

# NEWSIN brief

**Putin-Trump meet in Vietnam 'likely'**  
AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart Donald Trump will likely meet at the sidelines of the APEC summit but Moscow and Washington have yet to agree details, the Kremlin said yesterday.

Both leaders are headed to APEC summit in the Vietnamese city of Danang this weekend.

**UN warns Qatar in worker abuse probe**  
AFP, Geneva

The UN's labour agency yesterday closed a probe into the alleged mistreatment of foreign workers in Qatar, praising a reform plan agreed by the emirate.

Activists and international labour unions had accused Qatar of subjecting migrant workers to slave-like conditions on jobs.

**Schools shut till Sunday as toxic smog hits Delhi**  
OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

With the air pollution in the Indian capital worsened further yesterday, Delhi city government ordered the closure of all schools in India's capital till Sunday in view of the "unbearable" air pollution. On Tuesday, only primary schools were ordered to be shut.

**Germany's top court recognises third sex**  
THE HIGHEST COURT IN GERMANY

The highest court in Germany has ruled that a third sex must be included on official documents. The Federal Constitutional Court has ordered the creation of a new term covering transsexual people using a "positive name for the sex" for birth certificates by the end of next year.



US President Donald Trump and US first lady Melania visit the Forbidden City with China's President Xi Jinping in Beijing yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Trump honoured in China

### Tours Forbidden City with Xi after wrapping up visit to Seoul

With lavish pageantry and an uncharacteristic personal flourish, Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday rolled out a red carpet welcome for US President Donald Trump at the Forbidden City, the ancient home of China's emperors.

After warning the North's "cruel dictatorship" in a speech in Seoul against testing the United States, Trump and First Lady Melania Trump were met by Xi and his wife Peng Liyuan for tea at the former imperial palace.

The general gathering will be followed today by a full day of thorny talks, with Trump looking to prod Xi into doing more to squeeze North Korea economically and to address China's massive trade surplus with the United States.

The Trump administration sees Beijing as the key to controlling Pyongyang, which depends on China for its economic survival and for 90 per cent of its trade.

During his speech to the National Assembly in Seoul, Trump directed his words at North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, reported Reuters.

"The weapons that you are acquiring are making you safer, they are putting your regime in grave danger," he said. "Every step you take down this dark path increases the peril you face."

He called on countries around the world to isolate Pyongyang by denying it "any form of support, supply or acceptance."

Earlier, Trump congratulated Xi on his reappointment as China's Communist Party chief, tweeting: "I very much look forward to meeting with President Xi who is just off his great political victory."

Trump's use of the term "political victory" was the outcome of last month's Communist Party congress as seen by analysts as a conciliatory move before tough talks.

Xi has prepared an extravagant "state visit-plus" for Trump, who was greeted by children waving US and Chinese flags at the airport. He was treated to a Peking Opera performance at the Forbidden City.

Xi said during the tour that he expected Trump's visit to yield "positive and important" results.

The US leader has brought a business delegation and 19 deals worth a total \$9 billion were signed yesterday.

During his stay in Seoul, Trump had to abandon a surprise visit to the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) that divides the two Koreas because of bad weather, leaving him "permittedly frustrated" according to the White House, reported AFP.

South Korean President Moon Jae-In, who had flown earlier before fog closed in, was left waiting for him at the border, which bristles with electric fences, minefields and anti-tank barriers.

The Kim dynasty, which has ruled for decades, has been accused of committing a range of rights abuses including torture, rape and execution of perceived critics or those trying to flee the country.

It is also known to operate prison camps where hundreds of thousands languish under forced labour, and its 25 million people are cut off from the outside world.

**US president warns North Korea of grave danger in Seoul speech**

**Calls on countries to isolate Pyongyang**

**Fog frustrates Trump's attempt to visit DMZ**

## UN climate talks in Bonn

### Syria to join Paris pact, isolating US

Syria told the UN climate talks in Bonn on Tuesday that it would join the Paris Agreement, leaving the United States as the only nation in the world opting to stay outside the landmark treaty.

"We are going to join the Paris Agreement," the Syrian delegate, speaking in Arabic, said during a plenary session at the 196-nation talks, according to Safa Al Layoushi of the IndyAct NGO, who was monitoring the session.

The United States ratified the 2015 pact but US President Donald Trump announced earlier this year that he would pull out, saying the pact did not serve US interests.

"It is our understanding that the government of Syria announced today their intent to join the Paris Agreement," Nick Nuttall, the spokesman for the UN climate body, told AFP.

Nuttall identified the Syrian delegate as Wadah Katman, the deputy minister of the ministry of local administration and environment.

Syria must submit their "instruments of ratification" at the UN headquarters in New York before their adherence becomes official, he added.

According to the Syrian parliament website, a bill was passed on October 22 to ratify the Paris accord, "in accordance with the Syrian Constitution which stipulates the protection of the environment and the environment."

Other parties at the 12-day negotiations, tasked with elaborating and implementing the agreement, welcomed the news.

"Syria joining the Paris Agreement will be a good thing," South Africa's chief negotiator Maatso Kekana told AFP.

## SAUDI-IRAN TENSIONS

### Rouhani warns Riyadh of Tehran's 'might'

President Hassan Rouhani yesterday warned Saudi Arabia that it will achieve nothing by threatening the might of Iran, as a part of tensions between the regional heavyweight powers.

"You know the might and place of the Islamic republic. People more powerful than you have been unable to do anything against the Iranian people," Rouhani said.

The United States and their allies have mobilised all their capabilities against us and achieved nothing."

Rouhani appeared to be alluding to the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88, in which revolutionary Iran successfully resisted an invasion by Saddam Hussein's regime supported by Gulf Arab and Western governments.

His comments came after Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman accused Iran of delivering missiles to Yemeni rebels for use against targets in the kingdom that he described as "direct military aggression."

Iran strongly denied supplying any missiles to the rebels saying that it would have been impossible to do so in any case in the face of a Saudi-led air and sea blockade, reported AFP.

Rouhani reiterated that Iran wanted a peaceful settlement of the conflict between the rebels and the Saudi-backed Yemeni government and of Riyadh across the region that has placed it at loggerheads with Riyadh.

"We want the welfare and development of Yemen, Iraq and Syria, and of Saudi Arabia too. There are no other paths forward than friendship, brotherhood and mutual assistance," he said.

"If you think that Iran is not your friend and that the United States and the Zionist regime [Israel] are you are making a strategic and analytical error."

Rouhani's remarks followed a phone call to his Lebanese counterpart the previous day, in which the Iranian president pledged Tehran's support for Lebanon's stability following the resignation of the Saudi-backed Prime Minister Saad Hariri, reported AFP.



**AGENCIES**

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## Woters reject Trumpism

### US Democrats score key poll victories in Virginia, New Jersey governor's race in setback for Trump

trounced his Republican rival Ed Gillespie by an unexpectedly high nine percentage points in the southern battleground state.

In New Jersey, Democrat Phil Murphy reclaimed the governorship with a victory of about 13 percentage points over his rival following eight years of Republican Governor Chris Christie, a nemesis ally of Trump.

And in New York, progressive Mayor Bill de Blasio rode a wave of hometown distaste for Trump to cruise to reelection in America's most populous city.

Murphy and Northam painted their wins as rejections of the polarization that to a large extent characterized Trump's 2016 campaign and much of his first year in the White House.

"Tonight, New Jersey sent an unmistakable message to the entire nation: we are better than this," Murphy declared.



Ralph Northam



Phil Murphy

The most damaging defeat was in Virginia, a state seen as a bellwether for national politics with the country gearing up for 2018 congressional elections and the next presidential contest in 2020.

The Virginia governor's race had all the makings of a nailbiter, but in the end, Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam



Catalan regional policemen drag a picketer blocking the street at the North Bus Station in Barcelona yesterday as part of a region-wide strike called by a pro-independence union. Spain's Constitutional Court said it had annulled the Catalan parliament's unilateral declaration of independence last month. PHOTO: AFP

## NZ mourns loss of 'First Cat' Paddles

### US magazine Vanity Fair said the tech-savvy feline was 'helping establish Arden as the latest hip, cool world leader that America wishes it had'.

New Zealand was mourning the loss of the nation's "First Cat" yesterday after Prime Minister Jacinda Arden's pet puss Paddles was run over by a car in Auckland.

The prime minister's office confirmed that the ginger and white rescue cat, also described by Arden as the P.M. (Prime Moggy), died in an accident on Tuesday.

"To anyone who has ever lost a pet, you'll know how she was 'polydactyl', with extra toes that looked like thumbs, allowing her to operate a keyboard."

She said the cat's social media activities were "an enormous source of amusement."

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## LEAKS FROM PARADISE PAPERS

### Prince Charles lobbied for climate policy change

According to the BBC, he mounted a high profile campaign for changes to two major environmental agreements just weeks after Sustainable Forestry Management sent his office lobbying documents.

Four weeks after purchasing the shares, Prince Charles called for the Kyoto Protocol and the EU's emissions trading system to recognise carbon credits from rainforests, saying it was "wrong."

In October 2007, he launched the Prince's Rainforest Project, which aimed to highlight the impact of tropical deforestation.

The BBC's Panorama programme said it was unable to find any evidence of speeches made by the Prince about changing Kyoto, or EU ETS policy about rainforests, prior to purchasing the shares.

Sir Alistair Graham, former chairman of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, said the Prince's actions amounted to a



Prince Charles

## BID TO POSTPONE EXAMS

### Indian teenager kills schoolmate

India arrested a teenager yesterday for allegedly slitting the throat of a seven-year-old schoolmate in hopes the murder would lead to an exam being postponed, federal investigators said.

The 16-year-old is accused of killing his young schoolmate in September at a smart private school near Delhi in an attempt to delay an impending test and parent-teacher meeting.

Police had initially detained a bus conductor over the murder, claiming he killed the boy after the young pupil resisted a sex attack.

But a spokesman for federal investigators said they had credible evidence against the "academically weak" teenager, whose motive was to postpone the examination and a forthcoming parent-teacher meeting.

"He admitted during questioning that he wanted to shut the school for holding the exams and meeting," Central Bureau of Investigation spokesman R.K. Gaur told AFP.

The teenager, who cannot be named for legal reasons, would be sent to a juvenile detention centre until his trial for murder, he added.

Gaur said the bus conductor would remain in custody until cleared by a court of any wrongdoing.

The crime made national headlines and stoked concern among parents over safety in schools.



Priti Patel

After a public reprimand from the prime minister, Patel left London on Tuesday on a three-day trip to Israel, as she became the latest cabinet member caught up in a whirlwind of scandals rocking Prime Minister Theresa May's government.

But a spokesman for the 56-year-old International Development Secretary Priti Patel back from a trip to Africa to explain her talks with Israeli politicians, in which she reportedly raised the possibility of Britain diverting aid to the Israeli army.

Patel had apologised on Monday for holding 12 separate meetings - including with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu - during a family holiday in Israel in August, without notifying the Foreign Office or Downing Street in advance.