

TOPOF THE WORLD



BRITAIN
FB removes
Conservative
Party ad with
BBC presenters

London: Facebook said it has removed a Conservative Party ad that used BBC news footage on the grounds that it infringed on intellectual property rights. The BBC had complained about the ad last week, arguing material involving some of its well-known presenters was taken out of context and could damage its impartiality. Facebook said Monday that whenever it receives "valid IP claims against content on the platform, in advertising or elsewhere," it will "act in accordance with our policies and take action as required".

USA
2 Indians killed
in hit-and-run

Washington: Two Indian students have been killed in a hit-and-run accident on Thanksgiving night in the US state of Tennessee and the owner of the pickup truck involved in the incident has surrendered, authorities said. Judy Stanley (23) and Vybhav Gopisetty (26), were graduate students of the Tennessee State University and were pursuing food science degrees in the College of Agriculture, the university said. According to the local police, Stanley and Gopisetty died in an apparent hit-and-run incident on the night of November 28 in South Nashville.

SRI LANKA
Pak's Qureshi
meets Gotabaya,
invites him to
visit Islamabad

Colombo: Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi called on Sri Lanka's newly-elected President Gotabaya Rajapaksa here on Monday and discussed issues including bilateral trade, investment and people-to-people contact. According to the Pakistan Foreign Office, Qureshi also handed over a letter from Pakistan President Arif Alvi to Gotabaya and invited him to pay a visit to Islamabad at his earliest convenience. Earlier, Qureshi held talks with his Sri Lankan counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena.

HOUSE JUDICIARY PANEL TO BEGIN IMPEACHMENT HEARINGS WEDNESDAY

Trump's lawyer says President will not participate in hearing

House Intelligence Committee to submit report detailing evidence from previous round of hearings

EMILY COCHRANE & MICHAEL D SHEAR
WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 2

LAWYERS FOR US President Donald Trump said Sunday that they would not participate in the House Judiciary Committee's first public hearing Wednesday as House Democrats prepare to shift the direction of the inquiry towards drafting articles of impeachment against the President.

Democratic Representative Jerrold Nadler, the chairman of the committee, had offered the President or his lawyers the opportunity to participate in the hearing as part of the impeachment inquiry, when a panel of legal experts will offer an assessment of whether Trump committed impeachable offenses.

"We cannot fairly be expected to participate in a hearing while the witnesses are yet to be named and while it remains unclear whether the Judiciary Committee will afford the President a fair process through additional hearings," Pat Cipollone, the White House counsel, wrote in a letter to



Trump will be at a NATO leaders' meeting in London when the first hearing takes place, his lawyer said. *Reuters*

Nadler. "Under the current circumstances, we do not intend to participate in your Wednesday hearing." He did not rule out participation in future hearings.

Trump has stonewalled the inquiry, seeking to block witnesses and documents, and his lawyers had privately questioned whether to participate in the Wednesday hearing, as the President and his allies continue

to call the proceedings "de-ranked" and a "witch hunt."

On Friday, Nadler also informed the administration that the President and his lawyers had a week to tell the committee whether they would call witnesses or present evidence as part of their defence against possible impeachment articles stemming from allegations that Trump pressured Ukraine to help

EXPLAINED

First up, a lesson on what offences can lead to impeachment

THE NEXT step in the impeachment process will begin Wednesday as the House Judiciary Committee kicks off another round of hearings. The first hearing will see testimony from four legal scholars on what constitutes an impeachable offence. With the Judiciary panel likely to draft articles of impeachment later this month, the testimony by the legal scholars is aimed at familiarising the American public with the language of impeachment proceedings and to inform them of the kind of offences that could lead to the impeachment of a US president. With the GOP-majority Senate unlikely to remove Trump from office, the Democrats hope that such hearings will convince the public to vote him out in the 2020 election.

him in his reelection campaign. The House Intelligence Committee is expected to approve a written report of its findings in its investigation of Trump's dealings with Ukraine on Tuesday, after which the focus of the impeachment proceedings will shift to Nadler's panel.

During the remainder of his Thanksgiving vacation at Mar-a-Lago, his Palm Beach, Florida, es-

tate, Trump remained relatively quiet about the inquiry, except for a few Twitter posts sharing articles late Saturday that asserted Trump's innocence.

Representative Doug Collins of Georgia, the top Republican on the Judiciary Committee, before the announcement questioned why the White House would want to participate in "just another rerun". **NYT**

Israel A-G files official Netanyahu indictment, lines up 333 witnesses

JEFFREY HELLER
JERUSALEM, DECEMBER 2

AN INDICTMENT submitted to Israel's Parliament on Monday against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu names more than 300 prosecution witnesses, including wealthy friends and former aides, in three graft cases against him.

By formally sending the indictment to the legislature, after announcing charges of bribery, breach of trust and fraud on Nov 21, Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit set the clock ticking on a 30-day period in which Netanyahu can seek parliamentary immunity from prosecution.

Such protection seems unlikely, with Israeli politics in disarray after inconclusive elections in



The Israeli PM has 30 days to seek parliamentary immunity from prosecution

April and September and the failure of Netanyahu and his main challenger, Benny Gantz, to secure a ruling majority in the legislature.

Netanyahu, in office for the past decade, has denied any wrongdoing, saying he is a victim of an attempted "coup" waged by legal authorities trying to unseat

a popular right-wing leader.

As Prime Minister, he is under no legal obligation to resign after being charged. No date has been set for the opening of the trial.

The indictment submitted to parliament listed 333 witnesses for the prosecution. Legal experts said the long roster meant proceedings could go on for years.

They include US casino mogul Sheldon Adelson and his wife Miriam, Hollywood producer Arnon Milchan, Australian billionaire James Packer and retired Israeli security chiefs.

"When an accusation is true, you don't need 333 witnesses," Netanyahu wrote on Twitter. "When the accusation is untrue, not even 333 witnesses will help." **REUTERS**

Malta PM to quit over journalist's murder

STEPHEN GREY CHRIS SCICLUNA
VALETTA, DECEMBER 2

MALTESE PRIME Minister Joseph Muscat, engulfed in crisis over the probe into a murdered journalist, announced on Sunday he planned to step down, saying he would ask his ruling Labour Party to start a process next month to choose a new leader for the country.

Calls for Muscat to quit had intensified after the investigation into the 2017 car bomb killing of anti-corruption journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia led to charges on Saturday against a prominent businessman with alleged ties to government ministers and senior officials.



Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat. *Reuters*

In a televised address on Sunday evening, Muscat said he was not leaving immediately, rather announcing a process to replace him that will start on Jan 12.

This drew immediate criticism from some opponents who

said he should go right away.

"I will write to the President of the Labour Party so that the process for a new leader is set for 12th January 2020. On that day I will resign as leader of the Labour Party. In the days after I will resign

UN chief warns world against burying head in sand as annual climate meet kicks off



EXPRESS IN MADRID

AMITABH SINHA
DECEMBER 2

AMID INCREASING pressure on countries to do more to save the world from climate change, the two-week annual climate conference began in the Spanish capital on Monday with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warning that the climate crisis was fast approaching a "point of no return".

"By the end of the coming decade, we will be on one of two paths, one of which is sleepwalking past the point of no return. Do we want to be remembered as the generation that buried its head in sand and fiddled as the planet burned?" Guterres asked at the opening ceremony that was attended by over 50 heads of states and governments.

His comments come on the back of mounting scientific evidence that the world was not doing enough to ward off the catastrophic impacts of climate change, and that an immediate shifting of gears was required to meet the targets countries had set for themselves under the 2015 Paris Agreement.

On the opening day, most of the talk was about striking a deal over the creation of a new carbon market, an issue that remained unresolved last year as countries finalised most of the other provisions of the Paris Agreement rule-book. The rulebook specifies the processes, mechanisms and institutions through which the provisions of the Paris Agreement would be implemented.

A carbon market allows countries to trade emission reductions between themselves, for a price. A country can earn carbon credit by achieving emission reductions more than its own target, and then trade this credit to others who are struggling to meet their own targets. A similar carbon market existed under the Kyoto Protocol as well. But that regime is expiring next year, and its replacement, the Paris Agreement, is trying to cre-



WE ARE STILL IN IT, U.S. HOUSE SPEAKER SAYS

Madrid: US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told a UN climate conference that the world could still count on the US in the fight against global warming despite Donald Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris Agreement. Pelosi and 14 other members of the US Congress were in Madrid to make the point that larges swathes of the US are committed to the targets set by the 2015 agreement, as are most Democratic candidates for President. "We're here to say to all of you, on behalf of the House of Representatives and the Congress of the United States, we're still in it, we're still in it," Pelosi said. **PTI**

ate a new one.

The biggest problem that this proposal has run into is the tussle over the fate of unsold carbon credits. Some countries, led by Brazil, and supported by India and others, insist that the large amount of carbon credits they had accumulated in the previous regime, but had remained unsold, be carried over to the new market. In the last few years, as many countries walked out of the Kyoto Protocol and the rest did not feel compelled to fulfil their emission reduction targets, the demand for carbon credits had crashed, leaving countries like India and Brazil with a large number of unsold credits.

However, developed countries have resisted this demand, saying that weak verification mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol had allowed dubious projects to earn carbon credits.

An agreement over the carbon markets is one of the most significant outcomes on the agenda of the Madrid meeting, but many are already warning that no deal is much better than a weak deal.

Pak ruling party leader, sacked over anti-Hindu remarks, returns as state minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LAHORE, DECEMBER 2

PAKISTAN'S PUNJAB province Chief Minister on Monday reappointed Fayyazul Hassan Chohan as his Information Minister, nine months after he was sacked over anti-Hindu remarks that invited criticism from senior party leaders and the minority community.

The portfolio was previously held by the minister for industries, Aslam Iqbal, who resigned from the post saying that due to engagements in his constituency he could not do justice to two ministries.

Chohan had come under severe criticism from senior members of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, ministers and social media users for his controversial remarks while addressing a gathering on February 24 in the aftermath of the Pulwama terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir.

He later apologised for his remarks, saying he was addressing Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Indian armed forces and the media, not the Hindu community in Pakistan.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan had taken serious notice of Chohan's remarks and had directed Punjab CM Usman Buzdar to remove him.

Several members of the Hindu community in Pakistan had also condemned the minister's remarks on social media.

Hindus form the biggest minority community in Pakistan.

WAVE OF NEW CASES TO BE FILED AS 15 STATES IN US EXTEND STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS TO ALLOW CLAIMS FROM DECADES AGO

Legal reckoning: New abuse suites could cost Church over \$4 bn

BERNARD CONDON & JIM MUSTIAN
NEW YORK, DECEMBER 2

AT THE end of another long day trying to sign up new clients accusing the Roman Catholic Church of sexual abuse, lawyer Adam Slater gazes out the window of his high-rise Manhattan office at one of the great symbols of the Church, St. Patrick's Cathedral.

"I wonder how much that's worth?" he muses.

Across the country, attorneys like Slater are scrambling to file a new wave of lawsuits alleging sexual abuse by clergy, thanks to rules enacted in 15 states that extend or suspend the statute of

limitations to allow claims stretching back decades. *Associated Press* reporting found the deluge of suits could surpass anything the nation's clergy sexual abuse crisis has seen before, with potentially more than 5,000 new cases and payouts topping \$4 billion.

It's a financial reckoning playing out in such populous Catholic strongholds as New York, California and New Jersey, among the eight states that go the farthest with "lookback windows" that allow sex abuse claims no matter how old. Never before have so many states acted in near-unison to lift the restrictions that once shut people out if they didn't bring claims of



Attorneys like Adam Slater are set to file potentially more than 5,000 new cases of abuse against the clergy. *AP*

childhood sex abuse by a certain age, often their early 20s.

That has lawyers fighting for

clients with TV ads and billboards asking, "Were you abused by the church?" And Catholic

dioceses, while worrying about the difficulty of defending such old claims, are considering bankruptcy, victim compensation funds and even tapping valuable real estate to stay afloat.

"It's like a whole new beginning for me," said 71-year-old Nancy Holling-Lonnecker of San Diego, who plans to take advantage of an upcoming three-year window for such suits in California. Her claim dates back to the 1950s, when she says a priest repeatedly raped her in a confession booth beginning when she was 7 years old.

"The survivors coming forward now have been holding on to this horrific experience all of their lives," she said. "They bot-

tled up those emotions all of these years because there was no place to take it." Now there is.

AP interviews with more than a dozen lawyers and watchdog groups offered a wide range of estimates, but many said they expected at least 5,000 new cases against the Church in New York, New Jersey and California alone, resulting in potential payouts that could surpass the \$4 billion paid out since the clergy sex abuse first came to light in the 1980s.

Lawyers acknowledged the difficulty of predicting what will happen but several believed payouts could exceed the \$350,000 national average per child sex abuse case since 2003. At the upper end, a key benchmark is the

average \$1.3 million the Church paid per case the last time California opened a one-year window to suits in 2003. That offers a range of total payouts in the three big Catholic states alone from \$1.8 billion to as much as \$6 billion.

Some lawyers believe payouts could be heavily influenced by the recent reawakening over sexual abuse fuelled by the #MeToo movement, the public shaming of accused celebrities and the explosive Pennsylvania grand jury report last year that found 300 priests abused more than 1,000 children in that state over seven decades. Since then, attorneys general in nearly 20 states have launched investigations of their own. **AP**