

BOEING 737 MAX 8 JET
WHO IS FLYING
AND WHO ISN'T

A number of countries have grounded Boeing's 737 MAX 8 jet in response to the Ethiopian Airlines crash that killed all 157 people on board. The Nairobi-bound plane was the same type as the Indonesian Lion Air jet that crashed in October, killing 189 passengers and crew -- and some officials have detected similarities between the two accidents. There are some 350 of the 737 MAX 8 planes currently in service around the world.

- COUNTRIES THAT HAVE GROUNDED JETS**
- BRITAIN, FRANCE AND GERMANY:** Britain, France and Germany yesterday banned Boeing 737 MAX aircraft from their country's airspace following the deadly plane crash in Ethiopia.
- SINGAPORE:** Singapore's aviation regulator yesterday completely banned the use of Boeing 737 MAX aircraft in the country's airspace. The Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) said it was "temporarily suspending operation of all variants of the Boeing 737 MAX aircraft into and out of Singapore" in light of the two recent accidents.
- CHINA:** Beijing Monday ordered domestic airlines to suspend operation of the Boeing 737 MAX 8, citing the two crashes. Noting "similarities" between the two incidents, China's Civil Aviation Administration said operation of the model would only resume after "confirming the relevant measures to effectively ensure flight safety". China accounts for about one-fifth of worldwide deliveries of Boeing 737 MAX models.
- INDONESIA:** Indonesia said it was grounding its 11 jets of the 737 MAX 8 type. The planes would remain grounded until they were cleared by safety regulators, Director General of Air Transport Polana Pramesti told reporters.
- SOUTH KOREA:** South Korea's transport ministry yesterday said it had advised Eastar Jet, the nation's only airline to operate Boeing 737 MAX 8s, to ground its two planes. The budget airline had agreed to suspend its use of the aircraft starting today, it added.
- MONGOLIA:** The Mongolian Civil Aviation Authority said on Facebook it had ordered the state carrier MIAT Mongolian Airlines to ground the sole Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft in its fleet.
- AUSTRALIA:** Australia yesterday barred Boeing 737 MAX planes from its airspace. Fiji Airways is the only 737 MAX operator affected by the Australian ban, according to Australia's Civil Aviation Safety Authority.



- MALAYSIA:** Malaysia yesterday became the latest nation to ban Boeing 737 MAX 8 planes from its airspace.
- OTHER AIRLINES:** Ethiopian Airlines said Monday it had grounded its Boeing 737 MAX 8 fleet "until further notice". The state-owned carrier is Africa's largest. South African airline Comair, Cayman Airways, Brazil's Gol Airlines, Aeromexico, Aerolineas Argentinas also suspended operations of 737 MAX from their fleets.
- COUNTRIES STILL FLYING JETS**
- US:** Boeing, a US company, which has sent experts to assist in the Ethiopia probe, said safety is its "number one priority". The US Federal Aviation Administration said it would take "immediate" action if there were safety concerns. A person with knowledge of the matter told AFP that American Airlines planned to continue operating its two dozen 737 MAX 8s.
- RUSSIA:** Russian airline S7 said it was closely following the crash investigation and was in contact with Boeing, but had received no instructions to stop flying the 737 MAX 8.
- ITALY:** Air Italy said it would follow all directives "to ensure the maximum level of safety and security". In the meantime, the planes remained in the air.
- ICELAND:** Icelandair, which operates three Boeing 737 MAX 8, said planes will fly until the ongoing probe report comes out.
- NORWAY:** Norwegian Air Shuttle, which operates 18 Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft, said it would keep them in the air.
- DUBAI:** Airline Flydubai said it was "monitoring the situation" and it was "confident in the airworthiness of our fleet".
- OMAN:** Oman Air said it was in contact with Boeing "to understand if there are any implications for other airlines operating the same model".
- INDIA:** India's aviation regulator said Monday that it had imposed additional "interim" safety requirements for ground engineers and crew for the aircraft, but stopped short of ordering their grounding.

SOURCE: AFP

Operations 'as good as over'

Says SDF; scores of jihadists killed; senior IS figures likely fled: US

AGENCIES

Kurdish-led forces yesterday said more people were surrendering from the Islamic State group's last scrap of territory in Syria, after overnight air raids and shelling ravaged jihadist outposts.

A ragged tent encampment in the eastern Syrian village of Baghouz is all that remains of a once-sprawling IS "caliphate" declared in 2014 across large swaths of Syria and neighbouring Iraq.

The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces have been trying to crush holdout IS fighters for weeks but the mass outpouring of men, women and children from the riverside hamlet has bogged down their advance.

Backed by the US-led coalition, the SDF renewed their assault on Sunday after warning remaining IS fighters that time was up for surrenders.

Airstrikes and shelling have since pummelled Baghouz for two nights in a row, killing scores of fighters and prompting hundreds of jihadists and their relatives to surrender.

"The operation is over, or as good as over, but requires a little more time to be completed practically on the ground," SDF spokesman Kino Gabriel told al-Hadath TV. Islamic State was still putting up resistance with weapons including car bombs.

The frontline was quiet yesterday morning, hours after the airstrikes and rocket attacks on Monday night engulfed the last IS pocket in flames.

The commander said the SDF had slowed its

PHOTO: REUTERS



Islamic State's final enclave in Syria is seen on blaze after airstrikes on Monday night.

offensive after daybreak to allow for jihadists and their relatives to turn themselves in.

At the height of its brutal rule, IS controlled a stretch of land in Syria and Iraq the size of the United Kingdom.

The total capture of the Baghouz camp by the SDF would mark the end of the cross-border "caliphate" it proclaimed five years ago.

But beyond Baghouz, IS retains a presence in

eastern Syria's vast Badia desert and sleeper cells in the northeast. The group released a video late Monday allegedly showing jihadists in Baghouz, quietly defiant in the face of the advancing SDF.

However the United States does not believe any senior Islamic State leaders are in Baghouz, assessing they have gone elsewhere as part of the group's shift towards guerrilla tactics, a US defence official has said.

Pelosi says Trump 'just not worth' impeaching

AFP, Washington

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, America's most powerful Democrat, said in remarks published Monday that she does not support impeaching Donald Trump, arguing the Republican president is "just not worth it."

"I'm not for impeachment," Pelosi told The Washington Post in a wide-ranging interview, the strongest signal yet that the Democratic leadership is deeply hesitant about taking such an explosive step to remove a sitting president.

"Impeachment is so divisive to the country that unless there's something so compelling and overwhelming and bipartisan, I don't think we should go down that path, because it divides the country," she said.

"And he's just not worth it." Trump and his associates face multiple investigations, including one headed by Special Counsel Robert Mueller that is looking into Russian influence on the 2016

US election and potential collusion between Trump's team and Moscow.

And in explosive congressional testimony late last month, former Trump lawyer Michael Cohen branded the president a conman and cheat and sought to implicate his ex-boss in multiple crimes.

Even as she waves off calls to impeach Trump, Pelosi stressed that she does not believe he is fit to lead the nation.



"I don't think he is" fit to be president, she said in the interview. "I mean, ethically unfit. Intellectually unfit. Curiosity-wise unfit."

The investigations and related testimony like Cohen's may or may not produce evidence of high crimes and misdemeanors on the president's part.

Some rank-and-file House Democrats, like freshmen liberal Rashida Tlaib, are keen to being impeachment proceedings. Their ranks are sure to grow if more serious evidence of presidential wrongdoing emerges.

But with the Senate in Republican control,

POWER STRUGGLE IN VENEZUELA

US to withdraw all diplomatic staff

AFP, Washington

The United States will withdraw all remaining diplomatic personnel from its embassy in Caracas as the crisis in Venezuela deepens, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said late Monday.

The move worsens already tattered relations, with President Donald Trump having said he rules out no options including military intervention to oust President Nicolas Maduro as Washington monitors rapidly unfolding events in the oil-rich but crippled South American nation supported by Russia and China.

The US has already imposed sanctions designed to choke off Venezuelan oil sales, the lifeblood of the leftist government in Caracas.

Much of Venezuela has been without electricity for going on five days now due to a power outage that the government blames on what it calls sabotage encouraged by the US.

Venezuela is in the grips of an acute economic crisis that has fueled the rise of opposition leader Juan Guaido, the national assembly speaker who in late January declared himself to be the interim leader. More than 50 countries led by the US have endorsed him.

On January 24 the State Department ordered all non-emergency government employees to depart Venezuela and urged Americans living in the country to consider leaving.

Pompeo took aim at the "central role Cuba and Russia have played and continue to play in undermining the democratic dreams of the Venezuelan people and their welfare."



'Not the web we wanted'

AP, Geneva

At the ripe old age of 30 and with half the globe using it, the World Wide Web is facing growing pains with issues like hate speech, privacy concerns and state-sponsored hacking, its creator says, trumpeting a call to make it better for humanity.

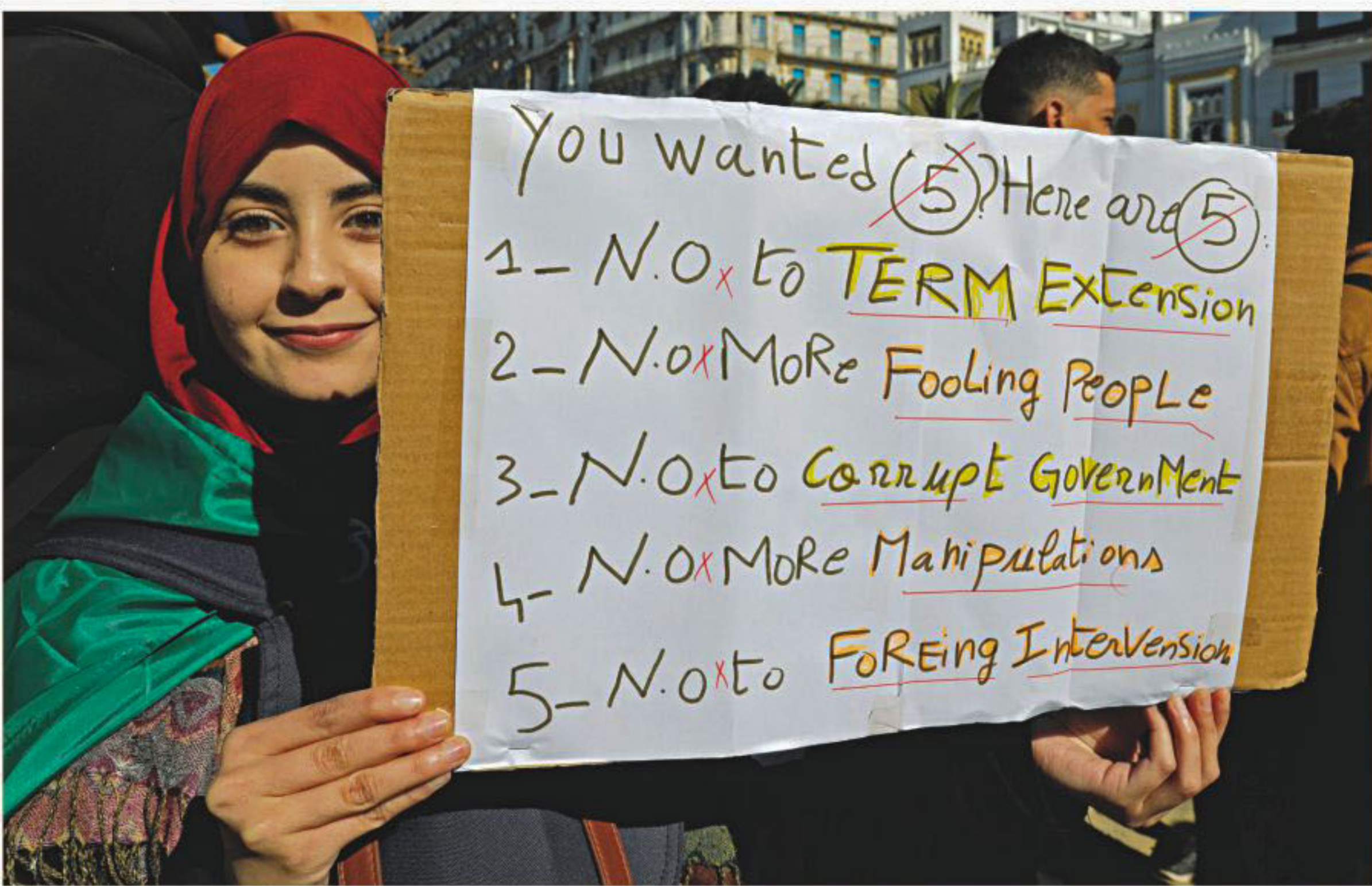
Tim Berners-Lee yesterday joined a celebration of the Web and reminisced about his invention at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, starting with a proposal published on March 12, 1989.

It opened the way to a technological revolution that has transformed the way people buy goods, share ideas, get information and much more.

It's also become a place where tech titans scoop up personal data, rival governments spy and seek to scuttle elections, and hate speech and vitriol have thrived -- taking the Web far from its roots as a space for progress-oriented minds to collaborate.

As of late 2018, half of the world was online, with the other half often struggling to secure access.

Speaking at a "Web@30" conference at CERN, Berners-Lee acknowledged that a sense among many who are already on the Web has become: "Whoops! The web is not the web we wanted in every respect."



A student holds a banner during a protest against Algeria's President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in Algiers, Algeria, yesterday. Thousands protested across Algeria yesterday, demanding immediate political changes a day after ailing Bouteflika abandoned his bid for a fifth term in power but stopped short of stepping down. PHOTO: REUTERS

Pak to deal 'firmly' with terrorists: US

AFP, Washington

Pakistan promises to crack down on militant groups attacking Indian rule over Kashmir, President Donald Trump's national security advisor John Bolton said Monday.

Bolton tweeted that he had spoken with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and "the FM assured me that Pakistan would deal firmly with all terrorists and will continue steps to deescalate tensions with India."

India has long accused Pakistan of covertly backing attacks by guerrillas in Kashmir. In February, JeM, or the Jaish-e-Mohammed group, claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing that killed 40 Indian paramilitary members, triggering cross-border air raids and a surge in political tension between the nuclear-armed neighbors.

Bolton said that during his talks with Qureshi he'd set out "to encourage meaningful steps against JeM and other terrorist groups operating from Pakistan."

The latest Pakistani reassurances came as US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met in Washington with the Indian foreign secretary, Vijay Gokhale, and urged Pakistan to take "meaningful action against terrorist groups operating on its soil," Pompeo's spokesman said.

Pompeo's spokesman said that during the secretary of state's talks with Gokhale they "discussed the importance of bringing those responsible for the (February) attack to justice."

NDTV ONLINE

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, in her first rally as a Congress leader, addressed an audience in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Gujarat and appealed: "Your vote is your weapon. Make the right decision, ask the right questions."

In the few words that marked her first election speech, the newly-minted Congress general secretary targeted PM Modi without once taking his name.

The April-May national election, she said, was "nothing less" than the Independence movement.

"Think and decide - those who talk big in front of you, where are the jobs they promised? What about the Rs 15 lakh in every bank account that they talked about? What about women's safety?" she said at the rally in Ahmedabad, dressed in a white and blue sari.



Giant cut-outs of her grandmother Indira Gandhi at the venue in Gandhinagar reminded many in the crowds of her striking resemblance to the former prime minister.

"Those who talk about fitrat (nature), the fitrat of this country is to seek the truth, the fitrat of this nation is to blow away the winds of hate with love," said the 47-year-old, using a word that PM Modi had used quite recently.

In the next two months, said

Priyanka Gandhi, "they" will raise all kinds of issues. "Ask the right questions, this is your country. You have to guard the country," she said.

"This is nothing less than the independence movement. Our institutions are being attacked, hatred is being spread everywhere. There can be no bigger thing than guarding the country and moving ahead together," Priyanka said.

Priyanka Gandhi's first-ever political rally outside the Gandhi

NEWSIN
brief

22 killed in Yemen strikes over 48 hrs

AFP, Sanaa

Twelve children and 10 women have been killed by strikes in Yemen's northern province of Hajjah in the past 48 hours, the United Nations said on Monday. Up to 30 people were reported wounded, including 14 children, several of whom "require possible evacuation to survive," the UN's humanitarian coordination office OCHA said in a statement. The UN did not say who was responsible, but Huthi rebel media outlets accused the Saudi-led coalition.

N Korea polls sees 99.99pc turnout

AFP, Pyongyang

Turnout in North Korea's single-candidate elections hit 99.99 percent this year, state media said yesterday -- up from a seemingly unimprovable 99.97 percent the last time they were held. With participation figures that Western democracies would never achieve, millions of North Koreans head to nationwide polls every five years to elect the rubber-stamp legislature.

Twelve dead in Brazil floods

AFP, Sao Paulo

Floods caused by torrential rain in and around Brazil's financial hub Sao Paulo killed 12 people and hurt six others overnight, firefighters said Monday. In the town of Ribeira Pires on the periphery of the country's most populated city, four members of one family died and another two were injured when a house collapsed around midnight.

BITS OF HISTORY
(MARCH 12)

- 1925:** Chinese revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen died. Known as the father of modern China, he became its first provisional president from 1911-1912.
- 1938:** German troops invaded Austria.
- 1999:** Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic became the first former members of the Soviet bloc to join Nato.

UN: Raw materials behind half of global emissions

AFP, Nairobi

Extracting and processing materials, fuel and food contributes as much as half of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, the UN said yesterday, as experts gathered in Kenya to find ways to rein in exploding global consumption.

Using dozens of data sources, the authors of a major new report presented lawmakers and businesses with a stark choice: drastically reform the global economy to get more from less, or risk the collapse of global infrastructure.

With countries already committed under the Paris climate deal to curb emissions to fend off the worst impacts of global warming, experts said there was little hope of meeting that goal without an "urgent and systemic transformation" in how we use Earth's resources.

The Global Resources Outlook 2019 said that worldwide consumption of basic commodities such as water, minerals and fossil fuels had tripled since 1970.

With high-population nations such as China and India rapidly expanding

their economies, the team behind the report called for a drastic overhaul in how that growth is fed.

"Nobody is claiming that the countries which are on the lower level of development should not have the right to develop," said Janez Potocnik, co-chair of the International Resource Panel.

"The question is, is it possible to do it differently to how we have done it, with fewer consequences than we see today?"

The report paints a grim picture of relentless demand for resources as the global population ticks towards eight billion people.

The use of climate-warming fossil fuels has increased worldwide from 6 billion tonnes in 1970 to 15 billion tonnes in 2017 despite decades of efforts to steer nations towards greener energy.

Water use for agriculture and industry outstripped population growth in the second half of the 20th Century. In 2017, 3,900 km3 of water was withdrawn for commercial purposes -- 70 percent of which went to farming.

'Hatred being spread'

Priyanka targets Modi as Congress kicks off polls campaign from Gujarat; Mamata releases TMC list for all Bengal seats

family constituencies in Uttar Pradesh followed her debut in the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting earlier yesterday. After years of campaigning in her brother Rahul Gandhi's Amethi and mother Sonia Gandhi's Raebareli in UP, this was her first election outing.

Meanwhile, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday announced the list of Trinamool Congress candidates for all the 42 Lok Sabha seats in the state, dropping 10 current parliamentarians.

Allotting 41 percent of the tickets to women, the list included a number of Bengali celebrities like Mimi Chakraborty and Nusrat Jahan.

Among those not in the list are Harvard University professor and eminent historian Sugato Bose - who had earned praise for his speeches during his first stint in parliament.