



KASTANIES, Greece (AP) — Greek police freed tear gas at migrants trying to push into Greece from Turkey through the land border Monday, and a child died when a dinghy boat capsized during a sea crossing, after Turkey opened its frontier for migrants and refugees to enter Europe. The child's death, reported by the Greek coast guard, was the first since thousands of migrants began massing at the frontiers with Greece over the weekend after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced an easing of restrictions on those wishing to cross to Europe. Turkey's announcement, initially by an official on Thursday, marked a dramatic departure from a previous policy of containing the hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants in Turkey. Erdogan apparently aims to pressure Europe into offering Turkey more support in dealing with the fallout from the Syrian war to its south.

HONG KONG (Reuters) — Hong Kong, grappling months of sometimes violent anti-government unrest, is to spend about HK\$500 million (\$64.3 million) on police protective equipment, including six armored vehicles, to help combat the threat of "local terrorism". Police chief Chris Tang was speaking on Monday after the government announced in its budget last week that police funding would be HK\$25.8 billion, up 25 percent from the previous year. About HK\$300 million will be used to buy protective gear, and HK\$200 million will be used for special equipment, including replacing six armored vehicles and buying more water cannon. The figure includes a planned upgrade in protective gear of HK\$10,000 for each of its 28,000 frontline officers. Tang said he was concerned about a spike in the number of youths violating the law, two days after more than 100 people were arrested following a protest that turned violent.

SEOUL/GAPYEONG, South Korea (Reuters) — The founder of the church at the center of South Korea's coronavirus outbreak apologized on Monday after one of its members tested positive for the virus and infected many others, calling the epidemic a "great calamity". South Korea reported 599 new cases on Monday, taking its national tally to 4,335. There have been 26 deaths. A member of a branch of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, known as Patient 31, was the first of a wave of infections to hit the country in recent weeks. The church's suspected role in the outbreak has caused significant public anger. Lee Man-hee, a self-proclaimed messiah who founded and heads the church, said it tried to prevent the spread of the virus among its members. "We did our best but were not able to stop the spread of the virus," Lee told a news conference outside a church facility in Gapyeong, northeast of Seoul. Several protesters shouted slurs at the reclusive leader, who spoke a day after the Seoul city government asked prosecutors to begin a murder investigation into him.

FRANKFURT (Reuters) — Flights have resumed to and from Frankfurt Airport after a drone sighting stopped planes taking off and landing for around 90 minutes. Fraport - the operator of Germany's largest hub - said on Monday. Germany's DFS air traffic control authority had earlier said that flights were suspended until further notice due to the sighting and police at the airport had said they were deploying a police helicopter. A spokesman for Fraport said 72 flights had been canceled and 57 were redirected due to the drone sighting. In one of the worst disruptions to air travel from drones in December 2018, reported drone sightings near Britain's Gatwick airport, the country's second busiest, caused chaos for hundreds of thousands of Christmas travelers.

DHAKA (Reuters) — Police in Bangladesh killed seven members of a gang of armed robbers on Monday during a raid on their hideout on a hillside overlooking a camp for Rohingya refugees in the southeast of the country, a police spokesman said. Crime and violence are on the rise in the squalid, sprawling camps around the coastal city of Cox's Bazar, where hundreds of thousands of ethnic Rohingya took shelter in recent years after fleeing persecution in neighboring Myanmar. Police said the gang had been engaged in narcotics and human trafficking, and the three-hour raid was conducted by a special police unit known as the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB). At least 50 Rohingya people have been killed in shootings in Bangladesh since the latest mass influx of Rohingya refugees in August 2017, according to police.

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday rebuffed a bid by gun rights advocates to overturn President Donald Trump's ban on "bump stocks" - devices that enable semi-automatic weapons to fire rapidly like a machine gun - implemented after the 2017 Las Vegas mass shooting. The justices left in place a lower court's decision that upheld the Trump administration's action to define bump stocks as prohibited machine guns under U.S. law. The ban, which went into effect in March 2019, was embraced by Trump following a massacre that killed 58 people at a music festival in Las Vegas in which the gunman used bump stocks. It represented a rare recent instance of gun control at the federal level in a country that has experienced a series of mass shootings. Numerous gun control proposals have been thwarted in the U.S. Congress, largely because of opposition by Republican lawmakers and the influential National Rifle Association gun rights lobby.

Northern Italy Overwhelmed by Coronavirus Outbreak



Residents wait to be given access to shop in a supermarket on February 23, 2020 in the small Italian town of Casalpusterlengo.

MILAN (AP) — The coronavirus outbreak in northern Italy has so overwhelmed the public health system that officials are taking extraordinary measures to care for the sick, seeking to bring doctors out of retirement and accelerate graduation dates for nursing students.

The region of Lombardy has been the epicenter of Italy's outbreak, registering the first positive test of the northern cluster and now counting 984 of Italy's 1,694 cases. Most alarmingly, 10% of Lombardy's doctors and nurses are out of commission, because they tested positive for the virus and are in quarantine, said the region's top health official, Giulio Gallera.

With officials saying they expect Italy's numbers to continue rising for at least another week, until containment measures begin to take effect, the health care emergency in Lombardy has reached a crisis point.

Hospitals in hard-hit Lodi and Cremona were so overwhelmed at times last week, with more sick people arriving than could be accepted, that they closed their emergency rooms and new patients were taken elsewhere.

"Effectively some of the hospitals in Lombardy are under a stress that is much heavier than what this area can support and has trained for years, to face this type of emergency," Dr. Massimo Galli, head of infectious disease at Milan's

Sacco Hospital, told Sky TG24. "This epidemic is on a scale that is larger than anyone could have thought, imagined or prevented."

Lombardy's regional government has asked the central government to reactivate retired doctors and nurses and get them back on the payroll. In addition, nursing students who were due to take their final exams next month are now expected to graduate in the coming days so they can be immediately put to work, Gallera said.

"We'll take anyone: old, young. We need personnel, especially qualified doctors," Gallera told reporters.

Private hospitals in Lombardy have offered up beds in intensive care units and more than a dozen doctors from the private sector have agreed to work in public hospitals to ease the crisis, regional president Attilio Fontana said. Regional authorities have asked Lombardy's hospitals to reduce by 70 percent their planned or elective surgeries, to free up ICU beds for virus patients.

Underscoring the emergency, Fontana himself has been in quarantine for several days after one of his top aides tested positive for the virus. A second member of the regional government tested positive Monday, forcing the entire regional government to undergo testing. Fontana has been working and sleeping out of his office, appearing at each day's virus briefing via video.

Muhyiddin Takes Office as Malaysia's New PM



Malaysia's Prime Minister Designate Muhyiddin Yassin waves to reporters before his inauguration as the 8th prime minister, outside his residence in Kuala Lumpur, March 1, 2020.

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters) — Muhyiddin Yassin took office as Malaysia's new prime minister on Monday, capping a week of political chaos caused by the shock resignation of Mahathir Mohamad, and as the country's economy weakens mainly due to the spread of the coronavirus.

In a marked difference from the administration of his outspoken 94-year-old predecessor, the publicity-shy Muhyiddin, 72, made no public remarks to state media called for his first day in office.

His office issued a two-paragraph statement saying he met government officials but had no plans to see any political leaders. He also visited the graves of his parents in his hometown in Johor, neighboring Singapore, to pay his respects.

Muhyiddin, who unexpectedly fought off a challenge from his former boss Mahathir to get the top job, will have to soon hammer out deals with his new Malay nationalist administration partners to pick his cabinet colleagues.

One of his biggest challenges would be to revive Southeast Asia's third biggest economy that grew at its slowest pace in a decade in the fourth quarter.

It was not immediately clear if he would stick to a \$4.7 billion stimulus package announced by Mahathir last week as interim prime minister to counter the impact of the coronavirus outbreak. Malaysia has

reported 29 confirmed cases of infection, with 22 already cured and discharged.

"The change of government and assemblance of a new cabinet — appointments expected soon — could delay the roll out of the stimulus measures announced by Mahathir," said Peter Mumford of consultancy Eurasia Group.

"In addition, the deterioration in relations between Muhyiddin and Mahathir means there is a risk the former replaces the latter's appointments at government-linked companies, creating a period of uncertainty that delays investment plans."

Foreign investors dumped 1.26 billion ringgit (\$300 million) worth of equities last week - the highest in 88 weeks - as domestic political uncertainty added to worries over the disease outbreak.

Muhyiddin also faces the possibility of sustained public protests, as supporters of his former political allies accused him of leading a coup to form a backdoor government.

Police said they are investigating whether participants at a rally on Sunday against Muhyiddin's premiership, who included Mahathir's eldest daughter, Marina, had contravened a law on illegal assembly.

Police have so far arrested one man and are investigating three others for social media posts that insult the king and threaten public order.

North Korea Fires Ballistic Missiles in Warning to U.S.



In this Feb. 28, 2020 photo, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, center, inspects the military drill of units of the Korean People's Army, with soldiers shown wearing face masks.

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea fired what appeared to be two short-range ballistic missiles on Monday, the South's military said, weeks after Pyongyang threatened to demonstrate a "new strategic weapon" and its deadline for Washington to offer sanctions relief expired.

The launch was the nuclear-armed North's first for more than three months and came as nuclear negotiations with the United States remain at a standstill.

The two devices were fired eastwards over the sea from the Wonsan area on the east coast and flew 240 kilometers (150 miles) at a maximum altitude of 35 kilometers, the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

They were "believed to be short-range ballistic missiles," a JCS official said.

South Korea's security ministers expressed "strong concern" the North was "carrying out actions giving rise to military tensions", the presidential Blue House said.

Japan's defense ministry said there was no indication of anything coming down in its waters or exclusive economic zone, but added: "Recent repeated launches of ballistic and other missiles by North Korea is a serious issue."

The launch came as Pyongyang battles to prevent a coronavirus outbreak and days after the one-year anniversary of the collapsed Hanoi summit between leader Kim Jong Un and U.S. President

Donald Trump.

Negotiations have since been deadlocked over sanctions relief and what the North would be willing to give up in return, despite a high-profile June meeting in the Demilitarized Zone that divides the peninsula.

Pyongyang carried out a series of weapons tests late last year, the last of them in November, often describing them as multiple launch rocket systems. It also carried out static engine tests, most recently in December.

At a party meeting at the end of that month, Kim declared that Pyongyang no longer considered itself bound by its moratoriums on nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests, and threatened to demonstrate a "new strategic weapon" soon.

Former State Department official Mintaro Oba said: "Coronavirus dominates our attention at the moment, but this is a reminder that North Korea continues to advance its nuclear and missile programs."

It would "look for ways to gain leverage and reclaim the initiative as we get closer to the U.S. presidential election", he added.

North Korea has not reported a single case of the coronavirus, which has killed more than 3,000 people and infected over 88,000 in dozens of countries since it emerged in neighboring China.

U.S. to Overhaul Navy Education as Military Edge Erodes



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Farragut prepares to moor pierside in Tromso, Norway, Sept. 7, 2018.

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — The U.S. Navy is overhauling its approach to education because the nation no longer has a massive economic and technological edge over potential adversaries, according to a strategy it is releasing Monday.

The Education for Seapower Strategy 2020, provided to The Associated Press ahead of its release, is the first unified, comprehensive education strategy for the Navy and Marine Corps, said John Kroger, who is implementing the strategy as the Navy's first chief learning officer.

It is very much a response to the nation's geopolitical position in the world today, versus the advantages it

had at the end of the Cold War, Kroger said, noting China's economic strength and investments in 5G networks, energy storage and other major technologies that matter for war-fighting.

The Navy wants to create a naval community college to provide associate's degrees to tens of thousands of young sailors and Marines, at no cost to them. It plans to unify the schools within the existing naval university system, similar to a state university system, and invest in them, as well as enact new policies to encourage and reward those who pursue professional military and civilian education.

"In a world where potential adversaries are peers economically and techno-

logically, how do you win?" Kroger said in an interview. "We think we can out-fight potential opponents because we can out-think them. In order to do that, we must have, by far, the best military education program in the world."

Kroger came to the Navy from Harvard University, where he was a visiting professor at Harvard Law School and leader in residence at the Kennedy School of Government. He was president of Reed College in Portland, Oregon, from 2012 to 2018, and previously served as Oregon's attorney general. Kroger served as a Marine from 1983 to 1986.

Though the need to ensure an advantage in fighting wars is driving the reforms, Kroger said, the educational opportunities will change how and whom the Navy recruits. It's more challenging to recruit when there's relatively low unemployment, he said.

The strategy does not specifically say how much the Navy is looking to spend on education or where the money will come from. Kroger said it will rely mostly on existing education funding that can be used in a more cost-effective way. About \$109 million was transferred from other Navy programs this fiscal year to pay for immediate education needs, including startup costs for the community college.

Buttigieg Quits Democratic Race for Presidency

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Pete Buttigieg on Sunday ended his campaign to be the Democratic nominee -- giving a major boost to fellow centrist Joe Biden.

The 38-year-old Buttigieg's surprise decision was set to shake up the race this week when 14 states vote on "Super Tuesday."

It is expected to further boost the fortunes of Biden after the former vice president scored a resounding victory in South Carolina's primary on Saturday in the contest to see who faces President Donald Trump in November.

Biden has emerged as the chief moderate challenger to frontrunner Bernie Sanders who has taken the race by storm and is looking to score big wins on Tuesday in states such as crown jewel California.

Buttigieg, a military veteran and former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, addressed supporters in his home town. "The truth is that the path has narrowed to a close -- for our candidacy, if not for our cause," he said.

Buttigieg however stopped short of endorsing Biden or any other candidate.

Biden's resounding victory Saturday in the first southern

state to vote has thrust him back into contention, after miserable showings in the first three states.

With 48 percent of the vote in North Carolina, Biden more than doubled the 20 percent won by Sanders -- positioning him as the leftist senator's main rival.

Sanders continues to hold poll leads in several Super Tuesday states -- including California.

"I think we've got a great chance to win in California, in Texas, in Massachusetts and a number of states," Sanders said Sunday on CBS.

He later congratulated Buttigieg on "running a strong and historic campaign" and angled for his supporters. "I urge them to join us in the fight for real change in this country," Sanders tweeted.

In an already turbulent Democratic race -- which has gradually winnowed down a diverse and record-large field -- Biden's victory Saturday injected further uncertainty.

"The biggest question is whether this will slingshot Joe Biden into victory in some Super Tuesday states," said Larry Sabato, director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia.