

## KEY EVENTS 2018

**JANUARY 23:** A Taliban car bomb attack kills 95 people and wounded 158 others in Kabul.

**FEBRUARY 09:** Kim Jong Un reaches out to South Korean President Moon-Jae to meet for talks in Pyongyang.

**MARCH 11:** China's parliament changes the country's constitution to allow President Xi Jinping to rule for life.

**MARCH 19:** Russian President Putin wins reelection.

**APRIL 13:** The US and its allies fire 100 missiles at Syria in response to the chemical attack that took place a week earlier.

**APRIL 19:** Miguel Diaz-Canel becomes Cuba president.

**APRIL 20:** North Korea say it would immediately suspend nuclear tests ahead of the summits with South and the US.

**MAY 18:** More than 100 people die in a plane crash in Cuba.

**MAY 18:** Prince Harry and Meghan officially tie the knot.



**JUNE 20:** A ferry sink in Indonesia killing over 190 passengers.

**JULY 13:** A IS suicide bomber kills 128 people and wounds over 150 at a Pakistani election rally.

**JULY 24:** A dam collapses in Laos, stranding 3,000 people in nearby villages. At least 19 people die from the flooding.

**JULY 25:** Pakistan holds general election. Imran Khan wins it defeating Nawaz Sharif.

**AUGUST 14:** A bridge in Genoa, Italy collapses, killing at least 39 people and injuring another 15.

**SEPTEMBER 5:** India's SC throws out the ban on gay sex.

**SEPTEMBER 20:** Malaysia charges former PM Najib with over 25 accounts of corruption. He lost power to Mahathir Mohammad in May 10 election.

**OCTOBER 21:** Trump say US to pull out of the landmark Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty with Russia, a decades-old agreement that prevented nuclear arms race.

**OCTOBER 27:** Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena swears in Mahinda Rajapaksa as PM after sacking incumbent Ranil Wickremesinghe.

**OCTOBER 29:** A passenger plane carrying 189 people crashes into the sea off Jakarta. All on board killed.

**OCTOBER 31:** Pakistan's Supreme Court announces the acquittal of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman who was convicted and sentenced to death in 2010 for blasphemy.

**NOVEMBER 17:** Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih takes the oath of office after defeating strongman Abdulla Yameen in September 23 election.

**DECEMBER 2:** US president Trump, Chinese President Xi agree trade truce. UN climate summit starts in Poland.

**DECEMBER 10:** France's President Macron promises to raise the minimum wage after weeks of violent protests by "yellow vests."

**DECEMBER 12:** UK PM Theresa May survives a no confidence motion moved by her own party over Brexit deal.

**DECEMBER 19:** Trump announces that US to withdraw troops from Syria and Afghanistan forcing his secretary of defence to resign.



## Syria regime victories

On April 14, the Syrian army declares that all anti-regime forces have been forced out of the Eastern Ghouta area adjoining Damascus after a blistering two-month offensive that leaves more than 1,700 people dead. It is a major victory in the government's effort to reassert control after the 2011 uprising that pulled the entire country into a devastating conflict. Backed by Russia's military might, Assad's forces go on to notch up a series of victories against rebels and insurgents, to be back in control of two-thirds of the ruined and divided country.



## US midterm polls and migrant caravan

Midterm elections on November 6 see the Democrats win control of the House of Representatives while the Republicans bolster their majority in the Senate. An approaching caravan of thousands of Central Americans draws headlines away from the campaign. The migrants started arriving at the heavily patrolled Mexico-US border from mid-November.



## FLASHBACK 2018

2018 was the year when conventional wisdom and international norms and rules were set upside down by one of the most divisive yet charismatic of leaders US has ever produced: Donald Trump. He has torn apart a number of international treaties with friends and foes alike, sparking remarkable confrontations with foreign leaders and even with his own cabinet members. It has seen many remarkable and shocking events, ranging from natural disasters to wars and protests, but Trump and his unorthodox foreign and domestic policies dominated the news all round the year.

## TRUMP, KIM MEET-UP

On June 12, Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un meet in Singapore in the first-ever meeting between sitting leaders of the two countries. They sign an agreement which reaffirms Pyongyang's commitment to the "complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula". But so far North Korea has taken few concrete steps to abandon its nuclear weapons, and the two sides have sparred over the meaning of the vaguely worded agreement.



## TRUMP QUIT IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

On May 8, President Donald Trump pulls the United States out of the hard-won 2015 accord that limits Iran's nuclear weapons programme in exchange for an easing of sanctions against the Islamic republic. The "one-sided deal" does not go far enough in preventing Iran from creating a nuclear bomb, Trump says, among other criticisms. The remaining parties to the accord -- Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China -- insist Iran has abided by its commitments and vow to keep the deal intact. In August Washington reimposes a first wave of sanctions on Iran; in November there is a second.

## Italy, Brazil turn right

On June 1, a populist coalition government takes power in Italy formed by the anti-establishment Five Star Movement and far-right anti-migrant eurosceptics. On October 28, Brazil elected Jair Bolsonaro as president. He has exalted the country's military dictatorship, threatened to jail or drive into exile his political opponents.

## Thai cave boys

There is a global sigh of relief on July 10 when the last of 12 young football players and their coach are extracted safe and sound from a flooded cave in northern Thailand where they had become trapped 17 days earlier. The fate of the junior football team had captured world attention, with US and British diving experts joining the rescue effort and former Thai navy diver losing his life.



## Khashoggi murder

On October 2, dissident Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a contributor to The Washington Post, enters his country's consulate in Istanbul and is never seen again. After more than two weeks of denials and contradictory statements, Riyadh admits that he had been killed inside the consulate after a brawl. It fires various officials and arrests others, also acknowledging the journalist's body had been dismembered. The murder tarnishes the kingdom's image and notably that of its crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, amid questions over whether he had ordered the killing, which the country vehemently denies.



## US MOVES EMBASSY TO JERUSALEM

On May 14, the United States opens its new embassy in Jerusalem, infuriating the Palestinians -- who also claim the holy city as their capital -- and flouting years of international policy. Clashes erupt on the border with Israel and the Palestinian territory of Gaza: after the bloodiest day in the dragging conflict in years, around 60 Palestinians are dead, killed by Israeli gunfire.



## Heat and fire

In July-August Europe swelters in a heatwave which approaches the continent's record 48 degrees Celsius (118.4 Fahrenheit), as deadly forest fires rage in Greece, Portugal and Spain. In November, California is ravaged by its deadliest fire ever, with 85 people dying before it comes under control after two weeks. The UN's World Meteorological Organization announces in November that 2018 is set to be the fourth hottest year on record.

## Yemen war and famine

On June 13, the war in Yemen steps up a notch when pro-government forces, supported by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, launch an assault to wrest back control of the vital aid port of Hodeida from Huthi rebels, backed by Iran. The war, which started in 2014, has already killed about 10,000 people with 20 million at risk of starvation.



PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

## NOTABLE DEATHS



**STEPHEN HAWKING**

British theoretical physicist and author died on March 14.



**ARETHA FRANKLIN**

Known as the Queen of Soul, and an icon of the US civil rights movement. She died on August 16.



**STAN LEE**

American creator of comic book superheroes Spiderman, the Fantastic Four and the Hulk, died on November 12.



**VS NAIPAUL**

Author, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001 died on August 11.



**JOHN MCCAIN**

American Vietnam war hero who became one of the country's best known politicians, died on August 25.



**GEORGE HW BUSH**

The 41st president of the United States of America died on November 30.



**KOFI ANNAN**

Former UN secretary general and Nobel Peace Prize winner died on August 18.