**David Sassoli elected European Parliament president**

# Italian MEP David-Maria Sassoli was elected president of the European Parliament on Wednesday, propelled to victory thanks to a recommendation from EU leaders to put a Socialist at the helm of the legislature.

# Sassoli won 345 votes in the second round of balloting. Jan Zahradil won 160 votes and Ska Keller 119.

# He is due to serve for two and a half years — half the parliamentary term — before passing the torch to a member of the center-right European People's Party for the rest of the mandate.

# In his remarks to MEPs before the vote, Sassoli — who as a former TV journalist has a profile in Italy but is not well known outside the country — said he had decided to run because "Europe will be stronger only with a Parliament which plays a more important role."

# The Parliament will also elect 14 vice presidents on Wednesday and five quaestors (who look after financial and administrative matters) on Thursday.

# Sassoli's rise to power is unexpected. EU leaders had on Tuesday floated the idea of Sergei Stanishev, a Bulgarian and the president of the Party of European Socialists, taking the Parliament presidency. Stanishev would have helped to provide an Eastern European balance to the slate of EU top jobs — the first four of which were settled on Tuesday.

# The “top jobs” package agreed by leaders on the European Council after three days of marathon talks saw German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen nominated as Commission president; Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel named president of the Council; IMF chief Christine Lagarde put forward to head the European Central Bank; and Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Borrell nominated as high representative for foreign affairs.

# Candidates who had been expected to seek the European Parliament presidency, including current job-holder Antonio Tajani and Belgian MEP Guy Verhofstadt, did not run. "Renew Europe [the liberal-centrist grouping in the Parliament] — including Guy Verhofstadt himself — supports the [Council] package so there is no liberal candidate for the European Parliament presidency," an official from the group said. Parliament officials said Stanishev did not submit his candidacy.

# In recent days, senior MEPs have asserted the Parliament's autonomy and independence. However, in the event, they followed the path set down by the European Council in electing a Socialist and thus providing political balance to the slate of EU top jobs. By choosing an Italian and not an Eastern European for the role, they failed to provide geographical balance.

# Sassoli did not make his bid public before the end of the European Council on Tuesday. As a former vice president of the Parliament, Sassoli is known to MEPs for chairing plenary sessions in Strasbourg. As a member of Italy's center-left Democratic Party, his delegation is the second largest within the Socialists and Democrats group in the European Parliament.

# The Parliament will also elect 14 vice presidents on Wednesday and five quaestors (who look after financial and administrative matters) on Thursday.

# After thanking Tajani for his “dedication" to the institution, Sassoli made an emotional plea in plenary, asking the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission to “respond with more courage to the requests of European citizens.” He also called to "reinforce procedures to make the Parliament a protagonist of a true European democracy.”

# “The Parliament will act as a guarantor of the independence of European citizens,” he added.

**PHOTO David-Maria Sassoli PHOTO CREDIT: POLITICO**

1. **US border patrol divers search for missing two-year-old girl in Rio Grande**

United State border patrol divers are searching for a two-year-old girl who was swept away in the Rio Grande on the [US-Mexico border](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/us-mexico-border) as she was crossing into Texas with her mother.

The [treacherous river](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jun/26/us-mexico-border-migrants-crossing-rio-grande) that winds along the border between Texas and Mexico may have claimed yet another victim, a week after [pictures](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jun/25/photo-drowned-migrant-daughter-rio-grande-us-mexico-border) of a father and his tiny daughter who [drowned](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/01/drowned-migrants-oscar-martinez-angie-valeria-funeral-el-salvador) in the same waters [shocked](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jun/25/photo-drowned-migrant-daughter-rio-grande-us-mexico-border) the world.

Government divers were searching for the latest possible casualty, after a mother from the Caribbean nation of Haiti was apprehended by border patrol on the US side of the border this week and told agents her daughter had been lost to the powerful river currents as they crossed together near the [Texas](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/texas) town of Del Rio.

The news of more hardship for migrants crossing unlawfully into the US in desperation, particularly amid the [crackdown](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jul/01/migrants-us-mexico-border-rio-grande-numbers) on entry and on seeking asylum by the [Trump administration](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/trump-administration), came on the day the government’s own watchdog [decried squalid and overcrowded conditions](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jul/02/migrant-detention-center-overcrowding-report-inspector-general%27) in border patrol stations for detained adults and [children](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jun/30/children-border-crisis-america-wasnt-prepared-for-trump-us-immigration).

Mexico’s government, citing unpublished US data, on Wednesday said migrant arrests at the border fell 30% in June from the previous month after it launched a migration restriction policy as part of [a deal](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jun/07/us-mexico-deal-tariffs-trump-says) with the US to avoid [possible trade tariffs](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/may/30/trump-mexico-tariffs-migration).

The Mexican government said it was now bussing home dozens of Central American migrants from the city of Juárez, on the border with Texas, who were forced to wait in Mexico for their asylum claims to be processed under a Trump administration policy known as “Remain in Mexico”.

After migrant arrests reached a 13-year monthly high in May, immigration has arguably become the biggest issue for Trump and Democratic hopefuls vying for the 2020 presidential election.

The Democratic US senator [Cory Booker](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/cory-booker) would “virtually eliminate immigration detention” if he wins the White House, his election campaign team said on Tuesday.

[Presidential 2020](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/us-elections-2020) hopeful [Julián Castro](https://www.theguardian.com/world/julian-castro) last week proposed decriminalizing border crossings as a step toward freeing up federal resources and eliminating thousands of cases clogging criminal courts – an initiative favored by fellow candidate [Elizabeth Warren](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/elizabeth-warren).

Lawmakers visiting Texas border patrol stations earlier this week [condemned](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jul/01/aoc-border-facility-horrifying-cbp-officers-tweets) conditions the government is keeping migrants in as “horrifying”.

Meanwhile higher-than-average snowfall in the Rocky Mountains is sending more water into the Rio Grande and adjacent canals, creating deceptively swift waters. Border agents said they are rescuing immigrants from the river on an almost daily basis.

Last week, Óscar Alberto Martínez Ramírez, 26, and his daughter Angie Valeria, 23 months, [perished](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jun/25/they-wanted-the-american-dream-reporter-reveals-story-behind-tragic-photo) in the swift river currents close to the Mexican town of Matamoros. Dozens of migrants have drowned in the Rio Grande already this year.

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1. **Theresa May to warn successors that no-deal Brexit threatens UK's future**

Theresa May is to warn her potential successors that a no-deal Brexit threatens the UK’s future, in her final speech in Scotland as prime minister.

May will also unveil plans for a review into the role of Whitehall departments in the devolved nations, in a move expected to lead to increased direct spending by the UK government in [Scotland](https://www.theguardian.com/uk/scotland), Wales and Northern Ireland Guardian newspaper reported.

She will travel to Scotland on the eve of a widely anticipated [Conservative leadership](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/conservative-leadership) hustings between Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt in Perth on Friday evening, which is likely to focus heavily on Holyrood’s powers.

Recent opinion polls show increased support for independence, particularly if Johnson becomes prime minister and presses ahead with a no-deal Brexit. A Panelbase poll for the Sunday Times last weekend put the yes vote at 49 percent, excluding don’t knows, with 51 percent favouring a referendum if the UK leaves the EU.

Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland’s first minister, [tweeted that May’s visit](https://twitter.com/NicolaSturgeon/status/1146128356091551745)was “a desperate act by a prime minister who has shown zero respect for the Scottish parliament during her time in office”.

She added: “It’s for the Scottish people not a Tory PM to consider and decide what future we want for our parliament and country.”

Sturgeon has said she wants a fresh independence referendum later next year, and has tabled legislation to enable referendums to take place in Scotland if the UK government hands Holyrood the powers to stage one.

Both Johnson and Hunt have ruled out giving her those powers but senior Scottish Tories fear the Brexit crisis and Johnson’s expected victory in the leadership election [will substantially boost support](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jun/23/boris-johnson-as-pm-would-be-catastrophe-for-uk-say-scottish-tories) for an early independence referendum.

Whitehall sources say May’s review, which will be headed by the former Scotland Office minister Lord Dunlop, will focus on giving UK departments an enhanced role in devolved countries in an effort to strengthen the union and share its resources.

One source said the prime minister wanted Whitehall departments to stop treating devolved nations as areas they were no longer concerned with. The Scotland Office and Wales Office are likely to be enlarged rather than merged into a new department.

“We’re trying to get a real shift in mindset in Whitehall,” he said. “The emphasis needs to be not so much on the mechanics of devolution. The emphasis needs to be much more on sustaining the union.”

**Photo: Theresa May PHOTO CREDIT: REUTERS**

# 4. Google Sends Gifts To Indonesian Baby Named ‘Google’

United States technology giant Google has sent gifts to a baby boy named Google by their parents in Indonesia, local media reported on Wednesday.

Google was born in November but his birth certificate went viral recently after his mother posted it on social media.

Some online commenters quipped that he would find it hard to search his name on Google.

“They sent several items as a token of appreciation, including a jumper,” the baby’s mother, Ella Karina, was quoted as saying by Tribunnews online newspaper.

Ella said that Google congratulated them and expressed hope that baby Google would help many people in the future.

Google’s mother said she was initially opposed to her husband’s idea to name their second child Google, but now she has no regrets.

“We thank `technology giant Google’ for their attention. We are more confident now,” Ella said.

**Photo: Baby named Goggle PHOTO CREDIT: BBC**

5.

## First time ever, scientists eliminate HIV in entire genome of lab mice

Scientists eliminated HIV from the entire genome of lab mice for the first time ever using a slow-acting drug and gene-editing.

The feat, revealed in [a publication](http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-10366-y), suggests this two-pronged technique could be the basis for the first universal cure in humans, with human clinical trials slated to start next summer.

Only two people have been cured of HIV, both had terminal blood cancer and underwent a risky bone marrow transplant that obliterated both diseases.

But the transplant technique has not worked in anyone else - proving fatal in some - and it effectively requires that the patient have both HIV and cancer.

Now, a team spearheaded by an HIV expert in Nebraska and a gene-editing expert in Philadelphia has presented the unprecedented fruits of a five-year project: using a slow-acting drug called LASER ART that corners the virus, followed by CRISPR Cas9 gene-editing that blitzes it.

In a new paper, they reveal this approach successfully eliminated HIV from the entire genome of a third of their lab mice.

Even they were surprised.

'We didn't believe it,' Dr Howard E Gendelman, Director of the Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, told DailyMail.com.

'We thought it was a fluke, a problem with the graphs; that the cells carrying HIV had died; that our assay system was wrong.

'It was only after we repeated it a couple of different times,' he says, that they accepted they had hit the veritable jackpot.

What's more, journals didn't believe it.

'After we got it right, we submitted it for publication and it was rejected from many different journals,' Dr Gendelman said.

'They had a hard time believing HIV could be cured.'

He and his co-author (and 'best bud') Dr Kamel Khalili, of Temple University in Philadelphia, added no less than 20 supplemental figures to their paper - far more than usual - to prove that their results were not a fluke, finally getting the green light from Nature Communications.

'There was a lot of frustration, self-introspection, denials, reaffirmation, and just laborious day by day activities to prove it,' Dr Gendelman said.

HIV is so hard to obliterate because it is a virus that infects the genome.

**AFRICA**

# 1.

# 44 dead as air strike hits Libya migrant detention centre

# An air strike hit a detention center for mainly African migrants in a suburb of the Libyan capital Tripoli late on Tuesday, killing at least 44 people and wounding more than 130, the United Nations said.

It was the highest publicly reported toll from an air strike or shelling since eastern forces under Khalifa Haftar launched a ground and aerial offensive three months ago to take Tripoli, the base of Libya’s internationally recognized government Reuters reported.

United Nations Libya envoy Ghassan Salame condemned the strike, saying it “clearly amounts to the level of a war crime”.

“The absurdity of this ongoing war has today reached its most heinous form and tragic outcome with this bloody, unjust slaughter,” Salame said in a statement.

UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said it was the second strike on the center during the recent fighting, even though its coordinates had been communicated to the warring sides. It may depending on the precise circumstances be a war crime, she added.

Libya is one of the main departure points for African migrants, fleeing poverty and war, to try to reach Italy by boat, but many are picked up and brought back by the Libyan coast guard, supported by the European Union

Thousands are held in government-run detention centers in what human rights groups and the United Nations say are often inhuman conditions.

The UNHCR refugee agency had already called in May for the Tajoura center, which holds 600 people, to be evacuated after a projectile landed less than 100 meters (330 feet) away, injuring two migrants.

The hangar-type detention center is next to a military camp, one of several in Tajoura, east of Tripoli’s center, which have been targeted by air strikes for weeks.

Frightened migrants were still at the detention center after the strike, which partially destroyed the hangar. “Some people were wounded, and they died on the road, on their way running, and some people are still under the debris so we don’t know what to say,” said Othman Musa, a migrant from Nigeria.

**PHOTO: Debris covers the ground and an emergency vehicle after an airstrike at a detention center in Tajoura, east of Tripoli in Libya PHOTO CREDIT: AP**

# 2.

# Over 100 civilians killed in South Sudan violence

 South Sudan’s army and several armed groups killed more than 100 civilians in a surge in violence in a southern region of the country after the signing of a peace deal last year, a United Nations report said.

The armed forces also committed sexual violence including rape against around 100 women and girls in the same region, Central Equatoria, between September 2018 and April 2019, the report by the UN peacekeeping mission in the country found Reuters reported.

The violence in the Central Equatorian region is an exception to the trend of a “significant decrease in conflict-related violations and abuses” across South Sudan since the deal was signed, the report said.

Lul Ruai Koang, South Sudan’s military spokesman, said he had not seen the report and declined to comment on its contents.

South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 but descended into a civil war two years later. A 2018 study found that nearly 400,000 people have died as a result of the war.

After a string of failed agreements, the two main warring parties signed a deal last September. In May, the two sides agreed to give themselves six more months to form a unity government as part of the deal.

**3.**

**Mozambique says militants kill 11 in attack near Tanzania border**

Eleven people were killed in an attack last week by an Islamist militant armed group in northern Mozambique near its border with Tanzania, Mozambican police said

Several of the attackers from the Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama (ASWJ) group were later arrested, police added, referring to a militia operating in the gas-rich northern province of Cabo Delgado province since at least 2014 Reuters reported.

Six people were wounded in the raid, said Orlando Mudumane, spokesman for Mozambique Police’s General Command, adding that the arrested gunmen included both Mozambicans and foreigners.

“On 26 of June, 2019, a group of bandits perpetrated an attack in the village of Itole, in Palma District, killing 11 civilians; 9 Tanzanians and 2 Mozambicans,” he said.

He dismissed reports the that deaths were by beheading, a method of killing used by the group in some previous attacks.

“All of them died of gunshot wounds, no beheadings. The defense forces combed the area and have already detained some elements of the group, foreigners and nationals.”

Information about the attack has been scarce, with conflicting accounts from local and international media on the number of deaths and nature of the attack in the Muslim-majority region of the southern African nation.

Last week’s ambush was the latest in a spate of execution-style attacks in the area since 2017 that have so far killed more than 100 people, while forcing hundreds to flee into the interior.

Tanzanian security officials on Saturday also confirmed the attack and number of deaths, but were unsure of the identity of the suspects.

“The attack took place on June 26 in Mozambique where the Tanzanians had gone to work in paddy fields,” Tanzania’s police chief Simon Sirro said at a weekend briefing near the border.

“According to eyewitness accounts, unidentified gunmen raided the paddy farmers and carried out the attack.”

Sirro said Tanzanian and Mozambique police had launched a joint investigation into the incident.

Impoverished Cabo Delgado, surrounded by dense forests and isolated villages, houses a growing clutch of multinational companies developing one of the biggest offshore gas finds in a decade - estimated to be worth at least $30 billion.

Whilst the attacks have mostly targeted civilians and government buildings, in February U.S. energy giant Anadarko said one worker was killed and several others injured in two attacks near the construction site for its massive liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in Cabo Delgado.

The attacks by the Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama, or “followers of the prophetic tradition”, have drawn comparisons to Islamist groups in Tanzania, Somalia, Kenya and the Great Lakes region.

In common with Boko Haram in Nigeria, it touts a radical form of Islam as an antidote to what it regards as corrupt, elitist rule that has broadened gaping inequality.

# 4. Ebola case identified near South Sudan border

An Ebola case-patient has been identified just 70 kilometers (43 miles) from the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) border with South Sudan, the Associate Press (AP) reported today. The story cited South Sudan's health ministry as the source of information.

Officials said the case is a contact of a known Ebola patient from Beni.

Last month, a 5-year-old boy found in Uganda became the first international case of Ebola in this 11-month long outbreak that has otherwise stayed confined to the DRC’s North Kivu and Ituri provinces. Uganda had in place for months an extensive surveillance and response protocol for Ebola border crossings, but officials in South Sudan told the AP they were not as prepared for the virus.

Photo: **More than 1,500 people have died since the DRC's current Ebola epidemic erupted in the country's eastern North Kivu and Ituri provinces last year**

Photo: AFP

5.**South African Prayer-seeking thieves steal from church**

Police in South Africa are looking for four suspects who allegedly robbed a church after demanding to be prayed for.

The four men entered the church in Port Elizabeth looking for the local pastor to pray for them for a pending court appearance .

When they realised he was not there they then stole a cellphone, laptops and an undisclosed amount of money.

Police spokesperson Alwin Labans told the BBC that the suspects were armed with knives.

“They found a 26-year-old man in the prayer room and demanded prayers from the pastor. They then pulled their knives and robbed him. They have yet to be identified but we are investigating the matter,” he said.

The men then took the church member to the kitchen while they plundered the church, in search of whatever valuables they could find.

Police say the robbery is being investigated.

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