

NEWS IN brief

Muslim leaders gather in Malaysia for summit

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

Leaders and senior representatives from some 20 Muslim nations flocked to the Malaysian capital yesterday to discuss issues agitating Muslims globally at a summit. Saudi Arabia decided to snub, and Pakistan ducked out of attending. No agenda for the Kuala Lumpur Summit has been released, but it could address age-old disputes in Kashmir and the Middle East, the conflicts in Syria and Yemen, the plight of Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim minority, and mounting outrage over China's camps for Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang.

US Congress okays space force

AFP, Washington

The US Senate approved a massive defense spending bill on Tuesday, sending Donald Trump a \$738 billion package that creates a new space force, fulfilling a presidential priority, and seeks to curb Russia's sprawling energy ambitions. The National Defense Authorization Act, which passed 86 to eight, marks a jump from the \$716 billion in funding authorized last year. It will go to fund a wide range of military activities.

Boko Haram jihadists kill 14 in Chad

AFP, N'djamena

Fourteen people were killed and 13 were missing after Boko Haram jihadists attacked a fishing village in western Chad on Tuesday, government officials said. "There were 14 dead, five wounded and 13 missing in the attack" near the village of Kaiga on the shores of Lake Chad, Imouya Souabebe, the prefect of the region, said. Kaiga lies in marshland in a remote region where the borders of four countries meet.



Demonstrators wave the national flag of India and shout slogans during a protest against a new citizenship law, on the outskirts of Mumbai, India yesterday. Inset, Students and supporters hold placards as they protest outside Jamia Millia Islamia university against the law in New Delhi.

PHOTO: REUTERS, AFP



UK risks more in post-Brexit talks

Warns EU chief Ursula von der

AFP, Strasbourg

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen yesterday warned that failing to rapidly negotiate a new trade deal after Brexit would hurt Britain more than it would the EU.

"The timetable ahead of us is extremely challenging," she told the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

"In case we cannot conclude an agreement by the end of 2020, we will face again a cliff edge. This would clearly harm our interests but it will impact more the UK than us."

Euro-sceptic British MEPs laughed at the warning, but it reflects a pessimistic mood among Brussels officials.

"Time is limited and it won't be possible to do everything, but we'll do everything we can. We can't do it all but we will give it our all," EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier said.

"After the transition period we'll have to continue to work with the British and to negotiate," he said.

Britain is due to leave the European Union on January 31, but will remain in a transitional arrangement until the end of the year while negotiators debate future trade ties.

Under the withdrawal agreement which Prime Minister Boris Johnson has agreed with Europe but not yet pushed through parliament, the UK could ask for a one or two year extension.

But Johnson, who last week won a comfortable majority in the UK general election, insists he will not ask for more time and is preparing legislation to forbid such a move.

In this case, negotiators will only have 11 months to conclude a trade agreement, a task that officials on both sides have warned is extremely ambitious.

'Your job is to douse fire'

Mamata lashes out at Amit Shah during third protest march against amended citizenship law

PTI, Kolkata

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday lashed out at Union home minister Amit Shah for bringing in the amended citizenship law, which she termed "divisive", and said he must douse the fire caused by the legislation.

The TMC supremo said if Aadhaar is not a proof of citizenship as per the home minister, then why was it linked to welfare schemes and the banking system.

"I urge Amit Shah to ensure that the country does not burn. Your job is to douse the fire," she said after leading the third protest march against the amended citizenship law from Howrah Maidan to Esplanade in Kolkata.

The chief minister also appealed to Shah to take care of the country and "control" BJP cadres.

In a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' slogan, she said the BJP government has brought disaster for everyone in the country.

"They want to turn the entire country into a detention centre. But we will not let that happen," she said, reiterating that she won't allow the implementation of the citizenship

law and the NRC in West Bengal.

The Chief Minister has already stopped work on the National Population Register - considered the first step before rolling out the citizens' list across the country that's meant to weed out illegal migrants. Mamata is one of the three Chief Ministers who have refused to implement the citizenship law - meant to expedite citizenship for non-Muslims from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who moved to India till 2014 after facing religious persecution.

The other two are Kerala's Pinarayi Vijayan and Punjab's Amarinder Singh.

Meanwhile, one of India's top Muslim cleric yesterday appealed for restraint while exercising the democratic right to protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act.

Syed Ahmed Bukhari, the Shahi Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, stressed that the CAA "has nothing to do with Muslims living in India," according to a video posted by Indian news agency ANI.

Imam Ahmed Bukhari's appeal for restraint came after violence at Delhi's Jamia Millia University on Sunday and arson and pitched battles between protesters and Delhi Police at Seelampur in east Delhi.

BJP wants to turn the country into a detention centre: Mamata

Citizenship law won't affect Muslims: Jama Masjid Shahi Imam



Pak govt to save Musharraf in court on appeal: AG

Says ex-president was not given fair trial

DAWN ONLINE

Termining the high treason trial against former military ruler Pervez Musharraf "unfair", the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government on Tuesday decided to defend the self-exiled, ailing ex-president during the hearing of an appeal to be filed on his behalf.

"I will defend the law in the case but not any individual," said Attorney General Anwar Mansoor in the late-night joint press conference that he addressed along with Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan.

He said former president Musharraf had not been given the right of fair trial during the case tried in a special court and the judgement was announced in absentia without recording statement of the accused.

The attorney general said the verdict raised questions about "urgency in pronouncing the judgement when Musharraf was in critical condition in ICU"

in Dubai.

"Musharraf was not given a chance to record his statement under Article 342 (of the Constitution), to present his testimony and witnesses and his request to record his statement through video link or before a commission was turned down by the judge," he added.

"There is no question that a person who had committed treason must be punished but in this case the right of fair trial guaranteed under the Constitution was not ensured. A trial should not just be fair but also seen to be fair," he insisted.

The attorney general argued before the media that one of the major flaws in the case was that those who might have assisted

Gen Musharraf in enforcing emergency in the country "had not been made party" in the case. He said if Gen Musharraf had been given a chance to record his statement and present his witnesses, he might have come up with "logical" reasons in support of emergency he had proclaimed in 2007.



US IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS WHO'S IN THE CLUB NO ONE WANTS TO JOIN

Before Donald Trump, three other US presidents faced impeachment proceedings. None were ousted by impeachment, although Richard Nixon resigned rather than be impeached.

1868: JOHNSON SURVIVES BY ONE VOTE

Democrat President Andrew Johnson's push for reconstruction after the American Civil War, including by reintegrating the southern States into the Union, put him in conflict with the Congress. Congress vetoed all his legislation including the "Black Codes" - racist laws voted by representatives from the South. In the impasse, Johnson fired his secretary of war, prompting Congress to launch impeachment proceedings - the first in US history. On February 24, 1868, the House of Representatives voted 11 articles of impeachment, notably over his attempt to replace an office holder appointed by the Senate. But after a weeks-long trial, the Senate in May fell one vote short of the two-thirds majority required for a conviction.

1974: NIXON RESIGNS BEFORE IMPEACHMENT

During Republican President Richard Nixon's 1972 campaign for re-election, burglars were sent to bug the Democratic headquarters in the Watergate building in Washington. The operation was bungled and the burglars were caught, the scandal being revealed in investigative reporting by the Washington Post newspaper. Nixon attempted to cover-up his involvement. But on July 24, 1974 the US Supreme Court ordered him to hand over clandestine recordings of his private Oval Office conversations which provided the proof that he and his top advisors had engaged in an elaborate cover-up of the crime. On July 30, the House Judiciary Committee approved three impeachment articles: obstruction of justice, abuse of power and attempt to impede the impeachment process by defying committee subpoenas for evidence. Before the articles could be considered by the House of Representatives, which would have almost certainly voted for his ouster, Nixon quit on August 9.



1999: CLINTON ACQUITTED

In 1998, Democratic President Bill Clinton denied under oath a sexual affair with Monica Lewinsky, a former White House intern nearly half his age. Lewinsky at first also denied any improper relationship but later admitted to an affair, as Clinton eventually did. It led to calls for his impeachment for lying under oath and trying to cover up the affair. On December 12-13, 1998, the House Judiciary Committee - voting almost exclusively along party lines - approved four articles of impeachment. On December 19, the House of Representatives voted for impeachment on just two articles: perjury before a grand jury and obstruction of justice. But at the Senate vote on February 12, 1999, the 45 Democratic senators stayed united against the 55 Republicans to block a two-thirds vote for conviction. Clinton remained in office until the end of his term in 2001.

SOURCE: AFP



China's President Xi Jinping greets children waving the flags of China and Macau upon his arrival at Macau's international airport in Macau yesterday, ahead of celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the handover from Portugal to China. PHOTO: AFP

Australia bakes on hottest day

Continent hit by two separate climate driving events; thick smoke and intense heat trigger health warnings

AFP, Sydney

Australia this week experienced its hottest day on record and the heatwave is expected to worsen, exacerbating an already unprecedented bushfire season, authorities said yesterday.

The average nationwide temperatures of 40.9 degrees Celsius (105.6 degrees Fahrenheit) on Tuesday beat the previous record of 40.3 degrees Celsius in January 2013, the Bureau of Meteorology said.

"This heat will only intensify further today," meteorologist Diana Eadie said.

The heatwave is another alarm bell about global warming in Australia, where this year's early and intense start to regular summer bushfires has heaped pressure on the Australian government to do more to tackle climate change.

Hundreds of bushfires have been raging across Australia for months, including a "mega-blaze" burning north of Sydney, the country's biggest city, reports AFP.

Smoke from the fires has engulfed Sydney, raising air pollution to levels so hazardous that leading doctors have labelled the event a "public health emergency".

At least three million hectares (7.4 million acres) of land has been torched across Australia, with six people killed and



about 700 homes destroyed.

Scientists say the blazes have come earlier and with more intensity than usual due to global warming and a prolonged drought that has left the land tinder dry and many towns running out of water.

Australia is being hit with two separate climate-driving events off its west and southern coasts - a positive Indian Ocean Dipole and negative Southern Annular Mode - that are reducing rainfall and increasing temperatures, reports Reuters.

The fires have sparked climate protests targeting the conservative government, which has resisted pressure to address the root causes of global warming in order to protect the country's lucrative coal export industry.

The combination of thick smoke settling over populated areas and intense heat has triggered numerous health warnings, especially for the young and the old.

"People should take those conditions seriously and do what they can to keep out of the heat as much as possible," said Richard Broome, the director of environmental health in New South Wales state.

Record spot temperatures were recorded this week in Western Australia, where firefighters have also been battling blazes raging across thousands of hectares of land.

China postpones UNSC discussion on Kashmir

China has postponed a discussion by the UN Security Council planned for Tuesday about the situation in the disputed Indian territory of Jammu and Kashmir because the UN peacekeeping mission there was not ready to provide a brief, diplomats said. The Himalayan region has long been a flashpoint in ties between nuclear-armed neighbours India and Pakistan, with both claiming Kashmir in full but ruling it in part. Diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, said China's UN Ambassador Zhang Jun told the council on Tuesday that he would again request the meeting when the peacekeeping mission was ready to give a detailed briefing.

2012 gang-rape case: India SC rejects death penalty plea

India's top court yesterday dismissed an appeal against the death penalty by one of four men convicted of the gang-rape of a woman on a bus in New Delhi and her murder, saying it found no reason to review the sentence. The four were convicted in 2013 of the rape, torture and murder of the 23-year-old physiotherapy student in New Delhi in 2012, an attack that triggered shockwaves across the world. The woman died of her injuries in hospital in Singapore. The case prompted India to enact tough new laws against sexual violence, including the death penalty for rape in some cases.

Japanese journalist wins high-profile #MeToo case



A Tokyo court yesterday awarded 3.3 million yen (\$30,000) in damages to journalist Shiori Ito, who accused a former TV reporter of rape in one of the most high-profile cases of the #MeToo movement in Japan. The civil case made headlines in Japan and abroad, as it is rare for rape victims to report the crime to the police -- according to a 2017 government survey, only four percent of women come forward. Ito, 30, has become an outspoken symbol for #MeToo in Japan, where the movement against sexual harassment and abuse has struggled to take hold. She had sought 11 million yen (\$100,000) in compensation from Noriyuki Yamaguchi, a former TV reporter with close links to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS