

NEWSIN brief

Australia arrests 3 on terror charges

AFP, Melbourne

Three men who allegedly plotted "chilling" terror attacks in Melbourne were charged early yesterday, less than two weeks after a stabbing rampage inspired by the Islamic State group left two dead in Australia's second city, police said. The trio, all Australian nationals of Turkish descent, were detained by counter-terror police in overnight raids.

Lanka reinstates top detective after outcry

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan police yesterday reversed a decision sacking a top detective investigating a string of high-profile gruesome cases involving the rich and powerful, following intense protests. The island nation has been politically paralysed since October 26 when President Maithripala Sirisena controversially sacked prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe.

India ammunition depot blast kills six

AFP, Mumbai

An explosion at an ammunition dump in India killed six people yesterday, police said, underscoring concerns over the country's handling of military equipment. Staff were disposing of Russian anti-aircraft shells out of production since 2014 when a box was dropped and exploded, the Times of India reported.

Chilli powder thrown at Delhi CM Kejriwal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A man hurled chilli powder at Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal outside his office here yesterday. The attacker, identified as Anil Kumar, has been taken into custody, officials said. Kejriwal was going for lunch when the attack took place outside the chief minister's chamber on the third floor of the Delhi Secretariat, AAP spokesman Raghav Chadha tweeted.

PNG police storm parliament over pay

AFP, Port Moresby

Papua New Guinea police and soldiers stormed the country's parliament yesterday, assaulting staff, smashing windows and demanding unpaid APEC bonuses just days after the international summit wrapped up, police and witnesses said. The Pacific nation had rolled out the red carpet for visiting world leaders during the two-day conference.

BITS OF HISTORY (NOVEMBER 20)

- 1945:** Twenty-four German World War Two leaders went on trial for war crimes in Nuremberg.
- 1947:** Princess Elizabeth, heir to the British throne, married Prince Philip Mountbatten at Westminster Abbey.
- 1998:** Russia launched the first module of the \$60 billion International Space Station from the Baikonur cosmodrome.

Six survive 84-floor lift drop in Chicago

USA TODAY ONLINE

An elevator inside Chicago's former Hancock building dropped 84 floors before trapping six people inside, local news outlets reported. Rescuers arrived shortly after the fall early Friday morning to cut a hole in the building's wall and free those inside.

The accident unfolded at in the 875 North Michigan Avenue building, formerly known as the John Hancock Center and the city's fourth tallest building, the Chicago Tribune reported. Guests entered the elevator after leaving building's Signature Room — a bar with stunning views of downtown from the 95th floor — before at least one cables holding the car broke.

A sudden "clack clack clack" noise occurred, passenger Jaime Montemayor, 50, told the Tribune, before dust began seeping into the car. Those aboard screamed, prayed and cried, the newspaper reported.

"I believed we were going to die," Montemayor, who was visiting from Mexico, told CBS Chicago. Firefighters arrived to make a rescue, eventually locating the car near the 11th floor and cutting an opening in a concrete wall, the station reported. Those inside were pulled to safety, leaving cables hanging next to the elevator's cracked door.

The whole process took nearly three hours.

"It was a pretty precarious situation where we had the cables that were broke were on top of the elevator," said Chicago Fire Department Battalion Chief Patrick Maloney, per ABC 7 Chicago.

None rescued from the trapped needed hospitalization, CBS Chicago noted, and visitors to the tower on Friday were using freight elevators to reach its top.



A migrant, part of a caravan of thousands traveling from Central America en route to the United States, poses for a photo after climbing up the border fence between Mexico and United States while moving to a new shelter in Mexicali, Mexico on Monday. Inset, migrants queue for aid in a shelter in Tijuana, Mexico.

PHOTO: REUTERS

White House backs down from legal fight

Restores CNN reporter's press pass

AFP, Washington

The White House said Monday it restored in full the media credentials of CNN reporter Jim Acosta, ending a contentious legal battle, but also warned that he may be ejected again if he fails to abide by new rules being implemented for media events with the US president.

CNN said it was dropping its lawsuit on Acosta's access, a case that raised concerns over constitutional rights for the press.

"Today the @WhiteHouse fully restored @Acosta's press pass," CNN said on Twitter. "As a result, our lawsuit is no longer necessary. We look forward to continuing to cover the White House."

The White House said it also issued new rules that call for journalists to "ask a single question" and then "yield the floor." Follow-up questions will only be taken "at the discretion of the president or other White House official."

"We have created these rules with a degree of regret," White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said in a statement.

"We would have greatly preferred to continue hosting White House press conferences in reliance on a set of understood professional norms... But, given the position taken by CNN, we now feel obligated to replace previously shared practices with explicit rules."

Sanders added that "a more elaborate and comprehensive set of rules might need to be devised" for interactions with the president outside the White House, but that it is holding back for now "in the hope that professional journalistic norms will suffice to regulate conduct in those places."

Acosta returned to the White House on Friday following a court order from a judge hearing CNN's lawsuit alleging that Acosta's ejection after a heated exchange with Trump violated constitutional free press guarantees.



Gunman kills 3 at Chicago hospital

REUTERS, Chicago

A gunman shot a doctor to death outside a Chicago hospital on Monday before storming the facility and killing a pharmaceutical assistant and a police officer during an exchange of gunfire and dying in the rampage, officials said.

The shooter knew the doctor he shot outside Mercy Hospital, Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson told a news conference, describing the initial killing as an act of domestic violence.

The gunman was the ex-fiance of the doctor, Chicago media outlets reported, with one witness saying he demanded a ring back.

Trump hits out at Pak over bin Laden capture

Islamabad summons US envoy to protest criticism

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump repeated Monday that Al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden, killed by US Navy SEALs in May 2011, should have been captured much earlier, casting blame on his predecessors and Pakistan.

"Of course we should have captured Osama Bin Laden long before we did," the US president tweeted, echoing remarks he gave to "Fox News Sunday" that drew the ire of Pakistan, where bin Laden had been hiding.

"I pointed him out in my book just BEFORE the attack on the World Trade Center," he continued.

"President Clinton famously missed his shot. We paid Pakistan Billions of Dollars & they never told us he was living there. Fools!"

Ten years after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, bin Laden was found to be hiding in the Pakistani city of

Abbottabad, where he was killed in a raid by US Navy SEALs approved by Trump's predecessor Barack Obama.

The assault sent relations between the wayward allies to a new low.

In his interview on Sunday, the Republican leader had said he canceled assistance worth hundreds of millions of dollars to Pakistan earlier this year because "they don't do anything for us, they don't do a damn thing for us."

Trump had also told Fox News that bin Laden had lived "beautifully in Pakistan and what I guess in what they considered a nice mansion. I don't know, I've seen nicer."

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan hit back at Trump's claim, calling on the president to name an ally that has sacrificed more against militancy.

Pakistan yesterday summoned the US Chargé d'Affaires in Islamabad to protest against remarks made by Trump.



Spain threatens to veto Brexit deal

REUTERS, Madrid

Spain will vote against the European Union's draft Brexit deal on Sunday unless it is modified to make clear that the future of the disputed British territory of Gibraltar relies on talks between Madrid and London, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said.

Spain's demands on Gibraltar are the latest push by EU states to obtain more on national interests ahead of Sunday's summit of EU leaders, but diplomats said there was little concern these would scupper prospects for a deal.

"As of today, if there are no changes with respect to Gibraltar, Spain will vote no to the agreement on Brexit," Sanchez said during a conference in Madrid yesterday.

According to EU rules, the withdrawal treaty is adopted by qualified majority and not unanimity. So a single state like Spain cannot block it. The EU's executive said it was aware of Spain's concerns and it expected the issue to be resolved.

A small peninsula on Spain's southern coast and a British territory since 1713, Gibraltar is a major point of contention in Anglo-Spanish relations. Spain has long claimed sovereignty over it. Gibraltar is due to leave the European Union along with the United Kingdom in March, although 96 percent of its population voted in the 2016 referendum to remain in the bloc.

While Spain last week initially welcomed a protocol on Gibraltar in the draft Brexit agreement, Foreign Minister Josep Borrell on Monday said there was confusion over Gibraltar in the main body of the agreement.



This handout photo provided by the South Korean Defence Ministry in Seoul and taken yesterday shows a North Korean guard post being blown up in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), as seen from the South Korean border observatory. Pyongyang blew up 10 guard posts in the Demilitarized Zone as the two Koreas pursue a reconciliation drive.

PHOTO: AFP

Xi visits Philippines to cosy up to US ally

Deal to cooperate on oil, gas development inked

AFP, Manila

Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday called his visit to long-time US ally the Philippines a "milestone", as he aims to boost blossoming ties on the promise of billions of dollars in backing for mega-projects.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has proven a willing recipient of Beijing's attentions, declaring shortly after his election in 2016 his nation's "separation" from former colonial master the US.

Since then Beijing, which is competing with Washington for supremacy in the Pacific, has promised \$24 billion in investment and infrastructure loans that the developing nation of 105 million deeply needs.

But over two years later, only a trickle of funding has arrived, prompting critics to question whether Duterte has been duped into pivoting toward China and giving too much ground on the South China Sea dispute.

Xi landed in Manila to a red-carpet welcome for the first state visit from a Chinese

president in 13 years, which Manila hopes will finally net those investment deals.

"For the Philippines, this is more than a reciprocal visit. It is an historic occasion," Duterte said in welcoming Xi to the presidential palace for the two-day visit.

The Chinese leader offered similarly sweeping remarks, saying: "My visit will be a milestone in the history of exchange between our two countries."

Few details were released on the deals inked yesterday, including an agreement to cooperate on oil and gas development.

China has disbursed tens of billions of dollars in loans since 2013 as it expands its political influence globally, countering the American hegemony that characterised the post-World War II order, especially in Asia.

However, even before Xi's arrival, hundreds of protestors descended on the Chinese embassy to voice opposition to closer ties with Beijing.



Amitabh clears farmers' debts

AGENCIES

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has helped farmers of Uttar Pradesh by paying off their loans.

The 76-year-old actor paid off loans of 1398 farmers from the state, that amounted to over Rs 4.05 crore.

He shared the news in his blog where he wrote, "Gratitude leans across to the desire of removing some of the burdens that farmers continue to suffer from... It was Maharashtra first, when over 350 farmers loans were taken care of... now its UP and 1398 of them that had out standings of loans on banks has been done with an outlay of 4.05 crore... and the inner peace it generates when the desired is completed."

Tens of thousands of Indian farmers struggle with debt.

For decades now, the farming industry has been blighted by drought, the depletion of the water table, declining productivity and a lack of modernisation. Farm suicides have been linked to these issues - at least 300,000 farmers have taken their lives since 1995.

Bachchan, who is 76, remains one of India's most popular and best-known actors.

Since it would difficult to bring all of the farmers to Mumbai city, where he lives, he said he had reserved a train coach to bring 70 of them to meet him to receive the bank documents, reported BBC. They are expected to arrive on 26 November.

Earlier this year Bachchan paid off the loans of 350 farmers from Mumbai's Maharashtra state. Thousands of farmers in the state staged massive protests last year demanding loan waivers and better crop prices.



Ivanka used personal email for govt work

AFP, Washington

The US president's daughter and senior advisor Ivanka Trump used a personal email account for government business in violation of federal records rules, The Washington Post reported Monday.

The Post, citing anonymous sources, said the discovery was made by White House officials reviewing emails in response to a public records lawsuit.

When asked about it, Trump said she was unfamiliar with details of the rules, the Post said.

A spokesman for Trump's attorney confirmed that she did use a private email account before she was informed of the rules, and said that all her government-related emails had been turned over months ago, the newspaper reported.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly pilloried Hillary Clinton, his rival in the 2016 presidential election, for her use of a private email server for government business while she was secretary of state.

He also called on Russia to help locate some 30,000 emails that Clinton had not turned over to investigators after she, or her lawyers, determined it was unnecessary as they were personal messages.

Then FBI director James Comey -- fired by the president last year -- announced that the bureau would reopen an investigation into Clinton's use of the private email server just 11 days before the 2016 presidential vote, a move that some say may have helped cost her