

## New Zealand PM Says 'Gun Laws Will Change' after Mosque Shooting

CHRISTCHURCH - The New Zealand government is looking at banning semi-automatic weapons following the killing of 49 worshippers at two Christchurch mosques, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said. The suspected attacker had bought five guns legally. The primary suspect was an Australian citizen who "travelled sporadically to New Zealand and stayed for varied amount of time," Ardern told reporters. "I would not describe him as a long-term resident."

He was not on a government watch list in either New Zealand or Australia.

All of the suspected shooter's five weapons were legally acquired, according to the PM. The suspected gunman got a



"category A" firearms license in 2017, and began stockpiling weapons legally at that point, Ardern told reporters on Saturday. The "mere fact" that this happened means

people will want to see a change to gun laws, and she was committed to supporting that, she added.

The shooting was live-streamed on Face-

book, with the suspect killing 49 people and wounding more than 40 at two mosques before getting arrested by police. Shortly before the attack, he published a 73-page 'manifesto' in which he vowed "revenge" against Muslim "invaders" and said he was inspired by Anders Breivik, who killed 77 people in Norway in 2011.

Most of the victims were at the Al Noor mosque, as the attacker was reportedly chased out of the Linwood mosque by a "well known Muslim local" who fired two shots in pursuit, according to the New Zealand Herald.

The Herald later quoted one of the witnesses from Lindwood, Syed Mazharuddin, ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

### Dissident Group Unrelated to CIA: Wapo Pitches New Version of N. Korea Embassy Break-In

WASHINGTON - The Washington Post has reported, citing anonymous sources, that an obscure dissident group was behind a violent break-in at the North Korean Embassy in Spain, defying reports in local media that the CIA was involved. A group of 10 unidentified men stormed into the North Korean Embassy in Madrid on February 22, several days before the summit between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader

Kim Jong-un in Vietnam. According to reports in Spanish media, the attackers tied up and gagged the staff, placing hoods over their heads. They then seized documents, computers and other electronic devices before dashing away in two diplomatic vehicles they soon abandoned. While the investigation into the bizarre, brazen, action movie-style attack has been shrouded in secrecy, some shreds of information have been leaked to the Spanish ...*(More on P4)...(19)*

CANBERRA, Australia - An Australian senator has had a raw egg cracked over his head and faces censure for his fellow lawmakers after sparking outrage by blaming Muslim immigration for the New Zealand mosque shootings. Sen. Fraser Anning came under blistering criticism over tweets on Friday including one that said: "Does anyone still dispute the link between Muslim immigration and violence?" Television cameras caught a 17-year-old boy

### Australian Senator Faces Censure for Anti-Immigration Stance



breaking an egg on Anning's head and briefly scuffling with the independent senator while

he was holding a news conference Saturday in Melbourne. Police said the boy was arrested but was released without charge pending a further investigation. ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

### Thousands of Albanian Protesters Call for Govt to Step Down



TIRANA, Albania - Albanian opposition supporters are holding a protest against the government which they ac-

cuse of being corrupt and linked to organized crime. Thousands of supporters of the center-right

Democratic Party-led opposition have gathered on Saturday in front of Socialist Prime Minister Edi Rama's of-

fice to demand his resignation. The opposition, whose lawmakers have relinquished their seats in parliament, declines to dialogue with Rama, asking for a transitory Cabinet without him to prepare early elections. The United States and European Union have warned the opposition against using or inciting violence and to sit down for talks. Recent rallies have turned violent, with police deploying tear gas. ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

### Czechs to Buy Army Helicopters from U.S. Company: Deputy Minister

PRAGUE - The Czech Republic will buy 12 military helicopters from a U.S. company, narrowing the field of possible suppliers, Deputy Defense Minister Jakub Landovsky told a paper on Saturday. The Defense Ministry scrapped a tender for helicopters in 2017 and planned to launch another in summer 2018, meant to include bidders from Germany and Italy too. The contract, estimated at 12.5 billion crowns (\$553 million), will now go to Bell Helicopter, a unit of Textron, or Lockheed Martin's Sikorski, the Pravo daily paper said. "It is true that we did not have any large project with the United States for a long time," Landovsky said in an interview published by Pravo. "The helicopters are now on the table. And it is possible to say that we are in exclusive talks with the United States now about a purchase of new helicopters," he said. (Reuters)

### IS Clings On in Face of Kurd-Led Assault in Syria

BAGHOUZ (Syria) - US-backed forces battled Islamic State group fighters overnight as the jihadists Saturday clung onto their crumbling bastion in eastern Syria.

"Clashes broke out again last night and have continued since," said Adnane Afrine, spokesman for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

"There have so far been no surrenders (today) and there's no sign they are giving up," he told AFP.

AFP journalists at an SDF post inside Baghouz village, the last IS redoubt, heard sporadic rounds of mortar fire and US-led coalition planes overhead.

IS launched three suicide attacks Friday outside Baghouz, killing six people among those fleeing the crumbling jihadist bastion near the Iraqi border. (AFP)

### Yellow Vest 'Ultimatum' Rally Turns Violent in Paris

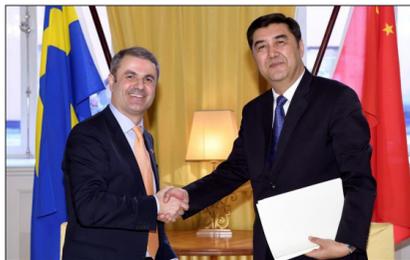
PARIS - After weeks of declining participation, France's "yellow vest" protest movement attempted to rebound on Saturday with a major rally in Paris which quickly turned violent.

A large crowd gathered on the Champs-Elysees avenue for the 18th straight week of anti-government protests which initially rocked President Emmanuel Macron's administration, forcing him to adopt more anti-poverty measures, but had appeared to fizzle in recent weeks.

Police fired tear gas to disperse protesters who erected barricades near the Champs-Elysees in scenes reminiscent of some of the most tense "yellow vest" rallies. (AFP)

### Head of Chinese Energy Agency Expelled from Communist Party

BEIJING - The head of China's energy planning agency has been expelled from the country's ruling Communist Party and dismissed from his posts. China's disciplinary committee announced Saturday evening that Nur Bekri used his authority to aid others in job placement, business operations and mineral resource development in exchange for huge amounts of money and property. Bekri was one of the most senior officials from the predominantly Muslim Uighur (WEE-gur) ethnic



minority in China's far west Xinjiang region. He became director of the National Energy Administration in 2014 and was also deputy chairman of the Cabinet's economic planning agency. The disciplinary commission said Bekri's case will now be investigated by criminal prosecutors. Thousands of both high- and low-level officials have been detained in President Xi Jinping's multi-year crackdown on corruption. (Fox News)

### 'Unhinged Russophobia': Moscow Slams New Barrage of US & Canada Sanctions over Kerch Standoff

MOSCOW - The Russian Foreign Ministry has vowed to retaliate to the new economic sanctions rolled out by Washington and Ottawa over the November showdown near the shores of Crimea.

The Foreign Ministry has called "groundless" the allegations by the US and Canadian governments that Russia was the aggressor in the November 25 incident in the Black Sea, when three Ukrainian warships sailed into Russian territorial waters.

Moscow said that the Ukrainian vessels had not obtained proper permits to cross the strait and ignored repeated warnings by the Russian coast guard to stop when they entered Russian waters near Crimea. Three Ukrainian sailors were injured in the standoff, and a total of 24 Ukrainian personnel were detained and put on trial for violating Russian borders. The ships were later found to be armed and reportedly intended to cross the ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

### World Reacts with Sadness, Anger to New Zealand Mosque Shootings

LONDON - Leaders and organizations around the world expressed disgust and sorrow at the killing of 49 people in shootings at two New Zealand mosques on Friday, attacks that many blamed on the demonization of Muslims by the West.

Western leaders from Donald Trump to Angela Merkel expressed solidarity with New Zealanders, deploring what the White House called a "vicious act of hate".

The response from some Muslim countries went further, blaming politicians and the media for stoking that hatred. The nationalities of the victims included Indian, Pakistani, Malaysian, Indonesian, Egyptian, Bangladeshi, Saudi, Somalian and Turkish, authorities said.

New Zealand police said 49 people were killed and 42 were being treated for wounds, including a four-year-old child. Three people were in custody including one man who has been charged with murder, police said.

"I blame these increasing terror attacks on the current Islamophobia post-9/11 (where) 1.3 billion Muslims have collectively been blamed for any act of terror," Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan wrote on social media. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the attack was a result of Muslims being demonized. "Not only the perpetrators, but also politicians & media that fuel the already escalated Islamophobia and hate in the West are equally responsible for this heinous attack," he tweeted. (Reuters)

## Neighbor News

### US Officials Offered Iranian Engineer Cash to Take Down Tehran's Power Grid: Report

TEHRAN - Middle East commentator and analyst Sharmin Narwani, a former senior associate at Oxford University, has claimed that an Iranian-American engineer was offered money by US officials to conduct a sabotage mission targeting the power grid of Tehran, Iran's capital city.

Narwani revealed on Thursday that the engineer, a friend of hers whom she did not name for security reasons, was approached twice by "US State Department employees" following Iran's 2009 post-election unrest and was offered

\$250,000 to carry out the operation.

The agents allegedly described the operation as "very simple", demanding that the engineer go to a specific area in Tehran and apply a specific code in a communication device during his upcoming trip to the city. The engineer, however, allegedly declined to carry out the operation and ultimately notified Narwani in 2010. Speaking to Narwani, the engineer had also expressed shock that US officials knew of his planned trip to Tehran and also knew that he was "cash-strapped" at the time. (Press TV)

### Uzbekistan May Work on Common Space Project with Central Asian Countries

TASHKENT - Kazakhstan presented the space project to the heads of official governmental delegations of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan in the framework of the first Central Asian Economic Forum at Uzexpocenter exhibition, Trend reports via Uzbek media.

Collaboration in the space sphere may be one of the new areas of five-sided cooperation. Kazakh developers stated that the regional project envisages the creation of a group of five Earth remote sensing satellites.

"The project provides that each country will own a satellite, which will give an opportunity to receive high-quality remote sensing

information. This will increase the efficiency of surveying the surface of the earth and allow each country to introduce its own monitoring in the development of economic sectors, such as agriculture or others," Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Zhenis Kasymbek said at the presentation.

Kazakhstan proposes within the project to send working groups to all countries to analyze and study these proposals. Experts noted that the technology of remote sensing of the Earth from space is an indispensable tool for studying and continuous monitoring of our planet, helping to effectively use and manage its resources. (Trend)

### Turkmenistan Preparing for Participation in World Expo 2020

ASHGABAT - Work is underway to organize the pavilion of Turkmenistan at World Expo 2020 in Dubai, UAE, Trend reports referring to the local Al-tyr TV channel.

An international tender was held by the Turkmen Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations, following which a project proposal made by Tekmil, a local private enterprise, was selected. The area of the national pavilion will cover 1,581 square meters. Conditions will be cre-

ated for holding business forums and meetings. The exhibition in Dubai will be held under the slogan "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future". An estimated 25 million people will visit the World Expo during the six months which the event will be held for.

The official platform for the World Expo 2020 exhibition pavilion will be the new Dubai Trade Center with an area of 438 hectares, projected specifically for the exhibition. (Trend)

### Pakistan Looks Forward to Second Belt and Road Forum as Important Platform: Ambassador Khalid

BEIJING - Pakistan Ambassador to China Masood Khalid Saturday said that the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation was a symbol of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and had a growing impact on the world.

"Pakistan looks forward to the second Belt and Road Forum (BRF) as an important platform for getting the international consensus on connectivity and promoting effective cooperation to unlock the potential of our economies and give full play to the enterprising spirit of our peoples," he said in an interview with Xinhuanet.

In 2013, Pakistan and China had reached an understanding to develop the China-Paki-

stan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to upgrade the physical connectivity infrastructure between the two countries and further enhance economic relations.

In the short span of time, CPEC has become one of the largest, most visible and most successful projects under the initiative, the ambassador said. He further described the effect of CPEC on Pakistan in both tangible and intangible ways. The energy crisis afflicting Pakistan has largely subsided due to CPEC, according to the ambassador.

Pakistan's economic growth in 2017-18 had reached to recent high of 5.8 percent, he added. (Monitoring Desk)