

### Five killed in Honduras plane crash, no survivors

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Four Canadians and an American pilot died Saturday when their small plane plunged into the sea off the Honduran island of Roatan where they were vacationing, firefighters said.

The plane crashed near the town of Dixon Cove, a few minutes after taking off from the island's airport, rescuers said.

The dead were identified as Bradley Post, Bailey Sony, Tomy Dubler and pilot Patrick Forseth. The other Canadian pilot, Anthony Dubler, briefly survived the crash but died at the Roatan hospital of his injuries.

The causes of the crash and the registration information for the aircraft were not immediately available.

### UN peacekeeper killed in Mali

United Nations, United States

A Nigerian peacekeeper was killed Saturday in an attack on the United Nations' stabilization mission in Mali, the UN said.

The victim "succumbed to his wounds following the armed attack by unidentified assailants" in Timbuktu, a statement said. A Nigerian peacekeeper was also injured.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was "deeply saddened" by the assault, which he said could amount to a war crime.

# India's marathon election ends

Kolkata, India

Voting ended yesterday in India's marathon election that will decide whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi gets a second term in power.

As the final polling booths closed, a huge security cordon was thrown around the voting machines and boxes of paper ballots used for the world's biggest election before the official count starts on Thursday.

Several early exit polls released by Indian media predicted that Modi's right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will lose seats but with allies would still secure a majority of the 542 seats fought.

The opposition Congress party was predicted to more than double its 2014 tally of 42 seats. The polls have in the past been notoriously unreliable, however, adding to the political jitters.

Tens of thousands of police and paramilitaries were on duty in West Bengal state -- a symbol of the mounting tensions between the BJP and opposition parties during the six weeks of voting that has focused on Modi's record since his landslide win five years ago.

Long queues formed outside polling stations across the eastern state but the BJP and its rivals again accused each other of using violence, fraud and intimidation.

An improvised bomb was thrown at one Kolkata polling station and security forces intervened to stop BJP, communist and other groups blocking different booths across the state capital that was hit by two days



Elderly Indian voter Kasturi Devi, 101, leaves helped by officials after casting her vote at a polling station in Patna

of street battles last week.

Conjoined twins Sabah and Farah voted in the city of Patna in eastern Bihar state and 102-year-old Shyam Saran Negi, who has taken part in every vote since independence in 1947, cast his ballot in mountainous Himachal Pradesh state, highlighting the huge diversity of the exer-

cise.

Modi's constituency in Varanasi, the Hindu holy city in northern Uttar Pradesh state, was also among those to vote.

### \$7 billion outlay

The Delhi-based Centre for Media Studies estimates that the outlay on this election could top



Indian nuns from the Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charities queue to cast their votes at a polling station at St. Mary's School in Kolkata



Conjoined twins Sabah and Farah voted in the city of Patna in eastern Bihar

\$7 billion, making it one of the priciest contests globally -- with the lion's share of the spending by the BJP trying to woo India's 900 million eligible voters.

Lots of it has been spent on social media, with the parties using armies of "cyber warriors" to bombard India's hundreds of millions of Facebook

and WhatsApp users with messages.

Fake news and doctored images have abounded, including of Gandhi and Modi having lunch with Imran Khan, prime minister of arch rival Pakistan, or of a drunk Priyanka Gandhi, a politician and the sister of Rahul.

## Ecstatic Australian conservatives bask in election glory

Sydney, Australia

Australia Prime Minister Scott Morrison yesterday basked in the glow of a "miracle" election victory that sparked praise from the US president, soul searching on the left and speculation about what policies he will pursue.

Morrison's Liberal-National coalition bucked the polls to secure a victory for the ages, but it remained unclear if he would garner enough votes to have a parliamentary majority or need to govern with the help of independents.

The latest incomplete projections from the Australian Electoral Commission yesterday showed his party at six short of the 76 seats needed for a majority in parliament.

Projections by national broadcaster ABC showed the coalition with 73 seats, and leading in the count in four others.

The 51-year-old Morrison may yet have to depend on ecologically-minded independents to pass legislation and manage deep divisions within his fractious coalition with no room for defections.

As awed Australian pundits declared Morrison a campaigning "legend", US President Donald Trump got in on the act, sending a congratulatory tweet.

The two men spoke by phone after the results came in, vowing "close cooperation on shared priorities", according to White House account of the call.



Australia's newly elected Prime Minister Scott Morrison (C) arrives to deliver a victory speech with his family after winning the Australia's general election in Sydney

Trump's allies will be quick to claim Morrison's win as another victory in the global march of populism.

But the results showed a more mixed message from an electorate that appears increasingly split on the significant issues of the day.

Brash billionaire Clive Palmer -- who explicitly styled himself on Trump in a free-spending countrywide campaign that promised to "Make Australia Great" -- appears to have failed

to win a single parliamentary seat.

Ex-prime minister Tony Abbott -- the poster boy for the right wing of the Liberal party -- was unceremoniously turfed out of office after 25 years holding the same seat, with voters opting for a green independent.

### Challenging economic outlook

Despite his high political stock, Morrison may face a rocky three-year term.

First, he will have to contend

with a challenging economic outlook and figure out how to pay for a budget based on improbable growth forecasts.

After almost three decades of robust economic growth, Australia's economy is showing signs of stalling.

The central bank is widely expected to cut interest rates when it meets next month, in a bid to counter a housing market dip, stagnant wages and a weakening labour market.

Morrison finds himself in the

clear what they voted for.

In coal-rich Queensland, voters backed new mining projects that would bring jobs, but which are fiercely opposed in much of the rest of the country.

The divisions within Morrison's Liberals were already clear to see Sunday, with right and centrist factions racing to fill the policy void.

Some demanded an immediate loosening of rules on fossil fuel exploration, while moderates hinted at a re-think of the party's climate scepticism.

"I have to say to you on climate change, it is real. We take it very seriously," said Morrison's deputy, Treasurer Josh Frydenberg.

Inside the vanquished Labor party, Shorten's defeat and quick resignation prompted an immediate jockeying for leadership, with several party stalwarts -- including long-time contender from the party's left Anthony Albanese -- set to throw their hats in the ring.

Party officials defended their decision to set out their policies in detail -- which critics said provided Morrison with too big a target and made the vote a referendum on Shorten.

At least one other group was also licking their wounds.

Usually reliable pollsters had spectacularly failed to predict the election outcome and will be picking over the numbers for days and weeks to come to see what went wrong.