

15 THE WORLD

TOP OF THE WORLD



Prince Andrew

UK 'No cooperation' by Prince Andrew in Epstein case

London: Lawyers representing alleged victims of sex offender Jeffrey Epstein on Tuesday urged Britain's Prince Andrew to help US investigators, after a prosecutor said he had given "zero cooperation". US lawyer Gloria Allred, who represents five women allegedly assaulted by Epstein, said the Duke of York has "a moral obligation" to meet the FBI. "It's long overdue for him to do it, or to explain why he will not do it, and he's done neither," she said. "If he's done nothing wrong, which appears to be what he has claimed, then why won't he talk to law enforcement?"

PAKISTAN

Two terrorists killed in Khyber province

Peshawar: Two terrorists were killed and as many others arrested in separate incidents on Tuesday in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said. Police shot dead two terrorists, who happened to be a brother-duo, in northwest Pakistan. Acting on a tip-off, police intercepted two bikers on Tator road in Tank district, following which the two started firing at the security personnel. In the retaliatory firing, the two terrorists — identified as Awal Khan Bhattani and Jahanzeb Khna Bhattani — were killed, police said.

AFGHANISTAN

Taliban attack police base, 11 killed

Kabul: Taliban militants attacked a police base in northern Afghanistan, killing 11, possibly with help from at least one of the policemen inside, local government officials said Tuesday. The insurgents first overran a checkpoint near the base late Monday, and were apparently able to breach the compound with ease because a sympathetic policeman opened a door for them. These details were provided by Mabobullah Ghafari, a provincial councilman in Baghlan province where the attack took place. A local police official also gave the same account.

DUBAI

Indian expat gets jail term for groping woman

Dubai: A 33-year-old Indian man in Dubai was sentenced to three months of imprisonment for groping a woman in a mall, according to a media report. The incident took place on August 2 last year when the complainant, a 35-year-old Syrian woman, was shopping with her children at the mall, the Khaleej Times reported on Tuesday. The woman said she spotted the accused looking at her in a provocative way. "I got real scared of how he kept staring at my body," she was quoted as saying by the report.

WHO ADMITS ERROR IN ASSESSMENT, SAYS RISK LEVEL HIGH

Virus outbreak: Hong Kong restricts travel from mainland, toll hits 106

AGENCIES

BEIJING, JANUARY 28

CHINA SAID on Tuesday that 106 people had died from the coronavirus that is believed to have originated in the central city of Wuhan and is spreading across the country. The previous death toll, on Monday, was 81.

The number of confirmed cases increased from 2,835 on Monday to 4,515 on Tuesday, according to the National Health Commission. Meanwhile, Hong Kong on Tuesday implemented a broad series of restrictions aimed at controlling the spread of the coronavirus by limiting the number of mainland Chinese travelers entering the territory, one of Asia's busiest travel and financial hubs.

The restrictions, which included the suspension of high-speed and other train services between Hong Kong and the mainland, a 50 percent reduction in the number of flights, and a ban on tourism visas for many travelers, were announced by Carrie Lam, the city's chief executive.

The regulations, which apply to some plane, rail, bus and ferry arrivals, will begin on Thursday. They follow days of rising pressure from health care workers, epidemiologists and even pro-Beijing politicians who have traditionally supported Lam's government.



A Transmission Electron Microscopy image of the first isolated virus case; Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in Wuhan Tuesday. Reuters

Hong Kong has so far recorded eight confirmed cases of the virus. Barring Tibet, all Chinese provinces have reported the virus cases, posing a major challenge for health authorities.

Overseas confirmed cases have been reported in Thailand (7), Japan (3), South Korea (3), the United States (3), Vietnam (2), Singapore (4), Malaysia (3), Nepal (1), France (3), Australia (4) and Sri Lanka (1).

The World Health Organisation on Monday admitted an error in its assessment of the global risk of a deadly virus



in China, saying it was "high" and not "moderate", reports said.

The Geneva-based WHO in its latest situation report said the risk was "very high in China, high at the regional level and high at the global level." The organisation attached to UN admitted that it had stated "incorrectly" in its previous reports that the global risk was "moderate".

A shortage of medical kits needed to diagnose the coronavirus has slowed China's ability to respond to the outbreak and fueled concerns that the number of cases has been underreported.

2,000 PAK STUDENTS PLEAD FOR EVACUATION

■ Over 2,000 Pakistani students stuck in Wuhan have appealed to the Imran Khan government to rescue them, as per reports

■ Hafsa Tayab, one of the students stuck in Wuhan, said other countries are planning to get their citizens out of the city through special flights

■ There is a shortage of essentials and if this situation persists, we will run out of food very soon," Tayab said in a video uploaded on social media

■ The Foreign Office in Islamabad has confirmed efforts are being made to help the students. Officials are in constant touch with Chinese authorities, it said.

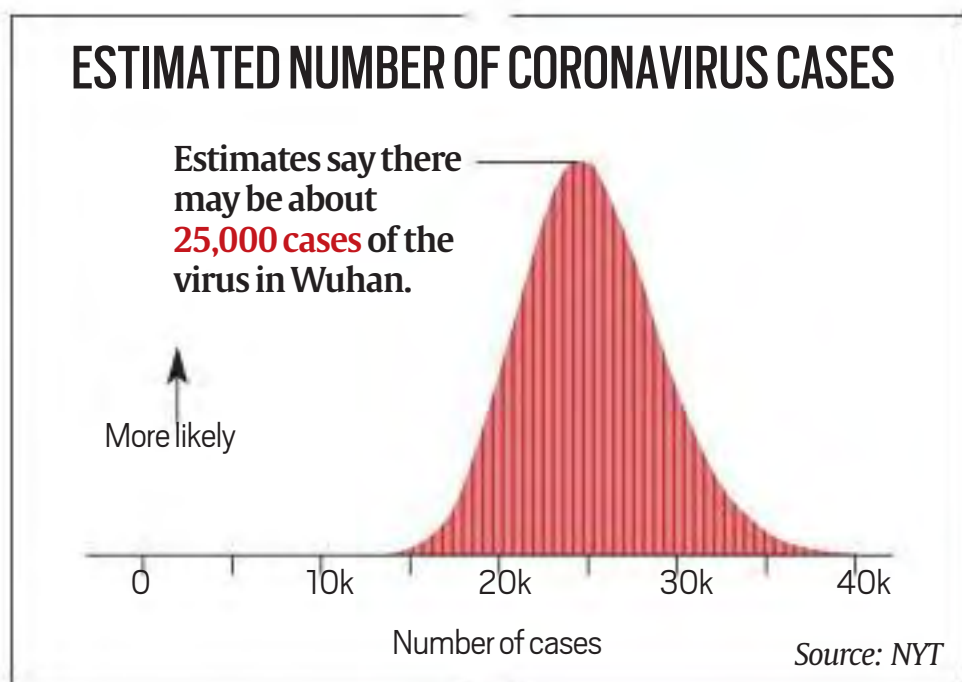
Confident of slaying devil virus: Xi

TONY MUNROE, MU YU XU
BEIJING, JANUARY 28

CHINESE PRESIDENT Xi Jinping told the visiting chief of the World Health Organisation on Tuesday that he was confident of winning the battle against a "devil" coronavirus that has killed 106 people and spread across the world.

A growing number of countries are planning to evacuate their citizens from Wuhan, a central city of 11 million people and epicentre of the outbreak. A chartered plane taking out U.S. consulate staff was set to leave Wuhan on Wednesday, a spokeswoman at the US embassy in Beijing said.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom



Ghebreyesus and Xi discussed ways to protect Chinese and foreigners in areas affected by the coronavirus and "possible alternatives" to evacuations, a WHO

spokesman said.

"The virus is a devil and we cannot let the devil hide," state television quoted Xi as saying. "China will strengthen inter-

national cooperation and welcomes the WHO participation in virus prevention ... We believe that the WHO and international community will give a calm, objective and rational assessment of the virus and China is confident of winning the battle against the virus."

A WHO panel of 16 independent experts twice last week declined to declare an international emergency over the outbreak. The spokesman said an increase in cases and deaths in China would not necessarily trigger the emergency status.

Traditionally, the WHO seeks to promote cooperation and avoid antagonising countries it is helping, or it risks a reaction that could undermine its humanitarian work. **REUTERS**

LANKA SUSPENDS VISA ON ARRIVAL FOR CHINESE CITIZENS

Colombo: Sri Lanka on Tuesday suspended its visa on arrival facility for travellers from China, its third largest tourism source market, a day after authorities here detected the country's first coronavirus infection.

Sudath Suraweera, the chief epidemiologist of the country's health ministry, said on Monday that a 40-year-old Chinese woman was found positive for the virus. Following this, Sri Lankan health authorities ordered travellers from China must apply for visa via the online portal. **PTI**

WILL MISS PLAYING THE VILLAIN: FARAGE

As Nigel Farage packed a few belongings into a box at his office in the European Union's parliament in Brussels on Tuesday, he reflected that he will miss the very institution on which - as its bluntest critic - he built his political career. "I'll miss some of the fun, some of the theatre," he told Reuters. "I'll miss being the pantomime villain, which I've been many times. This has been a massive chapter of my life."

Trump unveils Mideast peace plan that strongly favours Israel

MICHAEL CROWLEY, PETER BAKER & DAVID M HALBFINGER
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 28

PRESIDENT TRUMP unveiled his long-awaited Middle East peace plan on Monday, outlining a proposal that would give Israel most of what it has sought over decades of conflict while creating what he called a Palestinian state with limited sovereignty.

Trump's plan would guarantee that Israel would control a unified Jerusalem as its capital and not require it to uproot any of the settlements in the West Bank that have provoked Palestinian outrage and alienated much of the outside world. He promised to provide \$50 billion in international financing to build the new Palestinian entity and open an embassy in its new state.

"My vision presents a win-win opportunity for both sides, a realistic two-state solution that resolves the risk of Palestinian statehood into security," he said at a ceremony that demonstrated the one-sided state of affairs as he was flanked by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel but no counterpart from the Palestinian leadership.

Trump insisted his plan would be good for the Palestinians and in his speech reached out to President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority. "President Abbas," he said, "I want you to know if you choose the path to peace, America and many other countries, we will be there, we will be there to help you in so many

EXPLAINED Palestine nod unlikely

PALESTINIAN LEADERS are unlikely to respond positively to Trump's plan, with thousands having protested in Gaza City before details of the plan even emerged. They have refused to deal with the Trump administration, alleging bias towards Israel in earlier policies such as the shifting of the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. While experts said that the proposal had indeed made more concessions to Palestinians than predicted, they said it is nevertheless not likely to be seen as the "win-win" situation that Trump presents it to be.

different ways."

The proposal imagines new Israeli borders that cut far into the West Bank, and, at least in the short term, calls for what Netanyahu has described as a Palestinian "state-minus," lacking an army or air force.

Netanyahu called it "a realistic path to a durable peace" that "strikes the right balance where others have failed." **NYT**



US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington on Tuesday. Reuters

AFGHANISTAN

Remains of two US men found at plane crash site

AP & REUTERS
WASHINGTON/KABUL, JANUARY 28

A US defence official says the United States has recovered the remains of two American service members killed in the crash of an Air Force plane in Afghanistan.

They were the only two people aboard the Air Force E-11A electronic surveillance aircraft when it went down on Monday in Ghazni province, the official said, speaking Tuesday on the condition of anonymity ahead of an official announcement of the recovery. The identities of the two have not been publicly announced, pending notification of their relatives.

The official said the American recovery team met no Taliban re-



The wreckage. AP

sistance in reaching the crash site and said there is no indication that the plane was downed by hostile action.

A journalist in the area, Tariq Ghazniwal, said Monday that he saw the burning aircraft. He told *The Associated Press* that he saw two bodies and that the front of the aircraft was badly burned but its body and tail were hardly damaged.

IMPEACHMENT TRIAL

Bolton revelations fuel push for witnesses

MICHAEL D SHEAR & NICHOLAS FANDOS
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 28

THE WHITE House and Senate Republican leaders struggled on Monday to salvage their plans for a quick acquittal of President Trump after a new account by his former national security adviser John R Bolton corroborated a central piece of the impeachment case against him.

The newly disclosed revelations by Bolton, whose forthcoming book details how Trump conditioned military aid for Ukraine on the country's willingness to furnish information on his polit-

'FAVOURS FOR AUTOCRATIC LEADERS'

JOHN BOLTON privately told Attorney General William P. Barr last year that he had concerns that President Trump was effectively granting personal favours to the autocratic leaders of Turkey and China, as per an unpublished manuscript by Bolton

BARR RESPONDED by pointing to a pair of Justice Department investigations of companies in those countries and said he was worried Trump had created the appearance that he had undue influence over what would typically be independent inquiries

ical rivals, angered key Republicans and reinvigorated a bid to call witnesses. Such a move would prolong the trial and pose

new dangers for the president.

A handful of Republicans appeared to be moving closer to joining Democrats in a vote to sub-

poena Bolton, even as their leaders insisted that doing so would only delay his inevitable acquittal.

"I think it's increasingly likely that other Republicans will join those of us who think we should hear from John Bolton," Senator Mitt Romney, Republican of Utah, told reporters. He later told Republican colleagues at a closed-door lunch that calling witnesses would be a wise choice politically and substantively, according to people familiar with the discussions.

John F. Kelly, the former chief of staff to President Trump, told an audience in Florida on Monday night that he believed the revelations by Bolton.

"If John Bolton says that in the book, I believe John Bolton," said Kelly, who was the president's second chief of staff, according to a report in the Herald Tribune.

Senate Democrats, who have been holding daily news conferences, on Tuesday hit out at the "the nerve and the gall" of President Trump's legal team.

"Give me a break!" declared Senator Chuck Schumer, the minority leader, referring to Jay Sekulow, Trump's personal lawyer. "He has the nerve and the gall to get up there and say that there is no eyewitness testimony when we know that John Bolton has eyewitness testimony and is willing to testify?" **NYT**

THE 85-YEAR-OLD HAD INITIALLY REFUSED TO COMPLY WITH COURT-ORDERED DNA TESTS

Ex-king of Belgium acknowledges long-dismissed daughter

AURELIEN BREEDEN
NEW YORK, JANUARY 28

KING ALBERT II, the former Belgian monarch, conceded this week that DNA tests showed he was the biological father of Delphine Boël, an artist who claimed to be his daughter from an extramarital affair, an extraordinary admission after years of lawsuits that exposed the royal family to unusual levels of scrutiny.

King Albert's lawyers said in a statement on Monday that the 85-year-old former monarch,



King Albert II had ceded the throne in 2013. Reuters/File

who initially refused to comply with court-ordered DNA tests before finally submitting last year, had "taken note" of the results.

The lawyers added that there were "legal arguments and objections" establishing that "a legal paternity is not necessarily the reflection of a biological paternity," but that the king had decided "not to raise them and to put an end to this difficult procedure, in honour and dignity."

Boël, 51, is a Belgian visual artist who has claimed for years that she was conceived during an affair in the 1960s between

her mother, Baroness Sybille de Selys Longchamps, and Albert, who was then a prince and married to Paola Ruffo di Calabria, an Italian princess. Prince Albert and his wife already had three children.

Rumours of an illegitimate child were first alluded to in a 1999 book about Queen Paola by a journalist, Mario Danneels, and Boël made her first public claim that King Albert was her father in a 2005 interview.

While King Albert has never explicitly denied Boël's claim, he refused to acknowledge it, and

Boël filed a lawsuit seeking recognition as his biological daughter in 2013. King Albert ceded the throne to his eldest son that year, ending his immunity from prosecution.

Marc Uyttendaele, Boël's lawyer, said on Tuesday that she was "relieved" to be "considered as a legitimate child" because it would "put an end to the social exclusion that she was subjected to and will prevent her children from having to bear this burden."

But Uyttendaele added that she had been "hurt" by the "cold-

ness" of the king's statement.

In it, the king's lawyers said that he had "never been involved with any family, social or educative decision whatsoever regarding Madame Delphine Boël" and that it was Boël who, "40 years later," had decided to "change families" through a "long" and "painful" lawsuit.

"The attitude taken by Albert II yesterday does not foretell the opening of a dialogue between his daughter and him," Uyttendaele said. "For her part, she is open to this dialogue, but without much hope." **NYT**