

18 THE WORLD



BRITAIN
QUEEN'S OLDEST GRANDSON SET FOR DIVORCE
 Queen Elizabeth's oldest grandchild Peter Phillips and his wife Autumn have separated and will divorce, a spokesman said Tuesday, piling more misery on Britain's most famous family. Phillips, 42, and his Canadian wife Autumn will share custody of their two daughters and both remain in Gloucestershire, southwest England. Phillips is the son of Princess Anne.

TOP OF THE WORLD



Antonio Guterres

PAKISTAN
UN chief to visit Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib during Pak visit

United Nations: UN chief Antonio Guterres will visit the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev, in Kartarpur during his visit to Pakistan next week. The UN Secretary-General will arrive in Islamabad on Sunday on a four-day visit and will hold bilateral meetings with PM Imran Khan and Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on that day and speak at an event on sustainable development, climate change and peacekeeping. Guterres will "travel to Kartarpur to visit a holy site, Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib," Deputy spokesperson Farhan Haq said.



IRAQI WAKE UP TO SNOW FOR 1ST TIME IN DECADE

Snow in the old city of Mosul, Iraq. Many Iraqis awoke to a sight not seen in over a decade — their cities covered in snow — on Tuesday. It was a rare moment of respite during which residents took selfies and children played in parks, lobbing snowballs before the fluffy flakes disappeared and the white cover dissolved into grey puddles. *Reuters*

IS's ambitious South Asia branch is security threat to neighbours of Afghanistan: UN

YOSHITA SINGH
 UNITED NATIONS, FEBRUARY 11

THE ISLAMIC State group's South Asia branch remains active, ambitious and threatening, and has established contacts with other terrorist groups like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and has the potential to exacerbate the security threat to nations neighbouring Afghanistan, a UN report has warned.

According to the report, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) came under severe military pressure

from the security forces of Afghanistan and Taliban fighters towards the end of 2019, leading to its virtual expulsion from what had been its Afghan headquarters in Nangarhar Province.

The ISIL-K was formed on January 10, 2015 by a former Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) commander and was established by former Taliban faction commanders "who swore an oath of allegiance" to IS and its slain leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

The group has claimed responsibility for numerous attacks in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The 10th report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat said that even though the Afghan authorities took custody of more than 1,400 people, including ISIL-K fighters and their dependants, the terrorist group remains a threat to regional security.

"Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan remains active, ambitious and threatening. It continues its online recruitment

and propaganda, for which it also conducts outreach activities in religious and academic institutions in Afghanistan, including Kabul University," it said.

"It has established informal contact with other terrorist groups, including Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Islam, which regularly mount attacks on border posts of Pakistan. The approach of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan has the potential to exacerbate the security threat to countries neighbouring Afghanistan," the report said. **PTI**

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Chinese expert says virus to peak soon; death toll tops 1,000

Coronavirus is public enemy Number 1, says WHO chief

DAVID STANWAY & YILEI SUN
 SHANGHAI, FEBRUARY 11

CHINA'S CORONAVIRUS outbreak may peak soon, a prominent Chinese expert said on Tuesday, as the death toll soared past 1,000 and worry grew about the true extent of economic disruption to the world's second-largest economy.

The government's top medical adviser on the outbreak, Zhong Nanshan, held out hope that the epidemic may peak in February and then plateau before easing.

"The peak time may be reached at the ... middle or late this month," Zhong, an epidemiologist who won fame for his role in combating an outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in 2003, told *Reuters*.

The number of new cases was already declining in some provinces, he added.

The National Health Commission said earlier another 108 people had died on Tuesday, a daily record, taking to 1,016 the total of those killed in China. All but five of the deaths were in the central province of Hubei, the epicentre of the outbreak.

There were 2,478 new confirmed cases on the mainland by Monday, down from 3,062 the previous day, bringing the total to 42,638. It was the second time in



At a market in Hong Kong on Tuesday. *Reuters*

W.H.O. NAMES CORONAVIRUS 'COVID-19'

Beijing, Geneva: The new coronavirus that has killed over 1,000 people in China and sickened more than 43,000 others globally has been named 'COVID-19', the World Health Organisation said on Tuesday. "We had to find a name that did not refer to a geographical location, an

animal, an individual or group of people, and which is also pronounceable and related to the disease," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus was quoted by the official Chinese media as saying at a media conference in Geneva on Tuesday. **PTI**

USA

Number of US troops injured in Iran attack goes up to 100

Washington: The US military on Monday disclosed a more than 50% jump in cases of traumatic brain injury stemming from Iran's missile attack on a base in Iraq last month, with the number of service members diagnosed climbing to over 100. No US troops were killed or faced immediate bodily injury when Iran fired missiles at the Ain al-Asad base in Iraq in retaliation for the US killing of Revolutionary Guard General Qassem Soleimani in a drone strike in Baghdad on Jan 3.

PHILIPPINES

Manila notifies US of plan to end security pact

Manila: The Philippines notified the United States on Tuesday it would end a major security pact allowing American forces to train in the country, in the most serious threat under President Rodrigo Duterte to their 69-year treaty alliance. Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said in a tweet that Manila's notice of termination of the Visiting Forces Agreement was received by the deputy chief of mission at the US embassy in Manila. The termination would take effect after 180 days unless both sides agree to keep it. Locsin signed the notice on the order of Duterte, who has often criticised US.

Rohingya boat capsizes in Bay of Bengal, 16 dead

ASSOCIATED PRESS
 DHAKA, FEBRUARY 11

AN OVERCROWDED boat carrying about 125 Rohingya refugees from Bangladeshi camps sank early Tuesday in the Bay of Bengal, leaving at least 16 dead, Bangladesh officials said Tuesday.

The coast guard, navy divers and other rescuers recovered the bodies of 14 women, one child and a man after the wooden boat capsized off St Martin's Island, the top elected official on the island told *The Associated Press*.

Noor Ahmed told *AP* by phone from the scene that some 62 refugees on the boat survived. They were wooed by traffickers



Refugees wait after their boat capsized, in Teknaf, near Cox's Bazar. *Reuters*

to get on the boat from various points as it was heading for Malaysia, he said.

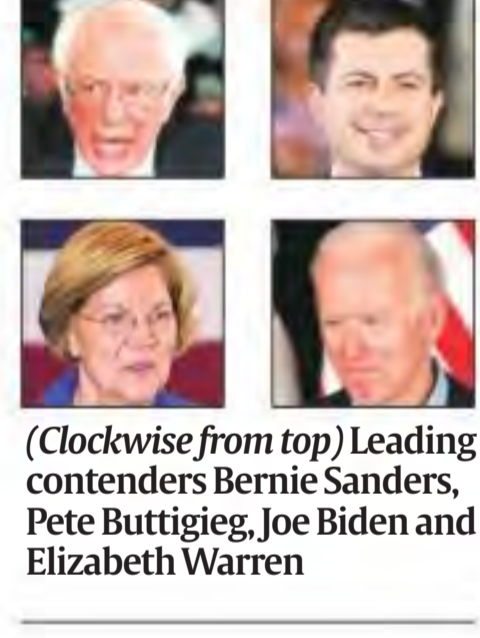
Iqbal Hossain, additional police superintendent in Cox's Bazar, said the overcrowding of the boat had caused it to capsize.

Voting ongoing in New Hampshire primary as top Democratic hopefuls seek clarity

STEVE PEOPLES, KATHLEEN RONAYNE, THOMAS BEAUMONT & HUNTER WOODALL
 MANCHESTER, FEB 11

WITH VOTING underway across the state, Democrats looked to New Hampshire on Tuesday to reset the party's presidential nomination fight and bring clarity to a young primary season that has been marred by dysfunction and doubt.

There were new signs of turbulence



(Clockwise from top) Leading contenders Bernie Sanders, Pete Buttigieg, Joe Biden and Elizabeth Warren

hours before polls closed. Flailing former front-runner Joe Biden announced plans to leave the state early.

After the chaotic Iowa caucuses failed to perform their traditional function of winnowing the race, it fell to New Hampshire to begin culling the Democratic field, which still features almost a dozen candidates.

For Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, the vote was an opportunity to build on his dominance of the party's left flank. A repeat of his strong showing

in Iowa could severely damage progressive rival Senator Elizabeth Warren, who faced the prospect of an embarrassing defeat in a state that borders her home of Massachusetts.

While Sanders marches forward, moderates are struggling to unite behind a candidate. After essentially tying with Sanders for first place in Iowa, Pete Buttigieg, the 38-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, began his day as the centrist front-runner. **AP**



Thai Army Chief Gen Apirat Kongsompong at a press conference in Bangkok. *Reuters*

Thai Army Chief: Gunman who killed 29 was not treated fairly in land deal

ASSOCIATED PRESS
 BANGKOK, FEBRUARY 11

THAILAND'S ARMY commander said Tuesday the soldier who killed 29 people in a shooting rampage had not been treated fairly in a land deal involving his commander and such arrangements would have to be halted.

The gunman killed his superior officer and the officer's mother-in-law, stole weapons and a vehicle and headed to a shopping mall in a northeastern city where he holed up for hours before security officers killed him.

"The perpetrator did not receive fair treatment from his superior and the relative," General Apirat Kongsompong said at a news conference in Bangkok. "They were involved in a land purchase deal that had gone wrong. We will investigate further about who else is involved in the issue."

Nepal suspends licence of hotel where 8 Indians died

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE
 KATHMANDU, FEBRUARY 11

NEPAL'S GOVERNMENT has suspended the licence of Panorama resort in Daman, a tourist destination near Kathmandu, where eight Indian tourists including four children died last month after inhaling carbon monoxide.

The decision, taken by the secretary of the Ministry of Tourism, said the operation of the resort, bar and other services would be barred for three months. They

were also instructed to take adequate safety measures and upgrade service facilities.

Eight people from two families from Kerala had inhaled carbon monoxide while using a kerosene heater in a single room with its windows shut on January 21, leading to their death in a Kathmandu hospital, 45 km away from Daman.

The hotel, run by Fortuna International Private Ltd, has also been asked to have itself classified based on service facilities when it resumes operations.

Trump admin proposes \$1.5 billion to ensure Indo-Pacific free of 'malign' China influence

LALIT K JHA
 WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 11

THE TRUMP administration has proposed \$1.5 billion in budgetary allocation for 2021 fiscal for the strategic Indo-Pacific, which it said was part of its efforts to ensure that the region remains free, open, and independent of "malign Chinese influence."

China has been trying to spread its influence in the Indo-Pacific region. To counter Beijing, the US has been pushing for a broader role by India in the strategically important region.

Beijing lays claim to huge

EXPLAINED: Efforts part of larger US focus on China, Indo-Pacific

THE TRUMP administration had declared from the outset that it wanted to pull US troops out of "endless wars" in the Middle East. Recently, the Pentagon chief also acknowledged that the US was shifting its military focus towards China. The US sees China's military movements in the South China Sea and its growing influence in the Indo-Pacific as a threat to Washington's own interests. The latest move seeking to allocate funds to enhance US influence in the region is an extension of this larger shift in focus.

swathes of the sea in the South China Sea where it has set up military facilities and artificial islands.

The White House in its budgetary proposal for the financial year 2021, beginning Oct 1, 2020,

WHAT BEGAN AS AN INTRICATE CONSPIRACY THEORY HAS NOW SURFACED IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS, CRIMINAL CASES, & MERCHANDISING

What happens when QAnon seeps from the Web to the offline world

MIKE MCINTIRE & KEVIN ROOSE
 FEBRUARY 11

A CITY council member in California took the dais and quoted from QAnon, a pro-Trump conspiracy theory about "deep state" traitors plotting against the President, concluding her remarks, "God bless Q".

A man spouting QAnon beliefs about child sex trafficking swung a crowbar inside a historic Catholic chapel in Arizona, damaging the altar and then fleeing before being arrested.

And outside a Trump campaign rally in Florida, people in "Q" T-shirts stopped by a tent to hear outlandish tales of Democrats' secretly torturing and killing children to extract a life-extending chemical from their blood.

What began online more than two years ago as an intricate, if baseless, conspiracy theory that quickly attracted thousands of followers has since found footholds in the offline world. QAnon has surfaced in political campaigns, criminal cases, merchandising and at least one college class. Last month, hundreds of QAnon enthusiasts gathered in

a Tampa, Florida, park to listen to speakers and pick up literature, and in England, a supporter of President Donald Trump and Brexit leader Nigel Farage raised a "Q" flag over a Cornish castle.

Most recently, the botched Iowa Democratic caucuses and the coronavirus outbreak have provided fodder for conspiracy mongering: QAnon fans shared groundless theories online linking liberal billionaire George Soros to technological problems that hobbled the caucuses, and passed around bogus and potentially dangerous "treatments" for the virus.

About a dozen candidates for



A rally for QAnon in Washington last year. *NYT*

public office in the United States have promoted or dabbled in QAnon, and its adherents have been arrested in at least seven episodes, including a murder in New York and an armed stand-off with police. The FBI cited QAnon in an intelligence bulletin last May about the potential for violence motivated by "fringe

political conspiracy theories".

Matthew Lusk, who is running unopposed in the Republican primary for a Florida congressional seat and openly embraces QAnon, said in an email that its anonymous creator was a patriot who "brings what the fake news will not touch without slanting". As for the theory's more extreme elements, Lusk said he was uncertain whether there really was a paedophile ring associated with the deep state. "That being said," he added, "I do believe there is a group in Brussels, Belgium, that do eat aborted babies."

The seepage of conspiracy the-

ories from the digital fever swamps into life offline is one of the more unsettling developments of the Trump era, in which the President has relentlessly pushed groundless conspiracies to reshape political narratives to his liking. In promoting fringe ideas about deep state schemes, Trump has at times elevated and encouraged QAnon followers — recirculating their posts on Twitter, posing with one for a photo in the Oval Office, inviting some to a White House "social media summit".

QAnon began in October 2017, when a pseudonymous user of the online message board 4chan

started writing cryptic posts under the name QClearance Patriot. The person claimed to be a high-ranking official privy to top-secret information from Trump's inner circle. Over two years and more than 3,500 posts, Q — whose identity has never been determined — has unspooled a sprawling conspiracy narrative that claims, among other things, that Trump was recruited by the military to run for office in order to break up a global cabal of pedophiles, and that special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation would end with prominent Democrats being sent to Guantánamo Bay. **NYT**