

12 THE WORLD

TOPOF THE WORLD



Michael Bloomberg hopes to take on Trump in the 2020 White House race

USA

Bloomberg says his campaign unknowingly used prison labour

Washington: Billionaire US presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg on Tuesday said his campaign had unknowingly used prison workers to make telephone calls on his behalf. Bloomberg, who last month entered the Democratic Party race to face Republican President Donald Trump in the 2020 election, said the campaign ended its relationship with a company that used prison labour for making phone calls. “We do not support this practice and we are making sure our vendors more properly vet their sub-contractors moving forward,” Bloomberg said.

PHILIPPINES

Typhoon Phanfone pummels central Philippines

Manila: Typhoon Phanfone pummelled the central Philippines on Christmas Day, bringing a wet, miserable and terrifying holiday to millions in the mainly Catholic nation. Police said six people were missing as the typhoon leapt from one small island to another for the second day — crumpling houses, toppling trees and blacking out cities and towns, including in popular resorts like Boracay. At the height of the festive season Wednesday, thousands were stranded at shuttered ports or evacuation centres.

SINGAPORE

Disney removes lesbian kiss from *Star Wars* film

A BRIEF kiss between two female characters was removed from screenings of *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* in Singapore, which has restrictive laws against gay people. Though just a few seconds and hardly a major plot point, the kiss between two minor characters was notable as the first overt appearance of gay characters in a *Star Wars* film. Disney cut the kiss to preserve the film’s PG-13 rating in Singapore, according to reports. The next-highest rating, NC-16, would have barred children under 16 from attending. Disney did not respond to a message sent on Tuesday.

WILDFIRE DESTROYS 120 HOMES IN CHILE



Firefighters at work in Valparaíso, Chile, on Tuesday. Reuters

■ A wildfire raged through a residential area on the outskirts of the Chilean city of Valparaíso on Tuesday, engulfing houses and prompting evacuation orders.

■ As of late Tuesday night, the blaze had destroyed more than 120 houses and was only partly under control, the local fire department said.

■ The cause of the fire was not immediately known, but its rapid spread was worsened by warm, dry weather and steady winds.

■ Wildfires, which are exacerbated by climate change, have caused widespread destruction in Australia, Brazil, the United States and other countries this year.

Saudi FM to visit Pak to address concerns over Imran’s Malaysia summit pull-out

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD, DECEMBER 25

SAUDI ARABIA’S Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud will visit Pakistan on Thursday in what appears to be a damage-control exercise by Riyadh to address the growing criticism against the Gulf Kingdom after Islamabad pulled out of the Kuala Lumpur summit of Muslim nations under what Turkey termed Saudi threats, a media report said on Wednesday.

Pakistan faced huge domestic and international embarrass-



PRINCE FAISAL BIN FARHAN AL SAUD Saudi Foreign Minister

ment after Prime Minister Imran Khan refused to attend the summit at the eleventh hour. The summit from December

19-21 in Kuala Lumpur was seen by Saudis as an attempt to create a new bloc in the Muslim world that could become an alternative to the dysfunctional Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) led by the Gulf Kingdom.

Khan had accepted Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad’s invitation to the summit, but pulled out of it at the eleventh hour reportedly due to Saudi pressure.

Saudi Arabia never wants to lose the public support it enjoys in Pakistan and the Saudi Foreign Minister is believed to be visiting Islamabad for a day-long trip to

dispel such an impression, *The Express Tribune* quoted diplomatic sources as saying.

Prince Faisal will meet Pakistan’s top civil and military leadership and convey a message that Riyadh values its “long-term strategic partnership with Pakistan”, it said. Pakistan’s explanation for not attending the summit was that Islamabad wanted to maintain its neutrality.

A Turkish newspaper quoted President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as saying that Pakistan was pressured to stay away from the summit in which leaders of Malaysia, Turkey, Iran and Qatar participated. **PTI**



Pope Francis prays as he celebrates Christmas Eve Mass in St Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican. AP

Pope defends migrants, calls for peace in Christmas message

PHILIP PULLELLA

VATICAN CITY, DECEMBER 25

POPE FRANCIS urged the world to let the light of Christmas pierce the “darkness in human hearts” that leads to religious persecution, social injustice, armed conflicts and fear of migrants.

In his “Urbi et Orbi” (to the city and the world) Christmas Day message, the 83-year-old pope called for peace in the Holy Land, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, Venezuela, Ukraine and African countries caught up in conflicts.

The common thread of his address to tens of thousands of people in St. Peter’s Square and millions watching or listening around the world was that change starts in the hearts of individuals.

“There is darkness in human hearts, yet the light of Christ is

greater still,” Francis said, as he marked the seventh Christmas of his pontificate. “There is darkness in personal, family and social relationships, but the light of Christ is greater. There is darkness in economic, geopolitical and ecological conflicts, yet greater still is the light of Christ,” he said.

Francis singled out the persecution of Christians by militant groups in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria, asking God to console those who suffer for their faith.

Francis, who has faced flak because of his defence of migrants, dedicated a section of his address to their plight. “It is injustice that makes them cross deserts and seas that become cemeteries. It is injustice that forces them to endure unspeakable forms of abuse, enslavement of every kind and torture in inhumane detention camps,” Francis said. **REUTERS**

Taliban militants abduct 27 peace activists in western Afghanistan

REUTERS

KABUL, DECEMBER 25

TALIBAN MILITANTS have kidnapped 27 peace activists from a highway in Afghanistan’s western Farah province, local officials and peace activists said on Wednesday.

Massoud Bakhtawar, the deputy governor of Farah, said the activists were travelling with six cars from Herat to neighbouring Farah on Tuesday evening when their convoy was stopped by the Taliban on a main highway and taken to an unknown location.

Bismillah Watadost, a member of the group, said the activists had planned to travel to various parts of Farah to call for a ceasefire

KEITH COFFMAN

DENVER, DECEMBER 25

A MAN with a white beard was being held on \$10,000 bond for allegedly robbing a Colorado bank and throwing the stolen cash into the air while shouting, “Merry Christmas” to passersby, police and local media reported Tuesday.

David Wayne Oliver, 65, was arrested at a nearby Starbucks coffee shop after he held up the Academy Bank in Colorado Springs on Monday afternoon, according to a police report.

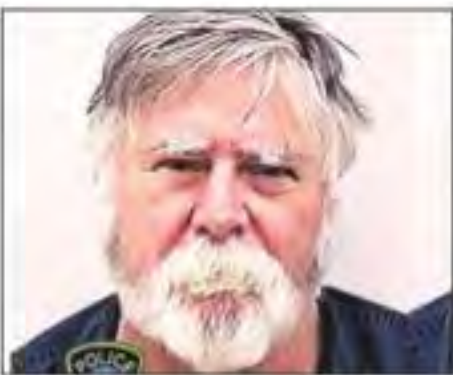
EXPLAINED

Broad movement for peace, facing resistance from all sides

THE PEOPLE’S Peace Movement is an umbrella group comprising people from all walks of life, most of them directly affected in some way by the nearly 2 decades of fighting. They march into Taliban-controlled areas and speak to the militants, trying to get them to lay down their arms. The government has objected to this, warning them against going into Taliban territory, and the Taliban itself have both met with the group and dismissed it as a government-funded initiative. However, for a period of time, when the US-Taliban talks had stalled, the People’s Peace Movement was the only ongoing effort for peace that was actually gaining ground.

between the warring parties in Afghanistan. The group, People’s Peace Movement, was formed to protest violent attacks after a car

bomb exploded at a sport stadium in southern Helmand province last year killing 17 civilians and wounding 50 others.



David Wayne Oliver

Police said the suspect had “threatened the use of a weapon” and left the bank with an undisclosed amount of cash.

A police spokesperson could not immediately be reached for comment, but Colorado Springs television station KCTV reported that eyewitness Dion Pascale recounted Oliver stepped outside the bank and tossed the money “all over the place.”

“He started throwing money out of the bag” before yelling, “Merry Christmas,” the TV station quoted Pascale as saying.

Pascale said bystanders retrieved some of the money and returned it to the bank as Oliver walked to the Starbucks, sat down and appeared to be wait-

ALGERIA

THOUSANDS TURN OUT TO MOURN ARMY CHIEF

The body of Algeria’s powerful Army Chief—the former independence fighter who became his country’s de facto ruler —was carried to his grave on a tank on Wednesday as hundreds of thousands of mourners looked on. Lieutenant General Ahmed Gaed Salah (79), who master-minded the state’s response to mass protests this year, died of a heart attack on Monday.

Iran starts Internet shutdown ahead of possible new protests

Move comes after online calls for renewed stir, ceremonies to commemorate those killed in last month’s demonstrations

REUTERS

DUBAI, DECEMBER 25

IRANIAN AUTHORITIES have shut down mobile Internet access to overseas sites in several provinces, an Iranian news agency reported on Wednesday, a day before new protests called for on social media.

Social media posts and some relatives of people killed in unrest last month over hikes in gasoline prices have called for renewed protests and commemoration ceremonies for the dead on Thursday.

The semi-official news agency ILNA quoted an informed source at the Communications and Information Technology Ministry as saying the shutdown was ordered by “security authorities” and covered the Alborz, Kurdistan and Zanzan provinces in central and western Iran and Fars in the south.

“According to this source, it is possible that more provinces will be affected by the shutdown of mobile international connectivity,” ILNA said.

In November, Iran shut down the Internet for about a week to help stifle the fuel protests which turned political, sparking the bloodiest crack-



In November, Iran shut down the Internet for about a week to help stifle the protests against fuel price hikes, which turned political, sparking the bloodiest crackdown in the 40-year history of the Islamic Republic. Reuters

IRAN WARPLANE CRASHES, PILOT MISSING

Tehran: An Iranian military fighter jet crashed on Wednesday near a dormant volcano in the northwest of the country and its pilot was missing, official media reported.

State news agency IRNA said the jet went down at 9am near Mount Sabalan, in the Lesser Caucasus range, and

was a MiG-29 on a test flight after being overhauled.

Amateur video footage appeared to show smoke rising above snow-capped peaks.

Fars news agency said the plane had been found but there was no trace of its pilot and that he could have ejected from the aircraft. **PTI**

down in the 40-year history of the Islamic Republic.

The internet blockage made it difficult for protesters to post

videos on social media to generate support and also to obtain reliable reports on the extent of the unrest.

35 civilians killed in double Burkina Faso attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

OUAGADOUGOU, DECEMBER 25

JIHADISTS IN Burkina Faso killed 35 civilians, almost all of them women, when they simultaneously attacked a town in the north and its military base in one of the deadliest assaults in nearly five years of jihadist violence in the West African country.

Seven soldiers and 80 jihadists also died in the double attack Tuesday in Arbinda in Soum province which lasted “several hours” and was of a “rare intensity”, the Army said.

Burkina Faso, bordering Mali and Niger, has seen regular jihadist attacks which have left hundreds dead since the start of 2015 when militant violence

began to spread across the Sahel region.

“A large group of terrorists simultaneously attacked the military base and the civilian population in Arbinda,” the army chief of staff said in a statement.

“This barbaric attack resulted in the deaths of 35 civilian victims, most of them women,” President Roch Marc Christian Kabore added on Twitter, praising the “bravery and commitment” of the defence and security forces.

Communications minister and government spokesman Remis Dandjinou later said 31 of the civilian victims were women, adding around 20 soldiers and six civilians were wounded.

The President has declared 48 hours of national mourning.

Nepal: Parliament committee to probe land case involving PM Oli

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

KATHMANDU, DECEMBER 25

MONTHS AFTER extensive media coverage and public debate over alleged lack of transparency and corruption while leasing out large chunks of land and other property belonging to the Nepal Trust, the Parliament’s Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has decided to investigate the matter. The Nepal Trust controls the confiscated property of former royals.

Committee chairman Bharat Shah said the PAC would study the case, ask for all relevant files concerning the leasing out of the Trust’s property and investigate any possible discrepancy.

The Nepal Trust was formed soon after the 2006 political change that saw the suspension of the monarchy for about two years, followed by its abrogation along with the confiscation of royal property, promising it would be used for the advancement of health and education.

The Trust, with PM K P Oli as its patron and his nominee as its chairman, however, amended the governing rule, making it legal to lease out the Trust property for commercial use. Deputy PM Ishwar Pokharel, who is in charge of Defence Ministry, is the current chairman of the Trust.

Further changes made to the composition of the Trust by the Oli government, allegedly favouring some companies, had caused a scandal.

HIS INVENTION BROUGHT DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO A NEW BREED OF CONSUMER DEVICES

Chuck Peddle dies at 82; his \$25 chip helped start the PC age

CADE METZ

DECEMBER 25

CHUCK PEDDLE, the engineer and entrepreneur who helped launch the age of the personal computer after designing a microprocessor that sold for a mere \$25, died Dec. 15 at his home in Santa Cruz, California. He was 82.

His partner, Kathleen Shaeffer, said the cause was pancreatic cancer.

In 1974, Peddle and several other engineers were designing a new silicon chip at the Motorola Corp. in Phoenix when the company sent him a letter demanding that he shut the project down.

Peddle envisioned an ultra-low-cost chip that could bring digital technology to a new breed of consumer devices, from cash registers to personal computers. But his bosses saw it as unwanted in-house competition for the \$300 processor Motorola had unveiled that year.

So Peddle moved the project to MOS Technology, a rival chip-maker near Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, taking seven other Motorola engineers with him. There they built a processor called the 6502. Priced at \$25 — the cost of a dinner for four, and the equivalent of about \$130 today — this chip soon powered the first big wave of personal computers in both the United States and Britain,



Chuck Peddle

including the Apple II and the Commodore PET.

“The market needed a cheap one,” Peddle said in a 2014 interview with the Computer History Museum.

In later years Intel, the Northern California chip giant, would come to dominate the personal computer business. But the market was seeded in Valley Forge, not Silicon Valley.

“Chuck Peddle is one of the great unsung heroes of the personal computer age,” said Doug Fairbairn, a director at the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, California. “Virtually all of the early, successful, mass-market personal computers were built around the 6502, not chips from Intel or anyone else.”

Charles Ingerham Peddle was born on Nov. 25, 1937, in Bangor, Maine, the oldest son of Thomas and Maxine (Denno)

Peddle. His father was a salesman, his mother a commercial illustrator. In high school Chuck dreamed of being a radio announcer. (Television was still in its infancy.) But after traveling to Boston for an audition, he realized that his talents lay elsewhere. At the suggestion of a neighbor, he enrolled in the engineering school at the University of Maine.

After graduation, his aim was twofold: He wanted to live in California, and he wanted to build computers. So he took a job with General Electric, where he helped design early space vehicles, electronic cash registers and so-called time-share computers, massive mainframes that could

be shared across companies, schools and other organizations.

Later, at Motorola, he worked on the 6800 chip, a \$300 processor used in pinball machines and other arcade games, before turning his attention to a lower-cost processor. When the company sent him a letter killing the project, he responded with a letter of his own. He told Motorola that because it was abandoning the project, all the work he had done now belonged to him.

When he first took the idea to MOS Technology, one of the company’s founders, L.J. Sevin, turned him down, worried that Motorola would sue. So Peddle took the project to the other founder, John Paivinen, with whom he had

worked at General Electric. Paivinen gave his approval.

After Paivinen had brought Peddle and the other Motorola engineers to Valley Forge and they built their low-cost chip, Motorola sued, just as Sevin had predicted. MOS fought the suit for years before paying a \$200,000 fine.

By then, its \$25 chip was feeding the rise of the personal computer. At MOS, Peddle built a personal computer around his new chip called the KIM-1 (the letters stood for Keyboard Input Monitor), and he started selling chips to a pair of young entrepreneurs, Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, who were building a company called Apple. **NYT**