



People hold signs reading "Puigdemont to prison" while waving Spanish flags during a demonstration calling for unity at Plaza de Colón in Madrid, yesterday; sacked Catalan President Carles Puigdemont greets a supporter after leaving a restaurant the day after the Catalan regional parliament declared independence from Spain in Girona.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS



Naik promoted  
hatred among  
religious groups

Finds Indian probe

OUR CORRESPONDENT, NEW

INDIA

India's elite anti-terror probe

has filed a charge

sheet in a trial court in

Mumbai saying controversial

Islamic preacher Zakir Naik

has promoted "hatred and

animosity between different

religious groups and among

non-Wahabi Islamic sects in

India through his public

speeches and lectures.

During the investigation,

it was found that through his

public lectures/speeches

Naik "deliberately and maliciously insulted the religious beliefs of Hindus, Christians

and non-Wahabi Muslims,

particularly Sufi, and

Barelwasi, with intention of

outraging their religious

feelings," the charge sheet

filed by National Investigation

Agency (NIA) said.

The charge sheet, which

names Naik and his banned

NGO Islamic Research

Foundation (IRF) and

Harmony Media Private

Timed as accused, was filed

before a special NIA court on

the basis of 152 provisions

of Indian Penal Code and

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. IRF was banned

last year under India's tough

law UAPA.

It said the investigation

conducted by NIA has

firmly established that the

"incriminating public

speeches/utterings" of Naik

have been in circulation

through the electronic

media, such as CD/DVD/

YouTube, etc and have

been, and continue to be

seen, across the world.

## SPECIAL PROBE ON RUSSIA MEDDLING IN US POLLS First charges filed

Report says 'accused' may be in custody as early as Monday; US releases Russian defense firms sanctions list

AFP, Washington

A Washington grand jury on Friday approved the first charges in the probe led by independent prosecutor Robert Mueller, CNN reported, citing sources briefed on the matter.

The approval of the charges - details of which remain unclear - would mark a major step forward in the sweeping investigation into potential links between President Donald Trump's campaign and Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential vote.

A federal judge ordered that the charges stay sealed, the cable news network said, reporting that anyone charged could be taken into custody as early as Monday.

Reached by AFP, both Mueller's office and the US Department of Justice declined to comment on the CNN report.

Mueller, a former FBI director, was tapped in May to head the Russia probe -- one of several ongoing investigations on the matter -- shortly after Trump's shock sacking of then-FBI director James Comey.

That Mueller had impaneled a federal grand jury to investigate potential Russian meddling was seen as a step toward

possible criminal indictments.

Trump has not been accused of any wrongdoing but his abrupt firing of Comey is reportedly an area of interest to investigators, along with Trump's eldest son's meeting with a Kremlin-linked lawyer during the campaign and Trump's meetings at the White House with Russian officials.

Mueller's team has also scrutinized foreign lobbying done by Trump's former campaign chairman Paul Manafort and the president's former national security adviser Michael Flynn.

Meanwhile, under pressure from an impatient Congress, Trump's administration belatedly published a list of Russian firms and agencies Friday to comply with a new sanctions law.

Trump had opposed the law, which restricted his authority to loosen measures imposed to punish Russia for its meddling in Ukraine and alleged interference in US politics.

But he begrudgingly signed off on the "Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act" in August after lawmakers passed it with a veto-proof majority.

## 'Massive' response if N Korea use nuke: Mattis

AFP, Seoul

US Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis yesterday warned North Korea of a "massive" military response to any use of nuclear weapons as tensions remain sky-high ahead of Donald Trump's visit to South Korea.

Pygong in recent months has sparked global alarm by conducting a sixth nuclear test and test-launching missiles capable of reaching the US mainland, while Trump and the North's young ruler Kim Jong-un have traded threats of war and personal insults.

Mattis, on a trip to Seoul for annual defence talks, maintained that diplomacy remained a "preferred course of action" but stressed, "our diplomats are most effective when backed by credible military force".

"Make no mistake - any attack on the United States or our allies will be defeated," Mattis said at a joint press conference with his South Korean counterpart Song Young-Moo.

"Any use of nuclear weapons by the

North will be met with a massive military response, effective and overwhelming," Mattis said, adding Washington "does not accept a nuclear North Korea."

"I cannot imagine a condition under which the United States will accept North Korea as a nuclear power," he said.

Mattis did not specify the threshold of nuclear weapon activity that would trigger a military response.

Pyongyang's Foreign Minister Ri Yong-Ho said on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly last month that his country would test a nuclear bomb over the Pacific.

Mattis' trip comes ahead of Trump's first presidential visit to South Korea next month as part of his Asia tour which also includes Japan, China, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Trump's recent remark that "only one thing will work" with the North fuelled concerns of a potential conflict on the divided peninsula where the 1950-53 Korean War had left millions dead.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

## Obama called for jury duty in US

CNN ONLINE

Barack Obama has fulfilled his civic duty as president. Now comes another role as a citizen: jury duty.

Cook County Chief Judge Timothy Evans told county commissioners Friday that Obama has been summoned for jury duty next month in Illinois, according to CNN affiliate WLS. Obama plans to serve as juror, according to WLS.

The former president lives in Washington, but maintains a home in Chicago. With a Harvard Law School degree, experience teaching law and eight years as commander in chief, he is a pretty decent candidate for jury duty.

Obama is not the first former president to receive a notice for jury duty. In 2015, former President George W Bush reported for jury duty at a Dallas courthouse.

Illinois courthouses have seen their share of politicians and celebrities, including Oprah Winfrey. In 2004, Winfrey was among 12 jurors who served in a murder trial where the defendant was convicted. Her experience as a juror was a saddest ones she has ever had, she later said.

Jurors in Cook County get paid \$17.20 a day.

## JFK FILES: OSWALD'S MEETING WITH RUSSIANS AND CUBANS

## Trump holds back key information

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Files that could have shone further light on JFK assassin Lee Harvey Oswald's overseas meetings with Cubans and Russians just months before he killed the President were not included in the information dump ordered by Donald Trump.

As historians pore over details included in the 2,800 files that were released to the public, some were disappointed that potentially insightful information may be among that still being withheld at the request of the US intelligence community.

In addition to files relating to Oswald's assassination, the Washington Post said government files about Dallas businessman Gordon McClendon, a radio station owner who is said to have spoken to Jack Ruby shortly before he shot and killed Oswald two days after John F Kennedy's assassination, was not made public. The Washington Post said government files about infamous anti-Castro Cuban exiles, including Luis Posada and Orlando Bosch - accused of the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airline - were similarly not released.

In advance of the release of the files, Trump had vowed transparency and suggested he wished to make public all of

the estimated 3,100 files relating to the assassination of US's 35th president held in the National Archives. As it was, around 2,800 were released, with the remainder being withheld for six months at the request of the US intelligence community.

Among the documents that were released are those that capture the frantic mood of the country in the days after the assassination of the 46-year-old president, as officials sought to discover whether Oswald was working alone or as part of a broader conspiracy.

Memories believed to have been dictated by FBI Director J Edgar Hoover on 24 November 1963 - the day after the assassination and the day that Oswald was himself shot and killed, stated: "There is nothing further on the Oswald case except that he is dead."

An FBI cable from April 1964 recounts part of Oswald's bus trip to Mexico in October 1963, including the names of the people sitting around him. Another memo sent from the office of Hoover detailed how the Soviet Union had suspected that JFK's Vice President, Lyndon Johnson, the man who succeeded him, was involved in the President's death.

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## Release all Clinton emails: Trump

CNN ONLINE

President Donald Trump has made it clear to the State Department that he wants to accelerate the release of any remaining Hillary Clinton emails in its possession as soon as possible, according to three sources familiar with the President's thinking.

This latest move for disclosure from the State Department comes at the same time the President called on the Justice Department to go to the FBI to gain influence in an investigation into Russian efforts to gain influence in the US uranium industry during the Obama administration.

The sources described the President's interest in the release of the emails - and the testimony of the FBI informant - as rooted in a commitment to "transparency," with one source adding that "this law requires cooperation with Congress and the courts."

After the initial publication of this story, one White House official confirmed the President expressed interest in the release of the Clinton emails, and later - in a conversation with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson - learned of the vast backlog of more than 13,000 outstanding FOIA cases. Those cases involve not just Clinton's emails but a multitude of topics - some going back almost a decade. Trump then asked Tillerson to clear the backlog.

In a memo to State Department employees, Tillerson said that the department will commit more resources and workforce to address the long queue of requests.

In a statement to CNN, also after the initial publication of this story, Ray Shah, White House principal deputy press secretary said: "The President wants all federal agencies to meet their obligations under the law and be transparent with the public."

## PRACTICE OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIAN POLITICAL PARTIES Eying Rahul's promotion, Modi calls for debate

PTI, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday called for a debate on internal democracy in political parties, asserting that the growth of "true democratic spirit" within them is necessary for the country's future.

Modi made these remarks in a brief speech to the media at a "Divali Milan" event at the BJP headquarters as he pointed out that funding to political parties is often debated but not their values, ideologies, internal democracy and how they give opportunities to the new generation of leaders.

The country, he said, is not much aware of the practice of democracy within parties and the media should turn its attention to it, he said.

"Whether democratic values are a part of their (parties) core values or not, should be debated widely. I believe that the development of a true democratic spirit within political parties is necessary not only for the country's future but also for democracy," he said.

Though the Prime Minister made no reference to any rival party, his comments come against the backdrop of reports that the Congress may elevate its vice-president, Rahul Gandhi as party president in place of his mother Sonia Gandhi.

The BJP has often accused the Congress of practising dynastic politics and juxtaposed that with the rise of its party workers to top echelons to project itself as a party with a difference.

PM Modi also acknowledged that there are many voices within the BJP as he noted that when it was a small organisation earlier during the times of Jana Singh, its forerunner, there used to be "ideological harmony" from its central leadership down to workers in the bottom rung.

The party's expansion may be a reason behind divergent views, he said.

He also praised the media for its support to "Swachh Bharat" (Clean India) project, saying it has spoken in one voice over the issue even if it might have been critical of the government over other matters.



Iraqi forces gather at their camp on the front line in the northwestern town of Fikishkhar, near the borders with Syria and Turkey, yesterday. Since mid-October, Iraqi forces have reclaimed the entire oil-rich province of Kirkuk, stripping the Kurds of a major chunk of their oil revenues and dealing a crippling blow to their hopes of independence.

## 31 killed in central Nepal bus accident

AFP, Kathmandu

At least 31 people, including 11 children, died when an overcrowded bus swerved off the road and plunged into a river in central Nepal yesterday, police said.

The bus skidded off the road in Dhading district, approximately 80 kilometres (50 miles) west of the capital Kathmandu, early morning and plunged into the Trishuli River.

The death toll rose to 31 late afternoon after more bodies were recovered from the water, while soldiers in boats scoured the river for missing.

At least 16 injured passengers were taken to local hospitals, police said.

"The number of missing is still unknown as the bus had no record of the total number of passengers," district police chief Dhurna Raj Raut told AFP.

Authorities are yet to confirm the cause of the crash, but local media quoted passengers saying that the driver may have been drunk.

Police Inspector Singh told AFP that the driver was injured in the accident and is thought to have fled after freeing himself from the wreckage of the bus.