VOA NEWS

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VOA news. I'm Christopher Cruise reporting.

Ethiopian Airlines says searchers have recovered both flight recorders from the plane that crashed on Sunday, killing all 157 people on board.

The flight left the airport in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, just after 8:30 in the morning. It crashed six hours (minutes) later. It was flying toward Nairobi, Kenya.

Passengers from 35 countries were on the flight.

AP correspondent Charles De Ledesma reports.

An airline official has told The Associated Press that the plane's key communications device, the box, is partially damaged and that investigators "we will see what we can retrieve from it."

Red Cross workers, meanwhile, at the crash site are slowly picking through the widely scattered debris near the blackened crash crater, looking for the remains of 157 lives while heavy machinery digs the larger pieces of the plane.

Forensic experts from Israel have arrived to help with the crash aftermath although Ethiopian authorities will lead the probe into the crash assisted by the U.S., Kenya and others.

I'm Charles De Ledesma.

The Boeing 737 MAX 8 was a new jet. It had been delivered to the airlines just in November. It's the same model that took off in October from Jakarta and crashed into the Java Sea a few minutes later, killing all 189 people on board a Lion Air flight.

The United States on Monday sanctioned a bank based in Moscow that was jointly owned by Russian and Venezuelan state-owned companies for its support for Venezuela's embattled President Nicoláas Maduro and the country's state-controlled oil industry.

Algeria's president (presidency) said Monday that longtime leader Abdelaziz Bouteflika will not seek a fifth term as president despite filing the paperwork for it last week.

The presidency also announced that elections, initially scheduled for April 18, will be postponed.

This is VOA news.

Fierce fighting continued Monday in northeastern Syria. U.S.-backed forces are continuing what they say is their final assault on the Islamic State terror group enclave of Baghuz.

A spokesman for the Syrian Democratic Forces said IS militants are fighting back with suicide bombers.

As internationally backed Syrian forces continue their push, more than 65,000 people, almost all of them women and children, have evacuated the camps in northern Syria. No one expected or planned for the massive crowds and many of those displaced are defiant. They vow that IS will rise again.

A U.S. citizen held in Iran, 46-year-old Michael White, a U.S. Navy veteran, has been sentenced for an unspecified crime. That report on Monday from Iranian news agencies.

The case is likely to worsen already terrible relations with the United States.

*The New York Times* reported that White was arrested last July as he visited his Iranian girlfriend. The arrest was confirmed by Iran only in January.

On Monday, a prosecutor said White had been accused of a security-related charge but did not specify if that was what he had been convicted of.

Iranian officials have never said why he was being held.

The Trump administration on Monday sent to Congress a more than $4 trillion government spending plan for 2020.

Economists see some rosy numbers underline President Trump's budget proposals.

"We believe the 3 percent growth rate of 2018 will continue in 2019 and beyond 2020 and so forth ...."

That projection offered by White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow on "Fox News Sunday" underpins the assertion that President Trump's proposed $4.7 trillion spending plan will eventually bring the budget into balance.

The 2020 budget projects a $1.1 trillion deficit for the fiscal year, but it suggests that it will come into balance in 15 years in part thanks to the Republican tax cuts that President Trump wants to make permanent.

Still some economists see the bumping growth from the tax cuts waning. And the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office projects growth to slow to 1.7 percent in coming years.

Ben Thomas, Washington.

President Trump is asking for $8.6 billion for construction of a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border from the budget. That's in addition to the nearly $7 billion he has ordered to be used to build a wall under his state of emergency declaration.

The budget calls for a 5 percent funding increase for the Pentagon and a 5 percent cut in non-military spending.

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