

Mueller Finds No Trump Collusion, Leaves Obstruction Open

WASHINGTON — Special counsel Robert Mueller found no evidence President Donald Trump's campaign "conspired or coordinated" with Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election but reached no conclusion on whether Trump obstructed justice. That brought a hearty claim of vindication from Trump but set the stage for new rounds of political and legal fighting.

The battle began Monday as White House aides and allies blanketed television news broadcasts to trumpet the findings and claim that Trump has been the victim in a probe that never should have started.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said Trump will tell Attorney General William Barr decide whether the special



counsel's Russia report should be publicly released, though she adds that "he's more than happy for any of this stuff to come out." Trump cheered the Sunday outcome but also laid bare his resentment after two years of

investigations that have shadowed his administration. "It's a shame that our country has had to go through this. To be honest, it's a shame that your president has had to go through this," he said.

Democrats pointed out that Mueller found evidence for and against obstruction and demanded to see his full report. They insisted that even the summary by the president's attorney general hardly put him in the clear.

Mueller's conclusions, summarized by Barr in a four page letter to Congress, represented a victory for Trump on a key question that has hung over his presidency from the start — whether his campaign worked with Russia to defeat Democrat Hillary Clinton.

That was further good news for the president on top of the Justice Department's earlier announcement that Mueller had wrapped his investigation without new indictments. ...*(More on P4)...(8)*

India's Opposition Congress Promises Dole for Poorest Families Ahead of Election

NEW DELHI - The main opposition Congress party will give 72,000 rupees (\$1,045) to each of India's poorest families every year if voted back to power, its chief said on Monday, launching what he called a "final assault on poverty".

Congress President Rahul Gandhi, facing a tough opponent in Prime Minister Narendra Modi in general elections set for April and May, told reporters the program would benefit 250 million of a population of 1.3 billion.

"We've done all the calculations, we've asked the best economists," Gandhi said, emphasizing that the scheme would be fiscally prudent. "They all backed us on this idea. We are going to implement it." Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) dismissed Gandhi's announcement as a poll gimmick lacking details. "What will happen to subsidies? What will happen to other expenditure? Nothing is out there," said BJP spokesman ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

Kosovo PM Fires Deputy Minister over Comments about NATO

PRISTINA - Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj has fired the country's ethnic Serb deputy justice minister after she called NATO's 1999 bombing campaign against Serbia a "planned genocide". Deputy minister Vesna Mikić comes from Kosovo's Serb minority which accounts for about 5 percent of the country's population of 1.8 million.

"The NATO alliance committed a deliberately planned genocide against a sovereign

country that fought Albanian terrorism inside its own borders," Mikić said on her Facebook account on Sunday, marking the 20th anniversary of the NATO bombing. NATO carried out air strikes in 1999 against the now defunct Yugoslavia, comprised of Serbia and Montenegro, to halt a brutal crackdown against Kosovo Albanians by Serbian security forces.

After 78 days of bombing, under the terms of an armistice, former Yugoslav President



Slobodan Milosevic ordered his troops to withdraw from Kosovo and be replaced with NATO control.

Mikić's post sparked

criticism in the predominantly ethnic Albanian Kosovo where most people praise NATO for halting the ...*(More on P4)...(9)*

Charges of Cheating amid Confusion over Thailand's Election Result



BANGKOK - Thailand's first general election since a military coup five years ago was thrown into disarray on Monday as two op-

position parties alleged cheating and the election commission said it could be weeks until the make-up of parliament becomes clear.

Confusion over the outcome of Sunday's election raised the specter of a protracted struggle to form a government, spoiling hopes of a clear cut result that could have ended 15 years of political turmoil in Southeast Asia's second largest economy.

Both the pro-army party seeking to keep coup leader Prayuth Chan-ocha as prime minister and the opposition party linked to self-exiled former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, claimed they would

command enough parliamentary seats to form a coalition government. The pro-Thaksin Pheu Thai party said it was considering a legal challenge over what it said were poll irregularities after partial results showed Prayuth's Palang Pracharat party with an unexpected lead in the popular vote.

The strong early showing for Palang Pracharat increased the likelihood that Prayuth, who was army chief when he overthrew a Pheu Thai ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

Relief, And Questions, in Norway after Dramatic Cruise Rescue

OSLO - Norway breathed a collective sigh of relief on Monday after the dramatic rescue of a stricken cruise ship off its coast, but questions mounted about why the vessel chose to sail into notoriously perilous waters in a storm.

The Viking Sky, carrying 1,373 passengers and crew, sent out a mayday call on Saturday after it lost power in stormy seas, as it was tossed about in 15-metre (50-foot) waves that sent tables and furni-

ture sliding from side to side.

The incident led to a spectacular airlift rescue. Images from the scene spread widely in the media and on social networks over the weekend. It was one of the biggest rescue operations in modern times, with almost 500 passengers, many of them elderly, airlifted off the ship through day and night by a relay of helicopters fighting heavy winds. Miraculously, just 28 people ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

Death Toll Rises to 78 in China Chemical Plant Explosion

XIANGSHUI - The death toll from an explosion in a chemical plant in east China's Jiangsu Province has risen to 78 as of Monday afternoon, authorities said.

Rescue workers discovered 14 more bodies after searching in 20 companies within an area of 2 square kilometers surrounding the blast site, raising the total death toll to 78, Cao Lubao, mayor of Yancheng, said at a press conference Monday afternoon.

Among the dead, 56 people have been identified, according to Cao.

Of the 28 missing persons previously reported, 25 have been confirmed dead and another three have been found. Cao said Saturday that the people reported as missing ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

Saudi-Led Coalition Signs Mou with UN for Protection of Yemeni Children

RIYADH - Saudi-led coalition involved in a war in Yemen signed on Monday a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations to protect Yemeni children, Saudi Press Agency reported.

The Joint Forces Commander of the Coalition, Fahad Bin Turki Bin Abdulaziz and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, signed the MoU in Riyadh.

The deal aims to strengthen the protection of children affected by the armed conflict in Yemen. Abdulaziz affirmed his hopes of close ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

Pope Visits Italy's 'Flying House' to Sign Papal Document

LORETO, Italy - Pope Francis signed a new document on young people during a visit on Monday to a site that some Catholics believe was the house of Jesus Christ's mother, flown by angels from the Holy Land to Italy's Adriatic coast.

Francis traveled to the city of Loreto, site of one of Italy's most visited religious shrines, where he said a Mass, comforted many sick people, and signed a paper he has written on the role of young people in the Church.

The document, known as an "apostolic exhortation", is his assessment of a month-long



synod of bishops at the Vatican last year. The document, now being translated from the original Spanish, is expected to tell young people that they should not be obsessed with doctrinal minutiae but blend the Church's rules with social activism to help those in need. Vatican spokesman Ales-

sandro Gisotti said its title is "Christus Vivit" (Christ Lives) and that it will be published on April 2. According to popular tradition, the tiny house at Loreto was where the Madonna lived in Nazareth and where, according to the Bible, an angel appeared to her to tell ...*(More on P4)...(11)*

India's Jet Airways Receives 217.6 Mln USD Funding as Lenders Take Control

MUMBAI - India's beleaguered airline Jet Airways received an interim funding of 217.6 million U.S. dollars from State Bank of India Monday after its founder Naresh Goyal and his wife stepped down from the board of directors.

The infusion of 217.6 million dollars would address the short-term worries of staff salary and leased planes which were grounded.

"We expect to get new investor by May 31," said Rajnish Kumar, chairman of State Bank of India, one of the major lenders to the airline.

Naresh Goyal's stake is set to come down to about 25 percent while Etihad's holding will fall to 12 percent following approval for resolution plan submitted by the bankers, he said. (Xinhua)

Boeing to Brief on 737 MAX Updates as Ethiopian Backs Planemaker

ADDIS ABABA/SINGAPORE - Boeing Co will brief more than 200 global airline pilots, technical experts and regulators this week on software and training updates for its 737 MAX aircraft, as Ethiopian Airlines expressed confidence in the planemaker despite a recent crash.

Africa's biggest carrier will work with Boeing and other airlines to make air travel safer, its chief executive, Tewolde Gebremariam, said, after regulators this month grounded the worldwide fleet of the aircraft following the crash that killed 157 people.

"Despite the tragedy, Boeing and Ethiopian Airlines will continue to be linked well into the future," Tewolde said in a statement on Monday. "Ethiopian Airlines believes in Boeing. They have been a partner of ours for many years."

Qatar Airways, one of the largest Middle East carriers, also threw its support behind Boeing on Monday after two crashes since last October raised safety concerns about the 737 MAX.

The airline will however delay the April delivery of another MAX jet until the cause of the crash is known, Qatar Chief Executive Akbar al-Baker.

"I am sure that the aircraft will get back into the skies soon and that Boeing will get to the bottom of what happened and if there is something technical ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

Neighbor News

World Bank Approves 200-Mln-USD Loan to Support Uzbekistan's Rural Enterprises

TASHKENT - The World Bank has approved a loan worth 200 million U.S. dollars to support micro, small and medium-sized businesses in one of Uzbekistan's densely populated rural areas, the bank said on Monday.

According to a statement, the loan will come from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a member of the World Bank Group, and will help to start a new rural enterprise development project in the eastern Ferghana Valley.

"The shift from planned to market economy in Uzbekistan will create opportunities for local small businesses in domestic and regional

markets," said Hideki Mori, World Bank country manager for Uzbekistan, in the statement.

"With nearly 49,000 micro and small firms and 84,000 commercial farms and individual entrepreneurs in Ferghana Valley, the World Bank is pleased to support this project, which will help them expand, improve profitability and create up to 20,000 new jobs," Mori said.

Recognizing the need to reform the economy and find new drivers of growth, the Central Asian country is placing emphasis on accelerating private sector development to create jobs and increase people's income, the statement said. ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

Turkmenistan Intends to Offer Japan to Invest in TAPI Project

ASHGABAT - The implementation of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project (TAPI) is seen as a promising field for the cooperation of Turkmenistan with financial structures and companies in Japan, Trend reports via Turkmen newspaper "Watan".

This issue is planned to be discussed during the working visit planned for the near future by the Turkmen delegation to Tokyo. A report on the preparation of the visit was presented to President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov. "Speaking about the main directions of bilateral relations, among the priority areas, the head of state outlined trade, finance and investment, which should get a concrete discussion in the upcoming

talks," report said. The estimated cost of the transnational project is \$7 billion.

Construction of the Turkmen section of TAPI was launched in December 2015, while the Afghan section in February 2018. Pakistan plans to start the work on its pipeline section this year.

The total length of the pipeline, with a capacity of 33 billion cubic meters of gas per year will be 1,840 kilometers. The length of the Turkmen section will be 205 kilometers. Then, this energy bridge will pass through the Afghan cities of Herat and Kandahar (816 kilometers), through the cities of Quetta and Multan across Pakistani territory (819 kilometers), and reach the settlement of Fazilka in India. (Trend)

11 Killed, Dozens Injured in Southern Iran Flood

TEHRAN - At least 11 people were killed in the heavy rains and subsequent flood in the southern Shiraz city of Iran on Monday, official IRNA news agency reported.

In the incident, at least 35 others were injured,

according to the Emergency Organization of Iran.

Footage from the state TV and social media showed that flood was washing away the cars of the visitors who are in Shiraz for the new year holidays. (Xinhua)

Pakistan, A Powerful but Peace-Loving Nation: President

ISLAMABAD - President Dr Arif Alvi Monday said that Pakistan was a powerful country but it always desired peace.

Addressing an award distribution ceremony among the organizers of the Pakistan Day parade (March 23), the president said Pakistan Army was among the strongest, most experienced and well-disciplined armies in the world.

He said every Pakistani was ready to render sacrifice for his homeland and this patriotic passion had further been enriched by the Pakistan Day parade that had reflected the country's defence capabilities, professionalism and national solidarity.

He told the audience that Pakistan Day parade did convey a message of Pakistan, being a powerful nation.

had set a precedent by fighting out the terrorism.

He said Pakistan had rendered immense sacrifices in its fight against terrorism besides learning a lot during this course.

Referring to Pulwama incident, the president said baseless allegations had been hurled against Pakistan but the country acted responsibly. However, Pakistan had categorically warned the enemy against any aggression and in case of any misadventure, Pakistan would retaliate forcefully.

Similarly, Pakistan gave a befitting response when India violated its airspace. He said despite provocation from across the border, the country showed restraint and gave the world a message of peace. He said it was a matter of pride for Pakistani nation that despite being a powerful country, it always promoted peace. ...*(More on P4)...(18)*