

### G20 SUMMIT IN OSAKA

#### TRUMP TO PUTIN: DON'T MEDDLER IN US POLLS

President Donald Trump yesterday sardonically asked his Russian counterpart to please not meddle in US elections, appearing to make light of a scandal that led to an investigation of his campaign's contact with the Kremlin during 2016 elections. A two-year investigation into a Moscow-run influence campaign during the election has hung over Trump's presidency, frustrating the Republican president who has said he seeks better relations with Russia. Asked by reporters whether he would raise the issue during their meeting, held on the sidelines of a Group of 20 (G20) summit, Trump said: "Yes, of course I will," drawing a laugh from President Vladimir Putin. Trump then turned to Putin to give the directive twice, as he pointed a finger at the Russian leader. "Don't meddle in the election, please," Trump said.

#### CHINA WARNS OF 'SEVERE THREATS' TO GLOBAL ORDER

China yesterday warned that protectionism and "bullying" were threatening the world order as President Xi Jinping met other leaders at the G20 summit ahead of high-stakes talks with Donald Trump. Xi met three of his African counterparts yesterday morning on the sidelines of the G20 summit of major world economies. "All leaders in the meeting stressed that unilateralism, protectionism, and bullying practices are on the rise, posing severe threats to economic globalisation and international order, and severe challenges to the external environment of developing countries," Chinese foreign ministry official Dai Bing told reporters. Dai said the meeting involved Xi, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, and Senegal President Macky Sall.

#### LIBERALISM OBSOLETE!

EU President Donald Tusk yesterday lashed out at his Russian counterpart in unusually undiplomatic language, saying he "strongly disagreed" with Vladimir Putin when he said liberalism was "obsolete." In an interview with the Financial Times, the Kremlin strongman said the "liberal idea" was now "in conflict" with what people around the world want. Putin criticised German Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision to allow more than one million refugees into Germany as a "cardinal mistake" and praised US President Donald Trump for his efforts to stop the flow of migrants from Mexico. "This liberal idea presupposes that nothing needs to be done. That migrants can kill, plunder and rape with impunity because their rights as migrants have to be protected," he said. "The liberal idea has become obsolete. It has come into conflict with the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population." The Russian president concluded in the interview that liberal ideology had "outlived its purpose".



(From top left, anti-clockwise) US President Donald Trump attends a meeting with Russia's President Vladimir Putin; Trump, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi share a light moment; Trump speaks with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman; and Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel taps Putin during the G20 Summit in Osaka, yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

## Time running out for talks with US, says North Korea

REUTERS, Seoul

Time is running out for the United States to formulate a new strategy to revive negotiations with North Korea, a senior North Korean diplomat said, as a US envoy arrived in Seoul ahead of a visit by President Donald Trump. US-North Korean dialogue has stalled since a second summit between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un collapsed in Hanoi in February after US calls for North Korea's complete denuclearisation and Kim's demands for sanctions relief.

Kim has said a third meeting would be possible only if Washington is more flexible and set a year-end deadline.

Washington says it is prepared to resume talks with no pre-conditions and South Korean President Moon Jae-in said on Wednesday that the United States was in behind-the-scenes talks with North Korea over a possible third summit and had proposed reopening working-level negotiations.

However on Thursday, Kwon Jong Gun, director-general for US affairs at North Korea's foreign ministry, said that while Washington continued to speak of dialogue, it had become "more and more desperate in its hostile acts". "If the United States is to move towards producing a result, time will not be enough," he added.

On Wednesday, North Korea's foreign ministry complained about a recent sanctions extension by Washington, calling it an outright challenge to the first summit between Kim and Trump in Singapore last year at which the two sides pledged to improve relations.

Trump is due in South Korea at the weekend and in the run-up to his visit, US officials raised hopes for a restart of talks with North Korea following a cordial exchange of letters between him and Kim.

## Heatwave roasts Europe

Mercury crosses 45C in France for the first time; several deaths reported across the continent

AFP, Carpentras

The temperature in France surpassed 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit) for the first time on record yesterday as Europe sweltered in an early summer heatwave that has caused several deaths.

With France, Spain, Italy and parts of central Europe particularly badly hit by the high temperatures, officials pleaded with people to take common sense precautions.

France's new record temperature of 45.1 degrees Celsius was registered in Villeveille, a village in the southern department of Gard near Montpellier, the same area where a previous high of 44.1 degrees Celsius was set in August 2003, Meteo-France told AFP. Records began at the turn of the 20th century.

The state forecaster said it was likely the record could be beaten again yesterday as it was still relatively early in the day.

The new record makes France just the seventh

European country to have recorded a plus 45 degrees Celsius temperature, along with Bulgaria, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Greece and North Macedonia, Meteo France said.

At least two deaths linked to the heatwave were reported in Spain. Heat-related deaths have also been reported in Italy, France and Germany, mainly among the elderly.

France remains haunted by the memory of the devastating heatwave of August 2003 which exposed the shortcomings of emergency services at the height of the summer holidays. That year, nearly 15,000 people are estimated

to have died because of the heat, many of them elderly people at home.

Scientists warn that global warming linked to human fossil fuel use could make such scorchers more frequent.

In Spain, firefighters were continuing to battle a large forest fire in the northeastern Catalonia region.



#### MAY TO PUTIN: STOP 'DESTABILISING' UK, ALLIES

British Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday told Russian President Vladimir Putin that normal relations will not be restored until Moscow ends its "irresponsible and destabilising" activity, a Downing Street spokesperson said. The comments came as May met Putin for the first time since the row over the poisoning of a former Russian spy on British soil. May also told Putin that Britain "has irrefutable evidence that Russia was behind the attack" on the former spy. London has made clear that May's meeting with Putin does not represent a thawing of ties with Russia, despite calls from Putin for the two countries to "turn the page". Russia has repeatedly denied any part in his killing. Earlier this month, Putin said it was time to "turn the page" on the countries' difficult relationship after the poisoning.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

## NEWS IN brief

### France's eldest Auschwitz survivor dies, aged 101

REUTERS, Paris

Henriette Cohen, France's oldest survivor of Nazi Germany's Auschwitz concentration camp, has died. She was 101. Born in 1917, Cohen was detained with her mother-in-law in a Gestapo round-up in May 1944, near Marseille. The following month, they were deported to Auschwitz.

Cohen was consigned to forced labour. Her mother-in-law was sent directly to the gas chambers. Surviving cold, hunger and exhaustion, Cohen returned to France in 1945 weighing just 35 kg.

### Two wounded in French mosque shooting

REUTERS, Brest

A gunman opened fire outside a mosque in northwestern France on Thursday, wounding the local imam and another person, before fleeing the scene and later being found dead, officials said. It was not immediately clear what motivated the incident in the port city of Brest in Brittany, but Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said he had ordered an increase in security measures around places of worship across France.

### Nasa will fly a drone to Titan to search for life

AFP, Washington

For its next mission in our solar system, Nasa plans to fly a drone copter to Saturn's largest moon Titan in search of the building blocks of life, the space agency said Thursday. The Dragonfly mission, which will launch in 2026 and land in 2024, will send a rotorcraft to inspect the icy moon.

### US DEMOCRATIC DEBATE

## Kamala Harris goes after Biden

REUTERS, Miami

Presidential candidate Kamala Harris dominated her Democratic rivals in a debate on Thursday, confronting front-runner Joe Biden on race and calling his remarks about working with segregationist senators "hurtful."

In a breakout performance, the daughter of a black father from Jamaica and an Indian mother was at the centre of several heated exchanges during the second night of debates among Democrats vying for the right to challenge Republican President Donald Trump in the 2020 election.

Harris said the issue of race was deeply personal for her. She noted she was bused to school as part of integration efforts in California, and she questioned Biden's 1970s opposition to school busing.

"I do not believe you are a racist. And I agree with you when you commit yourself to the importance of finding common ground," said Harris. Biden appeared shaken by the attack, but defended his record on civil rights and said his remarks had been mischaracterized as praise for racists.



A Palestinian protester prepares to throw a stone at Israeli forces during clashes following a rally against the occupation in the village of Azmut, in the north of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## UN must drop its timidity

Says top UN official as govts failing to deal with existing challenges like climate-driven migration

REUTERS, Geneva

The United Nations must drop its bureaucratic timidity and stand up to its member states if it is to tackle global problems, a top UN official told Reuters in an interview.

Michael Moller, UN director-general in Geneva, said governments were failing to deal with new and existing challenges such as nuclear disarmament, internet regulation and climate-related migration, and the UN needed to respond.

That meant looking to emerging new groupings of decision-makers, such as cities, technology firms or online movements, while national governments are set to see their role shrink.

"It's tough for some of these guys to swallow. And it's tough, particularly for some of the bigger countries that are used to a very top-down governance," said Moller.

US President Donald Trump has pulled the United States out of the UN Human Rights Council, the Iran nuclear deal and

the Paris Climate Accord, while Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a Financial Times interview yesterday liberal values were now obsolete.

Moller declined to name names but suggested that such leaders were resisting the tide of history, and that "tearing down multilateralism in all its forms" did not make sense for any country.

"If you look at what's happening, a number of countries are walking away from all the international agreements that can lay their hands on, and a good number of their citizens are not following suit," he said.

The UN and its member states had been "too timid in our collective pushback on what's happening to human rights" and sometimes fell prey to wishful thinking when trying to mediate peace and stop wars, he said.

The UN should face its critics with facts and statistics to show the extraordinary prosperity and well-being it had achieved for humanity, Moller added.



## China snubs US sanctions on Iran

Says it will continue to import oil

AFP, Vienna

China yesterday said it would import Iranian oil in defiance of US sanctions on Tehran, a day before US and Chinese leaders are to meet to try to resolve thorny trade disputes.

"We reject the unilateral imposition of sanctions," said Fu Cong, Director General of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Department of Arms Control.

The United States, which is trying to force Iran to renegotiate an agreement limiting its nuclear programme, at the end of May tightened sanctions to include a full ban on Iran's exports of oil and has threatened to punish nations which refuse to go along.

"For us energy security is important and the importation of oil is important to Chinese energy security and also to the livelihood of the people," said Cong.

The sanctions have led to a plunge in Iranian oil exports, a key source of revenue for the government.

But according to an International Energy Agency report earlier this month Iran was continuing to export some oil, although it was difficult to say to which countries the crude was being shipped.

"We do not accept this so-called zero policy of the United States," said Cong, who was speaking on the sidelines of a meeting on the implementation of the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal.

The deal with European powers, Russia and the United States relaxed trade restrictions on Iran in exchange for limits on its nuclear programme, but President Donald Trump has pulled Washington out of the agreement.

## Duterte to jail critics who seek his impeachment

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has threatened to jail critics if they try to impeach him, as he faces accusations of defending Beijing after a boat crash in the disputed South China Sea. The issue has flared up since a Chinese fishing trawler hit and sank a Filipino boat on June 9 near Reed Bank, an area that is within Manila's territory but which is also claimed by Beijing. After a string of small street protests, as well as criticism from opposition politicians and former officials, Duterte lashed out while talking to reporters late Thursday. "Impeach me? I will arrest all of them. I dare you to do it," Duterte said. "I tell these stupid people, I said I deal with reality," he added. Duterte has tried to downplay the case, calling it an "accident" and accepting Beijing's offer to conduct a joint investigation.

## Indian women's heads shaved for 'resisting' rape

An Indian mother and her daughter had their heads shaved and were paraded through their village after resisting an attempted rape by men including a local official, police said yesterday. Ward councillor Mohommad Khurshid forcibly entered the women's home in the eastern state of Bihar on Wednesday with other men and allegedly attempted to rape the newly married 19-year-old daughter, police told AFP. When she and her mother - whose husband tries to make ends meet by begging - resisted, they were both physically assaulted and Khurshid brought in the local barber to shave their heads, the elder woman told police. The councillor and the barber were among those being held, with the case attracting national media coverage and opposition lawmakers hitting out at the state government.



## Dalai Lama says Trump 'lacks moral principle'

The Dalai Lama has accused US President Donald Trump of lacking "moral principle", in a wide-ranging BBC interview in which the Tibetan spiritual leader said that any female successor should be attractive. "One day he says something, another day he says something," the 83-year-old Buddhist monk said of the US president. "But I think (there is a) lack of moral principle." "When he became president he expressed 'America First'. That is wrong. America they should take the global responsibility," the Dalai Lama said, adding that Trump's emotions are "also a little bit... too complicated". He also reiterated his views on immigration into Europe, saying that only a "limited number" of refugees should be allowed to stay, saying "keep Europe for Europeans".

SOURCE: AFP