

TOPOF THE WORLD



Sanna Marin is 34

FINLAND  
Marin becomes youngest PM in the world

*Helsinki:* Finland's new Prime Minister — the world's youngest premier — will have a finance minister two years her junior in a new women-led coalition cabinet after a political shake-up, party officials said on Monday. Sanna Marin, 34 from the dominant Social Democrats, was nominated on Sunday. Centre Party chief Katri Kulmuni, 32, will get the finance post when the full new cabinet is announced this week, party members said. Finland's government resigned last week after the Centre Party said it had lost confidence in Social Democrat Prime Minister Antti Rinne over his handling of a postal strike.

BRITAIN  
Doctors advise shifting Sharif to US from UK

*Lahore, London:* Pakistan's ailing former PM Nawaz Sharif, who is currently undergoing treatment in London, has shown no improvement in his platelet count and the doctors have advised that he be shifted to the US for better medical care, a top party official said. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb said the 69-year-old Sharif's medical reports showed there was an 88% blockage in the arteries circulating blood to his brain. "Doctors have advised him to consult an expert in the US. However, transporting him there poses an immense challenge for the medical team," she said.

MYANMAR  
Groups launch Myanmar boycott

*The Hague:* Human rights campaigners supporting Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim minority on Monday called for a global boycott of the country, a day before genocide hearings begin at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. The Free Rohingya Coalition said in a statement it was starting the "Boycott Myanmar Campaign" with 30 organisations in 10 countries. It called on "corporations, foreign investors, professional and cultural organisations to sever their institutional ties with Myanmar".

# Futile to seek bigger commitments when targets not being met: India

Javadekar: India on course to meet and exceed targets, others must focus on implementing Paris pact



EXPRESS IN MADRID

AMITABH SINHA  
DECEMBER 9

IN THE clearest indication yet that India would not succumb to growing pressure on countries to commit to greater action on climate change, Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said Monday the demand for commitment to higher targets was a "futile" exercise considering most of the countries were not even on track to meet their previous targets.

Javadekar said India, which was one of the best performers on climate action and well on its way to exceeding its targets, would instead like countries to focus on achieving their current and past targets, instead of committing themselves to fresh, more ambitious targets.

"We should concentrate more on the implementation of the Paris Agreement rather than bring up new issues and new subjects at this stage... It is futile to talk about new targets right now, futile to talk about new ambitions or new programmes, unless we are able to implement our current targets under the



Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar at the Indian pavilion during the Madrid climate talks. The Indian pavilion this year is themed on the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, with the charkha being the star attraction. The Indian delegation has invited visitors and dignitaries to spin the charkha, and has presented them with small model charkhas as gifts. *Amitabh Sinha*

Paris Agreement," Javadekar said on the sidelines of the Madrid climate change conference here.

A series of scientific reports in the last few months have shown that the world was not doing enough to prevent the catastrophic impacts of climate change. There has been a growing pressure from civil society organisations, and even the United Nations, asking countries to undertake more climate action.

Javadekar said all interna-

tional assessments had shown that India was among the top five performers on Paris Agreement targets, and it was the only big emitter whose actions were compliant to the Paris Agreement goal of keeping the global rise in temperatures to below 2 degree Celsius from pre-industrial level.

"We are walking the talk. On all our three targets — on reduction of emissions intensity, on deployment of renewable en-

ergy, and on creation of carbon sink — we are doing well. We will not just achieve our targets but over-achieve them," he said.

"But that is not true of most of the other countries, most importantly the rich and developed countries, which are falling way behind their targets. Many of them have not even fulfilled their pre-2020 targets under the Kyoto Protocol (the predecessor to the Paris Agreement) and now they want us to forget those

because 2020 is already here. We cannot forget those commitments. This is not an excuse. Let them start implementing their Kyoto targets even now, and fulfil them over the next two to three years. We don't mind an extension of deadline. But the targets cannot be sidelined or pushed aside," he said.

Javadekar is set to argue India's case at the high-level ministerial segment of the conference that begins Tuesday.

EXPLAINED  
Bigger targets not the goal at Madrid talks

DESPITE GROWING pressure on countries to commit to more ambitious climate targets, this is not on the agenda of the Madrid talks. The primary goal is to complete the unfinished tasks of the Paris Agreement rulebook. The rulebook would contain the processes, guidelines and institutions for the implementation of the landmark agreement signed in Paris in 2015.

## House Democrats lay out case for formal Trump impeachment

LISA MASCARO & MARY CLARE JALONICK  
WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 9

THE HOUSE Judiciary Committee received a detailed summing up of the impeachment case against US President Donald Trump Monday as Democrats prepare formal charges against him. Trump and his allies lobbed fresh assaults on the proceedings they dismiss as a hoax and a sham.

Democratic lawyers outlined the findings so far, saying Trump's push to have Ukraine investigate rival Joe Biden while at the same time withholding US military aid ran counter to US policy and benefited Russia as well as himself. A committee vote is coming, possibly as soon as this week, on two or more articles of impeachment on charges of abuse of power, bribery and obstruction against the Republican President.

Trump quickly began tweeting anew against the "Witch Hunt!" and deriding "Do Nothing Democrats."

Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler was blunt as he opened the hearing, saying, "President Trump put himself before country."

The top Republican on the panel, Rep. Doug Collins said Democrats are racing to jam impeachment through on a "clock and a calendar" ahead of the 2020 presidential election.

N KOREA RESUMES INSULTS OF 'ERRATIC OLD MAN' TRUMP

*Seoul:* Satellite imagery indicated on Monday that North Korea had tested a rocket engine, and a senior Pyongyang official called Donald Trump a "heedless and erratic old man", resuming insults of the US President that had been set aside during a thaw.

The statement carried in state media KCNA by Kim Yong Chol, a ruling party vice chairman, was the strongest salvo yet in a war of words that has rekindled in recent days. He described Trump as impatient, rebuked him over his own rhetoric and repeated a threat from last week that Pyongyang would dust off its previous insult "dotard" for the US leader.

Tensions have risen in recent weeks as a deadline, set by North Korea for the US to soften its stance, approaches. Pyongyang conducted several weapons tests during that time. **REUTERS**

"They can't get over the fact that Donald Trump is the president of the United States and they don't have a candidate that can beat him," Collins said. **AP**



New Zealand's White Island after the volcanic eruption on Monday. *AP*

## New Zealand volcano eruption kills five people, several missing

CHARLOTTE GREENFIELD  
WHAKATANE, DECEMBER 9

AT LEAST five people were killed, up to 20 injured and several reported missing after a volcano that is a tourist attraction suddenly erupted off the coast of New Zealand's North Island on Monday.

Police said more casualties were feared with rescue services unable to reach White Island as it remained too dangerous after the eruption of the volcano there at about 2:11 p.m. (0111 GMT) spewed a plume of ash thousands of feet into the air.

About 50 people, New Zealanders as well as foreign tourists, were feared to have been nearby and several were

Around 50 people, including foreigners, were feared to have been near the crater minutes before the eruption

seen near the rim of the crater minutes before the eruption.

Many day tours visit the island regularly, and one from the Ovation of the Seas cruise liner was there at the time. Tour operators took some people off the island before it was declared unsafe. Twenty-three people were rescued, police said, adding that others were still on the island.

"We are unsure of the numbers and unsure of their well-being," deputy police commis-



In one interview obtained by *The Washington Post*, a person identified only as a senior National

Security Council official said that the Obama White House, along with the Pentagon, pushed for

After a short-term victory against militants in 2002, the US's effort in Afghanistan became a hazy spectacle of nation building, documents revealed. *Reuters*

data that showed President Barack Obama's announced surge in 2009 was succeeding.

"It was impossible to create good metrics. We tried using troop numbers trained, violence levels, control of territory and none of it painted an accurate picture," the official told interviewers in 2016, according to *The Post*. "The metrics were always manipulated for the duration of the war."

In 2010 this pressure trickled down to troops on the ground, as they answered to commanders eager to show progress to senior leaders, including Gen. Stanley McChrystal, then the commander of all US troops in Afghanistan. But the facts were

## Carbon markets, biggest agenda at Madrid, in danger of going unresolved

AMITABH SINHA  
MADRID, DECEMBER 9

THE SINGLE biggest agenda at the Madrid climate talks, an agreement over setting up a new carbon market, was in danger of being postponed for some other time, with both sides maintaining that they would not settle for a compromise solution.

There has been virtually no progress at the Madrid climate talks on two of the most contentious issues relating to the creation of a new carbon market under the Paris Agreement — the issue of transition of carbon credits from the older market under Kyoto Protocol to the new market being established, and a mechanism to avoid double counting of emissions reductions.

Carbon markets allow buying and selling of emission reductions, or carbon credits. In very simple terms it facilitates a mechanism that allows a country which has achieved its climate targets, to make additional emission reductions and sell it, for a price, to another country which is struggling to meet its targets. It is hoped that a carbon market will lead to greater overall reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Carbon markets are an unfinished agenda of the Paris Agreement rulebook that was finalised last year. But even after one year of consultations, and more than a week of negotiations here in Madrid, there has

Carbon markets allow buying and selling of emission reductions, or carbon credits

been little progress in resolving the contentious issues.

And it is likely that the Madrid climate talks would leave an agreement over the carbon markets for some other time.

"It is very clear that the kind of demands that countries like Brazil and India are making, on the transition of older carbon credits, or on allowing double counting, jeopardises the entire rationale of the carbon markets. I would say it would be far better for us to have no deal here in Madrid than having a bad deal," said Giles Dufraigne, policy officer (carbon pricing) with Carbon Market Watch, an international NGO.

On the other hand, India also said it would not agree to an agreement that did not allow for transition of its older carbon credits. "India has nearly 750 million carbon credits from the Kyoto regime. We have invested money to earn these credits. Now, suddenly we are being told that these credits are useless, and that we cannot sell them because a new market is being created. We are saying we must be allowed to sell these credits in the new market... We cannot agree to a deal that does not allow this transition," CK Mishra, India's Environment Secretary, said.

## Gunman at US base had filed complaint against instructor over 'derogatory' nickname

NICHOLAS BOGEL-BURROUGHS  
DECEMBER 9

THE INVESTIGATION into the fatal shooting last week at a Navy training centre in Florida was officially characterized as a terrorism inquiry Sunday as new details emerged about the Saudi air force trainee who killed three sailors on the base where he was a visiting student.

As the FBI continued to conduct interviews with everyone at the Pensacola Naval Air Station who may have had contact with the gunman, identified as 2nd Lt. Mohammed Alshamrani, new evidence emerged that the Saudi trainee filed a formal complaint earlier this year against one of his instructors, who left him "infuriated" in class by tagging him with a derogatory nickname.

The complaint, quoted in a communication circulated among people connected to the flight training, said that the instructor referred to Alshamrani as "Porn Stash" in front of about 10 other aviation students, embarrassing and angering him. "I was infuriated as to why he would say that in front of the class," the Saudi trainee wrote in his complaint.

The FBI declined to com-



Florida Gov Ron DeSantis visited the scene of the shooting at Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida. *AP*

ment on the April incident, and the special agent in charge of the agency's Jacksonville office, Rachel Rojas, said Sunday that investigators are still searching for a motive for the Friday morning attack.

Alshamrani reported that the confrontation came at the end of a meteorology class, when the instructor, James Day, asked whether students had any questions before he dismissed them.

The instructor then turned to Alshamrani and asked if he had any questions, addressing him as "Porn Stash," an apparent reference to the fact that his mustache resembled that of a porn actor.

"Laughing, he continued to ask, 'What? Have you not seen a porn star before?'" the lieutenant wrote in his complaint. **NYT**

### EVEN AS US OFFICIALS PUBLICLY SAID THEIR MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN WAS SUCCEEDING, DOCUMENTS SHOWED OTHERWISE

## Documents reveal American officials misled public over Afghan war

THOMAS GIBBONS-NEFF  
WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 9

THOUSANDS OF pages of documents detailing the war in Afghanistan released by *The Washington Post* on Monday paint a stark picture of missteps and failures — and delivered in the words of prominent US officials, many of whom publicly had said the mission was succeeding.

After a quick but short-term victory over the Taliban and al-Qaida in early 2002, and as the Pentagon's focus shifted toward Iraq, the US military's effort in Afghanistan became a hazy spectacle of nation building,

with a small number of troops carrying out an unclear mission, the documents show.

Even as the Taliban returned in greater numbers and troops on the ground voiced concerns about the US strategy's growing shortcomings, senior US officials almost always said that progress was being made. The documents obtained by *The Washington Post* show otherwise.

"We were devoid of a fundamental understanding of Afghanistan — we didn't know what we were doing," said Douglas Lute, a retired three-star Army general who helped the White House oversee the war in Afghanistan in both the Bush

and Obama administrations.

"What are we trying to do here? We didn't have the foggiest notion of what we were undertaking," he told government interviewers in 2015.

The 2,000 pages of interviews were obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request and years of legal back-and-forth with the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, known as SIGAR, according to *The Post*. Formed in 2008, SIGAR has served as a government watchdog for the war in Afghanistan, releasing reports quarterly on the war's progress, many of which clearly depicted the shortcomings of the effort.