



People sing Catalan anthem "Els Segadors" as they gather at Sant Jaume square to demand the freedom of the leaders of two of the largest Catalan separatist organizations, Catalan National Assembly's Jordi Sanchez and Omnium's Jordi Cuixart, who were jailed by Spain's High Court, in Barcelona, Spain, yesterday.

Gender inequality widening: WEF

APF, Geneva
A decade of slow progress towards better parity between the sexes has waned, warning the World Economic Forum (WEF) said yesterday, hailing the global gender gap was widening.
In recent years, women have made significant progress towards equality in a number of areas such as education and health, with the Nordic countries leading the fray.
But the global trend now seems to have made a U-turn, especially in workplaces, where full gender equality is not expected to materialise until 2234, WEF said in a report.
"A decade of slow but steady progress on improving parity between the sexes came to the first time since the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report was first published in 2006," it said.
The Geneva-based organisation's annual report tracks the disparities between the sexes in four areas: education, health, economic opportunity and political empowerment.
A year ago WEF estimated that it would take 83 years to close the remaining gap. Yesterday's report says that at the current rate of progress, it would now take a full 100 years on average to achieve overall gender equality.
The estimated time needed to ensure full equality in the workplace meanwhile has jumped from 80 years in 2014 to 170 years last year to 217 years now, according to the report.
The report is not all bleak, the march towards gender equality in education could reach the finish line within a mere 13 years, it said.
For instance, while Western European countries could close their gender gaps within 61 years, countries in the Middle East and North Africa will take 157 years, the report estimated.

BALFOUR DECLARATION 67 WORDS THAT CHANGED MIDDLE EAST

The Balfour Declaration a century ago opened the way for the creation of Israel, sowing the seeds of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that continues to tear apart the Middle East today. The statement was made in an open letter from British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour that was published on November 2, 1917, a year before the end of World War I. In one sentence it announced the British government's backing for the establishment within Palestine, then a region of the Ottoman Empire, of a national home for the Jewish people.
BRITAIN'S INTERESTS
With the Balfour Declaration, London was seeking Jewish support for its war effort. The post-war break-up of the Ottoman Empire and the Arab world. Their secret accord put modern-day Lebanon and Syria more or less under French influence and Iraq and Jordan under Britain. Palestine was to be placed under international administration. But Britain did not see this as its interests. It wanted to turn Zionist aspirations to its own ends, considering that a Jewish state could assure a foothold in the Middle East.
ONE SENTENCE, 67 WORDS
Balfour's famous typewritten letter, which had been approved by the cabinet, to a high-ranking representative of the British Jewish community, Lord Walter Rothschild. "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."
This one line of 67 words was a major victory for the Zionist chief in Britain, Chaim Weizmann, who was to become Israel's first president. Jews in 1917 represented only seven per cent of Palestine's population.

24,000 in 1882. The Arabs protested against the Zionist intent and the first political organisations to fight it were established in 1911.

ARAB WORLD SHARED OUT

In 1916, Britain's Sir Mark Sykes and France's Francois Georges-Picot negotiated the post-war break-up of the Ottoman Empire and shared out the Arab world. Their secret accord put modern-day Lebanon and Syria more or less under French influence and Iraq and Jordan under Britain. Palestine was to be placed under international administration. But Britain did not see this as its interests. It wanted to turn Zionist aspirations to its own ends, considering that a Jewish state could assure a foothold in the Middle East.

BIRTH OF ISRAEL

The declaration was put into action in April 1920 at the San Remo conference of World War I allies which delivered a mandate on Palestine. Approved in 1922 by the League of Nations, the mandate said Britain "shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home." London had to crush a 1936-1939 Arab revolt in Palestine that demanded independence and an end to Jewish immigration. The rise of Nazism and the Holocaust during World War II gave an impetus for a new wave of Jewish arrivals. In November 1947, the United Nations adopted a plan to split Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, with the holy city of Jerusalem under international control. And on May 14, 1948, immediately after the end of the British mandate in Palestine, Jewish leader David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the creation of the state of Israel.

UK PM names new defence minister as Fallon resigns

Reuters, London
British Prime Minister Theresa May was forced to appoint a new defence minister yesterday after her ally Michael Fallon quit in a sexual harassment scandal that has prompted calls for an end to the "locker room" culture in parliament.
Just hours after Fallon resigned over past behaviour in a "locker room" below the high stairs he was replaced by Gavin Williamson, 41, a rising star in the UK Conservative Party.
The growing harassment scandal threatens to undermine May further if her party's chief whip in parliament - a role in which he is tasked with maintaining voting discipline on legislation - resigns.
Williamson has risen quickly up the ranks of the Conservatives and May selected him last year as the party's shadow minister for defence.
As chief whip, Williamson was renowned for his toughness. But he has no former experience of the armed forces, according to his online profile, and some Conservative lawmakers openly questioned the appointment.
Fallon's resignation after he apologised for repeatedly touching a female radio presenter's knee in 2002, was yet another blow. Described by Conservative sources as a political "hotshower", Fallon was a trusted minister unable to robustly face down criticism of the government.
Britain's parliament is the latest institution to become embroiled in a sex scandal after abuse allegations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein prompted thousands of women and men to share stories of sexual harassment.
Ruth Davidson, leader of the Conservatives in Scotland, said it was time to break with the culture in politics where powerful people "use positions of power to demand things from others."
Allegations of sexual abuse have ranged from a charge of rape by an activist in the opposition Labour Party by a senior party member, to informally drafted by aides and researchers in parliament.
May has ordered investigations into a report that she has mistreated a female secretary to buy sex toys and an allegation that her deputy, Green, made an inappropriate sexual advance on a young woman - something he denies.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT SCANDAL



Gavin Williamson



Michael Fallon

Catalan ex-ministers face jail over secession bid

APF, Madrid
A judge in Madrid yesterday ordered ministers of Catalonia's deposed government to be held in jail pending further probes into their role in the regional government's quest for independence, prompting calls for protests in Barcelona and other cities.
Accused of sedition, rebellion and misuse of public funds, Catalonia's former vice president Oriol Junqueras and seven other deposed regional ministers were headed for detention after another day of drama in Spain's worst political crisis in a decade.
A ninth former minister, who resigned just before the Catalan parliament declared independence on Friday, was also remained in jail but will be free if he pays bail of 50,000 euros (\$58,000).
Grassroots independence association ANC called "peaceful but firm" protests for 7:00 pm (18:00 GMT) in front of the Catalan parliament in Barcelona and city halls around Catalonia.
Independence supporters have urged more protests today night and a big rally on November 12 in Barcelona. Pro-independence umbrella group Crida Democracia called for a week of demonstrations.
Spanish prosecutors also sought a European arrest warrant for Catalonia's ex-judge Carles Puigdemont, who is in Belgium and refused to show up to be questioned by the same judge.
In her ruling, judge Carmen Lelah said she had ordered preventive detention for the former ministers as she believed there was a risk they could escape, given Puigdemont had gone to Belgium.
Four other ministers also failed to turn up, and prosecutors asked that they too be arrested.
A total of 19 people including Puigdemont, Junqueras and the speaker of the Catalan regional parliament had been summoned to be questioned on Thursday.
A hearing of the speaker and five others at the Supreme Court was adjourned until November 9 after their lawyers requested more time to prepare their defence.



Cambodian participants row their dragon boats during the Water Festival on the Tonle Sap river in Phnom Penh, yesterday. Tens of thousands of Cambodian spectators flocked to the riverfront in the capital to watch the boat races as the country celebrates the annual water festival.

Trump for death penalty

Suspect confesses to crime, says killings 'felt good' and destruction of motor vehicles.
The complaint said Sapov, an Uber driver and father-of-three who moved to the United States in 2010, confessed to acting in the name of IS and "felt good about the work he had done," even demanding to hang its flag in his hotel room.
Sapov deliberately intended to attack on Halloween, determined to kill as many people as possible and "cause as much blood as the streets would be crowded for the holiday, authorities said.
A year ago, he first planned an attack in the United States, before setting two months ago on a vehicle strike, prosecutors said.
But he arrived as a moderate Muslim, he became radical after moving to America. The New York Times reported that he had been a student at a university-educated accountant from a wealthy family and dreamt of making it in the US, but that life did not work out as he planned it.
Instead he developed a violent temper, lost jobs and an imam worried he increasingly misinterpreted Islam, the Times said.
On Wednesday, Trump vowed to "get rid" of the green card lottery "as soon as possible," seizing on the fact that he had pressed his campaign-age of restricting immigration.

UN PROBE ON SYRIA SARIN ATTACK

APF, Moscow
Russia yesterday dismissed a report by a UN-led panel that blamed the Syrian regime for a sarin attack on the town of Khan Sheikhun and said the use of the substance was part of a "theatrical performance" by rebels.
A panel including diplomats and military officers presented Moscow's version of events complete with diagrams and satellite imagery, saying the Syrian regime did not carry the blame for the April attack which killed over 80 people.
"We believe that the report turned out to be superficial, unprofessional and amateurish," said Mikhail Ulyanov, head of the foreign ministry's security and disarmament department.
"The mission did their research from a distance, that in itself is scandalous."
He said "the use of sarin has been confirmed" but insisted it was not delivered by an aerial bomb but rather used "as a theatrical performance, a provocation" by the rebels.
At least 87 people died on April 4 this year when sarin gas agent projectiles were fired into Khan Sheikhun, a town in the Idlib province of northwestern Syria.
Images of dead and dying victims, including young children, in the aftermath of the attack provoked global outrage and US cruise missile strikes on a regime air base.
A joint panel by the United Nations and the world's chemical watchdog Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) concluded that the Syrian regime was responsible, and that the air force had dropped a bomb on the town, releasing the deadly nerve agent.

CIA releases more files from bin Laden raid

Reuters, Washington
A computer recovered in the 2011 US special forces operation that killed Osama bin Laden contained a video collection that included kids' cartoons, several Hollywood movies and three documentaries about himself.
The list of the videos was included in the release on Wednesday by the US Central Intelligence Agency of nearly 47,000 files found on the computer seized in the May 2, 2011, US raid on the al Qaeda founder's hideout in Abbottabad, Pakistan.
It is the fourth tranche of materials taken from the walled compound where bin Laden and his family lived to be made public by the US government since May 2011.
Materials that still have not been released are being withheld because they could harm national security, are blank, corrupted or duplicate files, are pornographic or are protected by copyright, said a CIA statement.
The copyright-protected materials include more than two dozen videos such as "Antz," "Cars" and other animated films and "Where Legends Game 'Final Fantasy VII'" and "Where in the world is Osama bin Laden" and two other documentaries about the al Qaeda leader, the CIA said.
"Today's release of recovered al Qaeda letters, videos, audio files and other material provides the opportunity for the American people to gain further insights into the plans and workings of this terrorist organization," said CIA Director Mike Pompeo. "CIA will continue to seek opportunities to share information with the American people consistent with our obligation to protect national security."
The materials released on Wednesday were posted on line - <https://www.cia.gov/library/abbottabad/> - in their original Arabic.
They include bin Laden's personal journal and 18,000 document files, about 79,000 audio and image files and more than 10,000 video files, the CIA said.
The CIA said that the materials, like those released in the past, provide insights into the origins of the differences between al Qaeda and Islamic State, disagreements within al Qaeda, and its allies, and the problems al Qaeda faced at the time of bin Laden's death.



MOSUL BATTLE IS executed 741 civilians Says UN rights office

APF, Geneva
The Islamic State group executed 741 civilians in the battle for the Iraqi city of Mosul, the UN said yesterday, accusing the jihadists of perpetrating "international crimes" during the nine-month military campaign.
More than 2,251 civilians were killed, mostly by IS attacks, during the fight between IS and the internationally-backed Iraq Security Forces (ISF) that ended in July, the UN rights office said in a report.
"Those responsible must answer for their heinous crimes," the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, said in a statement.
Mosul, Iraq's second city, was captured by IS in 2014 and became the capital of the group's self-styled "caliphate" in the country.

OBITUARY

Mr. Iqbal Ahmed, born on 14th March 1943, the eldest son of late Anwaruddin Ahmed and late Musarrat Begum breathed his last at about 9pm, Saturday, the 28th October 2017, at his Century Tower apartment.
He left behind his wife Asma Ahmed, son Ishaq Ahmed Babbar, daughter Mahabubeh Ahmed, Trina and daughter-in-law Samia Chishti Ahmed Lubna, three grand children Mehdi, Afroz and Fayaz, his three brothers and two sisters, many nephews and nieces and host of friends and relatives to mourn his death. Please pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

