

NEWSIN brief

Cyclone Idai kills 24 in Zimbabwe

At least 24 people have died in south eastern Zimbabwe as homes and bridges were swept away by a tropical storm, the country's information ministry said yesterday. Cyclone Idai, which brought floodwater and destruction to areas of Mozambique and Malawi, hit Zimbabwe on Friday, cutting off power and communications.

Jihadists kill 13 in Mozambique

At least 13 civilians have died in fresh attacks in Mozambique's volatile northern Cabo Delgado province where Islamists have terrorised villagers in remote communities for more than a year, local sources said yesterday. One of the latest attacks occurred on Thursday evening on Ulo village in Mocimboa da Praia district in which more than 120 houses were destroyed. The jihadists have terrorised remote communities, killing more than 200 people since October 2017.

France slaps sanction on JeM chief

A couple of days after China put a "technical hold" on the UN Security Council's efforts to designate Jaesh-e-Mohammed founder Masood Azhar as a global terrorist, France on Friday sanctioned him at the national level by freezing his assets. This was conveyed by French Foreign Minister Le Drian to Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj during a telephonic conversation. Le Drian also told Swaraj that France has raised the issue with the European Union for putting Azhar in the list of European Union list of terrorists.



NZ MOSQUE MASSACRE

(From top left, clockwise) Residents pay their respects at a memorial site in Christchurch; a sign condemning the attacks is seen at a memorial in the city; New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern speaks to representatives of the Muslim community at a refugee centre in Christchurch; the lights of the Eiffel Tower go off in tribute to the victims in Paris; and a Maori man in Christchurch greets a relative of a victim in traditional way to show support. All photos are taken yesterday.

NZ MOSQUE MASSACRE

Aussie senator egged after racist comments

A far-right Australian senator had to be restrained by security officials yesterday after punching a young man protesting his offensive comments about the Christchurch mosque attacks. Queensland Senator Fraser Anning drew international condemnation for his efforts to blame the attack that killed 49 Muslim worshippers on immigration. Amid the controversy, an unnamed young man threw an egg at Anning during a press conference in Melbourne, prompting the senator to hit him in the face repeatedly before being stopped by what appeared to be a security guard. In a statement on Friday, Anning had said the attack was the result of Muslim immigration into the country. Prime Minister Scott Morrison described Anning's comments as "appalling" and "ugly" with "no place in Australia", as he announced a bipartisan motion of censure would be launched.



'How sick it is'

Parents of Swedish girl, who died in a terror attack, slam NZ shooter for using her name

Terrorists love to exploit the deaths of children at the hands of the people they declare enemies. The propaganda of al-Qaeda and the so-called Islamic State is filled with images of mutilated toddlers that give the jihadis, they claim, license to take revenge and commit mass murder. So, too, with white supremacists—including the alleged murderer of 49 people at mosques in New Zealand on Friday. They have seized on the image of 11-year-old Ebba Åkerlund, killed in a 2017 terror attack in Sweden and often made into memes, to feed their hatred. Her name was scrawled on to the butt of the New Zealand shooter's assault rifle along with other pretexts for his "revenge." Her father, Stefan Åkerlund, told the Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet that he was mortified when he saw how the latest terrorist had used his daughter's name. "I could not even imagine the idea that someone would write my daughter's name on a rifle," he said on Facebook. He goes on to condemn the attacks in New Zealand. "How sick it is." Ebba's mother, Jeanette Åkerlund, also spoke out. "It gives you chills," she told Aftonbladet. "It is deeply tragic that Ebba's name is abused in political propaganda." Friday's attack in Christchurch, thought to be the deadliest against Muslims in the West in modern times, "goes against everything Ebba stood for", Åkerlund told Swedish public television SVT.



'I'll walk with you'

Mosque massacre prompts flood of support in New Zealand

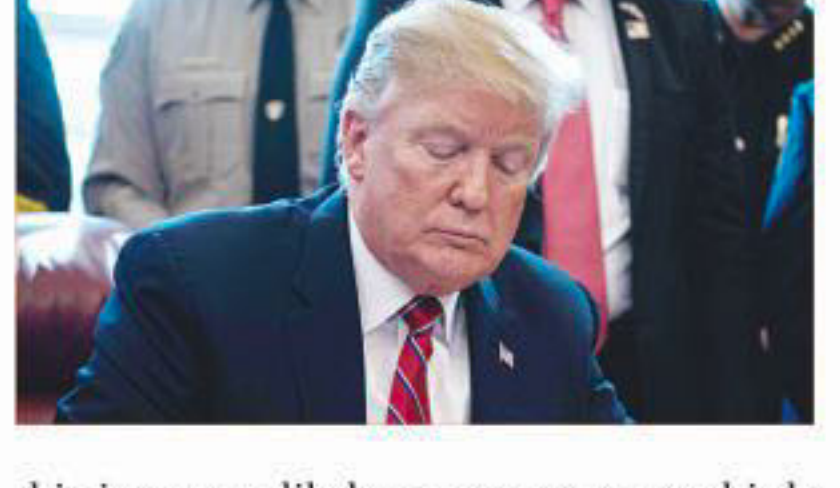
Kiwis have responded to the Christchurch mosque massacres with an outpouring of interfaith solidarity -- crowdfunding millions of dollars, donating halal food and even offering to accompany local Muslims now scared to walk the streets. The murder of 49 people at two mosques in this usually placid city on Friday has sent shockwaves rippling across New Zealand, a country that on average sees no more than 50 murders a year. But revulsion at the bloodshed and the self-declared perpetrator's racist motives has been matched by displays of support and warmth towards the country's devastated Muslim communities. In a suburb of Christchurch close to where the shootings took place, Yoti Ioannou and his wife put a shoutout on Facebook calling for locals to donate halal food. Their idea was to provide meals for the dozens of desperate relatives waiting at the city's hospitals for news of their loved ones as surgeons battled to save lives. The halal food drive was inundated, they said, with lines of people queuing up to give meals throughout yesterday. Across the country New Zealanders also dug deep -- the two most prominent crowdfunding campaigns had already raised between them more than NZ\$3.2 million (US\$ 2.2 million) within 24 hours of the shootings yesterday afternoon. Many of those donating left messages of support incorporating popular Maori terms. "Kia kaha to all New Zealanders, love to all families affected," read one donation, using a Maori phrase for "stay strong". Others put out offers for help and support for local Muslims who might be feeling afraid of leaving their houses. In one Facebook post that went especially viral, Wellington native Lianess Howard wrote: "If any Muslim women in Wellington feel unsafe right now -- I will walk with you, wait at the bus stop with you, I'll sit on the bus with you, or walk with you while you do the groceries." A screen grab of the post placed on Twitter was shared more than 16,000 times. Others came to the police cordons to show support. Wendy and Andy Johnson said that had clipped a silver fern, a national symbol, from their garden to place with the growing bunches of flowers left at the massacre site cordons.

Trump signs first veto for wall

Donald Trump signed the first veto of his presidency Friday, overriding congressional opposition to secure emergency funds to build more walls on the US-Mexico border. Trump declared in the Oval Office that he was "proud" to sign the veto. It came after he suffered an embarrassing defeat on Thursday when senators, including fellow Republicans, voted to terminate his declaration of an emergency on the Mexican border. Surrounded by law enforcement officials, senior aides and people who have lost loved ones to cross-border crime, Trump said the veto reaffirming his power to get the funds without Congress was to "defend the safety of all Americans." "The mass incursion of illegal aliens... has to end," he said. "People hate the word 'invasion' but that's what it is... Our immigration system is stretched beyond the breaking point." Trump's emergency declaration allows him to secure funding for construction of border walls after he failed to get authorization from Congress. Opponents, who accuse Trump of executive overreach and oversteering the problem on the border, could now use court challenges to halt the emergency measure.

Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic speaker of the House of Representatives and a leader in the fight to prevent Trump's wall plans, called Trump's action a "lawless power grab." "The president has chosen to continue to defy the Constitution, the Congress and the will of the American people," she said in a statement. An attempt to override the veto will be held on March 26, she announced. However, this is very unlikely to pass as a two-thirds majority is required. Trump has made border security an overarching domestic issue in his presidency and says it will remain at the center of the agenda in his 2020 reelection bid. Although there has been a surge in arrival of families and children at the border, overall apprehensions at the frontier are down substantially from a decade or more ago.

Most Republicans support Trump's position that the border is out of control. However, there were defections in Thursday's Senate vote by Republican senators angered at what they see as the president's improper seizing of power over the government purse strings -- a role reserved for the legislature. The declaration of emergency has been challenged by 16 states which sued the administration last month, contending the order was contrary to the constitution's presentment and appropriations clauses, which outline legislative procedures and define Congress as the final arbiter of public funds respectively. The lawsuit also questioned Trump's categorization of illegal border crossings as a national emergency, saying data issued by the administration itself refuted the notion. The White House says the emergency order empowers it to pull around \$6.6 billion from other sources, mostly already-allocated funds in the Defense Department budget. But the complaint countered that tapping military funds would result in huge losses for the states' national guard units which would otherwise use the money to combat drugs. Should the states prevail, the case could work its way up to the Supreme Court, setting up a precedent-setting showdown on the separation of powers.



A burning newsagent's shop is seen during a demonstration by the "yellow vests" movement in Paris, France, yesterday. Protesters set fire to a bank and ransacked stores on Paris' landmark shopping street in a new flare-up of violence as France's yellow vest demonstrations against President Emmanuel Macron and his pro-business reforms entered their fourth month.

THE GROWING THREAT OF WHITE NATIONALISM

The massacre of Muslims at New Zealand mosques on Friday demonstrated the global reach of a white nationalist movement that preaches an imagined "European" ideal, rejects immigration and shares often vicious threats over the internet. It's leaderless, fragmented, and relies for attention on lone-wolf type attackers like the 28-year-old Australian loner who allegedly killed 49 people Friday in Christchurch, explaining in a manifesto that he wants to "crush immigration" and "revenge terror attacks on Europe." But experts say it is a cohesive movement bound together online that stretches across Europe into Russia, has a deep following in the US and Canada, and as Friday's attack showed, is present in Australia and New Zealand. They say it poses as much of an international threat as Islamic extremism, and even more so in the United States where white nationalist attacks have outpaced those by jihadists for years. "White nationalism and far-right extremism is the most prominent extremist threat facing the United States today, and indeed it is a worldwide phenomenon," said Brian Levin, director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino. "These folks fear demographic change. They use the term white genocide," he said. The white nationalist movement has roots in concepts espoused decades ago by European and American fascists and neo-Nazis. French historian Nicolas Lebourg noted that the Christchurch suspect's manifesto cited British 1930s fascist Oswald Mosley, who developed the idea of a planet

Experts say 'white genocide' fears compounded by immigration uniting fragmented 'Europeans' Rise of far-right and anti-immigration leadership in Europe and US boosting extremists Attacker hailed Trump as 'a symbol of renewed white identity and common purpose'



organized by race. His use of the word "Europeans" for whites was first promoted in the late 1940s by American neo-Nazi Francis Parker Yockey. "White genocide" is an idea that appeared around 1972 in the United States, Lebourg noted, and was then popularized in Europe by French writer Renaud Camus. Indeed, the suspect's manifesto was titled "The Great Replacement," the title of a 2011 book by Camus, popular in white nationalist circles, that argued that non-white immigrants are supplanting white Europeans. But their ideas are not uniform -- some white nationalists are anti-Muslim, some anti-Jewish, some capitalist, others socialist. What unites them today, analysts say, is their fundamental opposition to immigration. Vanderbilt University professor Sophie Bjork-James said a common fear was that white Christians could become

minorities in societies they have dominated for centuries. This has given rise to movements like the France-rooted "Identitarians," and Identity Evropa in the United States. White nationalists have been further emboldened by the rise of politicians espousing traditionalist views and a tough line on immigration -- from Marine Le Pen in France and Viktor Orban in Hungary to Russian President Vladimir Putin; and the UKIP party in Britain. The same holds true in the United States where President Donald Trump campaigned for the White House on an anti-immigration platform, backed by an overwhelming white voter base. The Christchurch suspect called Trump "a symbol of renewed white identity and common purpose." While he was swift to condemn the massacre, Trump courted controversy once again on Friday by saying he did not think it showed white nationalism to be a growing problem worldwide.

"I don't really. I think it's a small group of people," he told reporters in the Oval Office. Bjork-James said the internet, especially sites like GAB and Stormfront, have helped build a global community for the otherwise disparate white nationalists. It was filled with comments early Friday on the Christchurch attack, with some questioning the murder of women and children. One commenter rejected the debate, she noted, by saying chillingly: "Invaders are not innocent people." She said overall the movement operates consciously as a "leaderless resistance," whose members aimed to inspire each other into action. "The lone-wolf attack is actually a part of a global strategy," said Bjork-James. The Christchurch suspect wrote that he took inspiration from other white nationalists who undertook mass killings. He cited Anders Breivik, who slaughtered 77 people in Norway in 2011; Dylann Roof, who killed nine African-Americans in a US church in 2015; Alexandre Bissonnette, who murdered six in a 2017 attack on a Canadian mosque; and others like them. But Lebourg said that attacks more recently appear to have become part of a cycle of revenge, especially since the jihadist bombings that targeted France in 2015. The suspect's manifesto supports that: he cites revenge for historical events and recent Islamic extremist attacks multiple times. The 2015 attacks were "a tipping point for all the supremacists," Lebourg said. "Now revenge is in people's heads." SOURCE: AFP

France repatriates children from Syria

France has repatriated several young children from camps in northern Syria, a move which could set a precedent for other European countries whose citizens are also stuck there. The five children were either orphans or separated from their parents in displacement camps, which are home to tens of thousands of IS families who fled the terror group's shrinking territory over the past few months. The French foreign ministry said most of the children were under the age of five, while not detailing their links to France. It reiterated that it would not bring back any French adults detained in Syria on suspicion of being IS members. The move comes as Western nations are struggling to decide what to do with their citizens who went to Syria to join Isis. There are believed to be more than 800 European citizens currently detained in Syria on suspicion of fighting for the terror group, and an unknown number of women and children family members. The fate of Shamima Begum, a 19-year-old British woman who left the UK to join IS four years ago, has been hotly debated over the past few weeks. The death of Begum's three-week old baby last week sparked criticism of the British government's refusal to repatriate any of its citizens, including children, from camps where nearly 100 infants have perished in the last few months.