Reuters/File

PAKISTAN

Hafiz Saeed to face trial on December 7

*Lahore:* Mumbai terror attack mastermind and chief of JuD, Hafiz Saeed, will be prosecuted for terror financing charges here next month, an official said on Saturday. An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Lahore held a hearing against Saeed and his accomplices on terror financing on Saturday and fixed December 7 as the date for indictment of the Jamat-ud Dawa (JuD) chief and others. “ATC judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta fixed December 7 for indictment of Saeed and others after hearing the arguments of prosecution and defence lawyers,” a court official told PTI after the hearing.

NETHERLANDS

Man arrested in Hague stabbings

*Amsterdam:* Dutch police said on Saturday they had arrested a 35-year-old man in connection with a stabbing incident that took place in The Hague on Friday, in which three youth were wounded. In a statement, Hague police described the suspect as “not having any fixed home or place to stay”. The incident caused panic in The Hague as it happened just hours after two people were stabbed to death in London allegedly by an ex-prisoner convicted of terrorism offences. The male attacker ran off after the stabbings at a department store.

IRAN

Govt disputes ‘exaggerated’ protest death toll

*Tehran:* Iran on Saturday disputed death tolls issued abroad for bloodshed that erupted during protests in the country over fuel prices, after a rights group said over 160 demonstrators were killed. Officials in Iran have yet to say how many people died in the ensuing violence that saw banks, petrol pumps and police stations set on fire. London-based human rights group Amnesty International said in a tweet on Friday that the crackdown claimed the lives of 161 demonstrators. But Iran’s deputy interior minister, Jamal Orfi, disputed such figures.

CHINA

Belize, Taiwan citizens held for HK ‘meddling’

*Beijing:* China has arrested a citizen of Belize for allegedly colluding with the US to meddle in the affairs of Hong Kong, the official Guangdong Communist Party newspaper reported on Saturday. It said Lee Henley Hu Xiang supported activities that led to chaos in Hong Kong, the Southern Daily said. It also said a Taiwanese man, Lee Meng-Chu, was also arrested in Shenzhen on October 31, for allegedly stealing state secrets for foreign forces after he made a trip to Hong Kong in August to support “anti-China” activities.

TWO PEOPLE KILLED, ACCUSED SHOT DEAD

London Bridge attacker was convicted in 2012 for PoK terror training camp

People convicted of terror offences must serve full prison terms: Boris

AGENCIES

LONDON, NOVEMBER 30

THE MAN who stabbed and killed two people in the London Bridge terrorist attack on Friday has been identified as a convicted terrorist who was jailed seven years ago over a plot to bomb the London Stock Exchange and build a terrorist training camp on land owned by his family in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

The suspect, identified as Usman Khan, had also discussed staging a Mumbai-style attack on the UK Parliament and described by the judge who sentenced him for terrorism offences in 2012 as an ongoing risk to the public with a “serious, long term venture in terrorism”.

Khan went on a rampage while out of parole on Friday and killed one man and a woman and injured three other people before being shot by armed police officers. “We are now in a position to confirm the identity of the suspect as 28-year-old Usman Khan, who had been residing in the Staffordshire area,” said Scotland Yard’s Head of Counter Terrorism Policing, Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu on Saturday.

“This individual was known to authorities, having been convicted in 2012 for terrorism offences. He was released from prison in December 2018 on licence and clearly, a key line of enquiry now is to establish how he came to carry out this attack,” the senior Indian-origin top police officer said.

On Khan’s early release from jail, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said people convicted of terrorism offences should not be allowed out of prison early.

“I think that the practice of automatic, early release where you cut a sentence in half and let really serious, violent offenders out early simply isn’t working, and you’ve some very good evidence of how that isn’t working, I am afraid, with this case,” Johnson said on Saturday.

The profile of Khan dating back to his conviction in 2012 reveals his links with Islamist terrorism, believed to be al-Qaeda but could also have an Islamic State (ISIS) connection. He had been secretly recorded talking about plans to recruit UK radicals to train at a camp in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), the region his family comes from.

He and two other co-conspirators had conducted a surveillance trip around central London



Prime Minister Boris Johnson with Home Secretary Priti Patel on Saturday. Reuters

as they talked about launching a Mumbai-style attack on UK Parliament. The then-20-year-old pleaded guilty to engaging in conduct for the preparation of terrorism, which included travelling to and attending operational meetings, fundraising for terrorist training and preparing to travel abroad.

UK home secretary Priti Patel, who had recently unveiled plans for tougher sentences for violent criminals, said the police needed “space and time” to complete the investigation and that it was not right to “speculate”.

JAIL BACKGROUND

**THE MAIN CHARGES** Usman Khan (28) had been jailed over plots to bomb London Stock Exchange, building a training camp on his land in PoK and stage a ‘Mumbai-style’ attack on UK Parliament

guilty in 2012 and was released in December 2018 ‘on licence’

**TOUGHER LAWS** Many have asked why Khan, who was ‘being monitored’ via an electronic tag, was released before serving his full 16-year term. They have also cited the incident to push for tougher prison laws.

**OUT ‘ON LICENCE’** Khan was believed to have ties to the al-Qaeda or the Islamic State. He pleaded

AFTER GOTABAYA CALLED DEAL A MISTAKE

Lanka port project based on win-win spirit, says China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

COLOMBO, NOVEMBER 30

CHINA HAS said the Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka was developed with a “win-win spirit” and “equal-footed consultation” with the host nation after the island nation’s newly-elected president called the deal a “mistake” and should be renegotiated, a media report said on Saturday.

Earlier this week, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said giving away the Hambantota port to China on a 99-year lease was a “mistake” by the previous government headed by President Maithripala Sirisena. “The deal has to be renegotiated. Giving a small loan for investment is a different thing but giving a strategic important economic harbour is not acceptable. That we should have controlled,” Rajapaksa said in Colombo.

Responding to an email by the Daily Mirror, the Spokesperson’s Office of the Chinese Foreign Ministry in Beijing said, “Our co-operation, including the project of Hambantota Port, are based on equal-footed consultation and win-win spirit.”

The office said the project aims to help Sri Lanka leverage its own advantage for better development. “China would like to work with Sri Lanka to build the Hambantota Port into a new shipping hub in the Indian Ocean, which will further boost local economic and social development,” the statement added.



Hambantota Port. Reuters/File

EXPLAINED

Strategic foothold

SRI LANKA had handed over the Hambantota Port to China in 2017 as part of a deal to pay off a debt of over \$8 billion to state-run Chinese firms, as per reports. The deal had raised hackles in international circles, with many highlighting the risk of handing over too much control to China in the Indian Ocean. While Beijing has sought to portray the deal as an economic one, India in particular has always seen the idea of a Chinese foothold so close to its own territory as alarming.

RALLY IN GERMANY AHEAD OF CLIMATE TALKS



Protesters at a coal-fired power station Lippendorf near Leipzig, Germany. AP

■ Mass protests, a last-minute venue change and talk of climate tipping points are adding some unplanned drama to this year’s international talks on tackling global warming

■ Delegates from almost 200 countries had hoped to put the finishing touches to the rules governing the 2015 Paris accord, ironing out a few wrinkles left over from last year’s conference in Katowice, Poland, and setting the scene for a major review of their efforts in 2020

■ Scientists didn’t have any good news either. Study after study published in recent months has underscored the rapid pace of global warming and the need to cut emissions of greenhouse gases as soon as possible.

Students, seniors march in Hong Kong

REUTERS

HONG KONG, NOVEMBER 30

SECONDARY-SCHOOL students and retirees joined forces to protest in Hong Kong on Saturday, the first of several weekend rallies planned across the city, as pro-democracy activists vowed to battle what they say are police brutality and unlawful arrests.

A top Hong Kong official said the government was looking into setting up an independent committee to review the handling of the crisis.

“I came out for the peaceful protest in June when there was



At a demonstration in Hong Kong on Saturday. AP

more than one million people, but the government did not listen to our demands,” said a 71-

year-old woman in Hong Kong’s Central district, who only gave her name as Ponn.

APPLE TO ‘EXAMINE’ CRIMEA MAP ISSUE

Apple said Saturday it was going to ‘carefully’ examine its controversial decision to show the annexed Crimea peninsula as part of Russia on maps and weather apps which has caused an outcry in Ukraine. Russian lawmakers said Wednesday that Apple had complied with a demand from Moscow for Crimea to appear as Russian territory. “We are going to study more carefully the question of designating disputed borders in our services,” Apple said

Iraq PM resigns; 3 more shot dead amid protests

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, NOVEMBER 30

Three anti-government protesters were shot dead and at least 58 wounded in Baghdad and southern Iraq on Saturday, security and medical officials said, as Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi formally submitted his resignation to parliament.

Lawmakers were expected to either vote or accept outright Abdul-Mahdi’s resignation letter in a parliamentary session Sunday, two MPs said. The prime minister announced Thursday he would hand parliament his resignation on Friday amid mounting pressure from mass anti-government protests.

The announcement also came after Iraq’s top Shiite cleric withdrew his support for the government in a weekly sermon.

The formal resignation came after an emergency Cabinet session earlier in which ministers approved the document and the resignation of key staffers, including Abdul-Mahdi’s chief of staff.

In a pre-recorded speech, Abdul-Mahdi addressed Iraqis, saying that following parliament’s recognition of his stepping down, the Cabinet would be demoted to caretaker status, unable to pass new laws and make key decisions. He listed his government’s accomplishments, saying it had come to



Demonstrators help an injured youth during a protest on Saturday. Reuters

power during difficult times.

“Not many people were optimistic that this government would move forward,” he said.

He said the government had managed to push through important job-creating projects and improve electricity generation. “But unfortunately, these events took place,” he said, referring to the mass protest movement that engulfed Iraq on October 1.

“We need to be fair to our people and listen to them.”

At least 400 people have died since the uprising shook Iraq with thousands of Iraqis taking to the streets in Baghdad and the predominantly Shiite southern Iraq decrying corruption, poor services, lack of jobs and calling for an end to the post-2003 political system. Security forces have used live fire, tear gas and sound bombs to disperse crowds.

N Korea issues threat: Abe may see what a real ballistic missile is

REUTERS

SEOUL, NOVEMBER 30

NORTH KOREA’S state media on Saturday lashed out at Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as an “imbecile and political dwarf” for calling Pyongyang’s latest test of a large multiple-rocket launcher a ballistic missile launch and warned he may see a real one in the near future.

North Korea fired two short-range projectiles into the sea off its east coast on Thursday, with its North Korean leader Kim Jong Un expressing “great satisfaction” over the latest test. Abe said on Thursday that North Korea’s missile launch was a threat to Japan and the international community.

“It can be said that Abe is the only one idiot in the world and the most stupid man ever known in history as he fails to distinguish a missile from multiple launch rocket system while seeing the photo-accompanied report,” KCNA news agency said, citing a vice director general of North Korean Foreign Ministry’s Department of Japanese Affairs.

“Abe may see what a real ballistic missile is in the not distant future and under his nose ... Abe is none other than a perfect imbecile and a political dwarf without parallel in the world.”

UN Security Council resolutions ban North Korea from firing ballistic missiles and using such technology.

WHILE WORTHY OF SUPPORT, WE DID NOT FUND THE ORGANISATIONS TARGETED: ACTOR

Brazil’s president accuses DiCaprio of financing Amazon fires

MARCELO TEIXEIRA & EDUARDO SIMÕES

SAO PAULO, NOVEMBER 30

BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT Jair Bolsonaro claimed on Friday that Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio financed fires being set in the Amazon rainforest, without presenting any evidence, the right-wing leader’s latest broadside in casting blame over forest fires that have generated international concern.

Bolsonaro appeared to be commenting on social media postings claiming that the envi-



Jair Bolsonaro



Leonardo DiCaprio

ronmental organization the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) had paid for images taken by volunteer firefighters that it then sup-

posedly used to solicit donations, including a \$500,000 contribution from DiCaprio.

The WWF has denied receiv-

ing a donation from DiCaprio or obtaining photos from the fire-fighters. “This Leonardo DiCaprio is a cool guy, right? Giving money to torch the Amazon,” Bolsonaro said on Friday during brief remarks in front of the presidential residence.

DiCaprio denied having donated to the WWF. In a statement, the actor lauded “the people of Brazil working to save their natural and cultural heritage.” But, he said, “While worthy of support, we did not fund the organizations targeted.”

DiCaprio has been an outspoken advocate on behalf of com-

bating climate change, speaking frequently about environmental issues including the Amazon forest fires. His Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, which is focused on projects that “protect vulnerable wildlife from extinction,” is part of the Earth Alliance.

Four members of the non-governmental organization Alter do Chão Fire Brigade were arrested on Tuesday with police accusing them of purposefully setting fires in order to document them and drum up more donations. They were released on Thursday on a judge’s order.

Bolsonaro has repeatedly

lashed out at various factions in casting blame for the forest fires.

In a Facebook live post on August 21, he said, “Everything indicates” that NGOs were going to the Amazon to “set fire” to the forest. When asked then if he had evidence to back up his claims, Bolsonaro said he had “no written plan,” adding, “that’s not how it’s done.”

One day later he admitted that farmers could be illegally setting the rainforest ablaze, but roughly a month later he attacked the “lying media” for saying that the rainforest was being devastated by the fires.

Bolsonaro talked about DiCaprio on Thursday during a live webcast. The president said the WWF paid the firefighting NGO to take pictures of forest fires in the Amazon.

“So what did the NGO do? What is the easiest thing? Set fire to the forest. Take pictures, make a video,” the president said. “(WWF) makes a campaign against Brazil, it contacts Leonardo DiCaprio, he donates \$500,000.”

“A part of that went to the people that were setting fires. Leonardo DiCaprio, you are contributing to the fire in the Amazon, that won’t do,” he said. REUTERS