

# NEWSIN brief

## Three Australians detained in Iran

AFP, Sydney  
Australia yesterday revealed that three of its citizens had been detained in Iran, the latest in a series of Westerners to be seized by authorities in Tehran. News of the trio's detention comes at a sensitive geopolitical juncture, and after Australia announced that it would join a US-led mission to protect shipping through the Strait of Hormuz with tensions high in the Gulf region. Canberra is battling to keep efforts to free the trio under wraps, and it is not clear if the three have been charged.

## Republican wins North Carolina special polls

AFP, Washington  
Republican Dan Bishop won a North Carolina congressional seat Tuesday in a special election that served as a test for President Donald Trump ahead of his bid for a second term in 2020. With 99 percent of precincts reporting, Bishop won 50.81 percent of the vote against 48.59 for Democrat Dan McCready.

## Trump adds TTP chief, others on terrorist list

AP, Washington  
A day before the anniversary of 9/11, President Donald Trump on Tuesday issued an executive order to expand the administration's ability to go after suspected terrorists and their financiers and supporters. Using the new order, US Treasury on Tuesday imposed sanctions on more than two dozen individuals and entities from 11 terrorist groups, including TTP, the Quds Force, the foreign wing of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, Hamas, the Islamic State, al-Qaida and their affiliates. Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) chief Noor Wali was among them.

# Rivals spar at UNHRC

### Islamabad demands UN probe, warns against genocide; Delhi slams false allegations; suspected militant killed in J&K

AGENCIES

Pakistan's foreign minister told the United Nations human rights forum on Tuesday that India's military presence in the disputed Muslim-majority territory of Kashmir raised the spectre of genocide.

India, which stripped Kashmir of its autonomy on August 5, in response accused Pakistan of "offensive rhetoric.. of false allegations and concocted charges" against it.

India and Pakistan both rule parts of the Himalayan region while claiming it in full. They have fought two wars over it and India's move to impose direct rule on its side of the de facto border has reignited hostility.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi evoked past and current atrocities in Europe, Africa and Asia when he addressed the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

"The forlorn, traumatised towns, mountains, plains and valleys of Indian-occupied Jammu & Kashmir reverberate today, with the grim reminders of Rwanda, Srebrenica, the Rohingya, and the pogrom of Gujarat," he said.

## INDO-PAK TENSIONS OVER KASHMIR



"I shudder to mention the word genocide here, but I must... The Kashmiri people in the occupied territory - as a national, ethnic, racial and religious group of people - face grave threats to their lives, way of living and livelihoods from a murderous, misogynistic and xenophobic regime."

The minister urged the council to heed recommendations by UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet and her predecessor

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein to launch a so-called international Commission of Inquiry (COI) into the Kashmir situation.

A COI is one of the UN's highest-level probes, generally reserved for major crises like the Syrian conflict, reported Reuters.

Later India's vice minister for foreign affairs, Vijay Thakur Singh, took the floor at the forum to hit back.

"The world is aware that this fabricated

narrative comes from the epicentre of global terrorism, where ring-leaders are sheltered for years," she said.

"This country conducts cross-border terrorism as a form of alternate diplomacy," she added, without naming Pakistan.

India flooded the Kashmir valley with troops, restricted movements and cut off communication as Prime Minister Narendra Modi withdrew special rights for the region on August 5. Mobile and internet connections have been cut off ever since.

Singh said the Jammu and Kashmir civil administration was ensuring basic services and essential supplies, and restrictions were being eased.

Meanwhile, a militant in Indian-administered Kashmir affiliated to a Pakistani-based militant group was killed by security forces in the restive territory yesterday, police said.

Asif Maqbool Bhatt belonged to Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a Pakistan-based group designated by the UN as a terrorist organisation, senior local police official Munir Khan told AFP.



## Trudeau launches Canada election campaign

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau yesterday kicked off a six-week re-election campaign with opinion polls suggesting his hold on power will be weakened. Trudeau, whose Liberals swept to office in November 2015 promising "sunny ways" and stressing the importance of gender equality and the environment, faces an electorate more focused on the economy and affordability when it voted on Oct 21. Not since 1935 has a Canadian prime minister who won a parliamentary majority in his first term been booted from office in the next election. But Trudeau may not win enough seats to govern by himself after a series of missteps that called into question his leadership while cutting into his once sky-high popularity. That would leave him and his Liberal Party weakened, pushing an opposition members of parliament to push through legislation.

## N Korea tests 'super-large' rocket launcher: KCNA

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has supervised a fresh test of a "super-large multiple rocket launcher" system, state media said yesterday -- the latest in a series of provocations by Pyongyang. South Korea's military said Tuesday that the North had launched "unidentified projectiles" from the Kaechon area in South Pyongan province. They flew approximately 330 kilometres (205 miles). The launch came shortly after Pyongyang said it was willing to hold working-level talks on denuclearisation later this month with the United States. Kim "gave field guidance" for Tuesday's test, the Korean Central News Agency reported. The "super-large multiple rocket launcher" was tested in an exercise observed by Kim about two weeks ago.

## UK archbishop prostrates over 1919 India massacre



Britain has never apologised for the 1919 massacre at Amritsar in India but the head of the Church of England prostrated himself to say sorry in a personal capacity and "in the name of Christ". British troops fired on thousands of unarmed men, women and children in Amritsar on April 13, 1919, killing 379 people according to colonial-era records. Indian figures put the total closer to 1,000. "I am so ashamed and sorry for the impact of the crime committed. I am a religious leader, not a politician. As a religious leader, I mourn the tragedy we see here," Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said as he visited the location in northern India on Tuesday.



US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump observe a moment of silence on the South Lawn of the White House to mark the 18th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks in Washington, DC, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



# Brexit chaos drags on

### A day after Johnson suspends parliament, Scottish court rules the move 'unlawful'

AFP, Edinburgh

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson suffered a fresh blow yesterday when a Scottish court ruled that his controversial decision to suspend parliament in the run-up to Brexit was unlawful.

The government immediately appealed, with the case set to be heard in the Supreme Court next Tuesday, and parliament set to remain shut in the meantime.

Johnson says the decision to suspend--or prorogue--parliament until October 14 is a routine move allowing his government to launch a new legislative agenda.

But critics accuse him of trying to silence parliamentary opposition to his threat to leave the European Union on October 31 even if he has failed to agree divorce terms with Brussels.

If Johnson fails to secure a deal he insists the country will leave anyway, to the outrage of many MPs who believe a "no deal" exit would bring huge disruption.

After the legal ruling, the opposition Labour party demanded that Johnson urgently recall parliament, which

was suspended for five weeks on Tuesday.

However, a government source told AFP that "nothing is changing" until the case was concluded.

The case, brought by 78 British lawmakers, was rejected by a Scottish lower court last week but was overturned yesterday by the Inner House, Scotland's supreme civil court.

It found that Johnson's advice to Queen Elizabeth II to prorogue parliament "was unlawful because it had the purpose of stymying parliament", a summary judgement said.

A British government spokesman said an appeal will be launched at the UK Supreme Court.

He noted a separate legal challenge to prorogation brought at the High Court in London last week had failed.

Scotland's first minister, Scottish National Party (SNP) leader Nicola Sturgeon, also asked parliament to be recalled.

"The immediate political implications are clear... parliament must be recalled immediately to allow the essential work of scrutiny to continue," she tweeted.



# Abe shakes up Japan cabinet

### Picks new foreign, defence ministers

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's Shinzo Abe yesterday appointed new foreign and defence ministers and promoted a popular rising political star, in a cabinet reshuffle that fuelled speculation over the prime minister's successor.

The spectacular appointment as environment minister of the telegenic Shinjiro Koizumi, the 38-year-old son of much-loved former PM Junichiro, set tongues wagging in Tokyo political classes as the Abe era draws to a close.

Abe is set to become Japan's longest-serving prime minister in November but is expected to step down at the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leadership election in 2021.

Abe reiterated his long-cherished ambition of amending Japan's post-war constitution to change the status of the country's Self Defense Forces.

Japan's new foreign minister is Toshimitsu Motegi, who was promoted as a reward for his work in negotiating a trade deal with the United States, which he will continue.

Outgoing foreign minister Taro Kono was shifted to the defence portfolio.

Analysts do not expect the shake-up to herald significant changes to Japan's diplomatic policy, which is managed largely by the prime minister's office.

## TRUMP-BOLT DISAGREEMENTS

**AFGHANISTAN:** Trump's idea of inviting leaders of the Taliban to Camp David, the presidential retreat, to discuss a deal on which the United States would withdraw thousands of troops from Afghanistan didn't go well with John Bolton. The Washington Post reported that tensions had risen to the point that Zalmay Khalilzad, the US negotiator with the Taliban, refused to share his draft deal with Bolton for fear he would scuttle it. Trump ultimately said he canceled the Taliban meeting, citing an attack that killed a US soldier, and said the talks were dead.

**IRAN:** Bolton has long been a vociferous hawk on Iran. In 2015, Bolton wrote an opinion piece in The New York Times bluntly headlined, "To Stop Iran's Bomb, Bomb Iran." Shortly after Bolton took office, Trump walked away from an international nuclear deal and slapped punishing sanctions on Iran. But recently Trump has increasingly said that he is open to diplomacy.

**NORTH KOREA:** Bolton is also well-known for his hard line on North Korea. Shortly before his appointment, he wrote in The Wall Street Journal that the United States would be justified in waging a pre-emptive strike on the country. While Trump has been vocal for talks with North Korea, Bolton occasionally been throwing a comment or two that greatly hindered the effort.

**VENEZUELA:** Bolton has championed one of Trump's biggest foreign policy pushes, seeking to topple Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, a leftist who presides over a crumbling economy. But Bolton made his exit before Maduro, who remains in power and enjoys support of the military more than half a year after the United States and other major Western and Latin American powers declared him illegitimate. Trump has been speaking less about Venezuela and, according to multiple reports, he chided Bolton in private for overselling the ease with which opposition leader Juan Guaido could take over.

# Iran upbeat as Trump sacks Bolton

### Rouhani says US 'warmongering' a failure, rules out meeting with Trump

AFP, Tehran

President Hassan Rouhani yesterday said that the United States' "warmongering" was a failure, as Iran welcomed the sacking of hawkish US national security adviser John Bolton.

Rouhani also dismissed the prospect of a meeting with President Donald Trump at a time his US administration is continuing to slap more crippling sanctions on the Islamic republic.

Arch-foes Tehran and Washington have been at loggerheads since May last year when Trump unilaterally withdrew from a 2015 nuclear deal and began reimposing the punitive measures.

Trump on Tuesday announced the firing of Bolton, a move widely seen as boosting the president's push to negotiate with US foes in Afghanistan, North Korea and other trouble spots.

A replacement -- the White House's fourth national security chief in less than three years -- would be named next week, Trump said.

Pompeo says no one should expect US policy changes

Ouster may help revive negotiations with North Korea



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the move doesn't indicate any changes in US policies.

"I don't think any leader around the world should make any assumption that because someone of us departs that President Trump's foreign policy will change in a material way," he said.

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also suggested little would change with Bolton's removal.

Analysts however say with the sacking of "war maniac" Bolton, as North Korean officials describes him, Washington-Pyongyang negotiations might get a boost. In the past, Bolton has proposed using military force to overthrow the ruling Kim family.

Richard Gowan, International Crisis Group UN director, said Bolton's departure may also help the international institutions.

"Bolton brought his trademark dislike of the UN and other international institutions like the ICC (International Criminal Court) to the White House. On his watch, the US has ensured that the UN has been marginalized on crises from Libya to Venezuela. The Trump administration was highly skeptical of multilateralism before Bolton's arrival, and is unlikely to embrace it warmly now he has gone. But the US may devote a little less time and energy to weakening UN institutions," he said.

## SHRINE TRAGEDY

# Stampede kills 31 in Karbala

### 100 people injured

AFP, Karbala

More than 30 pilgrims were killed and dozens injured Tuesday in a stampede at a major shrine in the Iraqi city of Karbala on the Shia holy day of Ashura.

It is Iraq's deadliest mass stampede in recent history during Ashura, whose commemorative marches were previously targeted by Sunni extremist groups.

Hundreds of thousands of Shia pilgrims from around the world swarmed Karbala, around 100 kilometres south of Iraq's capital Baghdad, to commemorate the death of Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Mohammed (pbuh).

The packed processions of black-clad worshippers made their way to his gold-domed shrine, carrying flags and crying out, "We sacrifice ourselves for you, Oh Hussein!"

As the massive crowds pressed forward, a stampede broke out that left at least 31 people dead and more than 100 more wounded, according to Iraq's health ministry.

Ministry spokesman Saif al-Badr said the death toll could rise as nine of the wounded were in critical condition.

The governor of Karbala said at least four million pilgrims had taken part in the procession that led to the stampede.

Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi and Health Minister Alaa al-Din Alwan travelled to Karbala late Tuesday to visit the wounded as messages of support began pouring in, with President Barham Saleh expressing his "deep condolences" to the victims' families.