

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2019



Muslim people pray on the first night of the holy month of Ramadan at the Istiqlal Grand Mosque in Jakarta. Ramadan in Indonesia began on May 6, with devotees fasting from dawn to dusk until Eid celebrations marking the end of the holy month. — AFP

YOUNG AFGHAN AMPUTEE'S JOY AT DANCING ON NEW LEG

With his hands in the air and an infectious grin spreading from ear to ear, a young Afghan boy whirls around a Kabul hospital room on his new prosthetic leg. The boy, five-year-old Ahmad Sayed Rahman, has captured hearts in Afghanistan after a short video of him effortlessly dancing on his new limb was posted this week on Twitter. "He is always dancing and showing how happy he is to have an artificial leg," the boy's mother, Rayeesa, told reporters at the Red Cross orthopaedic center in the Afghan capital on Tuesday. "I'm so happy for him that he's received this artificial leg and that now he can be independent," she added, as Ahmad danced to music blasting from a mobile phone.

Ahmad, whose leg was amputated below the knee when he was only eight months old, is a long-time patient, his physiotherapist Semeen Sarwari said. Because he's growing fast, he has needed a new leg every year or so. This new one is his fourth. "He's a child and wants to play, he wants to have a leg so is adapting quickly," Sarwari said. "He doesn't want to sit around inside." Ahmad and his parents, who are farmworkers, come from Logar province south of Kabul, where fight-



Ahmad Sayed Rahman, a five-year-old Afghan boy who lost his right leg when he was hit by a bullet in the crossfire of a battle, dances with his prosthetic leg at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) hospital for war victims and the disabled, in Kabul. — AFP photos

ing between the Taliban and the US-backed Afghan army is frequent.

His mother said Ahmad and his sister were caught in the crossfire of a battle, and both children were seriously wounded. Ahmad received his first prosthetic at age one, and soon learned to dance, his delight clear for all to see. More than 500,000 people had watched the video clip on Twitter within a day of it being posted on Monday. By Tuesday, he was showing off his skills to reporters in Kabul and was the top story on evening news programs. The video has attracted hundreds of admiring comments, with some people even offering to help. "This is the smile of victory over all odds of life ...god bless you dude" one Twitter user wrote. "Extremely amazed by the paradox of happiness & grief in this video!" wrote another.

Deadliest year

In 2018 alone, 3,804 civilians—including more than 900 children—were killed in Afghanistan, and another 7,000 more were wounded, according to the United Nations. It



Ahmad Sayed Rahman lies on the floor with his prosthetic leg.



Ahmad Sayed Rahman sits on a bench next to his mother, 42-year-old Bibi Saera Raisa, as she holds his prosthetic leg at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) hospital.

was the deadliest year yet for civilians in Afghanistan's conflict. Tadamichi Yamamoto, head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, said a "shocking number" of civilians are still being killed or maimed and called on all parties to do more to safeguard them. Peace talks are ongoing between the US and the Taliban but are moving slowly, adding to the anguish of everyday Afghans who have no idea what the future might hold for their country.

Ahmad's video was shot by Mulkara Rahimi, another physiotherapist at the Red Cross center. In her 10 years of professional activity, she's seen many patients like him. "Because he was so happy about the new prosthesis, I just wanted to save a record of the happiness," Rahimi says. "That's why I posted that video," she added, noting such moments were her reward for her difficult work. "I love my job," she said. The original video of Ahmad dancing can be seen at: <http://u.afp.com/JYuD>—AFP



Ahmad Sayed Rahman gestures as he dances with his prosthetic leg.

Migrant death ship to be shown at Venice art fair

The remains of the worst known Mediterranean migrant shipwreck, in which up to 900 people died, will be exhibited at the prestigious Venice Biennale art fair this week. The blue and red fishing boat was carrying almost 1,000 migrants when it struck a Portuguese cargo ship that was coming to its aid off the coast of Libya during the night of April 18-19, 2015. The boat sank quickly as the cargo ship's horrified crew raced to save 28 people. Swiss artist Christoph Buchel obtained permission from Italian authorities and a group that represents the victims to transport the hull to Venice as part of a project called "Barca Nostra" (Our Boat).



The fishing vessel 'Barca Nostra' (Our Ship) that sank on April 18, 2015 trapping hundreds of migrants in its hull, is being installed in Venice's former shipyards as part of the centerpiece of a new art project by Swiss-Icelandic artist Christoph Buechel. — AFP

It will be shown in a shipyard by itself, without any explanation. "It is a quiet site, sheltered from noise, an invitation to silence and meditation," said Paolo Baratta, the head of the Venice Biennale which opens on Saturday. Italy spent around 10 million euros (\$12 million) to raise the wreck from a depth of 370 meters (1,200 feet) and transport it to Sicily so the victims could be identified and given a proper burial. A large rectangular opening was cut in the hull to allow workers to recover hundreds of bodies, with dozens of medical examiners called in to examine the remains of 800-900 people.

Travel documents from Bangladesh, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Senegal, Somalia and Sudan, were found, along with small packets of earth from some migrants' homelands and a school report that a teenager had sewn into their clothes. "It seems we are looking at the worst massacre ever seen in the Mediterranean," UNHCR spokeswoman Carlotta Sami said at the time. The disaster provoked an emergency EU summit as Europe tried to control a migrant crisis that has presented the union with one of its biggest challenges ever. The victims now lie in various Sicilian cemeteries, and it was decided to not destroy the boat but integrate it into a Sicilian "memory garden". — AFP



Ahmad Sayed Rahman sits on a bench without his prosthetic leg at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) hospital for war victims and the disabled.