

# 15 THE WORLD



**MEANWHILE**  
**PASSENGERS AIRLIFTED FROM CRUISE SHIP**  
 Rescue helicopters were evacuating people from a cruise ship which suffered engine failure Saturday in stormy weather off the west coast of Norway, police and rescuers said. The maritime rescue service said the *Viking Sky*, with about 1,300 passengers and crew on board, had sent out a mayday signal as it had been drifting towards land.

## TOP OF THE WORLD



Ricardo Ezzati was the archbishop of Santiago

### CHILE

#### Pope replaces bishop accused of cover-up

**Vatican City:** Pope Francis on Saturday replaced Cardinal Ricardo Ezzati, the embattled archbishop of Santiago, Chile, after he became embroiled in the country's spiraling sex abuse and cover-up scandal. Francis accepted Ezzati's resignation and named a temporary replacement to govern Chile's most important archdiocese: the Spanish-born Capuchin friar and current bishop of Copiapo, Chile, Monsignor Celestino Aoz Braco. The 77-year-old Ezzati had submitted his resignation to Francis two years ago when he reached the retirement age of 75. But Francis kept him on, and Ezzati became the flashpoint of abuse survivors' ire for mishandling cases of abuse.

### CHINA

#### 26 dead as tour bus catches fire

**Beijing:** A tour bus with 56 people on board caught fire in China's central Hunan province, killing 26 people and injuring 28 others, officials said Saturday. The accident occurred on Friday when the 59-seater bus from the neighbouring Henan province suddenly caught fire on a highway in Hanshou county in Changde city. The 28 injured were rushed to three local hospitals.

### USA

#### School shooting survivor kills self

**Miami:** A teenager who survived the Parkland school shooting in Florida has killed herself while struggling with survivors' guilt, local media reported Friday. Sydney Aiello, 19, was a student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas on February 14 last year when a former student opened fire with a semiautomatic weapon, killing 14 students and three staff members. Her parents told local news CBS4 that she had been treated for PTSD, and suffered from survivor's guilt, when a victim fixates on why they were the one to live, not someone else.

## INVESTIGATION INTO POSSIBLE RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IN US ELECTIONS CONCLUDES

# Mueller submits Russia probe report

No new charges recommended; Democrats urge AG to make report public; Congress to be briefed on main conclusions

**SHARON LAFRANIERE & KATIE BENNER**  
WASHINGTON, MARCH 23

**SPECIAL COUNSEL** Robert Mueller on Friday delivered a report on his inquiry into Russian interference in the 2016 election to Attorney General William Barr, the Justice Department said, bringing to a close an investigation that has consumed the nation and cast a shadow over President Donald Trump for nearly two years.

Barr told congressional leaders in a letter that he may brief them on the special counsel's "principal conclusions" as early as this weekend, a surprisingly fast turnaround for a report anticipated for months. The attorney general said he "remained committed to as much transparency as possible".

In an apparent endorsement of an investigation that Trump has relentlessly attacked as a "witch hunt", Barr said Justice Department officials never had to intervene to keep Mueller from taking an inappropriate or unwarranted step. The department's regulations would have required Barr to inform the leaders of the House and Senate judiciary committees about any such interventions in his letter.

A senior Justice Department official said Mueller would not recommend new indictments, a statement aimed at ending speculation that Trump or other key figures might be charged down the line. With department officials stressing that Mueller's inquiry was over and his office closing, the question for both Trump's critics and defenders was whether the prosecutors condemned the President's behaviour in their report, exonerated him — or neither. The President's lawyers were already girding for a possible fight over whether they could assert executive privilege to keep parts of the report secret.

## Will the public see the report?

Special Counsel Robert Mueller has handed over his report to Attorney General William Barr. But it has yet to be made public, and the path to its potential release — or the release of the facts it contains — is complicated.

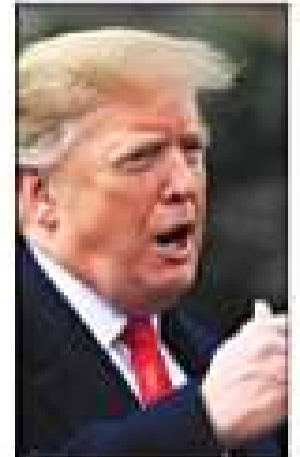
### JUST THE BASIC FACTS

■ The Attorney General is required only to provide Congress with very basic facts about the Special Counsel's report. He would be operating within the guidelines of regulations if he were to give lawmakers a bare-bones notification that Mueller had concluded his work.

■ In a letter to lawmakers on Friday, Barr said he planned to consult with Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and Mueller about what other details from the report could be given to Congress and the public.

### HOUSE CALLS FOR RELEASE

■ The House of Representatives passed a resolution calling for the



William Barr (centre) will decide if Mueller's (right) report on Russian interference in US elections and alleged collusion by the Trump campaign should be made public

report to be made public — a largely symbolic move to pressure Barr publicly to release it.

■ Democrats in the House have also already made the case that seeing the report in its entirety is critical to their ability to conduct oversight and determine whether to

move forward with impeachment proceedings.

■ Congress should decide what should be redacted in the report, House leaders have told Barr.

### CONGRESS' OPTIONS

■ If lawmakers are not given

access to the full report, they have a few options to try to make public details of the investigation, though some could involve years of litigation.

■ They could start issuing subpoenas to Barr, who could ignore them or refuse them. They could also subpoena Mueller's testimony. The Justice Department is likely to resist those demands.

■ If that happens, lawmakers could hold them in contempt and ask the U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia to prosecute. Lawmakers could also sue to try to force the Trump administration to hand over the requested material. Such litigation could go on for years.

Source: The New York Times

Since Mueller's appointment in May 2017, his team has focused on how Russian operatives sought to sway the outcome of the 2016 presidential race and whether anyone tied to the Trump campaign, wittingly or unwittingly, cooperated with them. While the in-

quiry, started months earlier by the FBI, unearthed a far-ranging Russian influence operation, no public evidence emerged that the President or his aides illegally assisted it.

Nonetheless, the damage to Trump and those in his circle has been extensive. A half-dozen former Trump aides were indicted or convicted of crimes, mostly for lying to federal investigators or Congress. Others remain under investigation in cases Mueller's office handed off to federal prosecutors in New York

and elsewhere. Dozens of Russian intelligence officers or citizens, along with three Russian companies, were charged in cases that are likely to languish in court because the defendants cannot be extradited to the United States.

Republicans immediately seized upon the news that no more indictments are expected as a vindication of Trump and his campaign. Those reports "confirm what we've known all along: There was never any collusion with Russia," Representative

Steve Scalise of Louisiana, the second-highest-ranking House Republican, said in a statement.

Democrats, including some of those hoping to supplant Trump in the White House in the 2020 election, insisted that Mueller's full report be made public, including the underlying evidence. In a joint statement, Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California and Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the top Senate Democrat, warned Barr not to allow the White House a "sneak preview" of the document. **NYT**

## Thousands march in London to demand new Brexit referendum



Protesters take part in the 'People's Vote' march in central London on Saturday. Reuters

**REUTERS**  
LONDON, MARCH 23

**HUNDREDS OF** thousands of people opposed to Britain's withdrawal from the EU marched through central London Saturday to demand a new referendum as the deepening Brexit crisis risked sinking Theresa May's premiership. Marchers set off in central

London with banners proclaiming "the best deal is no Brexit" and "we demand a People's Vote" in what organisers said was more than one million people strong and the biggest anti-Brexit protest yet.

"I would feel differently if this was a well-managed process and the government was taking sensible decisions. But it is complete chaos," Gareth Rae, 59, who travelled from Bristol to attend the demonstration, told Reuters.

It was not possible to independently verify the one million figure given by the organisers.

The one million estimate would make it London's second biggest demonstration after a rally against the Iraq War in February 2003, which organisers said close to 2 million people attended.

May has repeatedly ruled out holding another Brexit referendum, saying it would deepen divisions and undermine democracy.

## Christchurch mosques reopen after shooting

**TOM WESTBROOK**  
CHRISTCHURCH, MARCH 23

**SMELLING OF** fresh paint, the two mosques in the New Zealand city of Christchurch where a gunman killed 50 worshippers last week reopened their doors on Saturday, with many survivors among the first to walk in and pray for those who died.

At the Al Noor mosque, where more than 40 of the victims were killed by a suspected white supremacist, prayers resumed with armed police on site, but no graphic reminders of the mass shooting, New Zealand's worst.

Aden Diriyeh, who lost his 3-year-old son, Mucad Ibrahim, in the attack, came back to the mosque with his friends. "I am very happy," he said after praying. "Allah is great to us. I was back as soon as we rebuilt, to pray."

Police said they were reopening the nearby Linwood mosque, the second to be attacked during Friday prayers last week, as well.

New Zealand has been under heightened security alert since the attack. **REUTERS**

## Trump withdraws sanctions against N Korea immediately after Treasury imposes them

**LALIT K JHA**  
WASHINGTON, MARCH 23

**DONALD TRUMP** has abruptly ordered the withdrawal of additional "large-scale" sanctions on North Korea, immediately after the Treasury Department imposed them, with his press secretary saying that the US President "likes" North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and does not think they are necessary.

President Trump's unusual move comes after his second summit with Kim, held last month in Hanoi, Vietnam. Trump walked out of that summit after refusing to agree to the North Korea's demands of lifting all sanctions.

"It was announced today by the US Treasury that additional large-scale sanctions would be added to those already existing sanctions on North Korea. I have today ordered the withdrawal of those additional sanctions!"

Trump tweeted on Friday. This was an apparent reference to sanctions the Treasury Department announced Thursday on Chinese shipping companies doing business with North Korea. Those sanctions prompted swift pushback from the Chinese and North Korean governments.

The two companies are Dalian Haibo International Freight Co. Ltd and Liaoning Danxing International Forwarding Co. Ltd. The sanctions were the first new sign of pressure since talks between Trump and Kim broke down in Hanoi.

"The US and our like-minded partners remain committed to achieving the final, fully verified denuclearisation of North Korea and believe that the full implementation of North Korea-related UN Security Council resolutions is crucial to a successful outcome," said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

"Treasury will continue to enforce our sanctions, and we are making it explicitly clear that shipping companies employing deceptive tactics to mask illicit trade with North Korea expose themselves to great risk," it said.

The National Security Adviser John Bolton described it as an "important" action. "The maritime industry must do more to stop North Korea's illicit shipping practices. Everyone should take notice and review their own activities to ensure they are not involved in North Korea's sanctions evasion," Bolton tweeted.

The White House, however, defended Trump's decision.

"President Trump likes Chairman Kim and he doesn't think these sanctions will be necessary," White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said.

In June, Trump and Kim had their first-ever historic meeting aimed at denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. **PTI**

## ISLAMIC STATE STILL HAS THOUSANDS OF FIGHTERS AND TENS OF THOUSANDS OF FOLLOWERS DISPERSED ACROSS IRAQ, SYRIA, OFFICIALS SAY

# Even as it loses its last Syrian village, signs of IS revival already visible

**RUKMINI CALLIMACHI**  
MARCH 23

**BY NEARLY** every metric, the Islamic State is now a diminished force compared to its height four years ago. It has far fewer fighters and far less land, and the number of attacks it carries out worldwide has nose-dived.

And by all accounts, life in Baghuz as it was besieged these last few weeks was bleak. "Ask me, when is the last time I had an egg? One year ago," said Amy, a 34-year-old Canadian woman who fled the village recently and gave only her first name. She had left her job as a graphic designer in Alberta with her two toddlers to join her husband inside the caliphate. "I just want to go home and have the biggest Tim Hortons coffee," she said, referring to the Canadian coffee shop chain.

But those who have tracked the group since it took root in Iraq in the early 2000s point out that even after losing its land, the group is far stronger today than it was the last time it was considered defeated — in 2011, the year American troops pulled out of Iraq.

The militants were down to their last 700 fighters then. Now, American and Iraqi officials estimate that the group still has thousands of fighters and tens of thousands of adherents, dispersed across Iraq and Syria.

Signs of the group's resurgence are already visible. In the first 10 months since Iraq's prime minister at the time, Haider al-Abadi, declared victory over the militants in neighboring Iraq, the group carried out 1,271 attacks there, according to Michael Knights of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. In the weeks since President Trump claimed victory over the

Islamic State in December, the militants have claimed at least 182 attacks in Syria, killing and wounding 620 people, according to Charlie Winter, a senior research fellow of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation at King's College London.

"There is a tendency to rush into declarations of victory too fast and too early with jihadist groups," Winter said. "It may be weaker in the immediate term, but there is not a chance in hell that it has been defeated."

Even the commanders who helped free Baghuz caution that this is simply the end of one phase of the conflict and the start of another.

Liberating the cities and towns held by the Islamic State was the easy part, said Adnan Afrin, a commander with the American-backed Syrian Democratic Forces. "When we go to the front lines, we face them," he said. "We shoot



This 2014 photo shows a convoy of Islamic State militants in Raqqa, Syria. Experts have warned that declarations of victory against the IS could be premature. AP

them, they shoot back. We know who is in front of us."

"But behind us are sleeper cells," he added. "The fight against the enemy you cannot

see is much harder."

While many may describe the fall of Baghuz as the end of the caliphate, the group's project was always global, with nearly half of

its "provinces" overseas. Even as the territory it holds in Iraq and Syria has reached zero, the group's franchises abroad are growing, experts say.

In January, back-to-back detonations claimed by the Islamic State's local affiliate killed at least 20 people in the Philippines. In Afghanistan, the group continues to mount deadly attacks, despite the United States' dropping, in 2017, what it called the "mother of all bombs" on a cave complex used by the militants.

The military operation to dislodge the Islamic State came at a heavy price. The western half of the city of Mosul, most of the city of Raqqa and numerous others liberated along the way are in ruins. The 19-mile stretch of road from Hajin, where the operation to remove IS from its last remnant of Syrian territory began last September, to Baghuz, is a scene of catastrophic destruction.

Nearly every building is crushed or scarred. Craters, some large enough to swallow a tanker truck, mark the spots where 500-pound bombs made landfall.

"Why did they have to destroy all of Hajin?" asked Faisal Wuhaib Awad, 42, who owned a bakery there. "This was our livelihood. We went and looked and didn't find a single IS body there. No weapons. Not even a single bullet. So how can they say that this was an IS hideout?"

That Syria remains mired in a civil war in which the battle against the Islamic State is only one conflict among many. The future of the land the group once held there, about a third of the country, is uncertain with the United States promising to withdraw its troops.

On both sides of the border, the victors are wrestling with justice for the losers.

Thousands of fighters are locked in prisons while tens of

thousands of women and children are held in detention camps. Most of the foreigners who flocked to the caliphate risk becoming stateless, unwanted by the countries they fled and considered enemy combatants by the countries they're in.

The number of detainees has surged in recent weeks with up to 37,000 people arriving from Baghuz since February, according to the International Rescue Committee. A majority of them are women and children, and officials say nearly all are the families of IS members.

Those who have spoken to reporters have oscillated between acknowledging the group's losses and insisting that such losses were only temporary.

"It's getting smaller," said Dure Ahmed, 28, from Toronto. "Much smaller. But a lot of people still have hope that one day it will flourish back." **NYT**



At the site of an Al Shabaab attack in Mogadishu on Saturday. Reuters

## Shabaab attack in Somalia kills 15, including deputy minister

**ABDI SHEIKH**  
MOGADISHU, MARCH 23

**SOMALIA'S** AL SHABAAB stormed a government building on Saturday, detonating a suicide car bomb in the heart of the capital Mogadishu with at least 15 people, including a deputy minister, killed during the ensuing gun battle.

In the latest bombing claimed by al Shabaab, an Islamist group which is fighting to establish its own rule in Somalia, a huge explosion shook central Mogadishu and a large plume of smoke rose above a building housing Somalia's ministries of labour and works.

Police later said the fighting at the building had ended and that the premises had been completely secured.

"The building was secured by security forces. The four militants who attacked the building were shot dead. Another militant was a suicide car bomber and so he also died," Major Ali Abdullahi, a police officer told Reuters.

Abdullahi said Deputy Labour Minister Saqar Ibrahim Abdala and police personnel were among the dead. Police said earlier that some 20 people had been injured in the assault, which began when a suicide bomber detonated a car bomb, allowing other militants to storm the building. **REUTERS**