

world

Trump slams ‘fabricated’ testimony in Mueller report

AFP | Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday dismissed unfavorable testimony in the Mueller report on Russian election interference as “fabricated” and labelled the document “crazy.”

“Statements are made about me by certain people in the Crazy Mueller Report, in itself written by 18 Angry Democrat Trump Haters, which are fabricated & totally untrue,” the president tweeted.

A 400-page document outlining the findings of Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s 22-month investigation, made public on Thursday, cleared Trump of criminal conspiracy but left open whether he had obstructed justice.

Mueller’s report recounts 10 episodes involving the president and potential obstruction of the investigation.

After reviewing the document, Attorney General Bill Barr and his deputy Rod Rosenstein concluded there was insufficient evidence to charge the president with obstruction.

Mueller, however, noted that while he was following Justice Department policy in not charging Trump, the evidence he gathered “does not exonerate” the Republican president.

“Because I never agreed to testify, it was not necessary for me to respond to statements made in the ‘Report’ about me, some of which are total bullshit & only given to make the other person look good (or me to look bad)”

DONALD TRUMP

Trump initially celebrated the publication of the report -- which landed as the United States dives into the ferment of a bitter presidential campaign -- saying at the White House that he was “having a good day.”

But he was in a more defensive mood yesterday, as he prepared for a long Easter weekend at his Florida golf resort, insisting that he had done nothing wrong.

Public ‘misled’

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US President Donald Trump waves upon arrival at Palm Beach International airport, Florida

person look good (or me to look bad),” Trump added, repeating his description of the investigation as an “Illegally Started Hoax.”

Mueller said in his report that Trump’s “efforts to influence the investigation were mostly unsuccessful, but that is largely because the persons who surrounded the president declined

to carry out orders or accede to his requests.”

The episodes of potential wrongdoing, which will now be examined by the Democrat-led House of Representatives, include the firing of FBI chief James Comey, Trump’s efforts to remove Mueller and his attempts to prevent disclosure of emails about the infamous 2016

Trump Tower meeting between Russians and senior campaign officials.

Democrats meanwhile have demanded action against Barr, arguing that Mueller’s report undercut some of the attorney general’s key claims about the obstruction issue and the White House’s cooperation with the investigation.

11 sleeping civilians killed in Cameroon Boko Haram attack

AFP | Yaounde, Cameroon

Boko Haram fighters torched a village in Cameroon’s troubled Far North Region overnight and killed 11 civilians in their sleep, security sources said yesterday.

“Boko Haram made an incursion at night in the Tchakamari area. The toll is 11,” a source close to security services in the area said, confirming a report from a member of a local self-defence militia.

It was the deadliest Boko Haram raid in recent months in Cameroon. The bodies were “charred”, the source close to security services said, adding that the attackers had burnt the village.

The dead included both children and the aged and began at around 10 pm and lasted until about 1 am yesterday.

The Boko Haram conflict began in 2009 in neighbouring Nigeria and has killed more than 27,000 people and left 1.8 million homeless in the country’s northeast.

Stadium debate ahead of Ukraine presidential runoff

AFP | Kiev, Ukraine

A comedian tipped to take over Ukraine’s presidency and his incumbent rival go head-to-head in an extraordinary stadium debate yesterday, as campaigning reaches its grand finale before weekend vote.

Polls show Volodymyr Zelensky, a 41-year-old standup comic with no political experience, handily defeating President Petro Poroshenko in a second-round of voting on Sunday.

The television star’s bid started as a long shot but he leapfrogged establishment candidates amid frustration over corruption, economic trouble and a conflict with Moscow-backed insurgents in the country’s east.

Some 60,000 spectators are expected to attend the first and only policy head-to-head of the campaign, set to take place in Kiev’s Olympic Stadium amid beefed-up security.

Bangladesh girl burned to death on teacher’s order: police

AFP | Dhaka

A schoolgirl was burned to death in Bangladesh on the orders of her head teacher after she reported him for sexually harassing her, police said yesterday.

The death of 19-year-old Nusrat Jahan Rafi last week sparked protests across the South Asian nation, with the prime minister promising to prosecute all those involved.

Rafi was lured to the rooftop of the Islamic seminary she attended where her attackers asked her to withdraw the sexual harassment complaint she had filed with police.

When she refused, she was



Bangladeshi women hold banners and photographs of schoolgirl Nusrat Jahan Rafi at a protest in Dhaka

doused in kerosene and set on fire.

Police said yesterday that one of the 17 people arrested in connection with her death had accused the school’s principal of ordering the attack.

The teacher “told them to put pressure on Rafi to withdraw the case or kill her if she refused”, senior police superintendent Mohammad Iqbal, who is leading the investigation, said.

Expansive New Kingdom tomb unveiled in Egypt’s Luxor

Reuters | Luxor, Egypt

Archaeologists on Thursday unveiled an unusually large tomb on Luxor’s west bank dated to ancient Egypt’s 18th dynasty.

The 3,500-year-old, 450-square-metre (540-square-yard) tomb contains 18 entrance gates and is believed to have belonged to a nobleman named Shedsu-Djehuty.

The nobleman was the royal master of seals for ancient Egyptian kings of Upper and Lower Egypt, said Mostafa Waziri, secretary-general of Egypt’s Supreme Council of Antiquities.

Egyptian workers started

renovating the tomb upon its discovery in 2018, finding a huge yard, colourful floor tiles and wall paintings documenting activities including boat making and hunting.

The west bank of the River Nile at Luxor is home to the Valley of the Kings, where pharaohs and nobles of the New Kingdom were buried in tombs carved into the rock. The 18th dynasty was the first of the New Kingdom dynasties.

The tomb is the latest in a series unveiled by Egypt’s ministry of antiquities, which says more excavation teams have been working as security has improved in Egypt in recent years.

Endangered Kakapo population boosted by record number of chicks

Reuters | Wellington

A record number of endangered flightless Kakapo birds have hatched during New Zealand’s unusually long 2019 breeding season, dramatically boosting the numbers of the rare native parrot.

More than 70 chicks have been born, according to New Zealand’s Department of Conservation (DOC). Though not all are expected to make it to adult-

hood, the current 147 adult population is expected to see a dramatic increase.

The birds breed only once every two to four years when native rimu trees produce fruit, and this year’s season was expected to be a record length.

“It’s been going on for a long time... we had our first mating before Christmas, the first chick hatched on the 30 January, the earliest a chick had ever hatched,” Andrew Digby, a sci-

ence advisor on DOC’s Kakapo Recovery Programme, told Radio New Zealand’s ‘Kakapo Files’ podcast this week.

Kakapo are the world’s heaviest species of parrot, with females weighing around 1.4 kgs (3.1 pounds) and males 2.2 kgs (4.8 pounds).

The birds are vulnerable to predators and were decimated by cats and stoats introduced by European settlers in the 19th century.



Kakapo parrot chicks are seen in this undated social media photo obtained April 18, 2019, in an undisclosed location in New Zealand

By the mid-1990s Kakapo were on the brink of extinction but government-funded breeding programmes have worked to increase bird numbers.

Digby told Radio New Zealand that the young chicks were still quite uncoordinated and conservation staff were training them to get used to exploring so they can eventually climb 30 metres (90 feet) trees on dedicated island sanctuaries.