

# 21 THE WORLD

### TOP OF THE WORLD



At a protest. Reuters

### IRAQ President appoints new premier

**Baghdad:** Mohammad Allawi, a former communications minister, said Saturday he has been appointed Iraq's new premier, replacing Adel Abdel Mahdi who resigned under pressure from the street. The move could end the paralysis gripping Iraq's political elite, which has struggled to respond to four months of anti-regime rallies in Baghdad and mainly-Shiite southern Iraq. "... I wanted to talk to you first... I will ask you to keep up the protests, because if you are not with me, I won't be able to do anything," Allawi, 65, said in a video he posted to Twitter.

### YEMEN US drone hit building 'housing militants'

**Sanaa:** Tribal leaders said Saturday a suspected US drone strike destroyed a building housing al-Qaeda militants last week in Yemen. The tribal leaders said the drone strike took place in the Wadi Ubaidah area in the eastern province of Marib. The area is known as a stronghold for al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP, as the Yemeni affiliate is known. They said at least three explosions rocked the area, and that the building was set ablaze. It was not immediately clear how many militants were in the building or their identities.

### CHILE Four dead as protests grow

**Santiago:** A man died of carbon monoxide poisoning after a supermarket was torched in Chile's capital Friday, and another succumbed to injuries sustained in clashes with police, bringing the death toll in a new wave of unrest to four. Protests that flared up in October — initially over a rise in metro fares — had appeared to have calmed down. But there has been a spike in violent protests this week. A mob looted and then set fire to the supermarket in southern Santiago in the early hours of Friday. When firefighters arrived they found a dead man aged 30 to 40 and two other people suffering from signs of asphyxiation.



### AT THE STROKE OF BREXIT

■ Britain's Union Jack was removed from lines of EU member state flags at the European Council and European Parliament buildings in Brussels on Friday evening

■ In the UK, a party at Parliament Square and a light display count down at Downing Street marked the historic moment, while elsewhere there were some anti-Brexit rallies

■ 'This is the moment when the dawn breaks and the curtain goes up on a new act in our great national drama,' said UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson in a video message.

### Pak declares emergency to battle locusts

**SAJJAD HUSSAIN**  
ISLAMABAD, FEBRUARY 1



PAKISTAN, WHICH is facing its worst locust attack in decades, has declared national emergency to tackle the insects destroying crops on a large scale in Punjab province, country's main region for agricultural production. The decision was taken at a meeting convened by Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday. The meeting, attended by federal ministers and senior officials of the four provinces, also approved a National Action Plan (NAP) that requires a sum of Rs 7.3 billion to overcome the crisis. Minister for National Food

...the federal government should take all necessary steps to save national crops and provide required resources to the quarters concerned" — IMRAN KHAN

Security Khusro Bakhtiar informed the National Assembly about the gravity of the situation and the steps so far taken by the federal and provincial governments to deal with the crisis, the Dawn newspaper reported. During the meeting at the Prime Minister's Office, which was also attended by Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance Hafeez Shaikh among others, a detailed briefing on the overall situation was given to the PM. The meeting was informed that besides involving the officials concerned at the provincial and district levels, different tasks have been given to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), provincial disaster management authorities and federal and provincial departments to deal with the threat. Prime Minister Khan ordered formation of a high-level committee to be headed by Bakhtiar to take decisions at the federal level for the elimination of insects. The prime minister directed the authorities concerned to make immediate measures on the basis of damage of ripened crops. "Protection of farms and farmers is the highest priority of the government. Therefore, the federal government should take all necessary steps to save national crops and provide required resources to the quarters concerned," Khan was quoted as saying in the report. PTI

### RAPE CASE

### Weinstein yelled you owe me: Key accuser

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 1



A KEY accuser in Harvey Weinstein's trial testified Friday that he raped her twice, once bellowing, "You owe me!" as he dragged her into a bedroom. The first time, the heavyset Hollywood tycoon trapped her in a New York hotel room in March 2013, and angrily ordered her to undress as he loomed over her, and then raped her, she told jurors. Still, she kept in touch, sending him flattering emails, because "his ego was so fragile," she said, and it "made me feel safe, worshipping him in this sense. ... I wanted to be perceived as innocent and naive." Then, eight months later at a Los Angeles hotel where she worked as a hairdresser, she told Weinstein that she was dating an actor, she said. "You owe me one more time!" he screamed, she told jurors. She said she begged him not to take off her clothes, but he said, "I don't have time for games" and ripped off her

Weinstein leaves the court in New York. Reuters

pants before pushing her legs apart and raping her. Afterward, she said, she crawled into the bathroom, her eyes red and swollen from tears, and worried that he'd get angry if he knew she was crying. "OK, now go have your relationship," he told her, according to her testimony. His apology: "I just find you so attractive, I couldn't resist." The 34-year-old woman's testimony, which is set to continue Monday, is a pivotal moment in the rape case against the once-powerful movie producer who became one of the #MeToo movement's top targets.

### 4 ARE AFRICAN NATIONS, 3 HAVE MUSLIM-MAJORITY POPULATIONS

### Trump's expanded travel restrictions target Nigeria, five other countries

**TED HESSON**  
WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 1



US PRESIDENT Donald Trump issued an expanded version of his travel ban on Friday that targets prospective immigrants from Nigeria and five other countries, a move that could affect thousands of people and reignite debate on whether the policy is discriminatory. Of the six countries added to the ban, four are African nations and three have Muslim-majority populations. Democrats and immigration advocates accuse the Trump administration of seeking to expand its original 2017 ban that targeted Muslim-majority countries and of disproportionately focusing on African countries. Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf said during a call with reporters that the six countries failed to meet US security and information-sharing standards, which necessitated the new restrictions. The problems Wolf cited ranged from sub-par passport technology to

a failure to sufficiently exchange information on terrorism suspects and criminals. Belarus, which had been under consideration for inclusion, took steps to remedy deficiencies in recent months and will not face visa restrictions, Wolf said. The US will suspend the issuance of visas that can lead to permanent residency for nationals of Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Nigeria, a presidential proclamation said. Temporary visas for tourists, businesspeople, students and workers from those nations will not be affected, it said. REUTERS

### MALDIVES REJOINS COMMONWEALTH

Maldives was officially readmitted to the Commonwealth on Saturday more than three years after the Indian Ocean archipelago nation quit the organisation over criticism of its human rights record, taking the count of the bloc's membership countries back to 54. The island nation had quit the Commonwealth in October 2016 after being threatened with suspension over its human rights record and lack of progress on democratic reform

### BEIJING HITS OUT AT WASHINGTON

### US, Australia restrict entry as virus death toll in China hits 259

**AGENCIES**  
BEIJING, FEBRUARY 1

SEVERAL COUNTRIES, including India, scrambled to evacuate their nationals from the Chinese city of Wuhan, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak, as the death toll in China soared to 259 and nearly 12,000 people infected with the deadly virus. Chinese health authorities on Saturday announced that the death toll has increased to 259 as 46 more people, all but one in Hubei, died in the preceding 24 hours. With 2,102 new infections, the total confirmed cases in China increased to 11,791.



Screening at Basra airport in Iraq on Saturday. Reuters

The US and Australia are temporarily denying entry to noncitizens who have recently traveled to China. The American restrictions, announced on Friday, exempt immediate family members of American citizens and permanent residents. Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced Australia's temporary ban on Saturday, saying that "Australian citizens, Australian residents, dependents, legal guardians or spouses" would still be allowed into the country. China's government criticised the United States' measure, which it said contradicted the World Health Organisation's appeal to avoid travel bans, and "unfriendly comments" that Beijing was failing to cooperate. "Just as WHO recommended against travel restrictions, the US rushed to go in the opposite way. Certainly not a gesture of goodwill," said foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying.

### MEASURES AROUND THE WORLD

- HONG KONG**  
Thousands of Hong Kong medical workers voted Saturday to strike as they urge the government to close its border with the mainland. It has 13 confirmed cases so far
- BANGLADESH**  
Over 300 Bangladeshis on Saturday returned home from Wuhan on a special aircraft and were quarantined in a facility under military and police vigil, officials said
- JAPAN**  
Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan said the country would bar entry to foreigners who had visited Hubei within the past 14 days, or who had passports issued in Hubei
- VIETNAM**  
Vietnam has suspended all China flights, which applies to all airlines 'which have routes between Vietnam and China' and also includes Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan
- TAIWAN**  
Taiwan is barring Chinese nationals from Guangdong from entry beginning Sunday and travelers who recently visited the area will be subject to a 14-day quarantine.

### REIGNITES DEBATE AHEAD OF ELECTION

WITH THE new additions, Trump's travel ban now places restrictions on a total of 13 countries. While the Trump administration has cited security as the reason behind the move, it has been repeatedly criticised for excluding large groups of people "without adequate justification". Experts also suspect that the move, which comes as the 2020 poll season in the US is heating up, will be used by Trump to appeal to his voter base at a time when he is facing multiple allegations amid his impeachment trial.

### US ADVISES CITIZENS AGAINST TRAVEL TO PAK

ADVISING ITS citizens to reconsider visiting Pakistan due to terrorism, the US on Friday issued the highest level travel alert for Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa along with the Line of Control. The rest of the areas in Pakistan continues to remain on Level 3 of the travel alert. "Do not travel to the India-Pakistan border. Militant groups are known to operate in the area. India and Pakistan maintain a strong military presence on both sides of the border," it said. Indian and Pakistani military forces periodically exchange gunfire and artillery fire across the LoC, the advisory said. PTI



Mahmoud Abbas

### Abbas threatens to cut security ties with Israel, US

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
CAIRO, FEBRUARY 1

PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT Mahmoud Abbas threatened to cut security ties with both Israel and the US on Saturday, in a lengthy speech delivered at an Arab League meeting in Egypt's capital that denounced a White House plan for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The US plan would grant the Palestinians limited self-rule in parts of the occupied West Bank, while allowing Israel to annex all its settlements there and keep nearly all of east Jerusalem. The summit of Arab foreign ministers in Cairo was requested by the Palestinians, who responded angrily to the American proposal. Abbas said that he told Israel and the US that "there will be no relations with them, including the security ties" following the deal that Palestinians say heavily favours Israel. The Palestinian leader said that he'd refused to take US President Donald Trump's phone calls and messages "because I know that he would use that to say he consulted us." "I will never accept this solution," Abbas said. "I will not have it recorded in my history that I have sold Jerusalem." He said the Palestinians remain committed to ending Israeli occupation and establishing a state.

### LEGIONS OF READERS WERE ADDICTED TO HER PAGE-TURNERS

### Mary Higgins Clark, best-selling 'Queen of Suspense', dies at 92

**HELEN T VERONGOS**  
NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 1



Clark's books sold over 100 million copies in the US alone

MARY HIGGINS Clark, a fixture on best-seller lists for decades and a writer whose more than 50 novels earned her the sobriquet Queen of Suspense, died on Friday in Naples, Florida. She was 92. Her death was confirmed by her daughter Carol Higgins Clark, also a mystery novelist. In addition to Naples, Higgins Clark had homes in Saddle River and Manhattan and on Cape Cod. Higgins Clark, whose books have sold more than 100 million

copies in the United States alone, was still writing until recently, her daughter said, and had a book published in November. Legions of readers were addicted to her page-turners, which popped up on the market one after another. She wanted to create stories that would make a reader say: "This could be me. That could be my daughter. This could happen to us," she told Marilyn Stasio in a 1997 interview in The New York Times. In her memoir, "Kitchen Privileges" (2002), Ms. Higgins Clark described herself in her younger years as "aching, yearning, burning" to write, certain that she would succeed but needing guidance. There are, however,

two things that won't be found in her books — sex and profanity — and that choice was deliberate. In her first successful novel, "Where Are the Children?" (1975), which Ms. Higgins Clark sold for \$3,000, a young mother who is accused of killing her son and daughter changes her identity, finds a new husband and builds another family, only to have her second set of children disappear. Although she had begun pitching her first short stories to confession magazines when she was 16, Higgins Clark endured a rain of rejection slips for the next several years before she sold her first story,

"Stowaway," to Extension magazine in 1956. By then she had three children: Marilyn, Warren Jr and David. The fourth, born in 1956, was named Carol for a character in that story. The youngest, Patricia, was born in 1958. As the best sellers piled up, they would sustain her family beyond anything she had ever dreamed possible. In 1988, The New York Times reported that she had broken a record for what was believed to be "the first eight-figure agreement involving a single author." The multibook contract guaranteed her at least \$10.1 million. "All I have to do now is write

the books," she told The Times. In a statement on Friday, Simon & Schuster said that beginning with "Where Are the Children?," each of her 56 books had been a best seller. After 14 years of a marriage, Warren Clark, who worked in the shipping and airline industries, died of a heart attack in 1964, when Higgins Clark was 37. Higgins Clark married twice after she was widowed. Her brief second marriage is glossed over in her memoir as a mistake. The marriage was annulled, and in 1996 she married John Conneely, a former Merrill Lynch executive. He died in October 2018. Her five children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren survive her.

Even into her 90s, Higgins Clark continued to address her fans in online videos, appearing elegantly dressed and accessorised with glittering gems. In one video, Higgins Clark, who was grand marshal of the St. Patrick's Day parade in Manhattan in 2011, discussed the role of the Irish narrative heritage in her work and her legacy. "Let others decide whether or not I'm a good writer," she said. "I know I'm a good Irish storyteller." NYT