

TOP OF THE WORLD



Sebastian Kurz with Green Party leader Werner Kogler. Reuters

AUSTRIA
Kurz announces new govt with Green Party

Berlin: Seven months after his conservative party's coalition with the far right collapsed in a spectacular scandal, Sebastian Kurz, Austria's former chancellor, announced a new government with the leftist Green Party late Wednesday. "These were demanding negotiations, but the result is a very good one," Kurz told reporters. "Both we and the Greens will be able to honor the central election promises we made." Since Austria's snap elections in September, it was unclear if Kurz would revive a politically costly coalition with the far right or reach out to the Greens, his ideological opposites.

INDONESIA
Flood death toll rises to 29, many missing

Jakarta: Indonesia's disaster agency warned Thursday of more deaths after torrential rains pounded the Jakarta region, triggering floods and landslides that killed at least 29 and left parts of the city underwater. Tens of thousands fled to shelters across the capital region, with scores of houses damaged in the flooding, after torrential rains on New Year's Eve. Images showed waterlogged homes and cars covered in muddy floodwaters, while some people took to paddling in small boats or tyre inner-tubes to get around.

SRI LANKA
Bus operators ordered to turn down the music

Colombo: Sri Lanka's government on Thursday gave bus operators two weeks to turn down the notoriously loud music in their vehicles following complaints from passengers. Transport minister Mahinda Amaraweera has given bus operators until January 15 to voluntarily turn down the volume or he would bring in legislation, said ministry spokesman Dharma Wanninayake said. There are an estimated 20,000 private buses playing Sri Lankan roads, notorious for playing loud Sinhala, Tamil and Hindi songs.



Wildfires rage behind Lake Conjola in Australia's New South Wales. AP

Mass evacuations in Australia as deadly wildfires raze holiday towns
NSW declares emergency, allowing authorities to carry out forced evacuations

JILL GRALOW & SONALI PAUL
BATEMANS BAY, MELBOURNE, JANUARY 2

TENS OF thousands of holiday makers fled seaside towns on Australia's east coast on Thursday as bushfires approached, and military ships and helicopters began rescuing thousands more trapped by the blazes. Fuelled by searing temperatures and high winds, more than 200 fires are burning across the southeastern states of New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria, threatening several towns.

SON RECEIVES MEDAL FOR FALLEN FIREFIGHTER



The NSW state government declared a state of emergency,

beginning on Friday, giving authorities the power to forcibly

evacuate people and take control of services. "It is hell on earth. It is the worst anybody's ever seen," Michelle Roberts said by telephone from the Croajingolong Cafe she owns in Mallacoota, a southeastern coastal town where 4,000 residents and visitors have been stranded on the beach since Monday night. The HMAS Choules is expected to make two or three voyages over the coming days, authorities said. Elsewhere, long queues formed outside supermarkets and petrol stations as residents sought supplies to either bunker down or escape the fires. REUTERS

Lebanon gets Interpol wanted notice for former Nissan boss

BASSEM MROUE
BEIRUT, JANUARY 2

LEBANON'S JUSTICE minister said Thursday that Lebanon has received an international wanted notice from Interpol for Nissan's ex-chair Carlos Ghosn. Albert Serhan said in an interview that the Red Notice for the former automotive titan was received earlier Thursday by the prosecution. Ghosn has skipped bail before a trial on financial misconduct charges and fled to Lebanon via Turkey. Authorities have said he entered legally on a French passport. Interpol's so-called Red Notices are requests to law enforcement agencies worldwide that they locate and provisionally arrest a wanted fugitive. Serhan said the Lebanese prosecution "will carry out its duties," suggesting for the first time that Ghosn may be brought in for questioning. But he said that Lebanon and Japan do not have an extradition treaty, ruling out the possibility that Beirut would hand Ghosn over to Japan. Meanwhile, Japanese prosecutors raided Ghosn's Tokyo home on Thursday. Japanese media showed investigators entering the home, which was Ghosn's third resi-



Carlos Ghosn

TURKEY QUESTIONS PILOTS ABOUT GOSN'S ESCAPE

AUTHORITIES IN Turkey on Thursday were questioning seven people, including four pilots, about the role they may have played helping Carlos Ghosn make his escape from Tokyo to Beirut, offering new clues to his mysterious cross-country flight. He reportedly left Japan late Sunday aboard a business jet from Osaka to Istanbul Ataturk Airport, where he quickly switched to another plane and flew to Beirut. NYT

dence in Tokyo since he was first arrested a year ago. Authorities have now searched each one. Government offices in Japan are closed this week for the New Year's holidays. AP



Chief of the general staff Shen Yi-ming. AP

Taiwan's top military officer among 8 killed in helicopter crash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
TAIPEI, JANUARY 2

TAIWAN'S TOP military officer was killed in a helicopter crash on Thursday, the defence ministry said, just days before the island goes to polls to elect a new president. The chief of the general staff, Shen Yi-ming, was among eight senior officers — including three major-generals — who died when their Black Hawk helicopter smashed into mountains near Taipei. The 62-year-old general and his entourage were on a routine mission to visit soldiers in north-east Yilan county when the incident happened. Flags at all military units will fly at half-mast for three days as Shen was the highest-ranking military official to die while on official duty, the government said.

AFTER IRAQI PROTESTERS STORM U.S. EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD

US: Iran, allies may be planning more attacks

REUTERS
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 2

US DEFENCE Secretary Mark Esper said on Thursday that there were indications Iran or the forces it backs may be planning additional attacks and said it was possible the United States might have to take preemptive action to protect American lives. "There are some indications out there that they may be plan-



MARK ESPER
US Defence Secretary

ning additional attacks, that is nothing new... we've seen this for

Turkey Parliament authorises sending troops to fight in Libya

SUZAN FRASER
ANKARA, JANUARY 2

TURKEY'S PARLIAMENT on Thursday authorized the deployment of troops to Libya to support the UN-backed government in Tripoli that is battling forces loyal to a rival government seeking to capture the capital. Turkish lawmakers voted 325-184 at an emergency session in favor of a one-year mandate allowing the government to dispatch troops amid concerns that Turkish forces could aggravate the conflict in Libya and destabilise the region. The Tripoli-based government of Libyan Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj has faced an offensive by the rival regime in the

EXPLAINED
E Move threatens to turn conflict into broader crisis
TURKEY'S DECISION to send troops into Libya could turn the conflict in Libya into a broader regional crisis. Turkey has strategic and economic interests in Libya and already assists the UN-backed government in Tripoli by providing it with military equipment in its fight against Haftar's forces. Haftar is backed by Egypt, Jordan and the UAE. If Turkey sends troops to fight against Haftar, analysts fear Libya could become a dangerous flashpoint for the region.

east and forces loyal to commander General Khalifa Haftar. The fighting has threatened to plunge Libya into violent chaos rivaling the 2011 conflict that ousted and killed longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said last month that Sarraj requested the Turkish deployment after he and Sarraj signed a deal that allows Ankara to dispatch military experts and personnel to Libya. AP

stopped on a military base, he was also using the app and told officials he was trying to get more points than his children, according to the military documents obtained by CBC News. Shortly after the app was available, the Canadian Armed Forces issued a public warning, urging civilians to avoid military property when searching for Pokémon. CBC News filed an access to information request at the time, and more than three years later, the Canadian Department of National Defence released 471 pages of internal documents related to the game. The game — and the unusual civilian behaviour it brought —

was met with mixed reaction across Canada's military bases, according to the documents. Officials in North Bay filed a complaint with Niantic Inc., the gaming startup that teamed with the Pokémon company to make Pokémon Go, stating a Pokéstop location on the base would increase traffic and negatively affect the base's mission, according to CBC News. Other military officials were more optimistic about the increased foot traffic. "Maybe some extra people will visit the museum!" Major Alicia Saucier wrote of the military base in Petawawa, Ontario. NYT

NEPAL'S OBJECTION
KATHMANDU'S CLAIM
Nepal had objected after India released its new political map in November, following the reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir, claiming that Limpiyadhura, Lipulek and Kalapani areas were shown under India's territory even though, according to Kathmandu, they lie within Nepal's territory.
INDIA'S RESPONSE
New Delhi said the new map accurately depicted India's sovereign territory and that it had in no manner revised its boundary with Nepal.
THE SUGAULI TREATY
Nepalese territories, including Darjeeling, were handed to the British East India Company as concessions under the Sugauli Treaty which was signed in 1816 after of the Anglo-Nepalese War. Under the treaty, the Nepalese-controlled territory that was ceded included all areas that the king of Nepal had won in earlier wars such as the kingdom of Sikkim in the east and Kumaon and Garhwal in the west.

Nations while applying for obtaining their membership. The government has also been directed to submit the original map exchanged while signing a Boundary Treaty with the Indian government in 1960, the map published by the East-India Company on February 1, 1827, and a separate map published by the British Government in 1847. The court has also asked the government to submit details of efforts made, if any, for amending the map of Nepal. The Bench stated that the hearings on the PIL will be conducted in tandem with another similar petition filed by another advocate. PTI

Pak govt seeks stay of SC's ruling on Army chief's extension

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, JANUARY 2

THE PAKISTAN government on Thursday sought a stay order from the Supreme Court against its November verdict in the extension of service case involving Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa. Prime Minister Imran Khan had extended Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa's tenure through a notification on August 19. However, the Supreme Court suspended the government order, citing irregularities in the manner the Army chief, a close confidant of Khan, was granted an extension. The government in its plea requested the apex court "to accept the application and suspend/stay the operation of the impugned judgment dated November 28, 2019, in the interest of justice". This is the second petition filed in this high-profile case by the government, Geo News reported. On November 28, Bajwa, 59, got a six-month conditional extension from the apex court, ending an unprecedented legal wrangle. On December 26, the law ministry had approached the top court against its detailed judgment, issued on December 16, in which the government was ordered to legislate on Gen Bajwa's extension within six months. The petition filed on Thursday prayed to the court that "The petitioners have a strong prima facie case to succeed; hence the operation of the impugned judgment may be suspended/stayed till the final decision of this civil review petition."

MILITARY POLICE ASSIGNED TO PLAY THE GAME AFTER FANS INVADE BASES

Pika-who? How Pokémon Go confused the Canadian military

MARIEL PADILLA
JANUARY 2

SEEMINGLY OUT of nowhere, civilians started driving onto Canadian military bases at odd hours and wandering onto government property in July 2016, distracted by their cellphone screens. Military officials did not know what to make of it. Pokémon Go, the augmented-reality game, had soared to the top of the download charts. Within weeks, millions of people were chasing the digital animated creatures all over the world, and going to places they should not go.

More than three years later, Canadian military officials have shared internal documents with the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. News Network that show how the military, both curious and confused, reacted to the wildly popular app. Major Jeff Monaghan, an official based in Kingston, Ontario, wrote in an email: "Plse advise the Commissionaires that apparently Fort Frontenac is both a Pokégym and a Pokéstop. I will be completely honest in that I have no idea what that is."



After the app was available in Canada, the Canadian Armed Forces issued a public warning, urging civilians to avoid military property when searching for Pokémon. NYT

notepads in hand to search for Pokémon, Pokéstops and Pokégyms, according to the documents. (Users can find Pokéballs at Pokéstops, use their Pokéballs to capture Pokémon, and train and join teams at Pokégyms.)

"We should almost hire a 12-year-old to help us out with this," David Levenick, a security expert at a military base in Borden, Ontario, wrote in an email. Weeks after the app became available, Canadian officials noticed an increase in suspicious activity. One woman was found on a military base as three children with her climbed on tanks. She was playing Pokémon Go. Police responded to a vehicle that was "acting suspiciously" in a parking lot on a military base in Greenwood, Nova Scotia, only to find a handful of Pokémon chasers. And when another man was