



Blackouts, flooding as cyclone batters Tonga

## Military trial of Palestinian teen opens behind closed doors

Page 9

Page 7



CAPE TOWN: Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party leader Julius Malema (center) speaks flanked by Democratic Alliance (DA) party leader Mmusi Maimane (2nd left), United Democratic Movement leader Bantu Holomisa (2nd right), Corne Mulder (right) of the Freedom Front Plus (FF+) and Congress of the People (COPE) leader Mosuia Lekhota (left), as they give a press conference regarding their position on the embattled South African president's refusal to resign at Parliament in Cape Town. —AFP

# ANC orders Zuma to step down

## Hopes for economy with Zuma on way out

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's ruling party ordered Jacob Zuma yesterday to step down as head of state after marathon talks over the fate of a leader whose scandal-plagued years in power darkened and divided Nelson Mandela's post-apartheid 'Rainbow Nation'. Leading members of the African National Congress now want new party leader Cyril Ramaphosa to replace Zuma as president, ANC Secretary General Ace Magashule told a news conference. But the party's national executive was split on precisely when Zuma should go, Magashule added, leaving the president's immediate fate still hanging in the balance.

There was no word from Zuma or his spokesman but Magashule said the president had promised to respond to the order by today. The rand weakened, with traders blaming uncertainty caused by the lack of a clear timetable. Magashule said he had met Zuma personally to pass on the decision. "We haven't given him any deadline to respond," he said. "The organisation expects him to go." Zuma had asked the party to give him a notice period of three to six months but that had been rejected, Magashule said. "Timelines? No. The NEC believes that this is an urgent matter so it should be treated with urgency," he said.

### Borrowed time

Zuma has been living on borrowed time since Ramaphosa, a union leader and lawyer once tipped as Mandela's pick to take over the reins, was elected as head of the 106-year-old ANC in December.



### Party still split on when Zuma should go

Ramaphosa narrowly defeated Zuma's ex-wife and preferred successor, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, in the leadership vote, forcing him to tread carefully in handling

Zuma for fear of deepening rifts in the party a year ahead of an election. Despite the damning decision to order Zuma's "recall" - party speak for 'removal from office' - domestic media said the 75-year-old might yet defy the party's wishes, forcing it into the indignity of having to unseat him in parliament. South Africa's economy has stagnated during Zuma's nine-year tenure, with banks and mining companies reluctant to invest because of policy uncertainty and rampant corruption.

But since mid-November when Ramaphosa emerged as a real ANC leadership prospect, economic confidence has started to pick up. The rand - a telling barometer of Zuma's fortunes - has gained more than 15 percent against the dollar over that period. Since becoming president in 2009, Zuma has been dogged by scandal. He is fighting the reinstatement of 783 counts of corruption over a 30 billion-rand (now \$2.5 billion) government arms deal arranged in the late 1990s when he was deputy president. Some within the ANC and the opposition say the Gupta family, friends of Zuma, have used their links with the president to win state contracts and influence cabinet appointments. The Guptas and Zuma have denied any wrongdoing. —Reuters



South African President Jacob Zuma.

## Turkish opposition lawmaker jailed for 'leaking secrets'

ISTANBUL: An Istanbul court yesterday sentenced an opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) lawmaker to five years and 10 months in jail for leaking classified material to a daily critical of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. CHP lawmaker Enis Berberoglu had been sentenced in June to 25 years in jail but a regional appeals court in Istanbul quashed the conviction and in October ordered a retrial.

He was convicted on charges of "revealing information that should remain a secret for the sake of the state's security", state-run news agency Anadolu reported. Berberoglu's case relates to a controversial story published in 2015 by the Cumhuriyet daily which contained images purportedly showing the Turkish intelligence service seeking to transport arms over the border to Syria. The CHP lawmaker is accused of giving the images to Cumhuriyet's former editor-in-chief, Can Dundar, who fled to Germany after being given a five-year-and-10-month jail term.

The MP has been in jail since June. He is the first and, so far, only lawmaker from the main secular opposition party held in the crackdown that followed the July 15 failed coup. It was after Berberoglu's initial conviction that CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu walked from Ankara to Istanbul joined by thousands of others in what became the biggest opposition protest in Turkey since 2013 demonstrations against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Since the attempted overthrow of Erdogan, tens of thousands of people have been arrested over alleged links to coup-plotters and Kurdish militants, including nine MPs from the main pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). —AFP

## Water: Why taps run dry

PARIS: The world has abundant freshwater but it is unevenly distributed and under increasing pressure, UN agencies say, as highlighted by the severe shortages in Cape Town. South Africa yesterday declared a "national disaster" over a drought that has ravaged parts of the country and threatened to leave the city without domestic tap water.

### Water, water 'everywhere'

More than 97 percent of the planet's water is salty, most of it in the oceans and seas, but there is also a good supply of freshwater. Every year around 42.8 trillion cubic metres (1.02 trillion cubic miles) of renewable freshwater circulates as rain, surface water or groundwater, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This equals 16,216 litres (34,270 US pints) per person per day-four times the amount required in the United States, for example, for personal and domestic consumption, industry and agriculture.

Depending on diet and lifestyle, a person needs between 2,000 and 5,000 litres of water a day to produce their food and meet their drinking and sanitation requirements, the FAO says. About 60 percent of the planet's freshwater reserves is locked in the Antarctic. Of the rest, more than a quarter is in Central and Latin America, which is 60 times more than that available in the Middle East and North Africa. "The fact is there is enough water to meet the world's growing needs, but not without dramatically changing the way water is used, managed and shared," the United Nations said in 2015. "The global water crisis is one of governance."

### Shortages

In its most recent data (2014), the FAO said 45 countries were experiencing water shortages, defined as less than a thousand cubic metres (one million litres) per person a year. They include South Africa, Cyprus and Morocco. Twenty-nine of them, including Algeria, Israel or Qatar, were in a situation of extreme shortage with less than 500 m3 per person a year. A third of the planet's population depends on groundwater and the UN has warned of the danger of overusing these reserves.



GAZA: A Palestinian girl fills a water bottle at a mosque near their tent in the middle of Gaza City. —AFP

Groundwater reserves in part of India's Ganges basin, southern Spain, Italy and California's central valley could be drained dry in decades, it says. Countries like Canada, Russia and Peru use just one percent of their renewable freshwater. But others far overuse supply, such as Israel at 261 percent and Bahrain at 8,935 percent. Countries that use more than their renewable supply draw from nonrenewable underground water or desalinate sea water, as in the case of Bahrain.

### Cities in difficulty

Freetown, La Paz and Ouagadougou in 2016 suffered severe water shortages following drought, much as Cape Town is today. The global use of freshwater doubled between 1964 and 2014 because of population growth, urbanisation, industrialisation and increased production and consumption, the UN says. The demand for water in cities is expected to grow by 50 percent by 2030. "Water scarcity, exacerbated by climate change, could cost some regions up to six percent of their GDP, spur migration, and spark conflict," the World Bank said in 2016.

### Thirsty farming

Farming is the single biggest consumer of water globally (70 percent), most of it for irrigation. Industry uses 19 percent and households 11 percent, according to the FAO. But there are wide disparities at the regional level. In South Asia agriculture accounts for 91 percent of water use, against only seven percent in homes and two percent in industry. In the European Union and North America, however, industry consumes more than half of freshwater supply, ahead of agriculture (under 34 percent) and domestic use (under 18 percent).

### Global warming

The UN's climate science panel, the IPCC, said in a 2014 report that for every degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) of global warming, about seven percent of the world's population will see a drop of at least 20 percent in renewable water resources. Scientists calculate the planet has already warmed one degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) since the Industrial Revolution kickstarted the spewing of man-made, planet-heating gases into the atmosphere. The IPCC projects more frequent and severe droughts in already dry regions, reducing surface water and groundwater stocks. The impact will depend on the level of warming. —AFP