

# Hurricane Dorian death toll hits 43

**MARSH HARBOR:** The death toll from Hurricane Dorian's devastating rampage across the Bahamas rose to 43 and was likely to climb "significantly," officials said, with hundreds missing even as rescuers plucked desperate survivors from the debris. More than 260 residents of the brutally damaged Abaco Islands arrived in the capital city of Nassau after spending more than seven hours on a government-chartered ferry, a second of which was expected to arrive overnight.

Those who made it to safety awaited news of loved ones such as Diane Forbes, who had not heard from her two sons since Tuesday and was searching for them among some 200 evacuees sheltering at a gymnasium Friday night in Nassau, which was spared the wrath of the hurricane. "They said they were hungry and the scent of the bodies, the dead, was really getting to them... I don't know if my son is alive or not," she said of one of her children, who had been in Marsh Harbor on Abaco with his girlfriend and her mother. Confirming the new toll of 43, Prime Minister Hubert Minnis said 35 were killed on worst-hit Abaco and eight on Grand Bahama island. "The loss of life we are experiencing is catastrophic and devastating," he said in a statement late Friday quoted by The Tribune newspaper. With many missing, "this number is expected to grow significantly," his spokeswoman Erica Wells Cox told NBC News.

On the eventual death toll, Health Minister Duane Sands earlier said "the number will be staggering." "Literally hundreds, up to thousands, of people are still missing," Joy Jibril, the director general of the Bahamian tourism and aviation ministry, told CNN. Thousands of people were left homeless on Grand Bahama and Abaco and many were

becoming frustrated with the speed of relief and evacuation efforts. "There's no gas station, no food stores, my job is gone" said Melanie Lowe of Marsh Harbor, whose house was partially destroyed and had packed into a two-bedroom apartment with 16 people before arriving in Nassau. According to UN relief officials, more than 70,000 people - virtually the entire population of Grand Bahama and Abaco - are in need of assistance after the storm reduced homes to matchsticks and destroyed people's livelihoods.

The US Coast Guard and private organizations have been evacuating residents of Abaco and other islands to Nassau. The multinational relief effort, which also includes Britain's Royal Navy and several non-governmental organizations, has been hampered by flood damage to airport runways, destroyed piers and docks and downed communications. Tents and awnings installed at Nassau Airport, not far from rescue planes taking off and landing, provided temporary housing for storm-battered Bahamians.

## Landfall in Outer Banks

As survivors began the first steps of rebuilding their lives, arrangements were being made to take care of the dead and the Bahamian authorities were seeking to account for the missing. Sands said extra morticians and refrigerated coolers to store bodies were being sent to the affected islands. Mortuary workers in white hazmat suits, blue gloves and masks could be seen in Marsh Harbor carrying corpses in green body bags and loading them onto flatbed trucks.

"As you know, in the United States, we weren't hit nearly as hard as was thought but the Bahamas, you got hit very, very hard," US President Donald Trump said in a video

statement on Twitter. "On behalf of the United States and the people of the United States, we're working hard, we're with you and God bless you," he said. "Any cruise ship companies willing to act as stationary housing, etc., I am sure would be appreciated," he also tweeted. Dorian made landfall meanwhile in the United States as a Category 1 hurricane packing winds of nearly 90 miles per hour.



MARSH HARBOR: Damaged property from Hurricane Dorian litters the ground in Marsh Harbor, Great Abaco. — AFP

The Miami-based National Hurricane Center (NHC) said the storm made landfall at Cape Hatteras on North Carolina's Outer Banks, the finger-like barrier islands off the coast. Flooding was reported in the town of Ocracoke to the southwest of Cape Hatteras. Thousands of coastal residents of US states from Florida to Virginia had been fearing the worst but the East Coast largely escaped unscathed. Some flooding occurred in the historic city of Charleston, South Carolina, and tens of thousands of residents lost electricity but no major damage was reported.—AFP

## 'Electronic armies' threaten activists...

Continued from Page 1

Baghdad has however developed close ties with Washington since the American-led invasion that toppled ex-dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003. Despite that, Washington's bitter rival Tehran also holds considerable sway in Iraq's political scene and within the Hashed.

In recent months, anti-Israel and anti-US rhetoric has been on the rise as Iraqis feel increasingly squeezed by the war of words between the two sides. Some Iraqi factions have used the purported Israeli strikes to relaunch calls for US troops to leave Iraq. Just last week, many of the same figures lashed out against US-funded Al-Hurra TV for a documentary alleging corruption among Iraq's religious bodies, both Sunni and Shiite.

Perceptions Iraq was being "attacked" by Israel and America were "broadened to include critical and independent Iraqi voices, who have been maligned as agents in a broader plot," said Fanar Haddad, an Iraq expert at the National University of Singapore. "In this way, entrenched domestic interests and rivalries have been folded into the ongoing tensions between the Iran-led axis of resistance and the United

States, Israel and their allies in the region," he said.

## Rights groups react

Omar Al-Shaher, a journalist named in the graphic, said there was "not a shred of proof" to back up the claims. "These days, it's more dangerous than ever to have your name associated with the Israeli camp," he said. Historian Omar Mohammad, who documented atrocities in Mosul under the Islamic State group, said he suspected the new accusations came "as a result of the recent (purported) Israeli airstrikes and US-Iranian tensions."

Mohammad said the graphic's sleek production meant he was "absolutely" taking its threats seriously. "It is institutional and professional. Seems there is a team specialized in dehumanizing us," Mohammad told AFP from outside Iraq. Media rights groups are worried such incitement could lead to real violence. "The sensitivity of the Palestinian question in the region means that accusing someone of working with Israel is tantamount to calling for their killing," said the Journalistic Freedoms Observatory.

On Thursday, monitor and rights group Iraqi Media House called for better protection of journalists. "The phenomenon of electronic armies has reached dangerous levels, issuing threats including incitement to violence and hatred," it said. "We are surprised by the authorities' continued silence so far, including the judiciary, in a clear abandonment of its responsibilities when it comes to electronic crimes."—AFP

opment of meat substitute technology.

## Volcanic organisms

Sustainable Bioproducts, based in Chicago and led by Frenchman Thomas Jonas, is developing a new way to grow edible protein using NASA research. The company's technology emerged out of studying organisms that survive extreme temperatures in Yellowstone National Park's volcanic springs. It says it has discovered a so-called "complete protein" with all nine amino acids essential to the functioning of the human body, and that it can re-create the protein to manufacture food. The company, which plans to open a factory next year, recently raised \$33 million in financing from venture capital funds and food and agribusiness companies.—AFP

## US 'not surprised'

US Defence Secretary Mark Esper said he was "not surprised that Iran has announced that it's going to violate the JCPOA". Britain called Iran's move "particularly disappointing at a time when we and our European and international partners are working hard to de-escalate tensions". Despite the decision to further step back from the 2015 deal, Kamalvandi said Iran would allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to continue monitoring its nuclear program, as it has done under the 2015 accord.

"Regarding the monitoring and accesses of the IAEA... so that everything is clear (Iran's) commitments regarding transparency will be followed as before," the spokesman said. The European Union on Friday emphasized its reliance on the IAEA to monitor Iran's activities as it voiced "great concern" over the country's decision to roll back its commitments.

In its latest report on August 30, the watchdog said it continues to verify compliance through cameras and on-site inspections. But in an apparent hint at worries about access it said "ongoing interactions... require full and timely cooperation by Iran". Yesterday, the UN atomic agency noted Iran's latest move and indicated its inspectors were ready to check its compliance. "Agency inspectors are on the ground in Iran and they will report any relevant activities to IAEA headquarters in Vienna," spokesman Fredrik Dahl said.

## Europe 'must hurry'

Iran's new step came after Britain, France and Germany were unable to find a way to offset the impact of sanctions on the country before a September 7 deadline set by the Islamic republic. "If Europe wants to do something, it must hurry, because returning to the situation before reducing commitments could take time," Kamalvandi said. Tehran has already hit back twice with countermeasures in response to the US withdrawal from the 2015 deal.

On July 1, Iran said it had increased its stockpile of enriched uranium to beyond the 300-kilogram maximum set by the deal. A week later, it announced it had exceeded a 3.67-percent cap on the purity of its uranium stocks. Yesterday's developments came on the eve of a visit to Iran by the acting head of the IAEA, Cornel Feruta. Kamalvandi said Feruta would meet the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, Ali Akbar Salehi, and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.—Agencies

## Facebook rolls out dating...

Continued from Page 1

and prohibit people from sending photos, links, payments or videos in messages. Users may share their "stories" posts from the network, which are short video segments. This will help the service be "authentic in a way that a typical dating profile can't," according to Sharp.

## 'Real relationships'

Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg, in announcing the plan last year, said it was being designed for "real, long-term relationships, not just hookups." He pointed out that one in three marriages in the United States starts online and that some 200 million Facebook users identify as being single. Facebook may have an advantage over rivals in that it can allow people to share profiles and images from their social

media accounts.

The dating service will be free, unlike some rivals which offer both free and paid plans. Shares in Match Group, the parent firm of dating applications Tinder and OK Cupid, slumped on Thursday's news. Facebook Dating has already launched in 19 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Laos, Malaysia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Singapore, Surinam, Thailand, Uruguay and Vietnam.

It is set to launch in Europe in 2020. The move comes with Facebook battling to restore its reputation after a series of privacy blunders, including the hijacking of personal data on tens of millions of users ahead of the 2016 US election, and struggles to stem the flow of misinformation and manipulation.

Facebook's new service offers features that leverage the huge social network's user base while also promoting safety. Users may choose to see other people who are using Facebook Dating within the groups in which they participate. They also may share details of an upcoming date with someone they trust via Messenger.—AFP

## India loses contact with...

Continued from Page 1

The Chandrayaan-2 ("Moon Vehicle 2") orbiter, which will circle and study the Moon remotely for a year, is however "healthy, intact, functioning normally and safely in the lunar orbit", the ISRO said.

Freshly re-elected Modi had hoped to bask in the glory of a successful mission, but yesterday he deftly turned consoler-in-chief in a speech at mission control broadcast live on television and to his 50 million Twitter followers. "Sisters and brothers of India, resilience and tenacity are central to India's ethos. In our glorious history of thousands of years, we have faced moments that may have slowed us, but they have never crushed our spirit," he said.

"We have bounced back again," he added. "When it comes to our space program, the best is yet to come." Other Indians also took to Twitter to offer words of encouragement. "The important thing is we took off and had the Hope and Belief we can," said Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan. Indian media offered succor by quoting a NASA factsheet that said out of 109 lunar missions in the past six decades, 48 have failed.

Chandrayaan-2 took off on July 22 carrying an orbiter, lander and rover almost entirely designed and made in India—the mission cost a relatively modest \$140 million—a week after an initial launch was halted just before blast-off. ISRO had acknowledged before the soft landing that it was a complex maneuver, which Sivan called "15 minutes of terror".

It was carrying rover Pragyan—"wisdom" in

## Zimbabweans mourn Mugabe...

Continued from Page 1

Mnangagwa said on Friday that Zimbabwe would be in mourning until Mugabe was buried, but he did not say when that would be. It was also unclear whether Mugabe would be buried at Heroes Acre, a monument for national heroes built with the help of North Korean architects. The Zimbabwe Independent newspaper reported last month that Mugabe, who cut a bitter figure since the 2017 coup, preferred not to be buried at Heroes Acre because he did not want Mnangagwa to "pontificate over his dead body".

But yesterday Zimbabwe's deputy information minister Energy Mutodi wrote on Twitter that the plan was still for Mugabe to be interred at the monument. If Mugabe's family were to choose to bury the former leader at his rural home in Zvimba instead of Heroes Acre, it would be a major snub to Mnangagwa and ZANU-PF, the ruling party that Mnangagwa now heads but which Mugabe led for four decades.

Mugabe was feted as a champion of racial reconciliation when he first came to power in 1980 in one of the last African states to throw off white colonial rule. But by the time he was toppled to wild celebrations across the country of 13 million, he was viewed by many at

Sanskrit—which was due to emerge several hours after touchdown to scour the Moon's surface, including for water. According to Mathieu Weiss, a representative in India for France's space agency CNES, this is vital to determining whether humans could spend extended periods on the Moon. That would mean the Moon being used one day as a pitstop on the way to Mars—the next objective of governments and private space-faring programs such as Elon Musk's Space X.

## 'Space superpower'

In March Modi hailed India as a "space superpower" after it shot down a low-orbiting satellite, a move prompting criticism for the amount of "space junk" created. Asia's third-largest economy also hopes to tap into the commercial possibilities of space. China in January became the first to land a rover on the far side of the Moon.

In April, Israel's attempt failed at the last minute when its craft apparently crashed onto the lunar surface. India is also preparing Gaganyaan, its first manned space mission, and wants to land a probe on Mars. In 2014, it became only the fourth nation to put a satellite into orbit around the Red Planet, and in 2017 India's space agency launched 104 satellites in a single mission.

The country's principal scientific adviser, K Vijay Raghavan, described Chandrayaan-2 as "very complex, and a significant technological leap from previous missions of ISRO" in a series of tweets yesterday. Raghavan said the orbiter will help India better understand the Moon's evolution, mapping minerals and water molecules "using its eight state-of-the-art scientific instruments". "After a moment of despondency, it is back to work!! It is inspirational to see this characteristic of science in collective action. Kudos to ISRO," he added.—AFP

home and abroad as a power-obsessed autocrat who unleashed death squads, rigged elections and ruined the economy to keep control.

Most residents in downtown Harare said yesterday that they were saddened by Mugabe's death since he was their liberator and had broadened access to education. "Even now we have livestock we keep in the rural areas because of him, so it's painful to lose our father, our grandfather who helped us to learn and go to school," said Tongai Huni, a fruit vendor, speaking in the local Shona language. Others expressed anger that Mugabe had left the economy in a sorry state, with hyperinflation and mass unemployment.

Margaret Shumba, another resident of the capital, said she had bigger things to worry about than Mugabe's death. "We are just trying to deal with ... the harm that he did." Nearby, a policeman shook his head as he walked past a row of newspapers bearing pictures of Mugabe's face. "End of an era," read the headline of the Daily News, while the state-run Herald ran a commemorative edition to mark Mugabe's death with articles praising him. But the harsh reality for many Zimbabweans is that the economy is mired in its worst crisis in a decade, with triple-digit inflation, rolling power cuts which can last up to 18 hours a day and shortages of basic goods like fuel. Moves towards reintroducing the Zimbabwean dollar have been met by a deep-seated lack of confidence, and a clampdown on dissent by Mnangagwa's government has revived memories of repressive tactics in the Mugabe era.—Reuters

## Like meat, but not meat - the...

Continued from Page 1

He has applied his expertise to the food sector after founding the Spanish start-up NovaMeat that uses plant ingredients such as rice, pea protein and seaweed. The printer uses the material to create alternative beef steaks and chicken breasts, with texture claimed to match real meat. NovaMeat announced at the conference that it had raised \$2million from New Crop Capital, a specialty food fund, for further devel-

## Iran seizes boat in the Strait...

Continued from Page 1

Iran also seized another ship on July 31 with seven foreign crew onboard over fuel smuggling, but it has not revealed the vessel's identity or the nationality of its crew.

## Latest nuclear step

In another development, Iran said yesterday it has fired up advanced centrifuges to boost its enriched uranium stockpiles, in the latest scaling back of commitments under a crumbling 2015 nuclear deal. The Islamic republic was acting on a threat to further abandon its nuclear commitments based on a deadline it set for European powers to do something to shield it from US sanctions. The country's Atomic Energy Organization spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi said it had activated 20 IR-4 and 20 IR-6 advanced centrifuges. "The centrifuge machines, as they are engaged in research and development, will help with increasing the stockpile," he said. "The capacity of these machines is many times more than the previous machines. This started as of yesterday (Friday)," he told a news conference in Tehran.

Under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran was allowed to enrich uranium using only first generation-or IR-1 - centrifuges. Tensions have been escalating between Iran and the United States since May last year when President Donald Trump pulled out of the accord and began reimposing sanctions that have crippled its economy. The arch-foes were on the cusp of confrontation in June when Iran downed a US drone and Trump ordered retaliatory strikes before cancelling them at the last minute.

Britain, France and Germany have repeatedly said they are committed to saving the deal that gave Iran relief from sanctions in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program, but their efforts have so far borne little fruit. Iran said yesterday it was capable of enriching uranium beyond 20 percent but for now it had no plans to do so. "Our plan is that if the other parties act on their commitments, we too return to our commitments," said Kamalvandi.