Islamic State leader Baghdadi dead: Reports

Will broadcast footage from the US raid, says Iraqi state media

REUTERS
Baghdad/Washington, 27 October

Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is believed to have been killed in a US military operation in Syria, sources in Syria, Iraq and Iran said on Sunday, as US President Donald Trump prepared to make a "major statement" at the White House.

A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters that Baghdadi was targeted in the overnight raid but was unable to say whether the operation was successful. A commander of one of the militant factions in the northwestern Syrian province of Idlib said Baghdadi was believed to have been killed in a raid after midnight on Saturday involving helicopters, warplanes and a ground clash in the village of Brisha near the Turkish border.

Two Iraqi security sources and two Iranian officials said they had received confirmation from inside Syria that Baghdadi had been killed.

"Our sources from inside Syria have confirmed to the Iraqi intelligence team

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi FILE PHOTO

tasked with pursuing Baghdadi that he has been killed alongside his personal bodyguard in Idlib after his hiding place was discovered when he tried to get his family out of Idlib towards the Turkish border," one of the Iraqi officials said.

Iraqi state television said it would broadcast footage from the raid. US magazine Newsweek, which first reported the news, said it had been told by a US Army official briefed on the raid that Baghdadi was dead. It said the operation was carried out by special operations forces after receiving actionable intelligence. The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Britain-based war monitor the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said nine people were killed during the two-hour raid, including two women and likely at least one child.

Turkey says coordinated with US on raid

Turkey on Sunday said there was "coordination" between Ankara and Washington before the operation which US media reports said targeted and killed Islamic State chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

"Prior to the US Operation in Idlib Province of Syria last night, information exchange and coordination between the military authorities of both countries took place," the Turkish defence ministry said in a tweet. The elusive chief of IS was believed to be dead after a US military raid in the Idlib region. The helicopters targeted a home and a car outside the village of Barisha, the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said, in the operation which killed nine people. **AFP**

Paved way for Baghdadi raid: Iraq intel official

Iraq's intelligence service provided the US–led coalition with the exact coordinates of Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al–Baghdadi's location, paving the way for the raid that reportedly killed him, an Iraqi intelligence official told *Reuters* on Sunday. The agency learned of Baghdadi's location from documents found at a secret location in Iraq's western desert after arresting an Iraqi man and woman, the official said.

"We have been constantly coordinating with the CIA, providing valuable information that the Iraqi National Intelligence Service has on Baghdadi's movements and place of hiding," the official said. **REUTERS**

IN BRIEF

Texas shooting outside Dallas results in at least 2 deaths

Two people have been killed in a shooting at an off–campus Texas A&M University–Commerce party that also left at least 14 others injured, a sheriff's official said. The shooting took place just before midnight Saturday in Greenville, around 15 miles (24 kilometers) southwest of the Commerce campus, Chief Deputy Buddy Oxford of the Hunt County Sheriff's Office said. The shooter remains at large, Oxford said. He said the shooting began around 15 minutes after deputies arrived outside the venue, responding to reports of illegal parking. Deputies heard gunshots coming from the back of the building, but could not tell whether the shots were fired from inside or outside, Oxford said. **AP/PTI**

Warned Trump on impeachment, says former WH chief of staff

President Donald Trump's former chief of staff, John Kelly, says he advised the president not to fill the job with someone who wouldn't be honest with him and provide a check on his impulses because he would end up being impeached. "That was almost 11 months ago, and I have an awful lot of, to say the least, second thoughts about leaving," Kelly said. "It pains me to see what's going on because I believe if I was still there or someone like me was there, he would not be kind of, all over the place." "I said, whatever you do just don't hire a 'yes man,' someone who won't tell you the truth – don't do that. Because if you do, I believe you will be impeached," Kelly recalled in an interview at the Sea Island Summit. **AP/PTI**

Stop holding UK hostage: Govt

UK PM Boris Johnson. More than three years since Britain voted to leave the EU, the divided country and its parliament are still debating over it FILE PHOTO

REUTERS
London, 27 October

Boris Johnson's government stepped up pressure on lawmakers on Sunday to back the prime minister's bid to hold an early election and break the Brexit impasse, saying Britain was being held "hostage" by parliament.

But with the main opposition Labour Party waiting for the European Union to grant a Brexit delay and two other parties launching their own bid for an even earlier election, the government's bid so far looks set to fail.

Britain was due to leave the EU on Thursday, but despite the government arguing this is still the legal default date, few expect Johnson to meet his "do or die" promise to deliver Brexit on October 31 after the bloc agreed to another delay.

More than three years since Britain voted to leave the EU, the divided country and its parliament are still debating over how, when and even whether Brexit, Britain's biggest policy shift for more than 40 years, should happen.

All Britain's political parties agree an election is needed to break the standoff over Brexit, but do not see eye-to-eye on its timing. For many lawmakers, an attempt by Johnson to set the terms of a new election raises concerns that he might renege.

But a source at Johnson's Downing Street office said the prime minister would do all he can to force an election to "get Brexit done", including considering options offered by other opposition parties.

"Parliament cannot hold the country hostage any longer," Johnson said late on Saturday. "Millions of businesses and people cannot plan their futures, this paralysis is causing real damage and the country must move on in 2020." His culture minister, Nicky Morgan, doubled down on the message on Sunday, warning lawmakers that Thursday was still "the default leaving date". "So that should focus minds," she told *Sky News*.

UK Opposition parties suggest Dec 9 vote

Two British opposition parties want to hold elections even earlier than Prime Minister Boris Johnson has proposed as they try to ensure the country doesn't leave the European Union without an agreement.

The Scottish National Party and the Liberal Democrats say they will push for a December 9 election, three days earlier than Johnson has proposed and years earlier than the next scheduled vote in 2022.

They also plan to ask EU leaders to extend the Brexit deadline to at least January 31 to provide more time to debate Johnson's withdrawal agreement. **REUTERS**

HONG KONG PROTESTS CONTINUES

A protester receives medical attention after being hit with a pepper spray as he is being detained during an anti-government protest in Hong Kong's tourism district of Tsim Sha Tsui, in China, on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

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