

## world

# Sudan Bashir's graft trial starts

Khartoum, Sudan

Sudan's deposed military leader Omar al-Bashir, who ruled the country for 30 years, arrived in court yesterday in Khartoum for the start of his trial on corruption charges.

Bashir, 75, was forced from power on April 11, after months of protest against his regime and appeared before a prosecutor for the first time on June 16.

Now detained, the general was informed by the prosecutor's office that he faced charges of "possessing foreign currency, corruption and receiving gifts illegally".

A reporter outside the Judicial and Legal Science Institute where the trial is taking place said Bashir arrived in a huge military convoy.

In April, Sudan's army ruler General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan said more than \$113 million worth of cash in three currencies had been seized from Bashir's residence.

In May, the prosecutor general also said Bashir had been charged over killings during the anti-regime protests which eventually led to his ouster.

Protests against Bashir's rule erupted on December 19 after his government tripled the price of bread.

The most serious indictments facing Bashir, who ruled the country since seizing power in

**Omar al-Bashir** Former leader of Sudan



Aged 75  
Career soldier

\*International Criminal Court  
AFP Photo

- **1973**  
Participated in the Arab-Israeli war
- **June 30, 1989**  
Overthrows elected government, supported by Islamists
- **2003**  
Sends troops to put down rebellion in Darfur. 300,000 killed in conflict, according to UN
- **2005**  
Peace agreement with southern rebels after 21 years of civil war
- **2009**  
ICC\* issues arrest warrant against him for war crimes and crimes against humanity for genocide (in 2010)
- **2010**  
Elected president during elections boycotted by the opposition. Re-elected in 2015
- **2011**  
South Sudan proclaims its independence. Khartoum loses 3/4 of its oil reserves
- **2013**  
Protests repressed, dozens of dead says government, more than 200 says Amnesty
- **Since December 2018**  
Wave of protests against bread price increase, then for regime change
- **2019**  
**April 6:** Start of new protests outside the military headquarters  
**April 11:** Army announced Bashir has been removed from power and detained  
**April 16:** Transferred to prison  
**May-June:** Charged over the killings of protesters and with corruption  
**August 17:** Start of trial on corruption charges

a 1989 coup, have been filed by the Hague-based International Criminal Court (ICC).

They include war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide for his role in the war in Darfur, where a rebellion erupted in 2003.

The United Nations says the conflict has left more than 300,000 people dead and 2.5 million displaced, with hundreds of thousands still living

in miserable and impoverished camps.

The ICC has for years demanded that Bashir stand trial, and has renewed its call since his fall.

In a statement issued last week, Amnesty International warned that his graft trial should not distract from the heavier charges he faces in The Hague.

"While this trial is a positive

step towards accountability for some of his alleged crimes, he remains wanted for heinous crimes committed against the Sudanese people," Amnesty's Joan Nyanyuki said.

"Omar al-Bashir has evaded justice for far too long as the victims of horrific crimes still wait for justice and reparations more than a decade since the ICC issued the first warrant for his arrest," she said.

# Kuwait says emir recovered from 'setback'



Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Khaled al-Sabah (R), meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Kuwait City.

Kuwait City, Kuwait

Kuwaiti state media on Sunday reported Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad Al-Sabah had "recovered", shortly after Iran's foreign minister indicated that the 90-year-old was unwell.

The emir "has recovered from a setback and is in good health now", Kuwait's official news agency KUNA said, citing a palace statement, without specifying the nature of the "setback".

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif had earlier on Sunday wished Sheikh Sabah a "speedy recovery" after talking with the Gulf state's officials.

"Good talks with Kuwaiti crown prince (Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad Al-Sabah) and foreign minister. Praying for Emir's speedy recovery," Zarif wrote on Twitter.

The emir, who ascended to power in January 2006, was seen in public last week during Muslim prayers and appeared in good health.

Prior to KUNA's report late on Sunday, there had been no word on the emir's health in official media or Kuwaiti newspapers.

Zarif said that during the talks, he stressed that Iran's proposal for a regional dialogue forum and non-aggression pact would eliminate the need to rely on foreign powers.

Unlike its strained relations with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, Iran maintains good ties with Kuwait, which has acted as mediator to improve ties between Tehran and Arab Gulf states.

Sheikh Sabah had a pacemaker implanted in 2000 and underwent successful urinary tract surgery in the United States in August 2007.

# Russian sailor's message in bottle found 50 yrs later in Alaska

Washington, United States

A man gathering firewood in Alaska discovered a bottle with a handwritten message inside wishing the finder "happy sailing" more than 50 years after it was dropped into the sea by a Russian sailor.

"Sincere greetings! From the Russian Far East Fleet mother ship VRXF Sulak," it read. "We wish you good health and long years of life and happy sailing. 20 June 1969."

Tyler Ivanoff, a teacher's aide in Shishmaref, Alaska, spotted the bottle on the shore near his village, and pried off the plastic stopper with his teeth.

"It was still dry on the inside and still smelled like wine or whatever, old alcohol. The note was dry," he told the Nome Nugget newspaper.

Ivanoff posted a picture of the bottle and the note on Facebook on August 5.

But the yarn doesn't end there.

Rossiya 1, a Russian television network, tracked it by its return address in Vladivostok to a retired Soviet ship captain now living in Crimea.



The bottled message found on the shores of western Alaska (Courtesy of AP)

Anatoly Botsanenko, interviewed by the station in a naval uniform, said he served on the Sulak in 1969 when he was 35.

Peering at the message on the reporter's smartphone, Botsanenko said, "That's not really handwriting." But he then recognized the return address as his old home in Vladivostok.

"It's pretty cool how a small photo grew into a story," Ivanoff posted on Facebook.

# Blasts rock eastern Afghan city

- As many as 10 blasts were reported in and around the city in Nangarhar province

Jalalabad, Afghanistan

Scores of people including children were wounded Monday after a series of explosions shook the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad, as the country's independence day was marred by bloodshed.

As many as 10 blasts were reported in and around the city in Nangarhar province, authorities said, and casualty numbers rose as the day wore on.

"The explosions were caused by IEDs in different parts of the city and as groups of people were celebrating independence day," the Nangarhar governor's spokesman Attallah Khogyani said, referring to improvised explosive devices.

Jalalabad is the scene of frequent bomb attacks, and the surrounding terrain is home to both Taliban fighters and the Islamic State group's local affiliate.

At least 52 people were wounded, Khogyani said. Zaher Adel, a spokesman for a local hospital, said 66 wounded people had been brought in. An AFP correspondent saw children among the victims.

This year's August 19 celebra-



A volunteer carries an injured boy to a hospital, following multiples of bomb blasts in Jalalabad

tions mark 100 years of Afghan independence from British influence.

The day was supposed to be one of national pride and unity, but was overshadowed by an IS suicide attack Saturday on a crowded Kabul wedding hall that killed at least 63 people.

In Kabul, locals took to the streets to wave the black-red-and-green Afghan flag, but several public events to commemorate the date were scrapped as Kabul mourns and due to fears of a fresh attack.



Trump said he was pleased with talks on ending the war, 18 years after the Sept 11, attacks that prompted the US invasion of Afghanistan

"We postponed the celebrations to honour the victims, but we will definitely take revenge for our people," Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said.

"We will avenge the blood of our people, every drop of it."

Mayhem from Afghanistan's war continues to wreak havoc on Afghans every day, even though the US and the Taliban are in final negotiations for a deal that would see US troops begin to quit Afghanistan and could potentially lead to a reduction in violence.