

## Hurricane Dorian lashes US east coast 20 killed in Bahamas

AFP, Charleston

Hurricane Dorian lashed the Carolinas with driving rain and fierce winds as it neared the US east coast yesterday after devastating the Bahamas and killing at least 20 people.

Parts of downtown Charleston were flooded, with video footage showing people kayaking in the dark in gushing knee-deep water in the stately city on the coast of South Carolina. Trees bent in wind gusting in from the sea.

Dozens of streets were reported closed as up to 20 inches of rain were forecast and forecasters warned of flash flooding.

As day broke, the Category 3 hurricane was 130 kilometers southeast of Charleston, moving north along the coast with maximum sustained winds of 115 mph, the National Hurricane Center said.

Hundreds of thousands of people in the Carolinas, Georgia and elsewhere were under evacuation orders as the US girded for its taste of a storm that caused severe destruction in the Bahamas.

Power has been knocked out to more than 80,000 customers in South Carolina, and at least 22 shelters have been set up for evacuees, the state emergency management agency said on Twitter.

On Wednesday Bahamas Prime Minister Hubert Minnis said at least 20 people were known dead so far and he described the damage as nothing short of "generational devastation."

The US Coast Guard and Britain's Royal Navy airlifted survivors and ferried in emergency supplies as floodwaters receded in the Bahamas.

The United Nations said 70,000 people on Grand Bahama and Abaco islands were in "immediate" need of aid.

Dorian left Florida largely unscathed.



This photo shows debris and destruction in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian on the island Great Abaco in the northern Bahamas. Photo was taken on Tuesday and released on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

AGENCIES

## Iran lifts all restrictions

### NUCLEAR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Tehran to develop centrifuges for faster uranium enrichment

Israel wants tougher actions; EU urges Tehran to backtrack

Rouhani gives Europeans two more months to save 2015 nuclear accord

US refuses to drop sanctions, imposes new ones

times faster.

Iran says it is only enriching uranium to fuel nuclear power plants, but the United States has long suspected the program ultimately aims to produce weapons.

Iran's atomic energy organisation spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi will hold a news conference tomorrow to detail Tehran's third round of cuts in its nuclear commitments since May, the semi-official ISNA news agency reported.

Iran's arch-enemy Israel responded by calling for more international pressure on Iran.

"This is not the time to hold talks with Iran; this is the time to increase the pressure on Iran," said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The EU yesterday urged Iran to backtrack on moves to drop its commitments under the deal, known as the JCPOA.

"These activities we consider are inconsistent with the JCPOA," said European Commission spokesman Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela.

"We urge Iran to reverse these steps and refrain from further measures that undermine the nuclear deal."

Iran has expressed mounting frustration at Europe's failure to offset the effects of renewed US sanctions in return for its continued compliance with the agreement.

It had already hit back twice with countermeasures in response to the US withdrawal from the deal.

**INX Media case: Court sends Chidambaram to jail**  
A Delhi court yesterday sent former Union finance minister P Chidambaram in judicial custody till September 19 in the INX Media case. Considering that he has Z-security, the court directed that he be kept in a separate cell. The CBI argued for his judicial custody submitting that there was strong apprehension that he would tamper with evidence and influence witnesses if released on bail. Chidambaram's 15-day CBI custody, ordered by the special court in five spells that started after his arrest on August 21 night, ended yesterday. The allegations in the case centre around the role of Chidambaram, his son Karti Chidambaram, and several former government officials, in approving foreign direct investment in local media firm INX Media in 2007. The Central Bureau of Investigation says the approval was illegal and that it was a case of "abuse of power".

### Yahoo outage hits email users

Yahoo services went down for several hours yesterday, drawing ire from thousands of its email users who were given no idea how long the outage would last. Downdetector, a website that provides information on online outages, had received more than 5,000 reports of problems related to Yahoo Mail by 2 am ET. Some 300 users also reported problems with other Yahoo services, according to Downdetector. According to one Twitter user, Yahoo had been down for "well over 3 hours" in Australia. Most of the complaints originated in Europe. Yahoo's customer service webpage — help.yahoo.com — also went down for a time, displaying the message, "Thank you for your patience. Our engineers are working quickly to resolve the issue."

### Italy swears in new pro-EU cabinet



President Sergio Mattarella yesterday swore in Italy's new pro-European government, heralding a fresh start for the eurozone's third largest economy as the far-right falls from power.

Brussels warmly welcomed the coalition between the anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S) and centre-left Democratic Party (PD), which is expected to markedly improve rocky relations between Europe and Rome. "We're ready to give our utmost for the country," M5S head Luigi Di Maio, the new foreign minister, said.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte's government still faces votes in parliament on Monday and Tuesday. First on the cabinet's to-do list is the 2020 budget, which has to be submitted to parliament by the end of September, and then to Brussels by October 15. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker congratulated Conte and said Italy's new political era came at "an important moment for our Union", adding that he was sure Rome would play a "front-line" role on key issues.

SOURCE: AFP

Give support or deal with refugees

Erdogan threatens Europe over Syria safe zone, aid

AFP, Ankara

## Amazon's 'tallest tree' safe: scientists

AFP, Sao Paulo

Intrepid Brazilian and British scientists say they have located the Amazon's tallest tree in northern Brazil, untouched by a spate of wildfires that have raged in the rainforest for weeks.

The scientists say they located an unusually large specimen of the giant *Dinizia Excelsa* species -- measuring 88 meters (288-feet) with a circumference of 5.50 meters -- in a sanctuary of other *Dinizia* trees.

"The species generally reach a height of 60 meters. We have a great discovery here and now a commitment to preserve the largest trees in the Amazon," said research coordinator Eric Bastos.

Bastos led research conducted in August by scientists from the Federal University of the Valleys of the Jequitinhonha and Britain's Cambridge University and the University of Swansea. The discovery was made by using aerial sensors over Paru State Forest, which is shared by the Brazilian Amazon basin states of Amapa and Para.

The sanctuary of *Dinizia Excelsa* trees lies outside the areas affected by the wildfires which have caused international concern, Amapa State scientific sources told AFP.

According to National Geographic, scientists earlier this year discovered the world's tallest tropical tree, a 100 meter meranti tree in Sabah on the island of Borneo.

The tallest known trees are California redwoods, which have been measured up to 379.7 feet, or 115.7 meters.



Environmental activists protest yesterday outside Brazilian embassy in central Athens to demand action to save Amazon rain forest.

### AMAZON FOREST FIRES

## Bolivia has lost 1.7m hectares

AFP, La Paz

Wildfires raging in Bolivia's forests and grasslands since May have destroyed 1.7 million hectares (4.2 million acres), officials said Wednesday, amid an \$11 million effort by the government to contain them.

Environmentalists blame laws enacted under leftist President Evo Morales, who has encouraged the burning of forest and pasture land to expand agricultural production, while the government attributes the blazes to dry weather and winds.

"Of the fires that have occurred, 41 percent are in protected areas and 30 percent are in forests," Cinthia Asin, environmental minister for the eastern region of Santa Cruz told the press, updating the amount of land burned to 1.7 million hectares.

Santa Cruz is the hardest hit of Bolivia's departments since the fires began in May and intensified in late August.

Bolivia's government recently authorized farmers to burn 20 hectares (almost 50 acres) instead of the usual five hectares (12 acres) -- which is believed to have contributed to thousands of wildfires.

Asin said that over the first days of September, 751 new fires blazed, mostly in forested areas, leading Santa Cruz officials to believe that humans had started the conflagrations to clear farmland.

Separately, the Bolivian government reported that it was continuing its land and air efforts to extinguish the fires.

Foreign Minister Diego Pary said that the executive branch had spent \$1 million fighting the fires and had an additional \$2 million at its disposal from international cooperation.

Erdogan threatens Europe over Syria safe zone, aid

AFP, Ankara

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday warned Turkey would be forced to open the doors to Syrian refugees and criticised the West, especially the European Union, for failing to live up to its promises.

Turkey is home to more than 3.6 million Syrian refugees and recently called for a "safe zone" in the war-torn country's northeast, to which refugees could return.

If the safe zone does not happen, "we will be forced to open the doors. You either give support, or if you won't, sorry, but we can only put up with so much," Erdogan said.

"Are we going to shoulder this burden alone?" he asked during the televised speech in Ankara.

Erdogan claimed Turkey had spent \$40 billion on refugees and criticised the West, especially the European Union, for failing to live up to its promises.

Under a 2016 agreement, the EU promised Ankara six billion euros (\$6.6 billion) in exchange for stronger controls on refugees leaving its territory for Europe, but Erdogan said only three billion euros had so far arrived.

Turkey fears a fresh influx of refugees as the Syrian government advances into the last rebel stronghold of Idlib.

"We may be forced to do this (open the gates) to get this (international support)," he said.

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Video footage and photographs posted on social media showed several cars and small shops torn apart by the blast at a checkpoint on a road.

The US top negotiator for peace in Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad said this week the two sides had drawn up a draft framework agreement under

which US troops would leave five military bases in Afghanistan within 135 days of the signing of the pact.

There are some 14,000 US troops in Afghanistan, deployed at various bases across the country. Despite ending their combat role in 2014, an estimated 20,000 US and Nato security forces remain in the war-ravaged country.

Khalilzad is expected to meet Afghan and Nato officials to explain the draft agreement, which must still be approved by US President Donald Trump before it can be signed.

On Monday, a Taliban suicide truck bomber attacked a compound used by international organisations in Kabul, killing at least 16 people and wounding more than 100.

A senior Afghan interior ministry official said the two were killed in the suicide bomb attack and their vehicle was the main target.

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