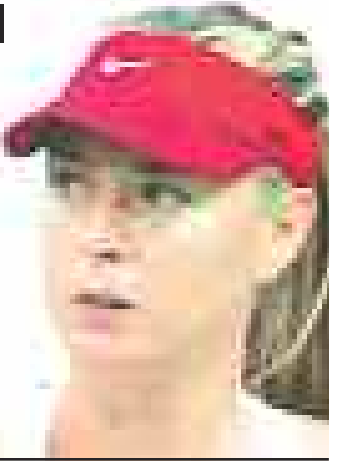


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Pope, UN chief for environmental, religious tolerance

The Business

An English Daily published simultaneously from Lahore and Faisalabad

Sharapova still has 'fire and motivation' despite 2019 misery



India's cyber chief admits Pakistan's superiority: ISPR

The Business Report

NEW DELHI: India's National Cyber Security chief has admitted the superiority of Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) in the narrative warfare, The Times of India reported.

According to details, National Cyber Security Coordinator Lieutenant General Rajesh Pant (ret'd) — while ruling the absence of Indian equivalent of the ISPR — said the three wings of the Indian armed forces have their own public relations officers and all of them go in different directions.

"When are we going to have our own equivalent of the DGISPR because the (Indian armed forces) services have their own PRs and they are going in different ways. Somebody at the national level now has to look at the narrative warfare and how to implement it in various domains," he said.

Rajesh Pant praised media wing of the Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged that Pakistan has got its act together through the ISPR.

Four, including Pak national, die in Greece: FO

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office on Saturday confirmed a Pakistani national is among the four people who died of asphyxiation in Greece on Dec 19.

"According to available information four persons had died on 19 December 2019 due to gas suffocation in a factory in Kalivia, a place 50 kilometres from Athens," read a statement issued by Spokesperson Ayesha Farooqui in response to media reports about the death of Pakistanis in Greece. According to local authorities, thus far one deceased has been identified as a Pakistani national as identification of the remaining three is in process. The spokesperson said the Pakistan Embassy in Athens is in close contact with local authorities and will provide necessary assistance and facilitation to bereaved families.

Academic Junaid sentenced to death for blasphemy

The Business Report

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani anti-terrorism court on Saturday sentenced a liberal scholar and former university lecturer to death on blasphemy charges.

In 2013, Junaid Hafeez was accused by students at the university where he taught of making blasphemous Facebook posts.

His lawyers say he was framed by students from an extremist Islamist party for his liberal and secular views and this month a US religious freedom commission placed Hafeez on its list of global victims.

"He (Junaid Hafeez) shall be hanged by neck till his death subject to its confirmation by the honourable high court," a court order stated. According to the court's short judgement, "All the sentences shall run consecutively and the accused would not be entitled to the benefit of Section 382-B CrPC because in case of blasphemy, this court has got no circumstance for taking [a] lenient view and it is also not permitted in Islam."

Under Section 382-B of the Criminal Procedure Code, the period of detention of a prisoner has to be considered in the prison term when a person is convicted by a trial court. His defense lawyer Asad Jamal said he would appeal against the ruling in a higher court. "There can't be a fair trial in blasphemy cases in Pakistan," Jamal told Reuters. "We have a spineless system. No one can stand up to a blasphemy charge."

Hafeez, who quit his studies at Pakistan's top medical college to pursue a passion for art and literature, secured a Fulbright scholarship and attended Jackson State University where he majored in American literature, photography and theatre. The trial was held in a prison in the central Pakistan city of Multan under tight security due to threats to Hafeez's family and his lawyer.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi administers the oath of office to Justice Gulzar Ahmed as Chief Justice of Pakistan. Prime Minister Imran Khan is also present on the occasion.

India moving towards Hindu Rashtra, says PM

■ Threat to Pakistan from India also increasing

The Business Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan has on Saturday said that India has been moving towards Hindu Rashtra with its Hindutva Supremacist fascist ideology over the last five years of PM Narendra Modi's government.

The premier took to Twitter and stated that all those Indians who want a pluralist India are beginning to protest and it is becoming a mass movement with the Citizens Amendment Act. Imran Khan said, "At the same time the siege by Indian Occupation forces in IOJK continues and a bloodbath can be expected when it is lifted. As these protests are increasing, threat to Pakistan from India is also increasing. Indian Army Chief statement adds to our concerns of a False Flag operation."

He further added, "I have been warning the international community of this for some time and am reiterating again: if India does such an

operation to divert attention from its domestic chaos plus whip up war hysteria to mobilise Hindu nationalism, Pakistan will have no option but to give a befitting response.

Another report adds: Prime Minister Imran Khan Saturday warned the international community of a befitting response to any Indian false flag operation aimed at diverting attention from its domestic chaos and to whip up war hysteria to mobilize the Hindu nationalism.

"I have been warning the international community of this for some time and am reiterating again: if India does such an operation to divert attention from its domestic chaos plus whip up war hysteria to mobilise Hindu nationalism, Pakistan will have no option but to give a befitting response," he said in a series of tweets. He said over the last five years of Modi's government, India had been moving towards Hindu Rashtra with its Hindutva Supremacist fascist ideology.

Now with the Citizens Amend-

ment Act, all those Indians who want a pluralist India are beginning to protest and it is becoming a mass movement, he observed.

At the same time, he said the siege by Indian occupation forces in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kash-

mir continued and a bloodbath could be expected when it was lifted.

"As these protests are increasing, threat to Pakistan from India is also increasing. Indian Army Chief's statement adds to our concerns of a false flag operation," the Prime Min-

PM, COAS discuss current situation, greet new CJP

By Our Staff Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Saturday called on Prime Minister Imran Khan after an oath-taking ceremony of newly sworn-in Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Gulzar Ahmed held at Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad. President Arif Alvi and CJP Justice Gulzar Ahmed were also present during the meeting.

Prime Minister Imran Khan, Chief of Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi, National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser, Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Law Minister Farogh Naseem and various ministers attended the oath-taking ceremony. Former chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry also attended the ceremony.

Trump okays Russia-Europe gas pipeline sanctions

■ Germany, EU hit out at US over sanctions on Russian gas pipeline

The Business Report

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has signed off on US sanctions against companies building a Russian natural gas pipeline to Germany that Congress fears will give the Kremlin dangerous leverage over European allies.

The sanctions, which are opposed by the European Union, were included in a sprawling defence spending bill Trump signed at a ceremony on Joint Base Andrews, an air force installation outside Washington, DC. They target companies building the nearly \$11 billion Nord Stream 2 pipeline under the Baltic Sea with the aim of doubling deliveries of Russian natural gas to Europe's leading economy, Germany.

US lawmakers have warned the pipeline would enrich a hostile Russian government and vastly increase

President Vladimir Putin's influence in Europe at a time of heightened tension across the continent.

Both houses of Congress overwhelmingly approved the sanctions, with the Senate voting Tuesday to send the measure to Trump's desk.

Trump, who has been accused by Democratic opponents of being soft on Putin, had little choice but to give his approval. The sanctions were inserted into a much wider \$738 billion annual Pentagon funding bill and, given the level of congressional support, a veto would likely have been overturned. The US measures have angered Moscow and the European Union, which says it should be able to decide its own energy policies.

Germany's foreign minister, Heiko Maas, discussed the issue during a phone call Friday with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, State Department spokeswoman

Morgan Ortagus said. Pompeo expressed "strong opposition" to the project, Ortagus said in a statement.

The German-Russian Chamber of Commerce insisted last week that the pipeline was important for energy security and urged retaliatory sanctions against the United States if the bill passes. The US sanctions target pipe-laying vessels for Nord Stream 2 and TurkStream, a Russia-Turkey pipeline, and include asset freezes and revocation of US visas for the contractors.

One major contractor that could be hit is Swiss-based Allseas, which has been hired by Russia's state-owned energy giant Gazprom to build the offshore section. The power of Gazprom, which is closely integrated with the Russian state, is at the centre of concerns about the pipeline in the United States, and also in eastern and central European

countries. Senator Ted Cruz, a Republican ally of Trump, said that halting Nord Stream 2 should be a major security priority for the United States and Europe alike.

"It's far better for Europe to be relying on energy from the United States than to be fueling Putin and Russia and dependent on Russia and subject to economic blackmail," he told the Senate last week.

However, Senator Rand Paul, another Republican, voted against the bill, objecting to its bid to "sanction NATO allies and potentially American energy companies."

Germany accused the United States (US) of interfering in its internal affairs on Saturday, in an increasingly angry spat over Washington's decision to impose sanctions on companies involved with a major project to supply Western Europe with Russian gas.

Muslims consider gold, barter trade to beat sanctions

KUALA LUMPUR: Iran, Malaysia, Turkey and Qatar are considering trading among themselves in gold and through a barter system as a hedge against any future economic sanctions on them, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said on Saturday. At the end of an Islamic summit in Malaysia, Mahathir praised Iran and Qatar for withstanding economic embargoes and said it was important for the Muslim world to be self-reliant to face future threats.

"With the world witnessing nations making unilateral decisions to impose such punitive measures, Malaysia and other nations must always bear in mind that it can be imposed on any of us," Mahathir said.

United States-allied Arab states Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt cut diplomatic and trade links with Qatar about 2-1/2-years ago over allegations it backs terrorism, a charge Doha denies. Iran, meanwhile, has been hit badly after the US reimposed sanctions on it last year. "I have suggested that we re-visit the idea of trading using the gold dinar and barter trade among us," Mahathir said, referring to the Islamic medieval gold coin.

"We are seriously looking into this and we hope that we will be able to find a mechanism to put it into effect." The leaders agreed they needed to do more business among themselves and trade in each other's currencies. The summit, which was snubbed by Saudi Arabia, was criticised for undermining the Saudi-based Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which represents 57 Muslim-majority nations.

Malaysia said all the OIC members had been invited to the Kuala Lumpur summit but only about 20 showed up. By the fourth and final day of the summit, no joint statement had been released. The summit had been expected to discuss major issues affecting Muslims, including Palestine, Kashmir and the plight of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and China's camps for Uighur Muslims in its western Xinjiang region.

Without naming any country, Mahathir said there was concern that Muslims in non-Muslim countries were forced to undergo assimilation. "We support integration but assimilation to the extent of shedding our religion is unacceptable," he said.

At a news conference, he said the summit participants had been told that Uighurs were being detained in China. "We have to hear the state, we have to hear the people who complain, then only it will be fair," he said.

He called India's new citizenship act unfortunate. The act facilitates for faster naturalisation of non-Muslims from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who had settled in India prior to 2015. —Reuters

Gold price gains Rs 350, traded at Rs 86,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The per tola price of 24 karat gold got increase by Rs 350 on Saturday and was traded at Rs 86,000, as compared to Rs 85,650 on last trading day, Karachi Sarafa Association reported.

Likewise, the price of 10 gram gold witness increase of Rs 300 and was traded at Rs 73,731 against last closing of Rs 73,431.

The price of silver remained stable and was traded at Rs 970 per tola and that of 10 gram silver was traded at Rs 832. In international market, the price of per ounce gold increase by \$ 01 and was traded at \$ 1478 as compared to last closing at \$1477, Karachi Sarafa association reported. —APP

India leads the world in internet shutdowns

NEW DELHI: In an unprecedented move, the Indian government suspended mobile internet services in parts of the capital New Delhi on Thursday, as protests over a citizenship bill seen as discriminating against Muslims escalated.

As of 2018, India led the world in internet shutdowns, according to a report by internet advocacy group Access Now, accounting for 67% of the total recorded worldwide.

An internet shutdown is a suspension of internet access ordered by the authorities. Telecoms companies then turn off the cellular networks at transmitting towers providing mobile phone internet services in the area. Countries with far more restrictive control over the internet, such as China and North Korea, did not feature prominently in the numbers compiled by Access Now because of the lack of publicly accessible data, the group noted.

Since January 2012, there have been 373 halts in India's internet service, according to the Software Freedom and Law Center (SLFC), which has been tracking the suspensions since then. Chart shows recorded halts to internet service since January 2012, indicating the frequency and duration of the suspensions. India's Home Ministry referred Reuters' inquiries about internet shutdowns to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, which in turn referred questions to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. —DNA

PSX edges down after Mush verdict, Pak-India tension

By Our Staff Correspondent

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in the outgoing week witnessed massive fluctuations as the week began on positive note but later encountered political uncertainties after the detailed judgement in the high treason case against former president Musharraf was issued by a special court, coupled with the news of a possible rise in India-Pakistan border escalations which forced investors to offload their positions.

On weekly basis, the Index closed on a negative note after losing 83.6 points, and thrashing the seventh consecutive week successful streak to an end. Yesterday, the benchmark KSE 100-share Index gained 177.62 points or 0.44 percent on daily basis, closed at 40,832.99 points.

Last Friday, the Index closed at 40,916.59 after gaining 184 points or 0.5 percent on a weekly basis.

Total 330 companies transacted shares in the Stock Market on Friday, out of which 155 recorded gain and 163 sustained losses whereas the share price of 12 companies remained unchanged. The three top traded companies were, HASCOLR1 with a volume of 18,563,000 shares and price per share of Rs10.54, FFL with

a volume of 14,164,500 shares and price per share of Rs14.79, and UNITY with a volume of 8,733,000 and price per share of Rs14.79.

On Monday, bulls lifted the benchmark KSE 100-share Index above the 41,000-point mark with 728.29 points

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and closed at 41,644.88 points.

However, on Thursday, the stock market lost its upward momentum in the wake of uncertainty linked to the release of the detailed verdict in the high treason case against former military ruler retired Gen Pervez Musharraf, with the KSE-100 index closing 948 points in the red at 40,655. Throughout the day, the Index witnessed fluctuation losing 1,100 points during intraday trading before making a slight recovery before hitting an intraday high of 41,796.

On Thursday, the Index started trading at 41,603.71 points and witnessed a bullish session throughout the day before taking a plunge at 2:00pm, just after the detailed verdict was issued. A total of 169,915,190 shares were traded as compared to the trade of 182,857,290 shares on Wednesday, whereas the value of shares traded during the day stood at Rs9.44 billion

as compared to Rs10.3 billion. In total, 361 companies transacted shares in the Stock Market, out of which 34 recorded gain and 310 sustained losses whereas the share price of 17 companies remained unchanged. The three top traded companies were, UNITY with a volume of 26,395,500 shares and price per share of Rs14.70, HASCOLR1 with a volume of 13,217,000 and price per share of Rs11.17, and FFL with a volume of 12,571,000 and price per share of Rs15.29.

On Tuesday, a total of 253,882,830 shares were traded compared to the trade 222,325,260 shares during the previous day.