

TOPOF THE WORLD



Protests outside the court in Paralimni, Cyprus. Reuters

CYPRUS
UK woman in gangrape trial gets suspended jail sentence

Paralimni: A British teenager accused of faking a gangrape allegation was given a suspended sentence by a court in Cyprus on Tuesday in a case that prompted a rare rebuke from Britain and protests from activists who say she did not get a fair trial. The 19-year-old says she was coerced by police into dropping a complaint that she was raped by a group of Israeli youths in the holiday resort of Ayia Napa in July. She was convicted on December 30 of public mischief over the withdrawn rape report.

KENYA
Shabab attack kills four, including a child

Nairobi: Stray bullets killed four civilians, including a small child, during an al-Shabab extremist attack in Kenya, authorities said Tuesday. A Kenyan national police statement said the attackers targeted a telecommunications mast in eastern Garissa county near the border with Somalia, where the al-Qaida-linked extremist group is based. Police officers on patrol killed two of the attackers in the early morning assault, the statement said. A teacher was among the dead, it added. Deputy county commissioner Kibet Bowen said all four civilians were killed by stray bullets in the fighting.

PAKISTAN
2 pilots killed after Air Force plane crashes

Lahore: A China-made trainer aircraft of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) crashed in Punjab province on Tuesday, killing both pilots aboard. “A PAF FT-7 aircraft on a routine operational training mission crashed near Mianwali, some 300 kms from Lahore,” the PAF said in a statement. Both pilots — Squadron Leader Haris bin Khalid and Flying Officer Ibaad ur Rehman — lost their lives in the crash, it said. A board of inquiry has been ordered by the Air Headquarters to determine the cause of accident.

NORIMITSU ONISHI
PARIS, JANUARY 7

FRENCH WRITER Gabriel Matzneff never hid the fact that he engaged in sex with girls and boys in their early teens or even younger. He wrote countless books detailing his insatiable pursuits and appeared on television boasting about them. *Under 16 Years Old*, was the title of an early book that left no ambiguity. Still, he never spent a day in jail for his actions or suffered any repercussion. Instead, he won acclaim again and again. Much of France’s literary and journalism

Stampede at Soleimani’s funeral kills at least 50, burial postponed

US Defence Secretary denies reports of military withdrawal from Iraq

BABAK DEHGHANPISHEH & AHMED ABOULENEIN
DUBAI, BAGHDAD, JANUARY 7

AT LEAST 50 people were killed in a stampede as mourners packed streets for the funeral of a slain Iranian military commander in his hometown on Tuesday, forcing his burial to be postponed, state media reported. Tens of thousands of people had gathered in the southeastern city of Kerman to pay tribute to General Qassem Soleimani, whose killing in a US drone strike in Iraq on Friday plunged the region into a new crisis and raised fears of a broader conflict. A senior Iranian official said Tehran was considering several scenarios to avenge his killing. Other senior figures have said Iran will match the scale of Soleimani’s killing when it re-



Coffins of General Qassem Soleimani and others killed in Iraq by a US drone strike, are carried on a truck surrounded by mourners during a funeral procession in Kerman, Iran. Reuters

sponds but that it will choose the time and place. Tuesday’s stampede broke out amid the crush of mourners, killing 50 people, Iran’s ISNA news

agency said. About 213 people were injured, an emergency services official told the semi-official Fars news agency. The burial of Soleimani had

been postponed, ISNA said, without adding long any delay would last.

‘Poorly worded’ draft

Media had reported on Monday that the US military had sent a letter to Iraqi officials informing them that US troops were preparing to leave. “In order to conduct this task, Coalition Forces are required to take certain measures to ensure that the movement out of Iraq is conducted in a safe and efficient manner,” it said. However, US Defence Secretary Mark Esper said there had been no decision whatsoever to leave Iraq. “I don’t know what that letter is,” he said. US Army General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the letter was a “poorly worded” draft document meant only to underscore increased movement by US forces. **REUTERS**

Pentagon rules out striking cultural sites, contradicting Trump

PETER BAKER & MAGGIE HABERMAN
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 7

US DEFENCE Secretary Mark Esper sought to douse an international outcry Monday by ruling out military attacks on cultural sites in Iran if the conflict with Tehran escalates further, despite President Donald Trump’s threat to destroy some of the country’s treasured icons. Esper acknowledged that striking cultural sites with no military value would be a war crime,

putting him at odds with the President, who insisted such places would be legitimate targets. Trump’s threats generated condemnation at home and abroad while deeply discomfiting US military leaders who have made a career of upholding the laws of war. “We will follow the laws of armed conflict,” Esper said at a briefing at the Pentagon when asked if cultural sites would be targeted as the President had suggested over the weekend. When asked if that meant “no” because the laws of war prohibit targeting cultural sites, Esper agreed. **NYT**

Khamenei for direct, proportional retaliation after Soleimani’s killing

FARNAZ FASSIHI & DAVID KIRKPATRICK
JANUARY 7

IN THE tense hours following the American killing of a top Iranian military commander, the country’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, made a rare appearance at a meeting of the government’s National Security Council to lay down the parameters for any retaliation. It must be a direct and proportional attack on American interests, he said, openly carried out by Iranian forces themselves, three Iranians familiar with the meeting said Monday.



It was a startling departure for the Iranian leadership. Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979, Tehran had almost always cloaked its attacks behind the actions of proxies it had cultivated around the region. But in the fury generated by the killing of the military commander, General Qassem Soleimani, a close ally and personal friend of

the supreme leader, the ayatollah was willing to cast aside those traditional cautions.

The nation’s anger over the commander’s death was on vivid display Monday, as millions of Iranians poured into the streets of Tehran for a funeral procession and Khamenei wept openly over the coffin.

Where, when and even if Iran may choose to retaliate remains a matter of speculation. As Iranian leaders weighed just what form it might take, analysts said the targets included US troops in Syria and Iraq, US bases in the Persian Gulf, or embassies or diplomats almost anywhere. **NYT**

Puerto Rico’s governor declares emergency after series of quakes

LUIS VALENTIN ORTIZ
SAN JUAN, JANUARY 7

PUERTO RICO Governor Wanda Vazquez declared a state of emergency and activated the National Guard on Tuesday after a series of earthquakes including one of magnitude 6.4 that was the most powerful to strike the Caribbean island in 102 years. The tremors killed at least one person, provoked a protective power outage across the entire island and cut off drinking water to 300,000 customers, Vazquez told a news conference, where she also announced the emergency measures. At least 346 people were left homeless, officials said. The declaration of emergency will facilitate financial aid for the US territory, and Vazquez said she had already been in contact with the US Federal Emergency Management Agency. The island has been rocked by a series of quakes since Dec 28, including 10 of magnitude 4 or greater. **REUTERS**

Weinstein faces new sex crime charges

Lawyers in Hollywood mogul’s New York rape trial begin jury selection process

GABRIELLA BORTER
NEW YORK, JANUARY 7

LAWYERS IN Harvey Weinstein’s rape trial will begin selecting jurors on Tuesday, a challenging process in the wake of the #MeToo movement and fresh sex crime charges brought against the former film producer. Hours after Weinstein’s New York trial started on Monday, Los Angeles District Attorney Jackie Lacey charged Weinstein with



Weinstein at court in New York on Monday. Reuters

the sexual assault of two unidentified women in 2013. Weinstein, 67, has pleaded

FB bans deepfake videos, but parody clips allowed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 7

FACEBOOK WILL ban deepfake videos ahead of the US elections but the new policy will still allow heavily edited clips so long as they are parody or satire, the social media giant said Tuesday. In a blog published following a *Washington Post* report, Facebook said it would begin removing clips that were edited — beyond for clarity and quality —

Deepfakes present another new challenge to Facebook

FACEBOOK HAS faced widespread criticism for not cracking down strongly enough against the spread of misinformation, especially during election time. With the campaign for the 2020 US presidential election set to heat up, one of the big challenges for those trying to combat fake news and misinformation comes in the form of deepfakes. Deepfakes are highly realistic videos, made using artificial intelligence, in which, among other things, persons in a clip can be replaced by others. This can be used to make it seem like someone has said something that he or she did not really say.

questionnaires to determine if they are able to be impartial.

A second phase of selection, in which a final jury of 12 will be picked, is expected to begin a week later, though Judge James Burke has called that date “optimistic.” Given the high-profile nature of the case, the court cast a wide net, sending out jury summonses to 2,000 New Yorkers. Based on past experience, a court spokesman said about 500 were likely to show up for jury duty. **REUTERS**

in ways that “aren’t apparent to an average person” and could mislead people. Clips would be removed if they were “the product of artificial intelligence or machine learning that merges, replaces or superimposes content onto a video, making it appear to be authentic,” the statement from Facebook said. However, the statement added: “This policy does not extend to content that is parody or satire, or video that has been edited solely to omit or change the order of words.”

USA AUTHOR ELIZABETH WURTZEL DIES AT 52

Elizabeth Wurtzel, whose startling 1994 memoir, “Prozac Nation: Young and Depressed in America”, won praise for opening a dialogue about clinical depression and helped introduce an unsparing style of confessional writing that continues to endure, died Tuesday in Manhattan. She was 52, and was suffering from breast cancer.



Pakistan’s National Assembly passes Bills to extend Army chief’s tenure

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, JANUARY 7

PAKISTAN’S LOWER House of Parliament on Tuesday passed three crucial Bills to give extension to Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa for another three years, signalling the dominance of the powerful army, which has ruled the country for more than half of its 72 years of existence.

Gen Bajwa, a close confidant of Imran Khan, was to retire on November 29 last year at the end of his three-year original term but the Prime Minister gave the 59-year-old Army chief another extension of the same length, citing the regional security situation through a notification on Aug 19. However, the Supreme Court on November 28 suspended the government order, observing that there is no law to give extension to the Army chief’s tenure. But the apex court granted a six-month extension to Gen Bajwa after being assured by the government that Parliament will pass a legislation on the extension/reeppointment of an Army chief within six months.

The government after initial hesitation secured the support of the main Opposition parties and introduced three bills in the National Assembly to extend the retirement age from 60 to 64 years for the chiefs of army, navy and air force, and the chairman of the joint chief of staff committee.

The Bills were approved by the Standing Committee on Defence on Monday, paving the way for approval by the Assembly.

Defence Minister Pervaiz Khattak moved the three bills — The Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill 2020, the Pakistan Air Force (Amendment) Bill 2020 and the Pakistan Navy (Amendment) Bill 2020 — for voting and were passed easily as the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and the Pakistan People



Pakistan Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa

PAK WRITER SAYS HIS NOVEL ON ZIA UL HAQ CONFISCATED

Karachi: A prominent Pakistani novelist and New York Times columnist said on Tuesday that security agents raided the offices of his publisher and confiscated all the copies of his book about the country’s former military dictator Zia ul Haq. The raid took place on Monday in Karachi, the largest city and key port in Pakistan, according to the novelist, Mohammad Hanif. Hanif, whose acclaimed *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* is a parody about the former dictator, killed in a plane crash in 1988, blamed the Pakistani spy agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence, for the raid. However, an official at the agency described Hanif’s claim as a “cheap attempt to gain popularity by hurling false accusations on a national institution”. **AP**

Party supported them. However, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal and Jamat-e-Islami boycotted the session as they were not happy with the new laws. After the approval by the National Assembly, the bills will be presented in the Senate, the upper house, and are expected to be passed without any problem. **PTI**

Japan seeks arrest of Ghosn’s wife amid efforts to snare him

REUTERS
TOKYO, BEIRUT, JANUARY 7

JAPANESE PROSECUTORS on Tuesday issued an arrest warrant for Carlos Ghosn’s wife for alleged perjury, as officials stepped up efforts to bring the fugitive car industry boss back to face trial on financial misconduct charges.

The former Nissan Motor, and Renault chairman fled to Lebanon last month from Japan, where he has alleged there was a government-backed coup to oust him.

A senior Japanese Ministry of Justice official said staff were poring over Lebanese laws to find a way to bring back Ghosn and that Japan “will do whatever it can” to put him on trial.

In Beirut, the justice minister confirmed that prosecutors had received a “red notice” arrest warrant from Interpol in respect of Ghosn and would take the necessary action.



Former boss of Nissan, Carlos Ghosn, with his wife Carole in March last year. AP

The ministry said nothing had been received from Japanese prosecutors relating to an arrest warrant for his wife, Carole, who is in the Lebanese capital.

The Japanese warrant accuses her of falsely claiming not to know, or to have met, people connected to a company that received payments from Nissan Motor, part of which it subsequently transferred to a firm owned by Ghosn.

Ghosn is scheduled to hold a news conference on Wednesday.

History of Pedophilia.

So far, however, Springora — now 47 and the head of the publishing company Julliard — is the only one of his victims to have spoken out. After hesitating for years, she told the French news media, she decided to break her silence after being outraged that a literary prize, the Renaudot, was awarded to Matzneff in 2013.

In *Le Consentement*, Springora recounts being seduced at the age of 14 by the famous writer, who was then in his 50s. Introduced to him by her own mother, Springora writes that she fell in love with Matzneff and became disenchanted only upon discov-

ering writings in which he described relations with countless other girls and boys, including those he met on sex tours in Southeast Asia.

She also relates the depression and other psychological problems she suffered from the relationship, and the years it took her to recover.

“He was not a good man,” Springora writes. “He was in fact what we’re taught to dread since childhood: an ogre.” In messages to *Le Parisien*, Matzneff wrote that the book’s reported contents were “unjust and excessive” and spoke of the “beauty of the love that we shared, Vanessa and I”. **NYT**



Gabriel Matzneff never hid the fact that he engaged in sex with girls and boys in their early teens or even younger. AP

of a problem that had never been hidden.

The former host of France’s most famous literary television programme struggled to explain why he and other guests — except, tellingly, the only non-French invitee — laughed with good humour

at Matzneff’s preferences for minors. Most of his longtime champions have remained silent, though a few still came to his defence, including the former book editor of *Le Monde*.

France’s culture minister, Franck Riester, said he supported