



“The Trump administration can correct its past, lift the sanctions and come back to the negotiating table. We're still at the negotiating table. They're the ones who left.”

— JAVAD ZARIF, Iran's Foreign Minister, on state of ties with US

TOP OF THE WORLD



At a protest. Reuters/File

US Pompeo lashes out at reporter

New York: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, apparently angered by a reporter's questions about the Trump administration's firing of the US ambassador to Ukraine, lashed out at her after the interview, cursing and challenging her to find Ukraine on a map, according to the reporter. "He asked, 'Do you think Americans care about Ukraine?'" He used the f-word in that sentence, and many others. "He called out for his aides to bring him a map of the world with no writing, no countries marked," Kelly said. "I pointed to Ukraine. He put the map away. He said, 'People will hear about this.'"

USA Airline fined for discriminating against Muslim passengers

Washington: Delta Air Lines was Friday fined \$50,000 by US Department of Transportation to settle allegations it discriminated against three Muslim passengers who were ordered off their planes. In its consent order, the department said it found Delta "engaged in discriminatory conduct" and violated anti-discrimination laws when it removed the three passengers. On July 26, 2016, a Muslim couple were removed from a flight in Paris after a passenger told an attendant their behaviour made her "very uncomfortable and nervous".

AUSTRALIA Three dead US men recovered from forest

Canberra: The bodies of three Americans who died when a water bombing plane crashed while battling Australia's unprecedented wildfire crisis were retrieved on Saturday as their families arrived in Sydney, officials said. Ian McBeth of Great Falls, Montana, Paul Clyde Hudson of Buckeye, Arizona, and Rick A. DeMorgan of Navarre, Florida, died when their C-130 Hercules tanker crashed on Thursday after dumping fire retardant on an out-of-control blaze northeast of the town of Cooma in southern New South Wales state.

USA 85,000 artifacts feared lost in fire

New York: Some 85,000 artifacts that tell the story of the Chinese migration to the United States may have been lost in a fire that struck a building in the heart of Manhattan's Chinatown, a museum official said Friday. The president of the Museum of Chinese in America told The New York Times that most of the thousands of historic and artistic items in its collection were probably lost in the fire that started Thursday night and tore through a building where the museum's acquisitions were stored.

HONG KONG DECLARES EMERGENCY

Virus outbreak: Xi warns of grave situation, death toll spikes to 41

AGENCIES BEIJING, JANUARY 25

AS CHINA marked a sombre Lunar New Year on Saturday, 15 more deaths from the new coronavirus were reported in Wuhan, the epicentre of the outbreak. Other countries, including Australia, said the virus had reached their shores.

The latest deaths, announced early Saturday by the health authorities in Hubei Province, whose capital is Wuhan, brought the toll in China to 41. All but three of those deaths were in Wuhan. The latest victims ranged in age from 55 to 87, the authorities said.

Nationwide, more than 400 new cases of the virus were diagnosed, officials said early Saturday, bringing the total number of confirmed cases in China to nearly 1,300.

In a sign of how the spread of the coronavirus has deeply shaken China, the nation's top leader, Xi Jinping, convened a meeting of the Communist Party leadership on Saturday to begin an offensive to stanch the spread



Medical workers at a hospital in Wuhan. AP

of the outbreak, improve treatment of victims and speed supplies to areas under lockdown.

"We're sure to be able to win in this battle to beat the epidemic through prevention and control," Xi said.

"Confronted with the grave situation of this accelerating spread of pneumonia from infections with the novel coron-

avirus, we must step up the centralized and united leadership under the party central" leadership, he added.

Meanwhile, on Saturday, Hong Kong's leader, Carrie Lam, declared a health emergency in the semiautonomous Chinese city and said schools would be closed until mid-February.

The city is treating five coro-

navirus patients connected to Wuhan, and more than 100 others are suspected of having the viral pneumonia.

Hong Kong is also suspending flights and train services to Wuhan and will cancel all Lunar New Year celebrations.

The Hong Kong Marathon, originally scheduled for early February, has also been called

LANCET WARNING

Medical journal *The Lancet* published a study on Friday suggesting that people infected with the coronavirus might be able to spread it even if they do not have flu symptoms.

"It shows this new coronavirus is able to transfer between person to person, in a hospital setting, a family home setting, and also in an intercity setting," Yuen Kwok-yung, an author of the study, said in an interview.

off. Masks and hand sanitisers have sold out in most pharmacies in the city.

On Saturday, officials announced that a second hospital was in the works to treat people infected by the virus. It would have a capacity for 1,300 beds. They plan to complete the facility, called Leishenshan Hospital, in 15 days.

‘Nobody can leave’: Trapped Wuhan residents stock up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA WUHAN, JANUARY 25

POLICE AT A roadblock on the outskirts of Wuhan turned away cars trying to leave the virus-stricken city on Saturday, as other anxious residents trapped inside spent the Lunar New Year stocking up on masks and medical supplies.

Authorities have prevented anyone from leaving Wuhan, the city of 11 million people at the heart of the viral outbreak which has so far infected nearly 1,300 people and killed 41 others.

AFP saw a steady trickle of cars approaching the roadblocks around 20 kilometres (12 miles) east of the city centre on Saturday morning, only for police in fluorescent jackets wearing masks to



Work in progress to build a hospital in Wuhan. Reuters

tell them to turn around. "Nobody can leave," a policeman told AFP.

AFP journalists only saw two vehicles allowed to pass the roadblock, including a white van which an officer said was "buying medicines" and would later return to the city.

A few people were allowed to enter the city through the barricade: Desperately needed medical workers whose holidays were cut short to help overwhelmed hospital.

Three young nurses who crossed the barrier on foot told AFP they were going to two hospitals. Two of them were waiting for a friend to pick them up.

"We went to our hometowns for holidays before the ban on transportation, but because of the epidemic we have to come back quickly to Wuhan," said one.

Dragging wheelie cases behind them, they were holding their coat hoods up against the rain. "They need us to go there, otherwise they will be too exhausted," another medical worker said.

4 killed, dozens injured as Iraqi security forces raid key protest sites

MAHER NAZIH & THAIER AL-SUDANI BAGHDAD, JANUARY 25

IRAQI SECURITY forces raided Baghdad's main protest site on Saturday and tried to eject protesters in southern cities, firing tear gas and bullets killing four people and wounding dozens more, police and medical sources said.

The new push to end the sit-ins and restore order came hours after populist cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, who counts millions of supporters in Baghdad and the south, said he would halt his involvement in anti-government unrest.

Sadr's supporters, who had bolstered the anti-government protesters and sometimes played a role in protecting them from attacks by security forces

and unidentified gunmen, began withdrawing from sit-ins early on Saturday.

Clashes then took place after authorities began removing concrete barriers near Tahrir Square where demonstrators have camped out for months, and across at least one main bridge over the Tigris River in the capital, Reuters reporters said.

Supporters of al-Sadr had begun to leave protest camps overnight after he announced he would no longer be involved in the anti-government demonstrations.

In the southern city of Basra, security forces raided the main anti-government sit-in overnight and deployed in force to stop protesters gathering there again, security sources said. Police arrested at least 16 protesters in the city, they said. **REUTERS**



22 DEAD IN TURKEY QUAKE

■ Rescue workers raced against time Saturday to find survivors after an earthquake claimed 22 lives and left more than 1,000 injured in Turkey.

■ The magnitude 6.8 quake struck on Friday evening, with its epicentre in the small lakeside town of Sivrice in Elazig province

■ Nearly 2,000 search and rescue personnel were sent while beds, blankets and tents were provided, the Turkish presidency said.

■ According to AFAD, there have been nearly 400 aftershocks following Friday's quake including 12 that were above 4 in magnitude

TRUMP IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS

Democrats wrap up with warning, White House team begins its defence

NICHOLAS FANDOS WASHINGTON, JANUARY 25

HOUSE DEMOCRATS concluded their arguments against President Trump on Friday by portraying his pressure campaign on Ukraine as part of a dangerous pattern of Russian appeasement that demanded his removal from office.

Ending their three-day presentation in the Senate, the impeachment managers summoned the ghosts of the Cold War and the realities of geopolitical tensions with Russia to argue that Trump's abuse of power had slowly shredded delicate foreign alliances to suit his own interests.

"This is Trump first, not America first," said Representative Adam B Schiff of California, the lead House manager. "And the result has been, and will continue to be, grave harm to our nation if this chamber does not stand up and say this is wrong."

Schiff also appealed to the consciences of Republican senators weighing whether to hear from witnesses and seek more documents that Trump suppressed. "I ask you — I implore you," Schiff said. "Give America a fair trial. She's worth it."

The president's lawyers presented the senators a different view of the facts and the

EXPLAINED Some omissions

SOME PARTS of the Trump team's defence drew scrutiny due to certain omissions. They said, correctly, that Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelensky has denied being pressured by Trump. However, senior diplomats had earlier said that Zelensky could not be expected to criticise Trump at a time when he badly needs US support. They also said Ukraine didn't know about the withholding of aid till August end, but as per reports, officials had said it was known by July end.

Constitution, seeking to turn the Democrats' charges back on them while denouncing the whole process as illegitimate.

"They're asking you to tear up all of the ballots all across the country on your own initiative, take that decision away from the American people," Pat A Cipollone, the White House counsel, said of the House managers.

PARNAS HANDS OVER TRUMP CALL RECORDING

LEV PARNAS, a former associate of Rudolph W Giuliani, President Trump's personal lawyer, said on Friday he had turned over to Democrats a recording of the president ordering the removal of Marie L Yovanovitch as the US ambassador to Ukraine



where we need to start is we gotta get rid of Yovanovitch. "Get rid of her!" a voice that sounds like Trump's responds, as per ABC News. "Get her out tomorrow. I don't care... Take her out."

DAYS AFTER WORLD COURT RULING

2 Rohingya women killed as Myanmar army shells village

THU THU AUNG YANGON, JANUARY 25

TWO WOMEN, one pregnant, were killed and seven other people injured after Myanmar troops shelled a Rohingya village on Saturday, according to a lawmaker and a villager, two days after the UN's highest court ordered the country to protect the minority.

Maung Kyaw Zan, a national member of parliament for Buthidaung township in northern Rakhine state, said shells fired from a nearby battalion hit Kin Taung village in the middle of the night. Government troops have been battling ethnic rebels in the state for more than a year.

"There was no fighting, they

just shot artillery to a village without a battle," he told Reuters by phone, adding it was the second time this year that civilians had been killed.

The military denied responsibility, blaming the rebels who they said attacked a bridge in the early hours of the morning.

Two military spokesmen did not answer phone calls from Reuters seeking comment on Saturday's deaths. In a statement posted on the Russian social media network VK, the army confirmed the deaths but blamed the Arakan Army, saying its artillery had hit the village during clashes.

In early January, four Rohingya children died in a blast the military and rebels blamed on each other. **REUTERS**

PEREZ TOLD JURORS THAT SCIORRA SHARED DETAILS OF THE ALLEGED ASSAULT

Weinstein rape trial: actor Rosie Perez backs up Sciorra account

BRENDAN PIERSON NEW YORK, JANUARY 25

ACTRESS ROSIE Perez took the stand in the rape trial of Harvey Weinstein on Friday to bolster the account of friend and fellow actress Annabella Sciorra, who said she was raped by the former Hollywood producer in the early 1990s.

Perez, whose film credits include Spike Lee's "Do the Right Thing," told jurors that Sciorra shared details of the alleged assault, including that Weinstein



Perez points at Weinstein at the court in New York. Reuters

had pinned her arms above her head as he raped her.

Weinstein, 67, has pleaded not guilty to sexually assaulting two other women, Mimi Haley and Jessica Mann. Sciorra, who appeared in "The Sopranos," testified on Thursday that Weinstein violently raped her more than 25 years ago.

While that allegation is too old to support a separate rape charge against Weinstein, prosecutors hope it will show that he is a repeat sexual predator — the charge that could put him in prison for life.

Since 2017, more than 80 women, including many famous actresses, have accused Weinstein of sexual misconduct.

Weinstein has denied any nonconsensual sex, and his lawyers said in opening statements on Wednesday that emails from his accusers would show they maintained warm relations with him after the alleged attacks.

Perez, testifying for the prosecution, said she called Sciorra, who confirmed her suspicion. Perez said she urged Sciorra to go to the police, but Sciorra refused, saying, "He'd destroy me." **REUTERS**

PSYCHIATRIST Barbara Ziv testified as an expert about why some sexual assault victims do not report attacks. Ziv said most victims of rapes and sexual assaults know their attackers, do not fight back during the attacks, and many maintain relationships with their attackers. "They're hoping that this was just an aberration," said Ziv