

# NEWSIN brief

## Two Koreas remove landmines at border

AFP, Seoul

The two Koreas yesterday started to remove landmines along a section of their heavily fortified border as part of a summit deal to ease military tensions, Seoul said. More than 800,000 mines are believed to have been planted along the entire border during and after the 1950-53 war to defend against infiltration.

## UN chief starts 3-day India visit

APP, Islamabad

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who began a three-day official visit to India yesterday, expressed concern over the situation in India-held Kashmir, and encouraged "positive dialogue" for the peaceful settlement of the ongoing dispute. The UN chief will be in India from October 1-3 during which he will meet India's top leadership.

## Macedonia votes to change name

AFP, Skopje

More than 90 percent of the Macedonia's 1.8 million voters voted to change the country's name to North Macedonia but only a third of the electorate turned out. Premier Zoran Zaev wants to rename the Balkan state to end a long-running row with Greece which has its own northern province named Macedonia and has accused its northern neighbour of territorial ambitions.

## Nearly 700 migrants rescued off Spain

AFP, Madrid

A total of 675 migrants, including children and babies, were rescued off the Spanish coast over the weekend, a government spokesman told AFP. On Saturday, 405 were picked up from what are often unseaworthy people smugglers' vessels, with seven children and babies among the African migrants.



An aerial view shows the earthquake and tsunami devastated neighbourhood in Palu, Indonesia's Central Sulawesi, yesterday. Inset, A damaged road in Palu. PHOTO: AFP

# Iran strikes Syria targets

## Missiles, drone attacks hit last pocket of territory held by IS

REUTERS, Beirut

Iran yesterday fired missiles at militants in Syria it blamed for an attack in southwestern Iran on September 22, the Revolutionary Guards said, in what it called a sign of Tehran's readiness to punish its enemies' "wickedness".

Tehran has accused US-backed Gulf Arab states of carrying out the September 22 shooting attack on a military parade that killed 25 people, nearly half of them members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards.

Yesterday's strike targeted the bases of "takfiri terrorists" backed by the United States and regional powers in eastern Syria, the Guards said in a statement on Sepah News, their official news site. It killed a number of militant leaders and destroyed their supplies and infrastructure, they said.

Iranian officials often use the word "takfiri" to describe Sunni Muslim hardliners. Iran is predominantly Shia Muslim.

"Death to the family of Saud," "Death to America," and "Death to Israel" were written on one of the

missiles shown on the Fars News site.

The strike targeted the last pocket of territory in southeastern Syria held by Islamic State, said an official in the Iran-backed regional alliance fighting in support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

### RETALIATION FOR PARADE ATTACK

US-led coalition confirms Iranian forces conducted 'no notice strikes'

Sr official indicates more attacks may be coming

It is an area where the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) launched a new offensive last month against Islamic State.

The US-led coalition confirmed Iranian forces had conducted "no notice strikes last night".

"At this time, the coalition is still

assessing if any damage occurred and no coalition forces were in danger," Col spokesman Sean Ryan said.

Fars News posted video footage of several missiles streaking into a dark sky during the attack.

The six ballistic missiles used in the attack flew 570 km (354 miles) to hit the targets, the Guards said. A map shown on state TV pinpointed Kermanshah in western Iran as the launch site and Albu Kamal in southeast Syria as the target.

The missiles were Iranian-made Zolfaghar and Qiam missiles, Fars News reported.

"Our iron fist is prepared to deliver a decisive and crushing response to any wickedness and mischief of the enemies," the Guards, the most powerful military force in the Islamic Republic, said in their statement.

Seven drones were also used to bomb militant targets during the attack, they said.

Mohsen Rezaie, a former commander of the Guards, suggested in a Twitter message yesterday that more attacks were coming.

# China wants deeper ties with Maldives

## Xi tells new Maldives president

REUTERS, Beijing

China wants to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation with the Maldives, President Xi Jinping said in a congratulatory message to the newly elected Maldivian president, the leader of an opposition that has vowed to review Chinese projects.

China and India are going head-to-head for influence in the Indian Ocean nation, a string of palm-fringed islands and atolls 523 km (325 miles) southwest of India's southern tip.

The Maldives opposition said before the election it would review China's investments in its Belt and Road infrastructure initiative, partly out of concern over terms, as experts have warned that the archipelago risked falling into a debt trap.

Xi told Ibrahim Mohamed Solih that China and the Maldives share a long-standing friendship, China's official Xinhua news agency said late on Sunday.

Xi told Solih that he valued the development of relations and was willing to "join hands with Solih to lift the comprehensive friendly cooperative partnership between China and Maldives to a new level", the report added.

Defeated president Abdulla Yameen had drawn the Maldives closer to China since 2013 in a Beijing-backed infrastructure boom.

China's Foreign Ministry last week urged "continuity and stability" in the Maldives after the election.



# Frenchman in Nobel scandal jailed for two years for rape

AFP, Stockholm

A Swedish court yesterday sentenced a Frenchman at the heart of a Nobel scandal to two years in jail for rape in a scandal that emerged during the #MeToo campaign.

An influential figure in Stockholm's cultural scene, 72-year-old Jean-Claude Arnault went on trial last month on two counts of rape relating to incidents dating back to 2011.

Prosecutors had called for a minimum sentence of three years in what was one of the first big trials to come out of the #MeToo movement.

Arnault is married to a member of the Swedish Academy which selects the Nobel Literature Prize winner, with the scandal prompting the postponement of this year's award.

The scandal erupted in November 2017, one month after rape and sexual abuse accusations surfaced against Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein.

At the time, Swedish daily Dagens Nyheter published the testimonies of 18 women claiming to have been raped, sexually assaulted or harassed by Arnault, who had close ties to the Academy.

The Frenchman ran the Forum club, which he founded in 1989 as a meeting place for the cultural elite and which was popular among aspiring young authors hoping to make contact with publishers and writers.

The Swedish Academy, which funded his club for years, has 18 members who are elected for life and Arnault often referred to himself as its "19th member".

# 'Don't bully us'

## Britain takes new combative tone to Brexit talks

AGENCIES

Britain cannot be bullied, Brexit minister Dominic Raab said yesterday, sharpening the government's criticism of the European Union for taunting Prime Minister Theresa May and souring difficult Brexit talks.

May's ministers have come out one by one at their party's annual conference in the city of Birmingham to warn the EU that they will embrace leaving without a deal if the bloc fails to show "respect" in the talks to end Britain's membership.

Just six months before Britain is due to leave the EU in the country's biggest shift in foreign and trade policy in more than 40 years, May faces growing criticism over her proposals.

Party unity is on ministers' minds, and they are encouraging the faithful to direct their anger at the EU rather than at their prime minister, who some eurosceptic Conservatives accuse of leading Britain towards a "Brexit in name only".

Ministers seek unity at party conference

Britain's top diplomat Hunt under fire over EU-USSR comparison

Raab said he had called on the EU to match the "ambition and pragmatism" Britain had put forward with May's Chequers proposals, named after her country residence where an agreement with her ministers was hashed out in July, reported Reuters.

"What is unthinkable is that this government, or any British government, could be bullied by the threat of some kind of economic embargo, into signing a one-sided deal against our country's interests," Raab said.

Meanwhile, Britain's Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt came under fire after comparing the EU's attitude towards Brexit to the Soviet Union, reported AFP.

In remarks directed at Brussels, Hunt said: "You seem to think the way to keep the club together is to punish a member who leaves...EU was set up to protect freedom. It was the Soviet Union that stopped people leaving."

His remarks were quickly denounced by two former civil service heads of the Foreign Office.



Students dressed as Mahatma Gandhi take part in an event to mark Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, at a school in Ahmedabad, India, yesterday. Gandhi Jayanti or Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi is celebrated on October 2 every year. PHOTO: REUTERS

# Merkel warns Trump against destroying UN

AFP, Frankfurt Am Main

German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday warned US President Donald Trump against "destroying" the United Nations.

"I believe that destroying something without having developed something new is extremely dangerous," Merkel said at a regional election campaign event in Bavaria.

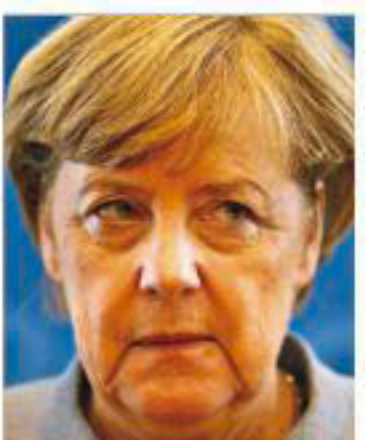
The veteran leader -- a close ally of Trump's bugbear Barack Obama while he was president -- added that she believed multilateralism was the solution to many of the world's problems.

Trump failed to see the possibility for win-win solutions, she said, instead seeing only one winner from any international negotiation.

In his second appearance before the UN's annual gathering last week, Trump told the General Assembly that he and his administration "reject the ideology of globalism, and we embrace the doctrine of patriotism".

"Global governance" is a form of "coercion and domination" that "responsible nations must defend against", he charged.

Merkel's opposing view to the US leader puts her in the same camp as UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who warned before Trump took the podium in New York Tuesday that "today, world order is increasingly chaotic".



# Typhoon kills four in Japan

AFP, Tokyo

Four people have been killed in a powerful typhoon that battered Japan over the weekend, local media reported yesterday, as the storm's aftermath brought travel chaos to Tokyo.

By yesterday morning, Typhoon Trami had cleared Japan, but its powerful winds and heavy rainfall caused damage that blocked roads and train lines.

Four people were killed in the storm and another was reported missing, Kyodo newswire said, citing local authorities.

Local officials and police earlier said one of the dead was engulfed by a landslide in western Japan's Tottori and another drowned in high waters in Yamanashi, west of Tokyo.

## \$1.8-BILLION FRAUD AT A MAJOR STATE-RUN BANK

# India seizes London, NY properties of accused

AFP, New Delhi

Indian authorities yesterday said they have seized assets of fugitive billionaire jeweller Nirav Modi worth some \$87 million, piling pressure on one of the main suspects in a \$1.8-billion fraud at a major state-run bank.

The seized assets included overseas bank accounts and diamond studded jewellery to the tune of \$3.1 million that has been brought back to India from Hong Kong in 23 shipments, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said.

The jewellery had been shipped out after Indian federal police registered a case of fraud against Modi in January.

"The international cooperation has borne fruit," the ED said in a statement.

"This has resulted in (the) seizure and provisional attachment of jewellery, bank accounts and immovable properties worth

\$87 million in India as well as four foreign jurisdictions."

The list of seized assets include a London property worth about \$7.8 million and two others in New York valued at \$29 million.

Modi, last seen in Britain, fled India in February after authorities accused him of defrauding the Punjab National Bank.

Modi and his uncle and business partner Mehul Choksi, also a diamond merchant, are accused of illegally diverting loans from the bank to foreign-based companies. Choksi is in Antigua.

Modi, 47, had luxury stores in several major cities and boasted celebrity customers including actresses Naomi Watts, Kate Winslet and Priyanka Chopra.

Before the case, Forbes had estimated his worth at \$1.73 billion, placing him 85th on India's rich list. He has now been removed from the ranking.



Nirav Modi

In Fond Remembrance of  
Jitkhar Uddin Ahmed (Jti)



(August 27th 1950- October 2nd 2015)

Founding Chairman Bonanza Group of Companies and Raj Overseas Ltd

"The void left by your passing can never be filled  
Your smile and indomitable spirit within us is forever instilled.."

Our prayers, deeds and actions will forever be dictated by the  
temple of his integrity, discipline and fair mindedness. May the  
Almighty Allah in His Infinite Compassion grant him Eternal Peace.  
We request all friends and family members to pray for his  
departed soul.