

TOP OF THE WORLD



Joe Biden and Kamala Harris during a debate. Reuters

USA Biden says will consider Harris for V-P role

Washington: A day after US Senator Kamala Harris ended her 2020 presidential bid, former Vice President Joe Biden, a leading contender for the Democratic nomination, said on Wednesday he would consider her as a potential running mate. Biden, with whom Harris clashed during a Democratic debate earlier this year, praised her after a campaign event in Ames, Iowa. "Senator Harris has the capacity to be anything she wants to be," Biden told reporters. "I talked to her yesterday. She's solid. She can be the president one day herself. She can be the vice president. She can go on to be a Supreme Court justice."

NEPAL Oli discharged from hospital

Kathmandu: After spending ten days in the intensive care unit of a hospital, Nepal Prime Minister KP Oli has been discharged. He had been admitted to the Manmohan Cardiothoracic Vascular and Transplant Center on November 26 following acute pain in the abdomen caused by an infection. Oli, 68, had been exploring possibility of a kidney retransplant, 12 years after he received it from a donor related to him in Delhi's Apollo hospital. "We wanted him to remain in hospital for some more days but he insisted on going back and starting his duties," a doctor said.

PAKISTAN Musharraf treason case verdict to come on Dec 17: court

Islamabad: The verdict in the high treason case against former Pakistan dictator General (retd) Pervez Musharraf will be pronounced on December 17, a special court announced on Thursday. Last week, the special court ordered 76-year-old Musharraf to record statement by December 5 in the treason case after the Islamabad High Court, after hearing the petitions filed by Dubai-based Musharraf and the Pakistan government, stopped the special court from issuing the verdict on November 28.



EXPRESS IN MADRID

AMITABH SINHA DECEMBER 5

AMIDST GROWING urgency over the need for enhanced actions on climate change, India, China, Brazil and some other developing countries have sought an assessment of the failures of developed coun-

Impeachment charges will be drafted against Trump: Pelosi

Democrats to push ahead with rapid timetable, to vote on charges this month

NICHOLAS FANDOS & SHERYL GAY STOLBERG WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 5

SPEAKER NANCY Pelosi announced on Thursday that the US House of Representatives would begin drafting impeachment articles against President Donald Trump, pushing ahead with a rapid timetable that could set the stage for a vote before Christmas to charge him with high crimes and misdemeanors.

Wrapping her announcement in the words of the Constitution and the nation's founders, Pelosi said it had become clear over the course of two months of investigation that Trump had violated his oath of office by pressing a foreign power for help in the 2020 election. Allowing Trump to continue in office without remedy, she said, would come at "the peril of our republic."

"His wrongdoing strikes at the very heart of our Constitution," Pelosi said in the Capitol. "Our democracy is what is at stake. The President leaves us no choice but to act because he is trying to corrupt, once again, the election for his own benefit."



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi speaks at Capitol Hill. NYT

Pelosi's hastily arranged announcement came a day after the House Judiciary Committee began formal impeachment proceedings against Trump, convening a hearing where three constitutional scholars invited by Democrats said Trump had engaged in conduct that clearly met the definition of impeachable offenses under the Constitution.

The decision follows a two-month-long inquiry by Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee that concluded that Trump abused his power by pres-

suring President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine to announce investigations into former Vice President Joe Biden and other Democrats, while withholding a White House meeting and \$391 million in vital military assistance. "The facts are uncontested," Pelosi said. "The President abused his power for his own personal political benefit, at the expense of our national security."

She added: "Sadly, but with confidence and humility, with allegiance to our founders and a heart full of love for America, to-



If you are going to impeach me, do it now, fast, so we can have a fair trial in the Senate, and so that our country can get back to business."

- DONALD TRUMP US PRESIDENT

day I am asking our chairmen to proceed with articles of impeachment."

Before her announcement, Trump seemed to welcome the coming fight, calling Democrats "crazy" in a pair of tweets that urged them to get the process over with quickly so he could defend himself in the Republican-controlled Senate.

"If you are going to impeach me, do it now, fast, so we can have a fair trial in the Senate, and so that our Country can get back to business," he wrote. NYT

58 migrants dead after boat capsizes off Mauritania

AHMED MOHAMED SALEM, CARLEY PETESCH & SAMY MAGDY NOUAKCHOTT, DECEMBER 5

SCORES of migrants who swam through rough Atlantic Ocean waters to safety from a capsized boat while 58 others drowned were receiving care Thursday in Mauritania after one of the deadliest disasters this year among people making the perilous journey to Europe.

The boat that left Gambia a week ago had been carrying at least 150 people, including women and children. It was headed toward Spain's Canary Islands when it tried to approach the Mauritanian coast to get fuel and food, Laura Lungarotti, chief of mission in the West African nation with the UN migration agency, told The Associated Press. "Many drowned. The ones who survived swam up to the Mauritanian coast close to the city of Nouadhibou," she said. "The Mauritanian authorities are very efficiently coordinating the response with the agencies currently present" in the northern city.

At least 83 people swam to shore, the agency said, while Mauritanian authorities said security forces found 85 survivors. Interior Minister Mohamed Salem Ould Merzoug said 10



The boat, which set out from Gambia with at least 150 people, capsized close to Nouadhibou city in the African nation of Mauritania

people were taken to a hospital for "urgent" treatment.

Local authorities continued to search for an unknown number of missing people.

The survivors were receiving care in accordance with "human solidarity, fraternity and African hospitality," the minister's statement said. It said the boat held as many as 180 people, most of them aged 20 to 30.

Mauritania will open an investigation into those responsible for "this drama" including possible trafficking networks, the statement said.

In recent months, authorities have detained boats mostly carrying hundreds of migrants from Senegal, the statement added. AP

US Navy sailor kills 2, then shoots himself, at Pearl Harbor base

CALEB JONES, JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER & AUDREY MCAVOY PEARL HARBOR, DECEMBER 5

AN ACTIVE duty US sailor whose submarine was docked at Pearl Harbor opened fire on three civilian employees Wednesday, killing two and then taking his own life just days before dignitaries and veterans descend on the base for the 78th anniversary of the Japanese attack.

The commander of Navy Region Hawaii, Rear Adm. Robert Chadwick, said he didn't know the motive behind the shooting at the Hawaii base's naval shipyard that left the third civilian Department of Defence employee hospitalised.

It also wasn't known if the sailor and the three male civilians had any type of relationship, or what the motive was for the shooting, Chadwick said.

"We have no indication yet whether they were targeted or if it was a random shooting," Chadwick said.

The sailor was assigned to the fast attack submarine USS Columbia, which is at Joint Base

The motive behind the crime remains unclear, said a Navy commander

Pearl Harbor-Hickam for maintenance. Details about the sailor were not immediately released.

It wasn't immediately known what type of weapon was used or how many shots were fired. Chadwick said that was part of the investigation. Personal weapons are not allowed on base.

Names of the victims won't be released until next of kin have been notified.

"Our thoughts are with the families of the victims and everyone involved. I can say that we are mobilising support services for naval shipyard personnel as well as everyone else who may be affected by this tragic event," Chadwick said.

The base went into lockdown around 2.30 pm when the first active shooter reports were received. The base reopened a few hours later. Witnesses were still being interviewed hours after the shooting. AP



US Navy Rear Adm. Robb Chadwick speaks to the media at the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, in Hawaii. AP

ANGELA CHARLTON & CLAIRE PARKER PARIS, DECEMBER 5

THE EIFFEL Tower shut down, France's high-speed trains stood still and tens of thousands of people marched through Paris and other cities Thursday in a massive and sometimes chaotic outpouring of anger at the government's plan to overhaul the retirement system.

Small groups of masked activists smashed store windows, set fires and hurled flares on the sidelines of the otherwise peaceful Paris march, prompting volleys of teargas from police.

Unions launched the open-ended, nationwide strikes Thursday over President Emmanuel Macron's centrepiece reform in the biggest challenge to the centrist leader since the yellow vest movement against economic inequality erupted a year ago.

Opponents fear the changes to how and when workers can retire will threaten the hard-fought French way of life. Macron himself



Protesters in Marseille on Thursday. Reuters

remained "calm and determined" to push it through, according to a top presidential official.

The Louvre Museum warned of strike disruptions, and subway stations across Paris shut their gates. Many visitors — including the US energy secretary — cancelled plans to travel to France.

Tourists discovered historic train stations standing empty, with about nine out of 10 of high-speed TGV trains canceled. Signs at Paris' Orly Airport

showed "cancelled" notices, with authorities saying 20% of flights were grounded.

Some travellers showed support for the striking workers. Others complained about being embroiled in someone else's fight.

Beneath the closed Eiffel Tower, tourists from Thailand, Canada and Spain echoed those sentiments.

Paris authorities barricaded the presidential palace and deployed 6,000 police officers. AP

Samoa shuts down in unprecedented battle against measles

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA WELLINGTON, DECEMBER 5

SAMOA ENTERED a two-day lockdown Thursday to carry out an unprecedented mass vaccination drive aimed at containing a devastating measles epidemic that has killed dozens of children in the Pacific island nation.

As the death toll climbed to 62, officials ordered all businesses and non-essential government services to close, shut down inter-island ferries and told people to keep their cars off the roads.



At a health emergency operation centre in Apia, Samoa, on Thursday. 62 people have died in the measles outbreak. AP

Residents were advised to obey a dawn-to-dusk curfew, staying in their homes and displaying a red flag if any occupants were not yet immunised.

Hundreds of vaccination teams, including public servants drafted in for the operation, fanned out across the nation of 200,000 in the early hours of the morning.

They plan to go door-to-door in villages and towns to administer mandatory vaccinations in red-flagged houses.

The markets on Apia's waterfront, usually packed with tourists buying handicrafts, were silent as stalls stood empty, while there was hardly any traffic in the city centre.

"It's very, very quiet out here. I can just hear a few barking dogs. The streets are empty. There are no cars," UNICEF's Pacific islands chief Sheldon Yett said.

"People are staying at home waiting for the vaccination cam-

paign. The teams are getting their supplies together and getting ready to go out."

The operation, carried out under emergency powers invoked as the epidemic took hold last month, is a desperate bid to halt measles infection rates that have been inexorably rising since mid-October, with most of the victims young children.

"I've seen mass mobilisation campaigns before, but not over an entire country like this," Yett said. "That's what we're doing right now. This entire country is being vaccinated."

Let's assess failure of developed countries in acting on climate, says India

tries to fulfil their climate obligations in the pre-2020 period.

At the Madrid climate change meeting, these countries argued on Thursday that the main reason why the world seemed headed towards a climate disaster was that the developed countries never met their obligations under the Kyoto Protocol, the 1997 climate agreement that expires next year and is set to be replaced by the Paris Agreement.

India and the other countries said that the developed countries must be given another two years, until 2022, to fulfil their earlier commitments.

"Study after study has shown

that we are not on track to meet the Paris Agreement goal of keeping rise in temperatures within 2 degree Celsius from pre-industrial times. There is a significant gap in what is being done and what requires to be done. But this gap has not arisen all of a sudden. This is a result of the failure of developed countries to deliver on their climate commitments in the pre-2020 period," said India's lead negotiator Ravishankar Prasad.

"Now, 2020 will be out in another year. And it seems all is being forgotten, and now everyone is being asked to enhance their post-2020 action plans because



Protesters at the venue of the UN climate change conference in Madrid. Reuters

of an impending crisis. But this crisis is because the gap was allowed to expand by the developed countries. They did not deliver on their emission reduction

targets, they did not deliver on their commitments to transfer finance and technology to developing countries. And they are not on track to meet their targets even in the post-2020 Paris framework," he said.

"We are saying, let them take another two years, but they should be asked to meet their pre-2020 targets. That will help in closing some of the gaps. And besides, let's have an assessment of what happened in the last few years, the reason that this gap has widened so much, so that we have more robust mechanisms in future to ensure that all targets are implemented," he said.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, only about 40 rich and industrial countries, who are responsible for most of the historical emissions of greenhouse gases, were required to make emission cuts, according to targets prescribed for each one of them. The Paris Agreement, on the other hand, requires every country to take climate action, but lets them decide for themselves what they can do.

Most of the countries that were mandated to make emission cuts under the Kyoto Protocol are not meeting their targets. Many of them have even walked out of the agreement, including Japan which had hosted

the 1997 climate meeting where the Kyoto Agreement had been finalised. Only the European Union has promised to meet its pre-2020 targets.

"Asking every country to enhance its action plan, or to commit itself to a net-zero emission level by 2050 is meaningless if we let a group of countries get away with not fulfilling their commitments. Such demands are also against the basic principle of equity and differentiated responsibilities enshrined in the climate negotiations. It is very well understood that the developed countries have to do more. By asking everyone to commit to

net-zero emissions by 2050, for example, undermines that basic principle," Prasad said.

He said India and the other countries were consulting with the rest of the developing world to move a formal proposal in this regard.

"We want the final decisions of this meeting to reflect our concerns and demands. Let us open up a separate track to assess our performance in the pre-2020 period, what happened and why the gap was created. Then, let us ask the developed countries to meet their pre-2020 targets in another two years," Prasad said.