

17 THE WORLD

TOP OF THE WORLD



Imran Khan

PAKISTAN

Leader in Imran party apologises for 'offensive posters'

Lahore: A leader from Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's party, who put up banners with a slogan offensive to the minority Hindus in the country, has apologised after he came under fire from netizens as well as the party. Mian Akram Usman, a Lahore-based leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, had put up posters in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day, which was observed across the country on February 5, with the slogan "Hindu baat se nahii, laad se maanta hai" (Hindus cannot be reasoned with using words but by force).

SOUTH KOREA

#MeToo initiator slams top court

Seoul: The woman who started South Korea's #MeToo movement on Friday slammed the nation's highest court for quashing her abuser's conviction last month, saying the ruling effectively silenced whistleblowers and victims of sexual violence. Seo Ji-hyun said she was groped by her superior Ahn Tae-geun at a funeral in 2010. Seo's abuser, Ahn Tae-geun, walked free last month after his conviction for abuse of power was quashed by the top court. Ahn's release "practically paves the way for any companies or organisations to demote or fire internal whistle blowers as they please," Seo said.

RUSSIA

26 children repatriated from Syria camps

Moscow: Russia has repatriated 26 Russian children from Syria, a Kremlin official said Friday. Presidential children's rights ombudsman Anna Kuznetsova visited Syria to organize the effort and met with Syrian President Bashar Assad's wife, Asma, in Damascus. Kuznetsova said Friday the children aged between 2 and 15 were taken from the al-Hawl refugee camp in north-eastern Syria near the border with Iraq. A further nine children from the camp will be flown to Russia soon, she added.

OVER 31,000 CONFIRMED CASES

Virus toll hits 636 amid outrage over death of doctor who raised first alarm

AGENCIES

BEIJING, FEBRUARY 7

THE DEATH toll in China's novel coronavirus epidemic has climbed to 636 with 73 mortalities on Thursday, while the total number of confirmed cases crossed 31,000, Chinese health officials said on Friday.

Hubei province and its provincial capital Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus outbreak, reported 69 deaths on Thursday while Jilin, Henan, Guangdong and Hainan provinces reported one each, China's National Health Commission said.

As many as 73 people died on Thursday, while another 3,143 new cases of infection were reported, which took to 31,161 the total number of confirmed cases of novel coronavirus infection from 31 provincial-level regions, the commission said.

The death of a doctor who was reprimanded for warning about China's new virus triggered an outpouring of praise for him and fury that authorities put politics above public safety.

In death, Li Wenliang became the face of simmering anger at the ruling Communist Party's controls over information and complaints that officials lie about



LOVE IN THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS: Couples, some with masks, at a mass wedding in South Korea, despite fears that the event could help spread the coronavirus. Reuters

or hide disease outbreaks, chemical spills, dangerous consumer products or financial frauds.

The doctor died due to the very virus he tried to highlight in December last year through social media and has become a national icon with millions of netizens expressing their grief and anger over the way he was treated.

"A hero who released information about Wuhan's epidemic

in the early stage, Li Wenliang is immortal," the China Center for Disease Control's chief scientist, Zeng Guang, wrote on the Sina Weibo microblog service.

Police in December had reprimanded eight doctors including Li for warning friends on social media about the emerging threat. The doctor was forced to sign a letter on January 3, saying he had "severely disrupted

social order" and was threatened with charges.

China's ruling Communist Party has sent a high-level investigation team to Wuhan to probe Li's death on Thursday.

"We are deeply saddened by the passing of Dr Li Wenliang. We all need to celebrate work that he did on 2019nCoV," the World Health Organisation (WHO) tweeted.

Global shortage of protective masks: WHO

Geneva: The world is running out of masks and other protective equipment against the coronavirus, the World Health Organisation chief warned Friday.

"The world is facing a chronic shortage of personal protective equipment," Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told the WHO's executive board in Geneva.

He said he would be speaking to members of the supply chain network for protective gear to try and resolve "bottlenecks" in the production. WHO earlier this week said it had started sending masks, gloves, respirators, protective isolation gowns and test kits to countries requiring assistance.

Tedros also said some countries were still failing to share clinical data on confirmed cases of the virus. "We urge those member states to share that information immediately," he said. PTI

Assess virus epidemic in calm manner: Xi to Trump

PTI & REUTERS

BEIJING, FEBRUARY 7

CHINESE PRESIDENT Xi Jinping spoke on Friday with his US counterpart Donald Trump on the novel coronavirus outbreak and asked him to assess the epidemic in a "calm" manner, urging America to adopt and adjust its response measures in a "reasonable way" to China's intensified efforts to contain the dreaded virus that has claimed over 630 lives.

After the phone conversation, Trump said that Beijing is showing "great discipline" in tackling the coronavirus outbreak that has killed more than 600 people in China.

Xi, in his first phone call with Trump since the coronavirus outbreak in December, told the



We have adopted the most comprehensive and strictest prevention and control measures through mobilising and rapid responses...

— XI JINPING

US President that China had launched a "people's war" against the epidemic that has been wreaking havoc in China and across the world.

People's war is an ideological concept developed by the ruling Chinese Communist Party founder Mao Zedong which meant a prolonged struggle with the support of people while fighting for a particular cause.

"Nothing is easy, but he will be successful, especially as the weather starts to warm & the virus hopefully becomes weaker, and then gone," Trump said on Twitter here.

"Great discipline is taking place in China, as President Xi strongly leads what will be a very successful operation. We are working closely with China to help!"

BOTSWANA

ELEPHANT HUNTING LICENCES TO BE AUCTIONED

Botswana, home to the world's largest elephant population, on Friday was set to hold its first major auction for trophy elephant hunting quotas since scrapping a hunting ban last year. The government is issuing seven hunting "packages" of 10 elephants each, confined to "controlled hunting areas", a wildlife spokeswoman Alice Mmolawa told AFP on Thursday

Trump confirms killing of Al Qaeda leader in Yemen

LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 7

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump has confirmed that in a major counterterrorism operation in Yemen the US forces have killed Qasim al-Rimi, a founder and leader of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the jihadist group that claimed responsibility for a mass shooting at an American naval base.

Rimi, 46, a deputy to al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, was placed on the United States' most-wanted terrorist list after taking over al-Qaeda's Yemen affiliate in 2015. US government had offered a USD 10 million reward for information on Rimi.

"His death further degrades al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the global al-Qaeda movement, and it brings us closer to eliminating the threats these groups pose to our national security," Trump said on Thursday.

He said the major counterterrorism operation was carried at his direction.

"Rimi joined al-Qaeda in the 1990s, working in Afghanistan for Osama bin Laden. Under Rimi, AQAP committed unconscionable violence against civilians in Yemen and sought to conduct and inspire numerous attacks against the United States



Al Qaeda flag sprayed on a wall in Yemen. AP/File

and our forces," Trump said. "The United States, our interests, and our allies are safer as a result of his death. We will continue to protect the American people by tracking down and eliminating terrorists who seek to do us harm," he said.

While Trump confirmed that Rimi had been killed, he did not say when the US operation was conducted or divulged any details about how it was carried out.

The AQAP has long been considered al-Qaeda's most dangerous branch for its attempts to carry out attacks on the United States' mainland.

Rimi had said in an 18-minute video that his group was responsible for the December 6 shooting at US Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida, in which a Saudi Air Force officer killed three American sailors. PTI

Singapore raises its alert to SARS level

Singapore: Singapore on Friday raised its coronavirus alert level and reported more cases not linked to previous infections or travel to China, a move that sparked panic-buying of essentials in some shops across the island.

As Singapore's infected tally hit 33, the alert level was raised to orange — a level reached during the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak and the 2009 H1N1 influenza which indicates the virus is severe.

Shoppers started clearing shelves of toilet paper, noodles and rice, and formed long queues in supermarkets.

"I understand people are concerned after the announcement this afternoon. However, we must not hoard items unnecessarily. This will create undue panic and is unhelpful to the situation at hand," trade minister Chan Chun Sing said. REUTERS

After Iowa, muddled run-up for Democrats to New Hampshire

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANCHESTER, FEBRUARY 7

THE DEMOCRATIC Party's seven strongest presidential contenders are preparing for what could be the fiercest debate stage clash of the 2020 primary season as candidates look to survive the gauntlet of contests that lie ahead.

The field has been shaken and reshaped by chaotic Iowa caucuses earlier this week, and Friday's debate in New Hampshire — coming four days before the state's primary — offers new opportunity and risk for the shrinking pool of White House hopefuls.

Two candidates, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders and former Midwestern mayor Pete Buttigieg, enter the night as the top targets, having emerged from Iowa essentially tied for the lead. Those trailing after the first contest — including former Vice President Joe Biden, Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren and Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar — have an urgent need to demonstrate strength. Billionaire activist Tom Steyer and New York entrepreneur Andrew Yang, meanwhile, are fighting to prove they belong in the conversation. The rapidly evolving dynamic means that the candidates have a very real incentive to mix it up with their Democratic rivals.

While Warren and Sanders as presidential candidates have sworn off wealthy donors, Buttigieg and the rest of the field have continued to hold private finance events with big donors,

EXPLAINED Changing dynamics

THE IOWA results could be a turning point in the presidential race, and may highlight new dynamics in the next debate:

THE TOP TWO Pete Buttigieg and Bernie Sanders will enter the next debate with the most momentum. The top two contenders may seek to gain a clear lead by taking aim at each other.

TENSIONS LINGER Despite attempts to play down tensions after confronting each other over "lying" at an earlier debate, the dynamic between Sanders and Elizabeth Warren remains unclear.

FRONTRUNNER? Joe Biden's stance as the frontrunner has taken a hit after the Iowa primary. He will likely have to take on a more aggressive stance in future, in order to make up for lost ground.

some with connections to Wall Street. In fact, Buttigieg took the unusual step of leaving New Hampshire this week to hold three fundraisers with wealthy donors in the New York area.

Indian-origin doctor gets 3 life terms for sex assault

ADITI KHANNA

LONDON, FEBRUARY 7

AN INDIAN-origin doctor, who exploited women's cancer fears to carry out invasive intimate examinations, has been given three life sentences for 90 sexual assaults on female patients in London on Friday.

Manish Shah assaulted 23 women and a 15-year-old girl and was described by the judge as a "master of deception who abused his position of power".

"You made up stories which got into heads and caused panic," said Judge Anne Molyneux. "Your

behaviour was not only sexual but was driven by your desire to control and on occasions humiliate women," she said.

The doctor was found guilty of 25 sexual offences against six victims at Mawney Medical Centre last autumn. In 2018, he was convicted of offences relating to 18 other people, bringing the total number of offences to 90.

"He took advantage of his position to persuade women to have invasive vaginal examinations, breast examinations and rectal examinations when there was absolutely no medical need for them to be conducted," prosecutor Kate Bex said during the trial. PTI



WEST BANK PROTEST

At a protest against US President Donald Trump's Mideast plan, in West Bank, Friday. Reuters

ABOUT 6,800 ASYLUM SEEKERS ARE JAMMED INTO A CAMP ON SAMOS

On a Greek island, migrants, locals bear brunt of forces beyond their control

JASON HOROWITZ

SAMOS, FEBRUARY 7

ON THE slope of a hill on Samos, the Greek island known for its ancient ruins, colorful fishing villages and sweet muscat wine, sits a crammed migrant camp and sprawling tent city that many consider the most overcrowded and desperate refugee camp in Europe.

Giannis Meletiou, a 60-year-old lawyer, lives at the foot of the hill. The other day, he hopped in his jeep and drove a couple hundred yards up a nar-

row winding road lined with crowded tents. He waved at children, who lit up when they recognized him because he often prepares them sandwiches.

Then he drove past the migrant camp, topped with barbed wire and spilling out people, and rumbled past trees that migrants had stripped of their branches and chopped their trunks for firewood.

He reached his family's old property, in a field with a view of the sea and snowcapped mountains, and stood above a shingled rectangle of stone. It was all that remained of the home

where his parents took refuge during the Second World War. The migrants had taken the wooden walls, the windows, the doors and the roof. "Everything," he said with a shrug.

About 6,800 asylum seekers are jammed into the camp and fighting the elements in the olive groves and pine woods of the hill. Below is a quaint port town that is home to about 6,200 locals like Meletiou.

Together, the locals and asylum seekers bear the shared brunt of forces beyond their control — Greek government dysfunction, the cold shoulder of the



At the migrant camp in Samos. NYT

European Union, the chaos in the Middle East and the geopolitical calculations of Turkey.

Many in town, like Meletiou, are sympathetic to the migrants' plight, even as more arrived this summer by boat from Turkey. The town's mayor, Georgios Stantzios, is an avid scuba diver who volunteered to rescue asylum seekers and recover drowned bodies at the height of the crisis in 2015.

Inside the camp, on a recent day, Syrian teenagers applied masking tape over the slashes in their tent, left by thieves stealing cellphones in the night.

Haidar Kazamahai tried to keep his 1-year-old son warm next to a neighbor's camp fire and explained that the authorities gave him nothing but four blankets and instructions to make do. "I have a 2-and-a-half-year-old girl," he said. "And my little boy."

Down the road, Mara Shahir, 67, a doctor from Syria, taught some boys how to ignite a campfire with a plastic bag. "In the future, they'll know how to keep warm," he said.

After months on the island, Shahir and most of his family received a sought-after spot on

a nine-hour ferry ride to take the next steps in their application process on the mainland. There, many were transferred to Ritsona, a camp with much better conditions, outside Athens.

Herutur Icapesa Matinda, 29, from Congo, had earlier made the trip from Samos to the camp, and celebrated by leading Syrian children in a song and dance.

"Ritsona?" Mr. Matinda called out. "Good," the children sang, copying his moves. "Samos?" he called. "Bad," they said. NYT