

# Anwar Declares 'New Dawn' After Release From Jail



his second jail term for an unrelated sodomy conviction sets up a tantalizing reunion with his nemesis-turned-ally Mahathir.

Mahathir has said he expects to run the government for one to two years but has signaled that the reins would be turned over to Anwar eventually.

### No Grudges

Anwar said his history with Mahathir was water under the bridge, as they shared the same goals of reforming the government and cleaning up a massive corruption scandal involving former prime minister Najib Razak.

"Bury the hatchet? It's been a long time already," Anwar said when asked about Mahathir. "I have forgiven him."

Anwar indicated that he had no immediate plans to get deeply involved in politics, but would support Mahathir's governing efforts as a "private citizen".

Anwar's release caps a remarkable reversal of fortune made possible by the BN's unexpected electoral drubbing a week ago.

Mahathir, who headed BN for 22 years until 2003, came out of retirement to lead the disparate opposition to a surprise victory.

Many had expected a BN win thanks to its tight hold over the media, government, police and electoral apparatus of the multicultural Muslim-majority nation.

But the result laid bare the depth of disgust with former leader Najib, who is implicated in a massive scandal in which billions of dollars were plundered from the state investment fund IMDB he established.

Mahathir has barred Najib from leaving the country pending investigations.

Malaysia's former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim greets the media after walking out of the Cheras Rehabilitation Hospital in Kuala Lumpur on May 16, 2018.

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) -- Reformist Anwar Ibrahim declared a "new dawn for Malaysia" Wednesday after his release from prison paved the way for a return to national politics as presumptive successor to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad following a stunning election upset.

In scenes that captivated Malaysians, the charismatic 70-year-old returned to the national spotlight after the country's king quashed a widely criticized sodomy conviction that had put Anwar behind bars for three years.

To ecstatic cries of "Reformasi!" (Reform) -- Anwar's rallying cry -- he took selfies with his former prison guards and vowed before hundreds of journalists and supporters to back efforts to take the country in a new direction.

Anwar said he had forgiven Mahathir, 92, who had him imprisoned two

decades ago but has become his unlikely ally.

"Now there is a new dawn for Malaysia," said Anwar, flanked by his wife Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and other members of his political party.

"The entire spectrum of Malaysians, regardless of race or religion, have stood by the principles of democracy and freedom. They demand change."

Anwar has cast a long shadow over Malaysian politics for decades.

He enjoyed a meteoric rise in the now-ousted Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition before a spectacular falling out with his then-boss Mahathir in 1998 that saw Anwar thrown in jail for sodomy and abuse of power.

Upon his release in 2004, he joined and revitalized the opposition coalition that finally ousted BN last week.

Anwar's release Wednesday from

## Maduro Vows 'Great Changes' in Venezuela If Re-Elected



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro delivers a speech to supporters during a campaign rally in Charallave on May 15, 2018.

CARACAS (Dispatches) -- Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro vowed to make "great changes" in the OPEC nation reeling from hyperinflation and shortages if re-elected this weekend.

"Venezuela needs big economic changes and we are going to do it ourselves," Maduro said at a rally in the bedroom community of Charallave, south of Caracas, prior to Sunday's poll which he is expected to win.

"If you give me your power on May

20, I swear ... to you with my life that I will dedicate myself to making all the economic changes that Venezuela needs for rebirth," added Maduro, who danced and sang under the Caribbean sun.

The president blames a U.S.-led "economic war", including recent sanctions on the financial sector by U.S. President Donald Trump's administration, for hardships.

Maduro's main rival in Sunday's vote, former state Governor Henri

Falcon, is proposing dollarizing the economy, reversing nationalizations, and opening Venezuela to immediate emergency foreign aid.

"Which would you prefer to have - two petros or two dollars?" he asked a crowd in a poor Caracas neighborhood at a rally on Monday night. He was referring to a new cryptocurrency project, which Maduro has pitched as crucial to bypassing U.S. sanctions on the South American country.

Maduro has accused Falcon of wanting to sell out the country -- which has the world's largest oil reserves -- to "the gringos," a derogatory term for the Americans.

He once threatened to "take up arms and lead a revolution" if a government comes into power that wants to hand the country's "riches" to "imperialist" forces.

The oil-rich country, which has a quintuple-digit annual inflation rate, suffers from severe food and medicine shortages, the return of once-controlled diseases, and mass emigration.

Earlier, an independent economic expert calculated an unofficial inflation rate of almost 18,000% for Venezuela, exceeding a prediction by the International Monetary Fund of almost 14,000%.

Maduro accuses the opposition of being incited by the U.S. to topple his government.

two-thirds of upper house members to get his way.

"The executive cannot unilaterally withdraw from a treaty or international agreement, because such withdrawal is equivalent to a repeal of a law," the senators told the Supreme Court.

Duterte's spokesman, Harry Roque, said he was confident the Supreme Court would throw out the petition. "Good luck to them," he said. "The courts will always defer to the executive on matters of foreign affairs."

The complaint to the ICC, filed by a Philippine lawyer and endorsed by a congressman and a senator, concerns the deaths of thousands of Filipinos in Duterte's signature crackdown

on illegal drugs. Duterte denies any wrongdoing.

Police reject allegations by activists of systematic murder and cover-ups during a bloody campaign.

Critics have dismissed as cowardly Duterte's decision to turn his back on the ICC, calling it contrary to his stated readiness to "rot in jail" if it meant saving his nation from the scourge of drugs.

Lawyers and jurist groups say the withdrawal is pointless and does not protect Duterte against a possible indictment, as the ICC's jurisdiction retroactively covers the period during which a country was a member of the court.

## Indonesia Police Kill Sword-Wielding Daesh Attackers



Two of the men who the authorities say attacked a police station lay dead at the scene in Pekanbaru, Indonesia, May 16, 2018.

JAKARTA (Reuters) -- Indonesian police shot dead four men on Wednesday after they used samurai swords to attack officers at Riau police headquarters in Pekanbaru, Sumatra, a police spokesman said.

The men had driven their car into the police yard before getting out to stage the attack, Setyo Wasisto, national police spokesman, told a briefing.

Two officers were wounded in the attack, while another was killed after one of the perpetrators tried to escape and crashed into the officer, he said.

"The one who escaped has been captured and secured at Pekanbaru police station," Wasisto said.

The spokesman said that a journalist who had been at the police station was also hurt after being hit by the car.

Earlier, an internal police report said that one of the dead men had a suspected bomb strapped to his body. Wasisto did not comment on this.

TV footage showed one man lying on the ground with a long sword next to his body and an armored car stationed outside the police station.

A police spokesman in Riau said they had not identified the perpetrators yet or determined their motive.

But the attack comes after a series

of suicide bombings by Takfiri militants targeting churches and a police building in Indonesia's second-biggest city of Surabaya over the past few days.

The suicide bombings, involving families with young children, and an explosion at an apartment where militants were suspected to have been constructing bombs have left around 30 people dead, including 13 suspected perpetrators, police said.

The attacks are the worst in the world's biggest Muslim-majority country since the bombing of tourist-packed restaurants in Bali in 2005.

Police suspect they were carried out by a cell of the Daesh-inspired group Jemaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), an umbrella organization on a U.S. State Department terrorist list that is reckoned to have drawn hundreds of Indonesian sympathizers of Daesh.

In a message carried on its Amaq news agency, Daesh has claimed responsibility for the attacks in Surabaya.

After some major successes tackling Takfiri militancy since 2001, Indonesia has seen a resurgence in recent years, including in January 2016 when four suicide bombers and gunmen attacked a shopping area in the capital, Jakarta.

## Sheikh Zakzaky, Wife Whisked to Kaduna for Trial



Leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky arrives in court in Kaduna on May 15, 2018.

KADUNA (Dispatches) -- Leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky was transferred to the central state of Kaduna, where he was arraigned before the state High Court along with his wife.

A member of Islamic Movement in Nigeria said the Nigerian military forces, in cooperation with the country's government, relocated the cleric to Kaduna on Tuesday morning.

Zakzaky and his wife were brought before the court hall by security forces and they took their seats as the case continued.

An oral application was moved for bail. But the presiding judge asked him to put his application officially in writing.

The case was adjourned to June 21, 2018 and the Sheikh and his wife were consequently returned to Abuja.

In a phone conversation with his son, Muhammad, a few days ago, Zakzaky had said that a representative from Kaduna state court recently served him a summons accusing the cleric of involvement in murder.

The cleric told his son that he rejected the allegations, noting that the government seeks to kill him under pressures from Saudi Arabia.

Supporters of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria have staged another protest to call for the release of their leader Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky.

Zakzaky has been detained without trial for over two years over accusations of inciting public disturbances. His movement has vehemently denied the charges.

Despite the ruling of a Federal High Court, which ordered Zakzaky's unconditional release in 2016, the Nigerian government has refused to set him free.

The top cleric lost his left eyesight in a raid which was carried out by the Nigerian army on his residence in the northern town of Zaria in December 2015.

During the raid, Zakzaky's wife sustained serious wounds too and more than 300 of his followers and three of his sons were killed. Zakzaky, his wife, and a large number of the cleric's followers have since been in custody.

A judicial inquiry after the 2015 brutal raid concluded that the military had killed 347 IMN members in Zaria. Soldiers buried the bodies in mass graves.

Several international organizations and human rights groups have denounced "the Zaria massacre."



SRINAGAR, India (Reuters) -- India will suspend operations against militants fighting its rule in the disputed region of Kashmir during the holy Muslim month of Ramadan, the government said Wednesday. The move follows weeks of sporadic violence in the Muslim majority territory at the heart of decades of hostility between India and Pakistan, both of which claim the region. More than 130 people have been killed this year in militant violence, prompting calls by the Jammu and Kashmir state government for a ceasefire during the fasting month that begins this week. Federal Home Minister Rajnath Singh has ordered security forces to halt cordon and search operations across Kashmir, the government said. Only last weekend, soldiers killed five suspected rebels in an operation in Shopian district that prompted protests from hundreds of people who pelted stones at the security forces.

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EDINBURGH (AFP) -- The Scottish Parliament formally rejected legislation for taking Britain out of the EU, in an unprecedented move that sets the scene for a constitutional crisis. Lawmakers in the devolved Edinburgh assembly voted by 93 to 30 to refuse "legislative consent" for the highly-contested European Union (Withdrawal) Bill currently being debated by the British parliament. British Prime Minister Theresa May is under no obligation to amend her Brexit plan in response to Holyrood's objection. However, experts warn that confrontation between London and Edinburgh could push Scotland towards independence. Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, leader of the secessionist Scottish National Party (SNP), said Britain was heading into "uncharted constitutional territory". The dispute centers on who will have control of powers currently residing in Brussels, such as over farming and fisheries, once Britain leaves the EU. Scotland's SNP government wants such powers to be under Scottish control, while the Conservative British government argues they should reside in London, at least initially.

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LUCKNOW, India (AFP) -- At least 18 people died after a flyover collapsed in northern India, crushing vehicles and passengers under tons of concrete, a rescue official said. Rescue workers rushed to the site in Varanasi city where an unknown number of people were still feared trapped under the debris, in the latest of a string of deadly construction accidents in India. TV footage showed mangled vehicles trapped under heavy cement girders with huge crowds gathered around. Enforcement of safety rules in India is weak and substandard materials are often used in construction. In 2016, some 26 people died in eastern Kolkata city after a 100-meter section of a flyover crashed down onto the street.

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PARIS (Reuters) -- With hundreds of migrants and asylum seekers packed in tents alongside a Paris canal and under a nearby bridge, charities are warning of the risk from drowning and violence if the authorities do not act to tackle makeshift camps. Two young men - one Afghan and one probably Sudanese - drowned in the canal this month from the camps housing more than 2,400 people by the Canal St Martin, a trendy area known for hipsters having picnics along its banks on sunny days. France, which has received far fewer asylum seekers over the past years than neighboring Germany, has nevertheless been struggling with tackling new arrivals - for years in what became known as the Calais "jungle," on the northern coast, and, since that was shut down, increasingly in Paris.

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WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -- Five people are dead and nearly half a million customers in the Northeast are without power due to severe weather that includes thunderstorms, flash flooding, hail, winds up to 80 mph and possibly tornadoes. An 11-year-old girl was killed in Newburgh, New York, by a falling tree that also injured her mother. Also in Newburgh, police said a tree fell on a woman who was operating a vehicle. She died later. In Danbury, Connecticut, one person died after a tree fell on his truck. A fourth person was killed by a falling tree in New Fairfield, Connecticut. And a 31-year-old male died when a tree fell on his car in the Poconos at around 4 p.m. There were nearly 50 reports of hail in states including Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut, the National Weather Service (NWS) said.

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KATHMANDU (Reuters) -- A 48-year-old Nepali mountaineer climbed Mount Everest for a 22nd time Wednesday, creating a new record for the most summits of the world's highest mountain, hiking officials said. Kami Rita Sherpa reached the 8,850-meter summit via the Southeast Ridge route, accompanied by 13 other climbers including his clients, Tourism Department official Gyanendra Shrestha said from the base camp. His latest ascent took him one summit clear of two fellow sherpas with whom he had shared the earlier record. "He has set the world record," Mingma Sherpa, chairman of the Seven Summit Treks company that employs Kami, said. Kami had begun his descent and is expected to reach base camp by the weekend, Shrestha told Reuters.

## Senators Ask Court to Overturn Duterte's ICC Exit

MANILA (Reuters) -- A minority bloc in the Philippine Senate Wednesday asked the Supreme Court to invalidate Duterte's withdrawal from the International Criminal Court, saying his action without the chamber's consent was unconstitutional.

Duterte issued a notice of withdrawal in March, saying his right to due process had been violated after an ICC prosecutor announced a preliminary examination of a complaint that accused the president and top officials of crimes against humanity.

But six minority members of the Senate, from among a total of 23, said Duterte would need the backing of

two-thirds of upper house members to get his way.

"The executive cannot unilaterally withdraw from a treaty or international agreement, because such withdrawal is equivalent to a repeal of a law," the senators told the Supreme Court.

Duterte's spokesman, Harry Roque, said he was confident the Supreme Court would throw out the petition. "Good luck to them," he said. "The courts will always defer to the executive on matters of foreign affairs."

The complaint to the ICC, filed by a Philippine lawyer and endorsed by a congressman and a senator, concerns the deaths of thousands of Filipinos in Duterte's signature crackdown