

FROM US'S TRUMP TO PHILIPPINES' DUTERTE

Populism wave hits political landscapes

AFP, Manila

The election of Rodrigo Duterte as Philippine president marks the latest victory for populist politics, as voters around the world reward candidates offering simple solutions to complex problems.

In a country beset by crime, poverty and corruption, Duterte promised voters a raft of quick fixes that many analysts believe will remain empty promises. One of his main campaign pledges was to completely eradicate crime within six months.

Foul-mouthed tirades have only added to the appeal of his plug-and-play solutions for a broken economy and a bankrupt society, echoing in some ways the simplistic sloganeering of presidential hopeful Donald Trump in the United States.

In Europe, iconoclast politicians revel in anti-immigrant rhetoric, capitalising on voters' disquiet over rising unemployment and an elite they think is out of touch.

"People want some kind of change. They want to break from the past. They are exasperated, aggravated," said Earl Parreno of the Manila-based Institute for Political and Economic Reform.

"They want someone like Duterte who promises everything will be solved in three to six months."

Duterte's victory over establishment candidate Mar Roxas was founded on simplistic brutality.

The 71-year-old vowed he would end crime by ordering security forces to kill tens of thousands of suspected criminals, then pardon himself if he was found guilty of mass murder.

Despite six years of stable economic growth under President Benigno Aquino, one in four Filipinos still lives on less than \$1.30 a day and a devastating rich-poor divide has worsened. "People want change. They are happy to take risks to get this change," said Parreno.

Even in a country that has a track record of controversial presidents -- dictators and movie stars jostle in the pages of recent history books -- Duterte's hustings have been colourful affairs. Supporters have delighted in their candidate's willingness to shoot from the hip, like when he called the pope a "son of a whore" and made jokes about raping an Australian missionary.

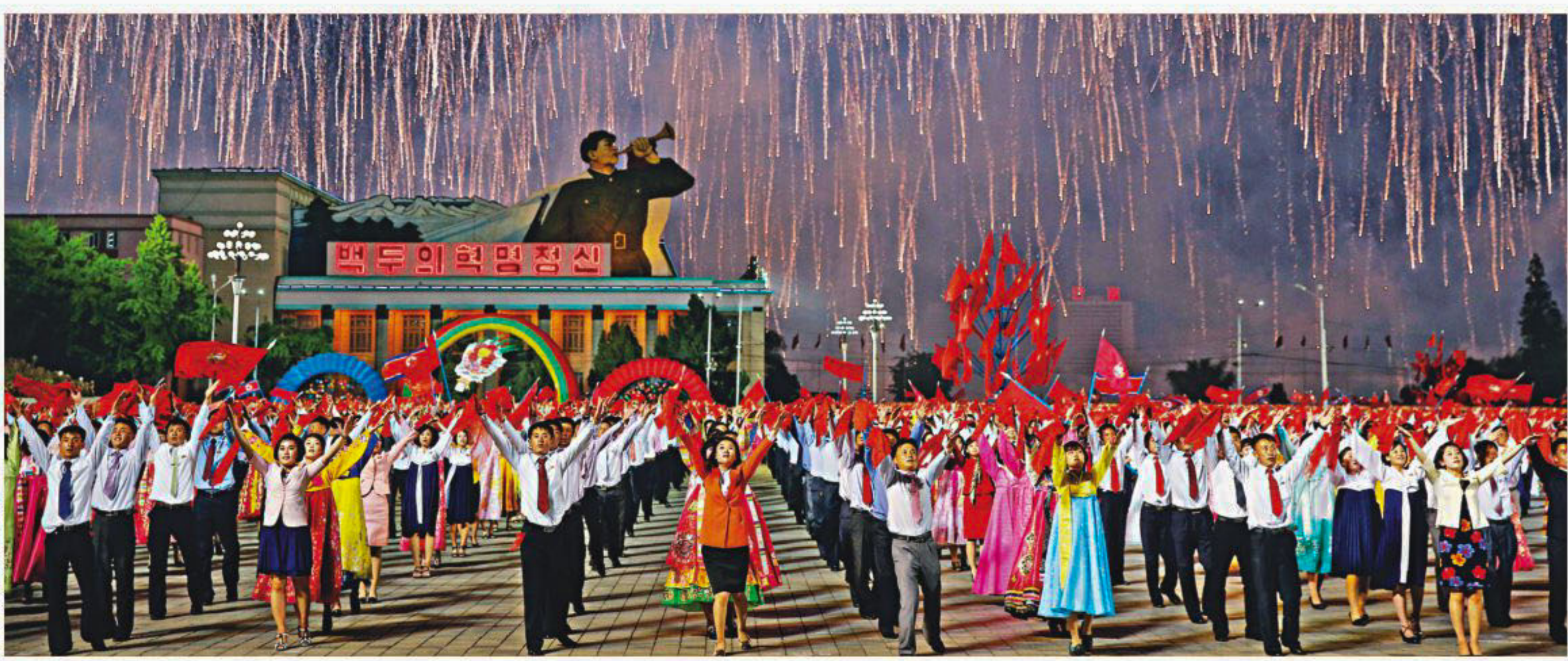
His coarse ascent mirrors that of Trump, the presumptive presidential candidate for the Republican Party.

Trump -- who, like Duterte, has drawn comparisons with Adolf Hitler -- is regularly accused of demagoguery, the populism-plus-one of a politician who plays to the baying mob.

While Duterte has focused on criminals, Trump has trained his fire on Muslims and Mexicans. While Duterte may have triumphed in Monday's poll, pundits expect Trump will come unstuck in November's US general election, losing to his Democratic Party rival Hillary Clinton.

But even if he were to win, Trump, like Duterte, would likely be tamed by the political system he is fighting against, says Simon Torrey at the University of Sydney. "It's often like walking through treacle being in government. They get all the populist energy beaten out of them as they are trampled on by vested interests and the flood of political bureaucracy," he said.

"There are no real examples anywhere of a populist politician making any radical change from within. Either



(From top left, clockwise) North Korean leader Kim Jong Un waves to the crowd yesterday as he presides over a mass rally and parade, a day after the ruling party wrapped up its first congress in 36 years by elevating him to party chairman, in Pyongyang; participant cries while taking part in a torchlight procession during the ceremonies; and fireworks explode over participants in a mass dance in the capital's main ceremonial square.

'This isn't just about me'

London mayor hits back at Trump over Muslim ban 'exception'

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

London's mayor Sadiq Khan has criticised Donald Trump for suggesting he would exempt him from his proposed temporary ban on Muslims entering the US, adding his comments play "into the hands of extremists".

It comes after Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential candidate, said he was happy to see London's new Muslim mayor elected, saying it could be "very, very good".

The billionaire property mogul caused international outrage when he called for the temporary ban after the November 2015 Paris attacks. David Cameron labelled the idea "stupid" and calls to ban Trump from entering Britain were raised in Parliament after a petition attracted nearly 600,000 signatures.

"This isn't just about me -- it's about my friends, my family and everyone who comes from a background similar to mine, anywhere in the world," Khan said.

"Donald Trump's ignorant view of Islam could make both our countries less safe -- it risks alienating mainstream Muslims around the world and plays into the hands of the extremists."

"Donald Trump and those around him think that western liberal values are incompatible with mainstream Islam - London has proved him wrong."

Asked by the New York Times how the ban would affect London's new Muslim mayor, Trump said there would "always be exceptions".

After being declared winner of the mayoral race on Saturday, Khan said he rejected the "politics of fear" as he promised to be a "mayor for all Londoners".

Commenting on the election, Khan said: "I was happy to see that. I think it's a very good thing, and I hope he does a very good job because frankly that would be very, very good."

Khan told Time magazine earlier this week that he was confident Trump's approach to politics would not prevail when America goes to the polls in November.



NEWS IN brief

US warship sails by S China Sea reef

REUTERS, Beijing/Hong Kong

China scrambled fighter jets yesterday as a US navy ship sailed close to a disputed reef in the South China Sea, a patrol China denounced as an illegal threat to peace which only went to show its defence installations in the area were necessary. Guided missile destroyer the USS William P Lawrence travelled within 12 nautical miles of Chinese-occupied Fiery Cross Reef, US said.

US will keep using term 'Rohingya'

REUTERS, Yangon

The new ambassador of the United States to Myanmar Scot Marciel yesterday said he will keep using the term Rohingya for the persecuted Muslim minority, even after the government controlled by Nobel prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi asked him to refrain from it. Members of the 1.1 million-strong group are seen by many Myanmar Buddhists as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

Air strikes kill 10 in Syria's Idlib

REUTERS, Beirut

Air strikes on a town in Idlib province in Syria's northwest killed at least 10 people yesterday, monitoring group the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported. Low-level fighting also appeared to continue inside the city of Aleppo. The Syrian army announced the extension of a ceasefire in Aleppo late on Monday.

'Executed' N Korean general resurfaces

AFP, Seoul

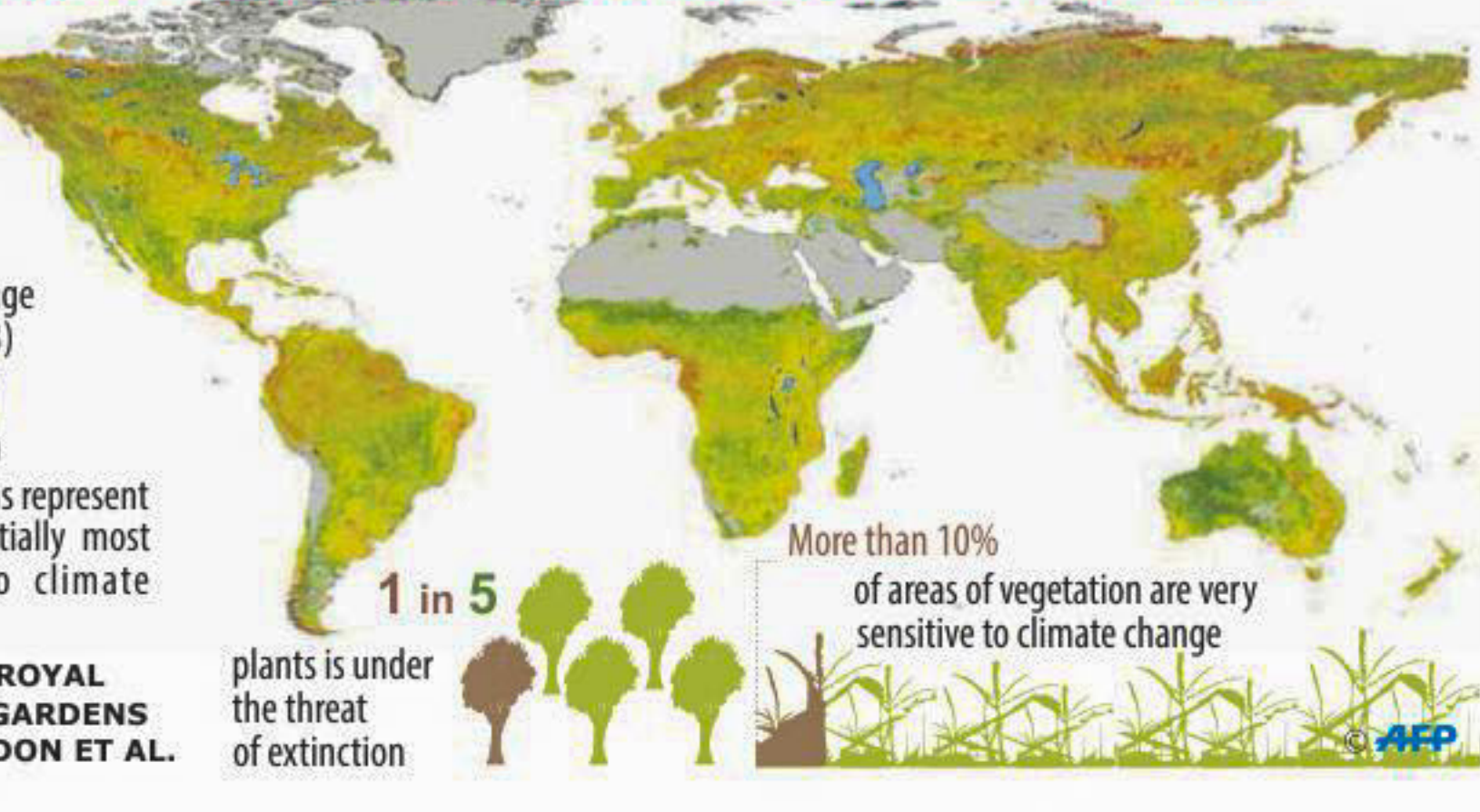
North Korea's former military chief of staff who was reported executed earlier this year is apparently alive and well after being named yesterday in a number of senior ruling party posts. Intelligence reports in South Korea had suggested Ri Yong-Gil, former chief of the Korean People's Army (KPA) General Staff, was executed in February on accusations of corruption and forming a political faction.

Indian woman, 70, gives birth to first baby

AFP, New Delhi

An Indian woman who gave birth at the age of 70 said yesterday she was not too old to become a first-time mother. Daljinder Kaur gave birth last month to a boy following two years of IVF treatment at a fertility clinic in Haryana with her husband, 79. The couple, married for 46 years, had almost lost hope of ever having a child and had faced ridicule in a country where infertility is seen as a

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S PLANTS



Fifth of plant types at risk

REUTERS, London

One in five types of plant worldwide is at risk of extinction from threats such as farming and logging that are wrecking many habitats, a first global overview of plant life said yesterday.

In total, 391,000 types of plants are known to science, from tiny orchids to giant sequoia trees, according to the "State of the World's Plants" written by 80 experts led by the Royal Botanic Gardens (RBG) at Kew, in London.

And despite 21 percent of all the species being threatened with extinction, the report also said new plants were still being discovered, such as a 1.5 meter tall insect-eating plant on a mountaintop in Brazil in 2015.

Nonetheless, the experts said many parts of the world were suffering rapid change, such as from the felling of tropical forests to make way for farms and cities. Global warming was among other man-made risks.

The report said a rising world population of more than 7 billion people needed food and places to live and that scientists should be pragmatic and help identify areas most in need of conservation.

The study said 31,000 plant species had documented uses such as in medicines, food or building materials. Little-known plants might have unknown benefits, such as resilience to diseases.

About 2,000 new types of plant were still being described every year.

Modi's degree is authentic

Says Delhi University

TNN, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BA degree is authentic, Delhi University clarified yesterday, putting to rest allegations of glaring discrepancies levelled by Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and other AAP leaders.

The university also said it has all the relevant records relating to his graduation while terming as "minor error" the mention of 1979 as his graduation year, though he passed out a year earlier.

"We have checked our records and it has been authenticated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's degree is authentic. He cleared the examination in 1978," said Delhi University's registrar Tarun Das.

The DU clarification came hours after a group of AAP leaders visited the university office to check the PM's degree. They were told to return today.

Panama Papers is a fight between world powers

Says Panama leader; Pak PM to address parliament after opposition boycott

AGENCIES

The Panama Papers revealing offshore secrets of the wealthy is really the result of a behind-the-scenes fight of big global powers, Panama's president said on Monday.

"It looks like internal politics and differences between the big powers is playing a role in how these issues are being handled," President Juan Carlos Varela said.

Varela's comments came just ahead of the release online of a database drawn from the Panama Papers -- a massive digital trove of documents copied from the servers of a Panamanian law firm, Mossack Fonseca, which specializes in offshore business.

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), a US-based outfit that networks investigative reporters around the world, was making public data from a portion of the 11.5 million Mossack Fonseca documents.

The latest release of the names of thousands of offshore companies and other

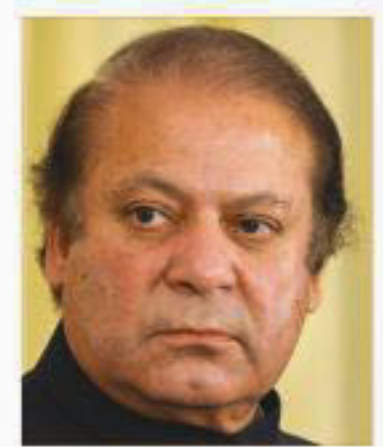
financial data of the rich and powerful is spurring renewed calls to counter corruption and tax evasion.

Japan's government spokesman yesterday said Tokyo plans to propose an action plan for combating graft at the summit of the Group of Seven rich industrial economies that will be held later this month in Ise, Japan.

That follows various moves by other countries to investigate or tighten oversight of such financial dealings following the first release last month of information from what has been dubbed the "Panama Papers."

Meanwhile, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will appear before parliament to answer questions on the Panama Papers leak that linked his family to offshore wealth, an official said yesterday, after lawmakers walked out of the assembly.

Leaked documents from the Mossack Fonseca law firm in Panama last month showed Sharif's sons, Hassan and Hussain, and his daughter, Maryam, owned at least three offshore holding companies



Pakistan ex-PM's son rescued after 3 yrs

AFP, Kabul

US and Afghan forces freed the kidnapped son of a former Pakistani prime minister during a counter-terrorism mission in eastern Afghanistan, Nato said yesterday, three years after he was kidnapped in a hail of bullets.

Ali Haider Gilani, son of Yousaf Raza Gilani, "was rescued today in Giyan District of Paktika Province Afghanistan by US Special Operations Forces and Afghan Commandos in a partnered raid," Nato said in the statement from Kabul.

The Afghan presidency said the raid had targeted an al-Qaeda cell, and that Gilani had been sent to the Pakistani embassy in Kabul. The Afghan ambassador to Islamabad, Omar Zakhilwal, told AFP that Gilani was in good health.

Yousaf Raza Gilani broke the news to a cheering crowd at a political rally in Pakistani-held Kashmir yesterday. "This rally has proved fortunate for me," he said. Hundreds of people converged on the family's home in Multan in central Punjab province as the news broke,

Clock ticks down on Rousseff

AFP, Brasilia

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff faced what could be her final hours in power yesterday on the eve of a Senate vote on whether to suspend her from office for an impeachment trial.

Rousseff, who is accused of illegally juggling government accounts, maintained the appearance of business as usual, her official agenda featuring routine meetings in Brasilia with officials and a women's group.

But Brazil's first female president looks increasingly likely to be forced to step aside when the Senate votes today on whether to open an impeachment trial, triggering her automatic six-month suspension. The result of what's expected to be a marathon voting session may not be final until tomorrow.

If she is pushed out, her vice-president-turned-enemy Michel Temer will take over. Adding to the instability shaking Latin America's most populous country and

biggest economy, the leaders of the Senate and the lower house spent Monday in open conflict on whether the vote should go ahead at all.

Late Monday, the interim speaker of the lower house, Waldir Maranhao, backed down and reversed an earlier attempt to order the Senate to halt proceedings and return Rousseff's case to the lower chamber.

That eased what was looking like an institutional crisis, with possibly the Supreme Court being needed to come in as a referee. However, there was no patching over the divisions left in Brazil by the trauma of what Rousseff is daily denouncing as a coup d'etat.

Police are responding to heightened tensions by building a huge metal barricade outside Congress in the capital to separate rival groups of protesters during the Senate vote. A separation corridor 80 meters wide and more than a kilometer long will also be enforced.

