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One dead, 44 injured in Swiss bus crash: police

Geneva, Switzerland

One person died and 44 were injured when a bus crashed into a wall on a Swiss motorway early yesterday, police said.

The accident happened on the motorway outside Zurich at roughly 4:15 am (0315 GMT), police in the Canton said in a statement.

Three people were seriously hurt, while the rest suffered minor to moderate injuries, they added. The cause of the crash, was not immediately known.

The vehicle, run by a subsidiary of the German-owned company Flixbus, was on route from the Italian city of Genoa to Dusseldorf, ATS news agency reported.



The wreckage of a bus that crashed into a wall

Power struggle ends

Sri Lanka reinstates ousted prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe**Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka's president yesterday reappointed as prime minister the same man he sacked from the job nearly two months ago, ending a messy power struggle that had paralysed the island nation.

Ranil Wickremesinghe, whose shock dismissal in late October threw Sri Lanka into constitutional crisis, was sworn in at a closed-door ceremony in the president's office in Colombo.

The 69-year-old had refused to step aside since being dumped and replaced by controversial strongman Mahinda Rajapakse -- leaving the country with two rival leaders and no functioning government.

The ousted premier had long asserted his dismissal was illegal, a view supported by Sri Lanka's parliament which six times voted against Rajapakse's claim to rule during tumultuous sessions that erupted into brawls.

President Maithripala Sirisena had refused to bow to pressure as the country drifted, declaring he would never reappoint Wickremesinghe and deriding his once-ally in public speeches as their alliance imploded.

The acrimony between the two was underscored Sunday when Sirisena barred journalists from attending the swearing-in ceremony -- leaving it to Wickremesinghe's



Maithripala Sirisena (R) listens to Mahinda Rajapakse (file)

legislators to announce the appointment.

"We thank the citizens of the country who fought the illegal seizure of power and ensured that democracy was restored," his United National Party of Sri Lanka posted on Twitter.

A spokesman for Wickremesinghe said he was expected to form a cabinet in the coming days with priority given to the 2019 budget -- without which Sri Lanka risks government shutdown and defaulting on

its sizeable foreign debt.

Sirisena's resistance became untenable after the country's highest court last week ruled that he acted outside the constitution when he dissolved parliament in early November and called early elections.

The Supreme Court also confirmed that Rajapakse could not exercise the powers of a prime minister until he proved his legitimacy -- which without enough support in parliament was impossible.



A protester wearing a yellow vest (gilet jaune) holds a placard reading "here lies democracy" during a demonstration against rising costs of living they blame on high taxes on the place de la Republique, in Paris

France's 'yellow vest' protests lose momentum

Paris, France

Groups of defiant "yellow vest" demonstrators faced off with tens of thousands of police around France on Saturday, but the protest movement appeared to have lost momentum on a fifth and decisive weekend.

President Emmanuel Macron, facing the biggest crisis of his presidency, announced a series of concessions on Monday to defuse the explosive "yellow vest" crisis, which swelled up from rural and small-town France last month.

The package of tax and minimum wage measures for low-income workers, coupled with bitter winter weather this weekend, appeared to have helped bring calm to the country after more than a month of clashes and disruption.

France was also hit by a

fresh deadly terror attack on Tuesday night when a gunman opened fire at a Christmas market in Strasbourg, leaving four dead and leading the government to urge people to stay at home to spare the stretched security forces.

Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said Saturday that eight people had now died in incidents linked to the demonstrations, and called on protesters to halt their blockades across the country.

"Everyone's safety has to become the rule again," he said in a tweet.

"Dialogue now needs to unite all those who want to transform France."

Richard Ferrand, the head of the National Assembly, welcomed the "necessary" weakening of the rallies, adding that "there had been a massive response to their demands".

Disgusting delicacies



"Fried Tarantula" from Cambodia is presented in the Disgusting Food Museum in Los Angeles, California. Care for some Chinese mouse wine, fried tarantula or sheep eyeball juice? Or how about fried locusts, grasshoppers or virgin boy eggs? These delicacies are among some 80 items featured at the Disgusting Food Museum opening in Los Angeles, with the aim of exposing visitors to different cultures and foods and what we may all be eating in the future.

Cambodia seizes 3-tonnes African ivory

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Cambodia seized more than 3.2 tonnes of elephant tusks hidden in a storage container sent from Mozambique, a customs official said yesterday, marking the country's largest ivory bust.

The discovery Thursday of 1,026 tusks at the Phnom Penh Autonomous Port followed a tip from the US embassy, the official said, and highlights Cambodia's emergence as a key regional transit point for the multibillion dollar trade in illicit wildlife.

"The elephant tusks were hidden among marble in a container that was abandoned," Sun Chhay, director of the Customs



Cambodian Customs and Excise Officials looking at ivory seized from a shipping container at the Phnom Penh port

and Excise Office at the port, told AFP.

He said the ivory was sent from the southern African nation of Mozambique and arrived at the port last year.

The unidentified owner of the shipment did not arrive to pick up the cargo.

Pictures of the massive haul showed long rows of confiscated tusks spread out on the ground at the port.

Sun Chhay said he did not know whether the shipment was destined for markets in other countries. Demand from China and Vietnam has fuelled the growth of illegal wildlife trafficking via Cambodia.