

## NEWS IN brief

### Britain, EU kick off new round of Brexit talks

AFP, Brussels

Britain and the EU kicked off a third round of Brexit talks yesterday still sharply divided over what comes first -- London's future relationship with the bloc or the costly divorce settlement. The EU says there has to be "sufficient progress" in three key areas -- EU citizen rights, Northern Ireland's border and exit bill.

### IS-claimed car bomb kills 11 in Baghdad

AFP, Baghdad

A car bomb exploded in a market in the Iraqi capital's Shia-majority district of Sadr City in Baghdad yesterday, killing 11 people and wounding 26, security officials and medical sources said. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement carried by its propaganda agency Amaq.

### Kenya bans plastic bags in bid to fight pollution

AFP, Nairobi

A ban on plastic bags came into force in Kenya yesterday in a bid to slow pollution, with offenders liable to jail time or hefty fines. The ban on the use of plastic carrier bags was carried through after the High Court threw out a challenge brought by importers who claim jobs will be lost and livelihoods threatened.

### Two dead, 25 missing in China landslide

AFP, Beijing

A landslide struck some 34 homes in southwest China yesterday, killing two people and leaving another 25 missing, according to the local government. Rescuers pulled six people out of the rubble, including the two who died, in a township in Bijie city in the southwest Guizhou province.



Residents use a truck to navigate through flood waters from Tropical Storm Harvey in Houston, Texas, US on Sunday. Inset, An elderly woman and her poodle use an air mattress to float above flood waters while waiting to be rescued from Scarsdale Boulevard in Houston.

PHOTO: REUTERS



## Military stand-off with China ends: India

AFP, New Delhi

India said yesterday it had agreed with China to end a months-long military stand-off at a strategically important disputed area in the Himalayas and troops were disengaging.

The foreign ministry said it had reached an "understanding" after talks with Beijing about the tense confrontation in an area near the Indian border that is claimed by both China and Bhutan.

China's foreign ministry said only that Indian troops were withdrawing. But New Delhi later made clear that both countries were pulling back their border forces.

"We had earlier in the day announced that following diplomatic communications, expeditious disengagement of border personnel of China and India at the face-off site was ongoing," the Indian statement said.

"This process has since been almost completed under verification."

The announcement comes days before India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to travel to China for a summit of

BRICS countries -- India, China, Russia, Brazil and South Africa.

The stand-off at the Doklam plateau began on June 16 and sparked what some analysts said was the worst crisis in decades between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

India does not claim Doklam for itself but is closely allied with Bhutan, which it regards as a buffer against rival China to the north.

India and China have a long history of mistrust and went to war in 1962 over the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

China announced it was "pleased" that India had agreed to withdraw troops from the flashpoint area.

"I am pleased to confirm that trespassing Indian personnel have all pulled back to the Indian side of the boundary," foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said.

"Chinese troops continue to patrol on the Chinese side of the boundary," she said.

China had repeatedly said India must withdraw its troops before any proper negotiation takes place. India said both sides should withdraw their forces together.

**BOTH COUNTRIES PULL BACK THEIR FORCES AT DOKLAM**

**DISENGAGEMENT JUST DAYS AHEAD OF BRICS SUMMIT**

## Taliban attack on Afghan forces kills 13

AFP, Kandahar

A Taliban suicide bomber killed at least 13 people and wounded several more in an attack on a convoy of Afghan soldiers in Helmand province late Sunday, an official said.

It was the latest in a series of deadly blows to Afghanistan's beleaguered security forces and yet again underlined spiralling insecurity in the war-torn nation.

"A suicide bomber detonated an explosive-filled car as the Afghan National Army convoy passed a small market in Nawa District of Helmand," Omar Zwak, a spokesman for the provincial governor, told AFP.

He added that civilians and forces personnel were among the dead while more than a dozen others had been wounded.

## ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

## UN chief seeks 'dream' of peace in Jerusalem visit

AFP, Jerusalem

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres held talks with Israeli leaders yesterday on his first visit since taking office, making a forceful argument for a two-state solution with the Palestinians and speaking of his "dream" for peace.

Guterres also spoke of what he called obstacles to peace when meeting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, including Israeli settlement building and the need for Palestinian leaders to condemn "terrorism".

"I dream that I will have the chance to see in the Holy Land two states able to live together in mutual recognition, but also in peace and security," Guterres said in remarks at Netanyahu's office.

He recalled past secret talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders at his office when he was prime minister of Portugal from 1995 to 2002, saying it had exposed him to the difficulties of the peace process.

Guterres spoke of improving economic and social conditions for Palestinians to

provide them with a "dividend" and incentive for peace.

The UN chief's meeting with Netanyahu was part of his three-day visit that ends Wednesday and came with the two-state solution, long the focus of international diplomacy, under threat.

Earlier in the day he met Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, and is due in Ramallah today for talks with Palestinian prime minister Rami Hamdallah.

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas is visiting Turkey and is not expected to meet Guterres during the trip.

Guterres will then travel to the Gaza Strip on Wednesday.

After arriving on Sunday evening, the UN chief met Jason Greenblatt, a top aide to US President Donald Trump charged with pursuing Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts.

Greenblatt was part of a US delegation last week including Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner that held talks with Netanyahu and Abbas. He remained in the region for further discussions.



## 'Even a baby wasn't spared'

Residents accuse Myanmar security forces of shooting 'indiscriminately' at the Muslim minority

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

The Myanmar army has been accused of carrying out extrajudicial killings in the restive Rakhine region, with residents and activists accusing soldiers of shooting indiscriminately at unarmed Rohingya men, women and children and carrying out arson attacks.

Authorities in Myanmar say close to 100 people have been killed since Friday when armed men, reportedly from the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), launched a pre-dawn raid on police outposts in the restive region.

The army has declared a war against "terrorism", encircling the townships of Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung, home to around 800,000 people, and imposed a curfew from 6:00pm to 6:00am.

However, advocates for the Rohingya have given a much higher death toll, telling

Al Jazeera that at least 800 of the Muslim minority, including dozens of women and children, have been killed in the violence.

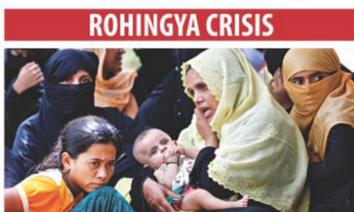
Al Jazeera could not independently verify the figures.

Aziz Khan, a Maungdaw resident, said the army stormed his village early on Friday and began "firing indiscriminately at people's cars and homes."

"Government forces and the border guard police killed at least 11 people in my village. When they arrived they started shooting at everything that moved. Some soldiers then carried out arson attacks.

"Women and children were also among the dead," he said. "Even a baby wasn't spared."

Ro Nay San Lwin, a Rohingya activist and blogger based in Europe, said anywhere between 5,000 - 10,000 people had been driven from their homes by the recent offensive.



ROHINGYA CRISIS



Smoke rises from clashes during the war between Iraqi army and Shia Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) against the Islamic State militants in al-Ayadiya, northwest of Tal Afar, Iraq yesterday. Clearing operations were continuing and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi was expected to soon arrive in the city to announce its liberation from IS.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## EU warns over UK Brexit talks progress

AFP, Brussels

EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier yesterday warned Britain to start "negotiating seriously" as London and Brussels kicked off a third round of tense Brexit talks.

"To be honest I'm concerned. Time passes quickly... We must start negotiating seriously," Barnier said as he greeted his British counterpart David Davis at the headquarters of the European Commission.

Barnier, a former French foreign minister and EU commissioner, sharply warned his counterpart that a recent flurry of British position papers fell short of clearing up differences.

"The sooner we remove the ambiguity, the sooner we will be in position to discuss the future relationship and a transitional period," Barnier said in reference to the papers.



Both sides are still sharply divided over what must be agreed first -- London's future relationship with the bloc or the costly divorce settlement.

The European Union insists on "sufficient progress" in three key areas -- EU citizen rights, Northern Ireland's border and the exit bill -- before it will turn to post-Brexit arrangements.

Davis firmly defended his government's efforts to explain its position saying they were "products of the hard work and detailed thinking."

They form the basis of "what I hope will be a constructive week of talks between the European Commission and the UK," he said.

## France gets First Dog

AFP, Paris

In keeping with time-honoured French presidential tradition, Emmanuel Macron has given the country a First Dog.

The 39-year-old president and his wife Brigitte adopted a black labrador-griffon mix at the weekend, whom they have named Nemo after the captain in Jules Verne's science fiction classic, Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea.

Nemo -- who is aged between one and two and was adopted from a shelter for abandoned dogs -- was glimpsed yesterday scampering around the Elysee Palace in a red collar, under the watchful eye of footmen in frock coats.

Every post-war French president has had a dog, who has the run of the palace's expansive gardens.

Most have picked a labrador, though World War II hero Charles de Gaulle had a pint-sized corgi -- a gift from Britain's Queen Elizabeth.

Nemo succeeds Philae, a labrador named after the European Space Agency's comet lander that was gifted to ex-president Francois Hollande as a puppy by Montreal-based French war veterans.

Across the Atlantic, torrents of ink were spilt on ex-president Barack Obama's pet dogs Bo and Sunny.

## AUGUST 8 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

## Kenya SC orders scrutiny of vote-count systems

REUTERS, Nairobi

Kenya's Supreme Court yesterday ordered the election commission to allow the opposition, which is disputing the results of this month's presidential vote, to have access to its computer servers and electronic devices used in the vote-count.

Election authorities say Kenyatta won a second term in the Aug 8 polls by 1.4 million votes. A parallel tally by independent monitors based on a sample of around 2,000 polling stations produced a similar result.

There were scattered protests in strongholds of opposition leader Raila Odinga. At least 28 people were killed in election-related violence, many of them shot by police, after results were announced.

The protests, which dissipated within days had raised fears that political violence could again destabilise the region's biggest economy, as it did following a disputed election in 2007.

Odinga's opposition coalition said in its court petition that results from more than one third of polling stations are "fatally flawed".

James Orendo, the coalition's lead lawyer, said it rejected some tally sheets because they lacked security features and an official stamp.

"These forms and the security features were supposed to protect the integrity of the process," he said.

The paper forms from each of the 40,883 polling stations were supposed to be signed by agents for each political party observing the process.

The system was designed as a manual backup to verify electronic results. In the 2013 election, electronic systems failed widely.

The court said it would allow Odinga's National Super Alliance (NASA) and Kenyatta's Jubilee Party limited access to the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission's electronic devices to verify details like who had used the devices and accessed the servers.

## German killer nurse probed in 90 deaths

AFP, Berlin

A male nurse jailed for life two years ago for killing two hospital patients with lethal drug overdoses murdered at least 90 patients in total, and possibly twice as many, police said yesterday, calling it post-war Germany's worst killing spree.

Niels Hoegel, 40, was jailed in February 2015 for two murders and four counts of attempted murder or causing bodily harm on intensive-care patients at the Delmenhorst hospital near the northern city of Bremen.

Police said yesterday that forensic experts had since exhumed and analysed more than 130 additional bodies and had found evidence of a vastly higher death toll at two hospitals where Hoegel had worked between 1999 and 2005.

"The insights we were able to gain are terrifying, they surpass what we could have imagined," said Johann Kuehme, police chief in the city of Oldenburg, where the other hospital is located.

The death toll "is unique in the history of the German republic," said the chief police investigator in the case, Arne Schmidt, adding that Hoegel killed "without a discernable pattern" and preyed especially on those in critical condition.

There was "evidence for at least 90 murders, and at least as many (suspected) cases again that can no longer be proven," he told a press conference, declaring himself "speechless" at the outcome.