

NEW ZEALAND

Ardern seeks ban

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern wants to find the best way of stopping foreigners buying homes in New Zealand before she goes to Vietnam next week.

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WORLD

Kurdish leader quits

Iraqi Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani says he will give up his position as president after an independence referendum he championed backfired.

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BUSINESS

Westpac won't settle

Westpac is not backing down over allegations of inter-bank rate-rigging, despite ANZ and National Australia Bank settling their cases.

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AUSTRALIA

Tensions high ahead of Manus closure



Uncertain future: Papua New Guinea says important issues need to be addressed before the Manus Island detention centre closes.

Picture: AAP

Australia insists it is working to find solutions for hundreds of men who will be left in limbo when the Manus Island offshore detention centre closes, as fears for their safety grow.

Power and water will be cut off to the centre as the Papua New Guinea navy prepares to retake control of the site.

Extra PNG police have been deployed to the island after many

locals threatened to use violence to stop the asylum seekers relocating.

PNG is demanding Australia clarify its plans for people found not to be refugees, and refugees who are refusing to settle on Manus Island.

PNG Immigration Minister Petrus Thomas said Australia was responsible for finding third-country resettlement options for refugees, as well as working to facilitate the returns of "non-refugees".

"There has to be a clear understanding of what Australia will continue to do and support PNG in the next few months to deal with the remaining caseload," Thomas said.

"There must be a review of the arrangement to clarify these international obligations and officials will be discussing the details of (a) revised agreement in the next few days." P2



WORLD

Trump calls Russia probe a witch hunt

US President Donald Trump has once again called special prosecutor Robert Mueller's investigation into his campaign's links with Russia a "witch hunt" and demanded "something" be done about alleged irregularities he says his former Democratic presidential rival, Hillary Clinton, committed during the 2016 election.

Trump did not comment on the news that the first charges resulting from Mueller's probe into presumed Russian interference in the election have been filed and tried to divert attention to the alleged actions by Clinton and other Democrats.

A Washington grand jury has approved the first charges in Mueller's investigation, although they have been kept sealed by order of a federal judge.

The investigation deals with alleged links between the Kremlin and Trump's campaign, but it also covers the president's finances and family business activities and seeks to determine if the mogul obstructed justice in May when he fired then-FBI director James Comey, who had been heading the Russia investigation. I

AUSTRALIA

More than 100 Turnbull decisions at risk, says Labor

Labor believes more than 100 Turnbull government decisions are vulnerable to legal challenge as a result of the dual citizenship status of Barnaby Joyce and Fiona Nash.

The opposition has received legal and parliamentary advice on a range of decisions

which could be challenged after the High Court disqualified the pair from parliament.

Among the 118 decisions under threat are ministerial announcements and grants, legislative instruments, water access entitlement payments, elements of the NBN

rollout and the mobile black spot program.

Acting Labor Leader Tanya Plibersek said some decisions were likely to have left people feeling aggrieved.

"If they want to pursue the government on some of them, I don't doubt they will," Plibersek said.

"No doubt there will be some people who will be wondering whether they were treated fairly and whether decisions were made properly by Fiona Nash and Barnaby Joyce when they weren't properly elected to the parliament." P6

NEW ZEALAND



Seeking an agreement: Jacinda Ardern will attend the APEC meeting in Vietnam.

Picture: AP

Ardern seeks to ban foreign home-buyers

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern wants to find the best way of stopping foreigners buying homes in New Zealand before she goes to the APEC meeting in Vietnam next week.

The free trade agreement TPP11 will be discussed on the sidelines

of APEC and member states want to finalise a broad agreement.

Putting a ban on foreign buyers could cause problems but Ardern believes it could be put in place before TPP11 is ratified.

"I'm looking to try to

resolve that issue before we go to APEC, before we're in a position of having to undertake additional talks around TPP11, so we can be assured we're no longer in this position of choosing one or the other," she said.

Ardern believes if the right mechanism can be found, and if it's in place before ratification "our understanding is that that would achieve

the outcome we are looking for".

She said she was looking at all options.

The government appears to want to be in a position where it doesn't have to renegotiate TPP11 – the original Trans-Pacific Partnership without the US which has withdrawn from it.

APEC takes place on November 11 and 12.

No date has been set for ratification of TPP11. ■

CONTINUED FROM P1

Tensions run high as Manus closure looms

Acting Prime Minister Julie Bishop said Australia was working on solutions.

"We are working with PNG to ensure that those who are found to be refugees can be resettled either in PNG or in other countries," she said.

"Those who have found not to be refugees should go home. They've been found by the UNHCR not to be owed protection. So they should return to their homes."

Greens senator Nick McKim said it was an escalating humanitarian emergency and held grave concerns for the safety of more than 600 people detained at the Lombrum centre.

"They're not in a good place and many of them are mentally unwell due to the deprivations they've suffered at Australia's hands and being indefinitely detained on Manus Island for so long," he said.

"They're absolutely in fear for their lives."

The men are refusing to leave the centre at the Lombrum Navy Base amid fears they won't be safe at three other facilities they are meant to relocate to in and around the island's main town of Lorengau. ■

WORLD

Deadly winds sweep across Central Europe

High winds have knocked down trees and caused widespread travel chaos across much of Central Europe, leaving six people dead and several injured.

Storm Herwart, which had gusts reach 180km/h, also caused electricity blackouts in hundreds of thousands of homes in the Czech Republic, Austria and other countries.

A Lufthansa flight from Houston to Frankfurt made an emergency landing in

the south-west German city of Stuttgart because of the strong winds.

Two people died in Poland, including a man who drove his car into a tree that had been knocked down by the storm, fire department spokesman Pawel Fratzak said. The second man was killed when a tree fell on his car in south-west Poland and his passenger was hospitalised, Polish media said.



Two others were killed in the Czech Republic when they were hit by falling trees, local TV reported.

Train connections in several German states were shut down, including

links to and from Berlin, because of the danger from branches falling on the tracks. Stationary trains were opened to travelers stranded by the cancellations.

Dangerous: Storm Herwart has disrupted travel and caused power outages. **Picture:** AAP

In the German city of Hamburg, the Elbe River flooded a parking garage, the city's famous fish market and several streets. Firefighters had to rescue seven cows from the Elbe.

Zoos in Prague, Berlin and the eastern German city of Rostock closed because of the danger of falling trees and the Austrian capital of Vienna shut down all operations at its main train station. ■

WORLD

Spaniards take to the streets for unity

Hundreds of thousands of supporters of a unified Spain have filled Barcelona's streets in one of the biggest shows of force yet by the so-called silent majority that has watched as regional political leaders push for Catalan independence.

Political parties opposing a split by Catalonia from Spain had a small lead in a recently published opinion poll, the first since Madrid called a regional election to try to resolve the country's worst political crisis in four decades.

Polls and recent elections have shown about half the electorate in the wealthy north-east region, which is autonomous, oppose secession from Spain, but a vocal independence movement has brought the crisis to a head.

Spain's central government called an election for December 21 after sacking Catalonia's president Carles Puigdemont, dissolving its parliament and dismissing its government.

The regional government claimed it had a mandate to push ahead with independence after an unofficial referendum on October 1, which was ruled illegal under Spanish law



United: Hundreds of thousands of Spaniards took to the streets of Barcelona.

Picture: AAP

and mostly boycotted by unionists.

Waving thousands of Spanish flags, protesters turned out in the largest display of support for a united Spain since the beginning of the crisis, underlining the depth of division in Catalonia.

The poll of 1000 people by Sigma Dos for newspaper El Mundo, which opposes independence, showed anti-independence parties winning 43.4 per cent support and pro-independence parties 42.5 per cent.

The survey was

taken just as the central government prepared to take control of Catalonia.

Madrid said secessionist politicians were free to take part in the December 21 election.

Former European Parliament president Josep Borrell called for voters to turn out en masse

in December to ensure independence supporters lost their stranglehold on the regional parliament.

"Maybe we're here because many of us during elections didn't go and vote. Now we have a golden opportunity. This time, nobody should stay at home," Borrell said. **I**

AUSTRALIA

Joyce hits out over citizenship sniping

Barnaby Joyce has blasted Liberal Party figures for sniping at the Nationals over the dual citizenship saga, reminding them the junior coalition partner was responsible for winning last year's election.

Tensions within the coalition have flared since the High Court booted Joyce and his Nationals' deputy Fiona Nash from parliament because of their dual citizenship.

Joyce fired a shot against

those providing "off the record" comments about the Nationals.

"We won the last election because the National Party didn't go backwards, we actually went forwards, we held all our seats and won one (more)," he said. "I just think people should be reminded of that and if they really have a strong view about something, put your name to it."

Joyce conceded Nash would not return to the Senate, with her seat to be snapped up by Liberal candidate Hollie Hughes. **I**



Not happy: Barnaby Joyce has slammed Liberal colleagues. **Picture:** AAP

WORLD

Fires force 1000 to evacuate in Italy

About 1000 people have been forced to leave their homes in north-west Italy as forest fires raged.

The towns of Mompantero, Venaus and Susa in the Susa Valley near the French border were worst affected by the fires, which are believed to have been started by arsonists, Italy's ANSA news agency reports. About 200 residents of a senior citizens home were forced to evacuate from the fires. **I**

WORLD



Deadly: The Somali government has sacked two officials after another Islamist attack in Mogadishu.

Picture: AAP

Security officials sacked after attack

The Somali government has sacked two top security officials after yet another Islamist attack on a hotel in Mogadishu, which killed 29 people in a siege that lasted nearly 12 hours.

The government sacked the country's police commander, Abdihakim Dahir Saiid, and the director-general of the

National Intelligence Security Agency, Abdullahi Mohamed Ali, the prime minister's office announced.

Twin bombings in Mogadishu two weeks ago killed more than 350 people, the worst such attacks in the country's history. More than 50 people are missing.

Islamist militants al Shabaab claimed responsibility for the weekend attack, which happened ahead of a planned meeting to try to defuse tensions between the federal government and regional states. Government officials had started to meet at the hotel to discuss strategy.

"So far I am sure 29 people died – the death toll may rise," police officer Abdullahi Nur said, adding at least 12 of the dead were police officers.

Three militants were captured alive and two others blew themselves up after they were shot, police said. Some militants may have disguised themselves and escaped with the residents who were rescued from the hotel, one police officer said.

The attack presents a further challenge to the new government of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, whose defence minister and chief of army staff resigned this month. ■

AUSTRALIA

Kangaroo warning for NSW drivers

With dry conditions in NSW forcing kangaroos closer to the roads, there's been a spike in wildlife collisions – and drivers are being warned to pay attention.

Animals are venturing closer to roadsides in the hunt for plant growth, NSW Ambulance said, and drivers need to know that swerving is the worst thing to do.

Since August, NSW paramedics have attended 38 collisions, including a fatal crash involving a 57-year-old motorcyclist who hit a feral pig at Coolah, in the central west.

Earlier in October, 50-year-old Col Wooderson narrowly escaped death when he hit a kangaroo while riding his bicycle on a highway at Berrima.

"It all happened so quickly. It was still dark and quite foggy and I was riding down a hill with a mate," Wooderson said.

"The kangaroo came from the bush and straight at me on to the road. The last thing I remember was him looking at me and me looking at him."

It is estimated one in seven crashes on country roads involves animals. ■

AUSTRALIA

Bird numbers soar to new heights in annual count

Record numbers and species of birds have been spotted across Australia in this year's annual count of our feathered friends.

Nearly two million birds were counted across yards, parks, wetlands and beaches by thousands of enthusiasts during the week-long Aussie Backyard Bird Count.

Among them were 635 species ranging from kookaburras and Australian magpies to the blue-

breasted fairy-wren and black-throated finch.

Organisers said while the figures from the fourth annual national bird count were only preliminary, they dwarfed last year's totals of 1.4 million birds and 576 species.

Birdlife Australia spokesman Sean Dooley said the rainbow lorikeet, noisy miner and Australian magpie were again the most common birds recorded, but there was



also a "phenomenal" leap in the number of scarlet honeyeaters popping up in Victoria.

"They are quite common

along coastal areas in NSW and Queensland and pretty rare in Victoria," he said.

"But this year, they've

On the up: Nearly two million birds were recorded during this year's Aussie Backyard Bird Count. Picture: AAP

erupted right across the state. We went from 17 in Victoria last year to 139 this year, so eight times as many as last year."

Dooley said last winter's extremely dry weather in Queensland could have prompted the honeyeaters to move south to find food.

He expected to uncover a similar trend in regards to more inland bush and water birds being seen in coastal areas when he analysed the data. ■

WORLD

Kurdish leader calls it quits

Iraqi Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani says he will give up his position as president after an independence referendum he championed backfired and triggered a regional crisis.

There was high drama at the Kurdish parliament, which was stormed by armed protesters as it met to approve the veteran leader's resignation as Kurdish president. Some MPs were barricaded in their offices.

In a televised address, his first since Iraqi forces launched a surprise offensive to recapture Kurdish-held territory on October 16, Barzani confirmed he would not extend his presidential term after November 1 "under any conditions".

"I am the same Masoud Barzani, I am a Peshmerga (Kurdish fighter) and will continue to help my people in their struggle for independence," said Barzani, who has campaigned for Kurdish self-determination for nearly four decades.

The region, which had enjoyed unprecedented autonomy for years, has been in turmoil since the independence referendum a month ago prompted



Out: Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani has announced his resignation.

Picture: AAP

military and economic retaliation from Iraq's central government in Baghdad.

In his address, Barzani vigorously defended

his decision to hold the September 25 referendum, the results of which "can never be erased", he said.

The vote was overwhelmingly for

independence and triggered the military action by the Baghdad government and threats from neighbouring Turkey and Iran. ■

AUSTRALIA

Melbourne auctions pave way for record

A record number of Melbourne auctions meant last week was the Australian property market's busiest of the year.

Melbourne's 1983 auctions in the seven days to October 29 lifted the total across the combined capital cities to 3690, beating the year's previous high of 3517 – set in the week before Easter.

The preliminary national

clearance rate rose from last week's revised 64.7 per cent to 67.8 per cent, according to preliminary figures from CoreLogic.

And the property data group said there could be more records to come before the year is out.

"Historically, auction volumes have peaked around late-November/early-December," CoreLogic said. "If this trend holds true this year, we could



Record high: Melbourne helped pave the way for the Australian property market's busiest week of the year.

Picture: AAP

see new records being set for auction volumes as the spring season concludes."

Combined capital city prices remained steady overall, dropping 0.1 per

cent in Sydney and lifting 0.2 per cent in Melbourne.

The median price across all capital cities was \$690,687 for a house and \$571,166 for a unit. ■

WORLD

Las Vegas shooter's brain to be studied

Scientists are preparing to do a microscopic study of the Las Vegas gunman's brain, but whatever they find likely won't be what led him to kill 58 people in the worst mass shooting in modern US history, experts say.

Stephen Paddock's brain is being sent to Stanford University for a months-long examination after a visual inspection during an autopsy found no abnormalities, Las Vegas authorities said.

Doctors will perform multiple forensic analyses, including an exam of the 64-year-old's brain tissue to find any possible neurological problems.

The brain will arrive in California soon, and Stanford has been instructed to spare no expense for the work, *The New York Times* reported. It will be further dissected to determine if Paddock suffered from health problems such as strokes, blood vessel diseases, tumors, some types of epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, degenerative disorders, physical trauma and infections.

The examination will come about a month after Paddock unleashed more than 1000 bullets through the windows of a 32nd-floor suite at the Mandalay Bay casino-hotel into a crowd below attending an outdoor country music festival.

Investigators working around the clock are frustrated by a lack of clues that would point to his motive. Authorities have resorted to putting up billboards in southern Nevada seeking tips and now the intensive brain study that medical experts say likely won't yield definitive answers. ■

BUSINESS



Up for the fight: Westpac is continuing its trial with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.

Picture: AAP

Westpac refuses to back down in court

Westpac is not backing down from its trial with the corporate regulator over allegations of inter-bank rate-rigging, despite ANZ and National Australia Bank's decision to settle their cases.

Counsel for all three banks and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission were in

Federal Court to discuss their next steps after NAB settled its case for \$50 million.

ANZ was the first bank to settle with ASIC on October 23 on what was supposed to be the first day of a trial lasting up to five months.

"I congratulate the parties in each of the ANZ and NAB proceedings for

the hard work in getting to this stage," Justice Jonathan Beach said.

Counsel for ASIC's case against Westpac, Philip Crutchfield QC, believes the trial will finish before the end of the year. "We are endeavouring to finish this trial well in advance of Christmas," he said.

Justice Beach is considering referring the ANZ and NAB cases to another judge for finalisation, while he presides over the Westpac trial. But if Westpac also

settles with ASIC, Justice Beach would likely oversee all three cases.

ANZ has not provided any details about the agreement it reached with ASIC except to say it had prepared for the financial impact. Settlements are subject to court approval.

NAB agreed to pay a \$10 million penalty to ASIC, the regulator's \$20 million of legal costs and make a \$20 million donation to a financial consumer protection fund nominated by the regulator. ■

CONTINUED FROM P1

Turnbull decisions at risk, Labor says

The High Court will be asked to rule on whether the decisions were constitutionally valid, as they were made after the two ministers effectively ceased to hold office in October.

One of the most controversial decisions in question is the relocation of the national pesticides agency from Canberra to Armidale in Joyce's northern NSW electorate.

Joyce said it was wrong to claim the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority move could be exposed to legal challenge, as it was a cabinet decision signed off by the finance minister.

"What this says is more about the Labor Party and its complete lack of vision for regional Australia," he said.

Joyce was confident other decisions he took as a minister would stand because his dismissal was not retrospective.

The former deputy prime minister and four senators were found to hold dual citizenship and were constitutionally ineligible to nominate for parliament at the 2016 election.

Voters will go to the polls in his seat of New England on December 2. ■

AUSTRALIA

Labor's poll lead comes as no surprise to Bishop

Acting Prime Minister Julie Bishop is not surprised the Turnbull government has taken a hit in the polls, given recent events.

The latest Newspoll, published in *The Australian*, has Labor leading the coalition 54-46 per cent in two-party terms.

The coalition's primary vote has also dropped from 36 to 35 per cent, while Labor's remains steady at 37 per cent.

Turnbull had a

tumultuous past week, with the High Court disqualifying Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce and cabinet minister Fiona Nash over their dual citizenship and ructions over Employment Minister Michaelia Cash misleading parliament over raids on two Australian Workers Union offices.

"Given the events of the last few weeks, it's not surprising that the Newspoll is as it is," Bishop said.



In it together: Julie Bishop and Malcolm Turnbull. Picture: AAP

However, she noted Turnbull had a 41-33 per cent lead over Bill Shorten as preferred prime minister and there was still 18 months until an election.

Labor has stepped

up pressure on the government, saying ministerial decisions made by Joyce and Nash could be under a constitutional cloud because of the High Court ruling.

Acting Labor Leader Tanya Plibersek said the government should have stood the ministers aside earlier to avoid any legal doubts over their decisions.

"No doubt there will be some people who will be wondering whether they were treated fairly and whether decisions were made properly by Fiona Nash and Barnaby Joyce when they weren't properly elected to the parliament," she said. ■