

## IN BRIEF



## Congolese 'Terminator' rebel guilty of war crimes

THE HAGUE  
International Criminal Court judges on Monday convicted Congolese rebel chief Bosco "Terminator" Ntaganda of war crimes, including directing massacres of civilians and rape, in a badly-needed victory for prosecutors in The Hague. **AFP**

## 5 held in Hong Kong after night of clashes

HONG KONG  
Five people were arrested during overnight clashes in Hong Kong between riot officers and anti-government protesters, the police said on Monday. Sunday night saw fresh violence break out in the district of Mongkok as police baton-charged protesters who refused to disperse following a peaceful rally earlier in the day. **AFP**

## U.S. billionaire charged with exploiting minors

NEW YORK  
Jeffrey Epstein, a hedge fund billionaire with ties to top politicians and celebrities, was charged on Monday with sexually exploiting dozens of young girls. Epstein, 66, was arrested at an airport in New Jersey on Saturday. **AFP**

# Conservative leader Mitsotakis takes oath as Greece PM

'People gave us a strong mandate to change Greece. We will honour it to the full'

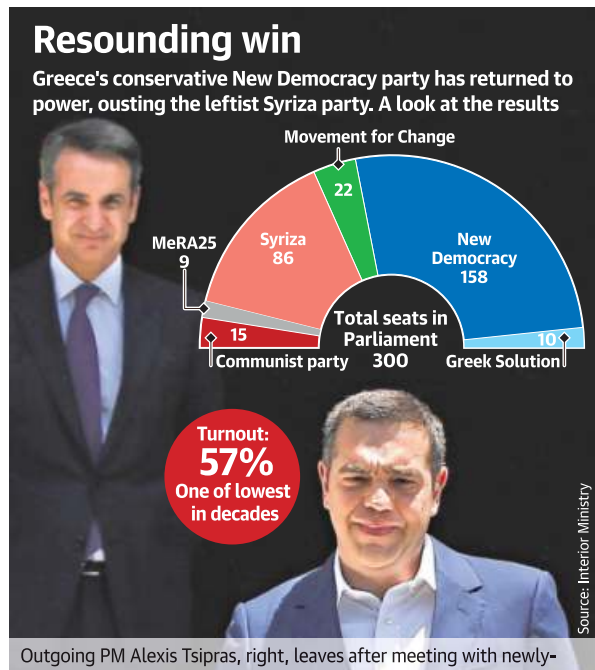
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
ATHENS

Greece's new conservative Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis was sworn in on Monday after a sweeping election victory put him in charge of the EU's most indebted member with promises to end a decade of economic crisis.

"The Greek people gave us a strong mandate to change Greece. We will honour it to the full," the 51-year-old Harvard graduate and former McKinsey consultant said after taking his oath of office in a televised ceremony, his wife and three children close by. "Hard work begins today. I am completely confident that we will prove equal to the challenge."

Mr. Mitsotakis later named a Cabinet with many technocrats in junior posts and only a handful of women.

The U.S.-educated conservative faces a hefty challenge as he takes over from leftist premier Alexis Tsipras, who imposed austerity measures required under a bailout to



Outgoing PM Alexis Tsipras, right, leaves after meeting with newly-appointed PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis, in Athens on Monday. **REUTERS**

keep Greece in the euro-zone. The country's public debt last year stood at €335 billion, or 180% of GDP.

The debt load is forecast to fall to 168% of GDP this year, but only through belt-tightening brought in under Mr. Tsipras's Syriza party, policies which Mr. Mitsotakis's New Democracy party says is stifling growth.

## Poll pledges

The tricky job of keeping Greece's international creditors onside while easing the hardship on Greeks – by lowering taxes and renegotiating fiscal targets – could re-

sult in a short honeymoon phase for Mr. Mitsotakis.

He has pledged to create jobs and "steamroller" obstacles to business. Those pledges wooed voters, who handed him 40% of the votes in Sunday's election, well ahead of the 31.5% given to Mr. Tsipras. "It's a strong message for change," Mr. Mitsotakis said on Sunday.

His party will have a majority of 158 seats in the 300-member Parliament. New Democracy was last in power in 2014, in coalition with the Greek socialists.

Syriza's parliamentary presence will shrink from 144 seats to 86. Mr. Tsipras has promised to remain an "active" voice in Opposition in defence of labour rights.

Entering Parliament for the first time are Greek Solution, a nationalist party formed by TV salesman Kyriakos Velopoulos, and MeRA25, an anti-austerity party founded by economist and former Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis. Neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn was shut out of parliament for the first time since 2012.

# Iran makes new threats that would reverse steps in n-deal

Threatens to restart centrifuges, ramp up enrichment

REUTERS  
GENEVA/DUBAI

Iran threatened on Monday to restart deactivated centrifuges and ramp up enrichment of uranium to 20% purity as its next potential big move away from a 2015 nuclear agreement that Washington abandoned last year.

The threats, made by Tehran's nuclear agency spokesman, would go far beyond the small steps Iran has taken in the past week to nudge stocks of fissile material just beyond limits in the pact.

That could raise serious questions about whether the agreement, intended to block Iran from making a nuclear weapon, is still viable.

The two threats would reverse major achievements of the agreement, although Iran omitted important details about how far it might go to returning to the status quo before the pact, when



A file photo of Russian-built Bushehr nuclear power plant in southern Iran. **AFP**

Western experts believed it could build a bomb within months.

In a separate standoff, Iran's Foreign Minister accused Britain of "piracy" for seizing an Iranian oil tanker last week. Britain says the ship was bound for Syria in violation of European Union sanctions.

Behrouz Kamalvandi, spokesman for Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, con-

firmed that Tehran had enriched uranium beyond the deal's limit of 3.67% purity, passing 4.5%, according to news agency ISNA.

U.N. nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, confirmed it had verified Iran's enrichment was beyond 3.67%.

Iran has said it will take another, third step away from the deal within 60 days. Mr. Kamalvandi said options included enriching uranium to 20% purity or beyond, and restarting IR-2 M centrifuges dismantled under the deal. Such threats put new pressure on European countries, which insist Iran must continue to comply with the agreement even though the United States is no longer doing so.

French President Emmanuel Macron was sending his top diplomatic advisor to Iran on Tuesday and Wednesday to try and help defuse tensions, a presidential official said.

# Bullying by U.S. pushed Iran to breach uranium limit: China

Beijing pushes for diplomacy for the settlement of the issue

ATUL ANEJA  
BEIJING

China on Monday alleged that "unilateral bullying" by the United States was the "root cause" of Iran's decision to expand uranium enrichment.

While regretting Iran's announcement as a breach of the nuclear deal, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang made it plain that Washington's policy of imposing "maximum

pressure" on Iran was the "root cause of the current crisis".

Mr. Geng compared Washington's international conduct to a "worsening tumour" that needed to be removed.

"The U.S. not only pulled out of the nuclear deal, but also exercised unilateral sanctions and long arm jurisdiction over Iran, creating increasing obstacles for the implementation of the deal.

And the effects have proven that unilateral bullying act has become a worsening tumour and creating greater crisis and problems worldwide," Mr. Geng said.

The Foreign Ministry followed up on its fierce attack on Washington by exhorting the "international community" to remain committed to multilateralism and seek political and diplomatic settlement of the issue under international law.

# Afghanistan rivals resume talks for peace

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
DOHA

Dozens of powerful Afghans resumed talks with the Taliban on Monday in Doha, where a possible ceasefire is on the table along with key issues such as women's rights.

Stakes are high for the talks which follow a week of U.S.-Taliban negotiations, with both sides eyeing a resolution to the bloody 18-year conflict.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tweeted that the Afghan gathering "has been a long time coming" and praised the country's "government, civil society, women, and Taliban" for coming together.

Washington has said it wants to seal a political deal with the Taliban ahead of the Afghan presidential polls due in September to allow foreign forces to begin to withdraw.

Around 70 delegates are attending the two-day gathering, which has been organised by Germany and Qatar.

Qatar's counter-terrorism special envoy Mutlaq al-Qahatani said "both sides are making progress". "By the end of tonight we can reach a kind of positive conclusion that is acceptable to both sides," he said.

Germany envoy Markus Potzel said "history will remember those who were

able to set their differences aside for the sake of the country" as he opened the dialogue on Sunday.

Delegate Asila Wardak, a member of the High Peace Council established by former President Hamid Karzai to engage with Taliban elements, said good progress was being made. But she stressed that the language of a joint statement would first have to be agreed by the entire conference which could

slow progress. The Taliban spoke about "women's role, economic development, (and) the role of minorities" in a future settlement, she said.

The so-called intra-Afghan meetings follow six days of direct US-Taliban talks that have been put on hold for the two-day Afghan conference and are set to resume Tuesday, according to both sides. The Taliban said they were "happy with progress".

# We're not big fans of that man, says Trump about U.K. envoy

Kim Darroch had called the U.S. President 'inept' & 'insecure'

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN  
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump has criticised Britain's Ambassador to the U.S., Kim Darroch, saying the British envoy had not served his country well.

Mr. Trump's comments, made on Sunday afternoon, came in response to a reporter's question on whether he had seen reports of leaked diplomatic cables, in which Mr. Darroch had been critical of Mr. Trump, published over the weekend by the *Mail on Sunday*, a British paper.

"No, I haven't seen it [reports of Mr. Darroch's comments]. But, you know, we've had our little ins and outs with – with a couple of countries. And I would say that the U.K. and the Amba-



Donald Trump

sador has not served the U.K. well, I can tell you that," Mr. Trump said.

"We're not – we're not big fans of that man, and he has not served the U.K. well. So I can understand it. And I can say things about him, but I won't bother."

Mr. Darroch had called Mr. Trump "inept" and "insecure" and the White House as "uniquely dysfunctional", in the leaked cables.

# Attack on Sri Lankan Editor: soldier held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
COLOMBO

A soldier has been arrested in Sri Lanka for attacking the Editor of a popular Sinhala language newspaper 10 years ago, the police said on Monday. The corporal was arrested after his finger prints matched with those in the Editor's car.

Upali Tennakoon, the Editor of the *Rivira* newspaper, and his wife were brutally attacked by a gang of unidentified persons in January 2009, two weeks after the killing of Lasantha Wickrematunga, the Editor of *The Sunday Leader*. Mr. Tennakoon has been living in the U.S. since the assault.

The incident was one of the attacks against media during the former regime of then President Mahinda Rajapaksa between 2005 and 2015.

# South Korean man defects to North Korea

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SEOUL

A South Korean man has defected to North Korea, following in the footsteps of his political parents who also made a high-profile switch of allegiance in the 1980s, according to Pyongyang's state media.

Years of repression and poverty in the reclusive North have led around 30,000 people to flee to its democratic neighbour in the decades since the Korean War, but defections in the other direction are extremely rare.

Choe In-guk – the son of former South Korean Foreign Minister Choe Dok-shin, who died in 1989, three years after moving to North Korea with his wife – landed in Pyongyang on Saturday, reported state-run



Choe In-guk

outlet Uriminzokkiri.

In video footage filmed at an airport and posted by the website on Sunday, the 72-year-old Mr. Choe said he had arrived in the North Korean capital "for residency". "I can't find words to describe my gratitude to the Republic that has embraced me," he said in the clip.

Mr. Choe added that he had decided to live in the North to "fulfil the wishes" of his parents.

# Court begins hearing in Italian marines' case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
THE HAGUE

An international arbitration court on Monday began hearing into Italy's request to direct India to drop all criminal prosecution against two Italian marines accused of killing two Indian fishermen off the Kerala coast in 2012 and grant Rome jurisdiction in the case.

Italy took the issue to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague in 2015, saying the case should be tried under maritime law as the incident happened in international waters. India, however, insists that the accused should return to New Delhi for a final judgment by an Indian court. Currently, the two marines – Massimiliano Latorre and Salvatore Gironi – are in Italy. Italy's representative

Francesco Azzarello told the court on Monday that Rome should have jurisdiction over the case because the two marines were functionaries of the Italian state doing their duty on board an Italian flagged ship in international waters. Mr. Azzarello said India already considers the marines guilty. "In India's eyes there is no presumption of innocence: the marines were guilty of murder even before the charges were laid," he was quoted as telling the court by Italian news agency ANSA.

In response, India's representative G. Balasubramanian told the court, "Italy maintains it has the exclusive jurisdiction in the case but one must take into account the fact that India and the two fishermen are the victims in this case."