



INTERNATIONAL

At Least 20 People Killed In Fire At Cairo's Main Train Station

At least 20 people have been killed and 40 wounded after a train locomotive crashed through a barrier at the main train station in Egypt's capital Cairo on Wednesday morning, Egyptian health authorities say. The locomotive's fuel tank then exploded, according to Egypt's Railway Authority, sending flames through the Ramses train station platform crowded with people. "The fire overwhelmed them and they ran while they were on fire until they fell meters from the incident," witness Ahmed Abdeltawab said. "The scene was terrifying." Surveillance video, widely shared on social media, shows people calmly walking through the train station. Suddenly they start running as flames blast through the area, engulfing the crowd. One man is seen fleeing while completely on fire. He desperately runs up and down a set of stairs, and another man tries to help him by dousing him with water. Egyptian Transport Minister Hesham Arafat has tendered his resignation because of the incident, according to Egypt's state news wire, and the prosecutor general has ordered an investigation into the fire. Questions remain about what led to the train locomotive crashing through the barrier. A general railway instructor, Ashraf Momtaz, told The Associated Press that at this point it's not clear there was a driver aboard when it crashed and it's possible they could have jumped out. "The railcar takes time to (gather) speed so there is a chance that someone set it on full speed before leaving," Momtaz told the wire service. Regardless of how it happened, he said that the crash suggests "negligence from the driver and supervisors." The Ramses train station, located in bustling downtown Cairo, is a hub for travel across Egypt. It's a country where deadly train accidents are tragically frequent. As the AP notes, "Official figures show that 1,793 train accidents took place in 2017 across the country." President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi said last year that the country doesn't have the budget to fully revamp the poorly maintained train system, the wire service added.

Vandals Steal Head Of 800-Year-Old Mummy In Ireland

Vandals have broken into a historic church in Dublin and stolen the head of an 800-year-old mummy nicknamed "The Crusader." The grim discovery was made by a guide at St. Michan's Church, as he was getting ready to open the site to the public, according to a statement from the Church of Ireland. In addition to the Crusader, several other corpses were damaged, including that of a nun dating back 400 years. "They broke open that vault, it's a big heavy steel door, and broke open one of the coffins," Archdeacon of Dublin, David Pierpoint, told The Irish Times. "Parts of the contents of the coffin have been dragged out." The archdeacon added, "These are people who have been lying at rest for years and years and to have them desecrated in such a sacrilegious way is so distressing and disturbing. I can't put it in words, I'm quite disgusted." In the Church statement, Pierpoint had a request for the vandals: "I would appeal to those responsible to examine their consciences and return the head of The Crusader to its rightful place." The church, which was founded in 1095, is home to five crypts housing the mummified corpses of prominent Dubliners, many dating from about 1600 to 1800. It's a significant tourist draw, with some 27,000 visitors annually, according to RTE.



May Offers A Vote On Delaying Brexit, Expanding Options As EU Deadline Looms

U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May says she's open to the possibility of delaying Britain's exit from the European Union that's planned for March 29, publicly accepting that option for the first time as she promised lawmakers a chance to vote on the question. May announced the strategy shift as Britain stares down an important deadline, with less than five weeks before its scheduled exit from the EU. Addressing the House of Commons, May offered three new commitments: (1). To hold a "meaningful vote" on embracing an EU exit deal by March 12; (2). If the March 12 vote fails, to hold another vote on March 13 "asking this House if it supports leaving the EU without a withdrawal agreement;" and (3) If those votes fail, to vote on March 14 on whether to "seek a short, limited extension to Article 50" — the exit clause in the EU Constitution that was triggered after the Brexit vote. All three of those votes would promise enormous political drama. But as May made clear, the March 13 vote would also put lawmakers on the record on a crucial Brexit question. Driving the point home, May said the vote would mean that "the United Kingdom will only leave without a deal on the 29th of March if there is explicit consent in the House for that outcome" — a responsibility-sharing statement that elicited grumblings and cross-talk in the chamber. "If Parliament opposes leaving with no deal — as expected — the government would seek a vote on whether to extend Brexit until the end of June at the latest," NPR's Frank Langfitt reports from London. "Of course, the European Union would still have to approve such an extension and has made it clear it would want an explanation of how a delay would help resolve the Brexit conundrum which has paralyzed British politics."

NATIONAL

New York City Lawmakers Call For Less Piercing Emergency Vehicle Sirens

Two lawmakers in New York City have issued a siren call of sorts, arguing that the shrill sound of police cars, fire trucks and ambulances has got to go. If passed, the legislation would require all emergency vehicles to change their sirens within two years to an alternating high and low sound similar to that heard in many European countries. Council Member Helen Rosenthal introduced the legislation on Feb. 13. "Noise pollution is an often unrecognized but very real public health issue," she said in a statement emailed to NPR. "Since my first year in office I have received complaints from constituents about the impact of wailing sirens, especially from ambulances, across my district." Carlina Rivera, who co-sponsored the bill, says the noise pollution in New York's five boroughs can cause cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment and hypertension. "Emergency sirens are clearly important in alerting people to nearby emergency vehicles that need to quickly navigate the crowded streets of New York," Rivera said. But she says a less traditional sound could still do the job in the city that never sleeps. Their legislation takes a cue from a Mount Sinai Hospital pilot project. After ambulances lowered the tone of their sirens and used a two-tone, high-low pattern, Rosenthal says complaints among locals dropped. According to The Associated Press, the European-inspired siren, which rings in at 118 decibels, is not any less loud than New York sirens, but it does have a lower frequency that sounds less piercing. Noise pollution is not just a concern in cities: A 2017 study by researchers from Colorado State University found that in more than 20 percent of the protected areas they studied, unnatural sounds were 10 times as loud as the natural background.



Will An Appeals Court Make The EPA Ban A Pesticide Linked To Serious Health Risks?

Eric Perez and his wife, Mari, live with their five children in the Wenatchee Valley in central Washington state. Their house is just feet from an orchard. A couple of years ago, the kids were having an Easter egg hunt in the yard when they smelled something "plasticky," Perez remembers — like "rotten eggs." Perez says they realized the orchard must have been sprayed while the family was away for their Easter lunch. Perez says they got stomachaches, started throwing up and having trouble breathing and got diarrhea and scratchy throats. "I think we all went to the doctor," he remembers. Washington's Department of Agriculture investigated and found evidence that a pesticide called chlorpyrifos had drifted onto the Perez's property from the neighboring orchard. Crops like apples, corn, soybeans and Christmas trees are sprayed with chlorpyrifos. The Environmental Protection Agency decided to phase the popular pesticide out of household use back in 2000, but it's still allowed in agriculture. Now, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals will decide whether the EPA has to ban it. When chlorpyrifos drifts onto farmworkers and rural residents, the immediate symptoms can include "nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, muscle weakness, muscle twitching, coughing, wheezing," says Richard Fenske, a University of Washington professor who has studied the chemical. For babies and children, the pesticide can be even more dangerous. "There are developmental effects in children and in the fetus during pregnancy," he says. "We may see slower learning, not making progress in school as quickly as other students." Specifically, children with more chlorpyrifos in their blood at birth and in early childhood scored lower on memory, verbal comprehension and reasoning tests. They also had lower IQs and higher rates of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and impulsive behavior than children exposed to less chlorpyrifos. EPA scientists recommended a total ban on the chemical. But in March 2017, President Trump's new EPA administrator at the time, Scott Pruitt, decided against that. A group of environmental and farmworkers organizations that want a total ban sued the EPA. Last August, a three-judge panel ruled 2-1 that the EPA had to ban chlorpyrifos. But the EPA appealed that decision, and now the full 9th Circuit is reconsidering the ruling. Farmers applaud that decision, saying they need chlorpyrifos.

3 People Reported Dead On Long Island, N.Y., In Collision Of Vehicle And 2 Trains

Officials say a vehicle went around a warning gate along tracks of the Long Island Railroad Tuesday, and collided with a commuter train bound for Manhattan. Then a train traveling in the opposite direction struck the vehicle, according to local authorities. All three people in the vehicle were killed. The incident occurred near the Westbury station just before 7:30 p.m. A train from Ronkonkoma was headed for Penn Station when it struck the vehicle. The Associated Press quotes Nassau County Police Chief Patrick Ryder as saying the passenger vehicle was "trying to beat the gate" at the time of the collision, and the train was going "full speed." He said the train partially derailed and struck the station, knocking off about 30 yards of concrete. Long Island Rail Road President Phillip Eng said in the first impact the vehicle was pushed toward a second, moving train and was struck again. Eng said the warning gate and lights were functioning. Two employees of Newsday said that they felt two bumps and saw flames on one side of the car windows before the train stopped.



STATE

Milwaukee Developer Wants To Build One Of World's Tallest Wooden Structures

A Milwaukee development firm is gaining national attention for its plans to build one of the tallest buildings in the world using an unusual construction technique. New Land Enterprises LLP is creating a 21-story apartment tower using laminated timber. The process, known as mass timber, layers wood together to create the building's frame. Proponents say mass timber buildings are more environmentally friendly and aesthetically pleasing than traditional concrete and steel buildings. Tim Gokhman, director of New Land Enterprises, compared mass timber construction to Tesla Inc., the California-based car company that specializes in electric vehicles. Electric cars have been around for years, but are finally efficient and being adapted to the mass market, Gokhman said. The same can be said for using wood in construction projects, he added. "For years, heavy timber was used, meaning (older) trees were cut down to make one beam," Gokhman said. "We are taking a tree that is much, much younger and much easier to grow for mass timber. The sourcing becomes a lot easier and the environmental benefits are enormous." According to the American Wood Council, a Virginia-based trade association representing wood products manufacturers, the combination of strong structural performance and opportunity for innovation has made mass timber an attractive construction alternative for developers. "Mass timber offers a host of advantages," according to a report by the American Wood Council. "Mass timber products allow the use of renewable and sustainable resources as an alternative for more fossil fuel-intensive materials." The New Land Enterprise project, named Ascent, will be a 205-unit luxury apartment building in downtown Milwaukee. New Land is also planning a seven-story mass timber office building in downtown Milwaukee.

Evers' Higher Education Budget Would Continue Tuition Freeze

Gov. Tony Evers' budget calls for giving people in the country without legal permission in-state tuition rates at University of Wisconsin System schools, continuing a long-running tuition freeze and handing the system an additional \$150 million. Evers is set to release his full budget on Thursday but his administration gave The Associated Press a preview of his plans for UW. Evers campaigned on allowing students who were children when their parents brought them into the U.S. without legal permission in-state tuition. His plan would let any Wisconsin resident who entered the country without legal permission to pay in-state tuition. He also campaigned on continuing the tuition freeze. Republican lawmakers put the freeze in place in 2013. He also promised to allow Wisconsin students to refinance their loans. His budget plan doesn't do that but does set aside \$50,000 to study the feasibility of creating a refinancing authority.



Sensenbrenner, Gallagher Vote Against Trump's National Emergency Declaration

U.S. Reps. Jim Sensenbrenner and Mike Gallagher are among 13 U.S. House Republicans who supported a Democratic effort to block President Donald Trump's national emergency declaration to fund a wall at the United States-Mexico border. The House's vote of 245-182 Tuesday fell well below the two-thirds majority that would be needed to override what would be the first veto of Trump's presidency. Both Sensenbrenner and Gallagher are in districts that are solidly Republican. Sensenbrenner, in Wisconsin's 5th District, said he supports constructing a wall, but opposes circumventing the "will of Congress" by funding it through the declaration. Gallagher, in the 8th District, said he's concerned with the precedent a national emergency would set. The issue is now before the Republican-run Senate.

Fourth Lawsuit Filed Challenging Lame-Duck Laws

A fourth lawsuit has been filed challenging December's lame-duck session of the state Legislature, this one arguing Republican lawmakers violated the U.S. Constitution when they took powers away from Wisconsin's governor and attorney general. The latest case argues the laws the Republican majorities in the Legislature passed late last year violated the will of voters, arguing that it was up to the court to restore the balance of power. "Elections matter," the complaint reads. "In this case, a lame-duck Legislature and outgoing governor deprived the people of Wisconsin of their electoral choice." The lawsuit specifically contends that Republicans violated the U.S. Constitution's Guarantee Clause, which guarantees every state the right to a republican form of government. GOP lawmakers, the complaint argues, "blunt(ed) election results" when they transferred powers previously held by the executive branch to the Legislature. The lawsuit also argues the lame-duck session violated the First and 14th Amendments of the U.S. Constitution by interfering with voters' right to free expression and association and by discriminating against Democrats based on their political views. It lists several promises Gov. Tony Evers made during the campaign, arguing each could have been fulfilled after he was elected were it not for changes Republicans made during the extraordinary session. Evers, the complaint states, campaigned on making changes to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp., but the lame-duck session reduced his power over WEDC and gave more power to Republican legislators. Similarly, Evers and Kaul both campaigned on ending Wisconsin's participation in a multi-state lawsuit to overturn the Affordable Care Act. That decision now requires permission from Republicans who hold a majority on the Legislature's budget committee. The suit also lists promises Evers made with regard to the state's Medicaid program. He wanted to end a work requirement for Medicaid recipients signed by then-Gov. Scott Walker, and he wanted to eliminate Walker's drug testing requirement for food stamps recipients. The lame-duck session took those powers away, the lawsuits states.



SPORTS

College Basketball: Wis. Badgers fall to Indiana Hoosiers 75-73 in double-overtime battle

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — When Howard Moore began his deep dive into Indiana for the only regular-season meeting this season between the University of Wisconsin men’s basketball team and the Hoosiers, the Badgers assistant coach saw two different teams. There was the Indiana team that went 12-2 to start the season, a run that included a blowout victory over Marquette and a close win at home against Louisville. And then there was the Indiana team that had gone 1-12 since that point, with the only positive result being a head-scratching overtime win at Michigan State early in February. “They’re very capable,” Moore concluded earlier this week. “Some would say they’re probably due. So you have to do whatever you can to not be the due date for them.” The No. 19 Badgers ended up being exactly that Tuesday night after freshman sensation Romeo Langford made a shot with 0.7 seconds left in the second overtime to give the Hoosiers a 75-73 win at Assembly Hall. Langford finished with 22 points for the Hoosiers (14-14, 5-12 Big Ten), who pulled off the upset despite the fact three of their players fouled out of the game. Indiana deserves credit for earning the win, its first at home since Jan. 3.

College Basketball: Toppin scores 19 to lead Dayton past UMass 72-48

Obi Toppin had 19 points and eight rebounds as Dayton rolled past UMass 72-48 on Tuesday night. Toppin shot 8 for 10 from the field. Josh Cunningham had 18 points for Dayton (19-9, 11-4 Atlantic 10 Conference). Jordan Davis added 13 points. Jalen Crutcher had 10 points for the visitors. Dayton dominated the first half and led 40-18 at halftime. The Minutemen's 18 points in the first half were a season low for the team. Jonathan Laurent had 21 points for the Minutemen (10-18, 3-12). Djery Baptiste added three blocks. Carl Pierre, who was second on the Minutemen in scoring heading into the contest with 12 points per game, shot only 17 percent for the game (2 of 12). The Flyers improve to 2-0 against the Minutemen for the season. Dayton defeated UMass 72-67 on Jan. 13. Dayton matches up against Rhode Island at home on Friday. UMass plays Duquesne on the road on Saturday.

WEATHER

- **This Evening:** Areas of freezing drizzle. Cloudy, with a high near 28. North wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 21 mph.
- **Overnight:** Cloudy, with a low around 22. North wind 8 to 14 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.
- **Tomorrow:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 38. North wind 6 to 9 mph.
- **Tomorrow Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 30. North wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening.



COMMERCIALS

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"Hey, we all love trees, okay? But most people don't know how to take care of their trees. Especially when it comes to pruning. They go out with their chain saws and hack'em and whack'em and try to make them small again. It's a controlling nature thing. The point is that pruning is more than just cutting, and it's certainly not topping, like what this guy is doing. To find out how to prune your trees right contact an arborist or call **PlantAmnesty**."