

ELSEWHERE



Algerian lawmakers choose new President

ALGIERS
Lawmakers named Abdelkader Bensalah, the Speaker of the upper house, as Algeria's first new President in two decades on Tuesday, after the resignation of Abdelaziz Bouteflika following mass protests. AFP

U.S.'s blacklisting a vicious move: Khamenei

DUBAI
Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the United States had made "a vicious move" in designating the Revolutionary Guards as a foreign terrorist organisation, and Tehran vowed to take action against U.S. forces in the region. REUTERS

FIA seeks cancellation of Lakhvi's bail

ISLAMABAD
Pakistan's top investigative agency has approached the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to seek the cancellation of the bail of Lashkar-e-Taiba operations commander Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has filed an appeal in the IHC seeking cancellation of the post-arrest bail of Lakhvi. PTI

Erdogan's party to seek a fresh vote in Istanbul

ISTANBUL
President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's AK Party (AKP) will demand a new vote in Istanbul, a senior party official said on Tuesday after its bid was rejected for a citywide recount of March 31 election results that appeared to hand the party defeat. REUTERS

Israel votes as Netanyahu seeks another term

He has been Prime Minister for 13 years

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JERUSALEM

Israelis voted on Tuesday in a high-stakes election that will decide whether to extend Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's long right-wing tenure despite corruption allegations or to replace him with an ex-military chief new to politics.

The vote is expected to be close and likely lead to frantic negotiations to form a coalition once results are in, with opinion polls having shown Mr. Netanyahu best placed to do so. Final results are not expected until early Wednesday.

Ex-military chief Benny Gantz has mounted a strong challenge to the veteran Prime Minister by brandishing his security credentials while pledging to undo damage he says Mr. Netanyahu has inflicted on the country with divisive polit-

Barr to release Mueller report 'in a week'

I am relying on my own discretion to make as much public as I can, says U.S. Attorney General

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

U.S. Attorney General William Barr told lawmakers on Tuesday that he intends to release within a week the long-awaited report on Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election from Special Counsel Robert Mueller.

"Within a week, I will be in position to release that report to the public and then I will engage with the chairmen of both judiciary committees about that report, about any further requests that they have," Mr. Barr said at a congressional hearing.

22-month-long probe

Mr. Mueller turned over his confidential report to Mr. Barr last month following his 22-month-long probe into whether Donald Trump may have colluded with Russia during the presidential campaign and if he then obstructed inquiries into the matter.

Mr. Barr later released a four-page letter to Congress laying out what he said were

Mr. Mueller's main findings and wrote that the Mueller probe did not establish that members of Mr. Trump's election campaign conspired with Russia.

Democrats have called for the Mueller report to be released in full but Mr. Barr said on Tuesday: "I don't intend at this stage to send the full unredacted report to the committee."

"I am relying on my own discretion to make as much public as I can," he told a House of Representatives appropriations subcommittee.

It was Mr. Barr's first appearance before Congress since Mr. Mueller delivered the report to him on March 22.

"This Congress voted unanimously to see that report," the subcommittee's Democrat chairman, Jose Serrano said, adding that he could not simply ignore the "elephant in the room."

"The American people deserve to see the full Mueller report, and to be trusted to make their own determinations on the merits."



Facing the Congress: U.S. Attorney-General William Barr at the Congress in Washington on Tuesday. AFP

Democrats also criticised Mr. Barr for taking it upon himself in the letter to decide that Mr. Trump should not be charged with obstruction.

Nita Lowey, the Democratic chairwoman of the House Appropriations Committee, said Mr. Barr's letter summarising the Mueller report appears to "cherry-pick

from the report to draw the most favourable conclusion possible for the president."

"In many ways, your letter raises more questions than it answers," she added.

Redacting information

Mr. Barr said he was working with Mr. Mueller to redact sensitive information in four

areas: secret grand jury information; information that could expose intelligence-gathering sources and methods; information relating to ongoing criminal cases; and information that "implicates the privacy or reputational interests of peripheral players where there is a decision not to charge them."

The *New York Times* and *The Washington Post* reported last week that some investigators on Mr. Mueller's team were unhappy with the way Mr. Barr described their findings. The reports said that some of the evidence against Mr. Trump was more damning than Mr. Barr's letter indicated.

Mr. Barr said he did not have insight into why some on Mr. Mueller's team were upset. "I suspect that they probably wanted more put out," he said.

Last week, Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee prepared subpoenas that they plan to issue to the Justice Department if Mr. Barr does not agree to release the Mueller report in full.

Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters found 'guilty' over 2014 demonstrations

REUTERS
HONG KONG

A Hong Kong court found leaders of the 2014 "Occupy" civil disobedience movement guilty on Tuesday of public nuisance charges during the mass protests, in a landmark verdict that comes as the China-ruled city's freedoms come under strain. Three of the defendants accused of playing a leading role in planning and mobilising supporters during the 79-day street occupa-

tions in 2014 - Benny Tai, 54; Chan Kin-man, 60; and retired pastor Chu Yiu-ming, 75 - were found guilty of conspiracy to commit public nuisance.

Mr. Tai and Mr. Chan were also found guilty of incitement to commit public nuisance. They appeared calm after the verdict was delivered, and Mr. Chan bowed to supporters, applauding them outside the court. The trio had pleaded not guilty to all charges, which each

carry a maximum seven years jail. In a summary, Justice Johnny Chan noted that while the concept of civil disobedience is "recognised in Hong Kong", it wasn't a defence to a criminal charge.

"The offence of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance does not have the undesirable effect of curtailing or suppressing civil disobedience at its formation stage or suppressing human rights as the defendants contended," the summary read.

Sri Lanka opens China-financed railway line

The extension is the first to be constructed in the country since its independence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO/BEIJING

Sri Lanka has opened a new railway line, built with China's assistance, connecting its coastal city of Matara and Beliatta in Hambantota, a move that will boost passenger traffic into the island nation's deep south.

The 26.75-km long Matara-Beliatta railway extension is the first to be constructed in Sri Lanka since 1948, and it passes through the country's longest and second-longest

railway bridges, China's Xinhua agency reported. The new line was declared open on Monday in the presence of Sri Lanka's Transport and Civil Aviation Minister Arjuna Ranatunga, Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera and other parliamentarians.

The railway extension was financed by the Export-Import Bank of China and the contract was awarded to the China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation. According to Sri Lankan

media reports, the cost of the project was \$278 million.

China on Tuesday praised the opening of the railway line in southern Sri Lanka.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang termed it as a major Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project in Sri Lanka. "The railway line is the first railway project contracted by Chinese company in Sri Lanka under the BRI and it is indeed the first railway built after country's independence," he said, ad-

ding that it will make regional transportation more convenient and facilitate local economic and social development.

Sri Lanka has been the major recipient of Chinese loans and investments in recent years, totalling over \$8 billion. The heavy borrowing has raised concerns over Sri Lanka's ability to repay, after Colombo handed over the Hambantota port to Beijing for a 99-year lease in 2017 as a debt swap.

IMF forecasts dip in global growth in 2019

India's growth projected to pick up from 7.1% last year to 7.3% this year and 7.5% in 2020

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected that global growth will be 3.3% in 2019, down from 3.6% in 2018 and 4% in 2017, IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath told the press at the release of the World Economic Outlook 2019 April report, at the start of the World Bank IMF Spring Meetings.

This lower projection is due to a slower global expansion in the second half of 2018 caused by U.S.-China trade tensions, macroeconomic stress in Turkey and Argentina, tighter credit policies in China and financial tightening, apart from a normalisation of monetary policy in advanced economies.

'Robust consumption' India's growth is projected to pick up, from 7.1% in 2018, to 7.3% in 2019 and 7.5% in 2020, "supported by the



Gita Gopinath, chief economist at the IMF in Washington. AP

continued recovery of investment and robust consumption amid a more expansionary stance of monetary policy and some expected impetus from fiscal policy," the report said.

These forecasts are nevertheless less by 10 and 20 basis points from the January and October forecasts.

"Nevertheless, reflecting the recent revision to the na-

tional account statistics that indicated somewhat softer underlying momentum, growth forecasts have been revised downward compared with October 2018 WEO by 0.1 percentage point for 2019 and 0.2 percentage point for 2020, respectively," the IMF said.

The IMF expects growth to pick up in the second half of the year driven by an accommodative policy stance in advanced economies, the prospects of an easing of trade tensions between the U.S. and China, and a ramped up fiscal and monetary stimulus by China to counter the trade war's effects.

Global growth is therefore expected to return to 3.6%, but this is subject to a rebound in Argentina and Turkey and certain emerging market risks not manifesting. Brexit uncertainties and China's growth not being as

high as expected are risks that will impact these projections.

Moderation in expansion

Beyond 2020, global growth is expected to level out at 3.6% over the medium term, driven by a moderation in expansion in advanced countries (caused by a weak productivity growth and a slow labour force growth) and the stabilisation of emerging market expansion at 2020 levels.

Advanced economies are expected to slow down to 1.6% growth by 2022 and remain at that rate thereafter.

For emerging markets and developing countries, growth is expected to steady at 4.8% over the medium term and given that these groups are growing faster than advanced economies, their contribution to global growth is expected to increase from 76% to 85% over

the next five years. However, there are "important differences" within emerging markets and developing economies.

For instance, China is expected to slow down to 5.5% by 2024 as it moves towards increasing private consumption and services and regulatory tightening.

India's growth is expected to stabilise at 7.75% over the medium term, driven by structural reforms and the easing of infrastructure bottlenecks.

In terms of policy priorities, the IMF has called for a "continued implementation of structural and financial sector reforms" in order to lower public debt and aid growth.

Specifically, it says a continued fiscal consolidation is needed to bring down public debt, strengthening goods and services tax compliance and lowering subsidies.

Indian couple charged with espionage

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BERLIN

An Indian couple accused of spying on Germany's Sikh community and Kashmir movement has been charged with espionage, German prosecutors announced on Tuesday.

They named the suspects only as 50-year-old Manmohan S. and his wife Kanwaljit K., 51, in keeping with German privacy rules.

"Manmohan S. agreed by January 2015 at the latest to provide information about Germany's Sikh community and Kashmir movement and their relatives to an employee of the Indian foreign intelligence service Research & Analysis Wing," they said.

His wife joined him in monthly meetings with the Indian intelligence officer between July and December 2017, and in total the couple were paid €7,200 (\$8,100) for their work.

British MPs endorse Brexit delay

U.K. wants extension of deadline to June 30 from April 12

REUTERS
LONDON

British lawmakers endorsed Prime Minister Theresa May's request to the European Union (EU) to delay Brexit until June 30 in a vote in Parliament on Tuesday, adding weight to the pitch she will make to EU leaders in Brussels.

The majority of Ms. May's Conservative Party voted alongside the Opposition Labour Party to back the Prime Minister's approach by 420 votes to 110.

"We should all be very clear what this extension would be for - it is all about making sure we leave the EU in a timely and orderly way and that means leaving with a deal," government Solicitor-General Robert Buckland said ahead of the vote.

The debate came as Ms. May travelled to Berlin and



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May in Berlin on Tuesday.

Paris to drum up support for her request for more time to try and find a new plan for Britain's EU exit that can command the support of her political opponents at home.

Ms. May met German Chancellor Angela Merkel at her riverside Chancellery. "The leaders agreed on the importance of ensuring Britain's orderly withdrawal

from the European Union," Ms. May's office said in a statement.

Chief EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier said the bloc was ready to grant a delay, but added: "Any extension should serve a purpose. The length should be proportional to the objective. Our objective is an orderly withdrawal."

No apology for Jallianwala Bagh for now, says U.K.

However, Minister for Asia and Pacific Mark Field says the issue is a 'work in progress'

VIDYA RAM
LONDON

The British government has failed to use the opportunity of a parliamentary debate on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre to apologise for the atrocity, with a Foreign Office Minister referring to potential "financial implications" as one of the issues to be considered.

However, Mark Field, the Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific, said that he recognised the "strong and compelling case" for Britain to go beyond the deep regret already expressed by the U.K. relating to the events of April 13, 1919, when hundreds were killed and more than 1,200 injured after British troops led by Reginald Dyer opened fire on a peaceful gathering.

Mr. Field told MPs at the Westminster Hall debate

called by fellow Conservative MP Bob Blackman that his "orthodox" views made him reluctant to apologise for things that had happened in the past, adding that it debated the currency of apologies if "we make them many many events". He also referenced potential financial implications.

'Active debate'

However, in an indication that things could shift somewhat in the future, he said that the issue of how to respond to the centenary was an "active debate among Ministers" and that it was "work in progress".

His comments fell short of the formal apology sought by the MPs who attended the event. Mr. Blackman told MPs that "India will never forget. We owe it to the victims and their families to



Mark Field, Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific. THE HINDU

never forget what happened in our name... I hope we see an apology from the British government... It makes me sad and ashamed that this was done in our name... it is time we own up to it and that we made an apology and suitable reparation."

"I am disappointed," said Virendra Sharma, the MP for Ealing Southall who spoke at the debate and last year in-

itiated a push for a memorial in the U.K. to mark the atrocity. He described the government's approach to the question of what to do as "confused". The debate, which saw MPs from across the political parties join in the call for an apology, also led to wider questions about Britain's approach to the massacre and the darker moments of colonial history.

'Wider effort needed'

Preet Kaur Gill, the MP for Birmingham Edgbaston said that the apology should mark the start of a wider effort to raise awareness and questioned if an apology without a "genuine understanding of the past" could provide closure. This required a nationwide effort to promote learning in schools around the massacre and other events, including what

British imperialism and colonialism had subjected people across the world too, she said. This would help children learn where they came from and understand how and where the country is today and help tackle far wider societal issues such as rising hate crime and racism. "By othering or writing people out of history, can we really be surprised that hate crime continues to exist or racism continues to fester?"

During the debate, some MPs suggested that the apology could help move bilateral relations forward, while one questioned how Britain could project itself as a proponent of international human rights - condemning other countries such as Brunei - when it had failed to acknowledge its own culpability and apologise for atrocities in its own past.

U.S. bars entry to 16 Saudis over Khashoggi killing

List has name of Crown Prince's ex-aide

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The U.S. State Department on Monday barred entry to 16 Saudi nationals over what it described as their role in the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi as the administration of Donald Trump continues to face harsh criticism over its handling of the affair. A statement by the State Department listed the 16 individuals and said that they had been designated under the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act.

The list released on Monday includes Saud al-Qahtani, a former aide to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and Maher Muteb, who was part of the Crown Prince's entourage on trips abroad.

The section in question "provides that, in cases where the Secretary of State has credible information that officials of foreign governments have been involved in significant corrup-



A poster of Jamal Khashoggi. REUTERS

tion or gross violations of human rights, those individuals and their immediate family members are ineligible for entry into the United States... The law requires the Secretary of State to publicly or privately designate such officials and their immediate family members."

The State Department previously revoked the visas of nearly two dozen Saudi officials and froze the assets of 17 others.

After initially denying the murder, Riyadh said the operation was carried out by agents who were out of control. A trial of 11 suspects opened earlier this year in Saudi Arabia.