

## DELHI GANG-RAPE

## Judge upholds closed doors trial ruling

GUARDIAN ONLINE

The trial of five men accused of the gang-rape and murder of a 23-year-old physiotherapy student last month will be held behind closed doors, a judge in Delhi said yesterday, upholding an order imposed by a magistrate after chaotic scenes at a hearing earlier this week.

Media organisations had protested against the decision, and a lawyer representing the victim's male friend – who was also injured in the attack – submitted an application for the order to be overturned, arguing "the whole nation is interested in knowing the proceedings of the case".

The case has caused anger and outrage in India and highlighted the problem of sexual violence towards women in the country, triggering widespread protests and continuing calls for major legal and policing reforms.

The five accused appeared in a magistrates court earlier this week and were given details of the charges against them, which include rape, murder, banditry and abduction.

The men, who include a bus driver, a cleaner and a part-time gym instructor, are accused of luring the two victims on to a bus on 16 December.

After being repeatedly assaulted, the pair were dumped on the roadside. The woman, who has not been named in local media, died two weeks later, on 28 December, in a Singapore hospital from internal injuries sustained during the attack.



A protestor wears an orange prison jump suit and black hood on their head during protests against holding detainees at the military prison in Guantanamo Bay during a demonstration in front of the US Supreme Court in Washington, DC on Tuesday. This week marks the 11th anniversary of the opening of the prison.

PHOTO: AFP

## India summons Pak envoy over border killings

*Islamabad refutes claim, suggests UN inquiry*

AFP, New Delhi

India yesterday delivered a dressing-down to Islamabad's envoy to Delhi as it accused Pakistan's army of beheading one of two soldiers killed in Kashmir, but both sides warned against inflaming tensions.

While Pakistan insisted no such incident had taken place and suggested a UN inquiry be held, India denounced the "inhuman" treatment of the pair who were killed two days after a Pakistani soldier was also slain in the Kashmir region.

As India's government mulled over its response, Foreign Minister Salman Khurshid struck a note of caution and warned against exacerbating the situation.

Khurshid said Pakistan's ambassador Salman Bashir had been "spoken to in very strong terms" after he was summoned for an angry rebuke

over the killings.

But in a subsequent press conference, Khurshid said that "whatever has happened, should not be escalated".

The two Indian soldiers died after a firefight erupted in disputed Kashmir on Tuesday. The Indian army said a patrol moving in fog discovered Pakistani troops about 500 metres inside Indian territory.

In a sign of a desire for revenge among troops on the ground, a Indian officer said it was "now a matter of prestige, the battalion has to regain its honour".

But amid the chorus of condemnation, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar appeared on Indian television to issue a firm denial and criticise the statements by authorities in Delhi.

"Let me just say that we are a bit appalled at some statements that are coming in from India because the

government of Pakistan has absolutely rejected that any such incident took place," she told India's CNN-IBN network.

Khar said Pakistan tempered its language after the death of one of its soldiers on Sunday in a border skirmish and India should have followed suit.

"We can ask a third party to do investigation on this, you know that UN military observers exist, we can call them... We must not all go back to having a go at each other."

Army sources said there had been further exchanges along the de facto border on Tuesday night which caused no damage and the border was calm yesterday.

Muslim-majority Kashmir is a Himalayan region that India and Pakistan both claim in full but rule in part. It was the cause of two of their three wars since independence from Britain in 1947.

## Egypt goes to polls in April

REUTERS, Cairo

Egypt, battered by political turmoil and an economic crisis that has sent the local currency tumbling, will hold a parliamentary election in April, officials said yesterday.

Under Egypt's new constitution approved by a referendum last month, President Mohamed Morsi must set an election date within 60 days of when he signed the document into law on December 26.

"The vote for parliament will take place in April," said an official at the presidency, who asked not to be named.

The Islamist-led government is trying to clinch a \$4.8 billion loan from the IMF to ease economic strains worsened by a turbulent political transition since a uprising toppled Mubarak in February 2011.

## NEWS IN brief

### Mideast battered by hail, snow

AFP, Ramallah

Two women were found dead in the West Bank yesterday after their car was swept away in floods brought by a storm that for days has blasted the Middle East with rain, hail and snow.

With snow falling in the West Bank city of Ramallah, wintry weather was also forecast for Amman and Jerusalem, and the polar air mass moving down from Russia sent temperatures plummeting as far south as Cairo.

### Pregnant Kate turns 31

AFP, London

Prince William's wife Catherine marked her 31st birthday yesterday, but her well-documented pregnancy was likely to make it a low-key celebration.

St James's Palace said the Duchess of Cambridge would mark the occasion "privately", and she is understood to be with her husband at their home in north Wales.

Kate was treated last month for a severe form of pregnancy sickness known as hyperemesis gravidarum, whose symptoms include sustained bouts of nausea and vomiting.

### Saudi beheads Sri Lankan maid

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia beheaded a Sri Lankan maid yesterday after she was convicted of murdering her employer's baby, the interior ministry announced, despite calls for a stay of execution.

Rizana Nafeek smothered the infant to death after an argument with the child's mother, her employer, the ministry statement carried by the official SPA news agency said.

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa had sent an appeal to King Abdullah on Sunday "requesting a stay of the execution".

### Aussie bushfire mostly under control

AFP, Nowra

Cooler conditions helped firefighters douse fierce blazes across Australia yesterday but up to 30 still raged out of control, destroying a handful of homes and killing thousands of livestock.

After facing one of the highest-risk fire days in its history on Tuesday, shifting winds in hard-hit New South Wales state caused temperatures to

## Venezuela crisis deepens

*Chavez inauguration delayed over health scare*

AFP, Caracas

Venezuela headed into uncharted political waters yesterday without ailing President Hugo Chavez amid calls for the Supreme Court to decide if his government's postponing his inauguration is constitutional.

After days of suspense, the government confirmed Tuesday that Chavez, recovering in Cuba from cancer surgery, was still too sick to return for his re-inauguration Thursday and would take the oath of office at a later date before the Supreme Court.

Leaders of the leftist government insist that, under the circumstances, the president's current term can be extended beyond the January 10 inauguration date until he is well enough to be sworn in to another six-year term.

"If anyone has doubts, then go to the Supreme Court, go ahead to the Supreme



Court, explain what your doubts are," Diosdado Cabello, the National Assembly speaker, said in a stormy debate after the delay was announced.

The Supreme Court, which is controlled by pro-Chavez magistrates, called a news conference yesterday amid opposition demands

for it to rule on the constitutionality of the government's decision.

Information Minister Ernesto Villegas said late Monday that Chavez's medical condition was unchanged since the latest complication from surgery was reported four days ago.

Chavez, who has not been seen in public for nearly a month, the longest stretch of his 14 years in power, is suffering from a severe pulmonary infection that has resulted in a "respiratory insufficiency," officials have said.

## CENSORSHIP ROW China journos strike deal with govt

GUARDIAN ONLINE

A dispute between China's propaganda authorities and a liberal southern newspaper has taken a fresh twist, as reports of a tentative deal have been offset by claims of an official whitewash and the resignation of a prominent newspaper publisher in Beijing.

Editorial workers at the Guangzhou-based newspaper Southern Weekly, some of whom have been on strike since Sunday, reached a deal on Tuesday, according to Associated Press, with provincial officials whom they accused of tampering with an outspoken New Year's Day editorial.

According to the agreement, censorship controls over the paper will be relaxed and the paper will resume its normal publishing schedule on Thursday. Anti-censorship protests outside the paper's headquarters have reportedly died down.

Yet other online accounts suggest a broader debate over media censorship stirred up by the dispute is far from over. Dai Zigeng, the editor-in-chief of the Beijing News, resigned on Tuesday night after refusing to publish a government-penned editorial playing down the controversy. Some Beijing News reporters' microblog accounts have been blocked, according to online accounts.



## BENGHAZI ATTACK Hillary may testify on January 22

AFP, Washington

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton may make a long-awaited appearance before lawmakers on January 22 to be quizzed about the deadly attack on a US mission in Libya, a senator said Tuesday.

Hillary had initially been due to testify to US lawmakers in late December after a scathing inquiry blamed "grossly inadequate" security at the diplomatic outpost in Benghazi for failing to protect staff there.

But she was forced to cancel her testimony and send in her two deputy secretaries instead when she fell ill.

Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans were killed when a wave of heavily-armed militants overran the compound and a nearby annex on September 11.

The Accountability Review Board set up by Hillary to investigate the attack slammed "systemic failures and leadership and management deficiencies at senior levels within two bureaus of the State Department" responsible for security.

## Eight killed in Kenya tribal violence

AFP, Nairobi

At least eight people were killed yesterday in the latest unrest to hit south-east Kenya, the Red Cross said, raising concern over security less than two months before the first general polls.

Violence in the Tana River region first erupted in August, pitting the Pokomo farming community against their Orma pastoralist neighbours and leading to a series of vicious reprisal killings and attacks.

Two of the eight killed were believed to be from the attackers, sources said.

## Only 'trees and leaves' left to eat

AFP, United Nations

Hundreds of thousands of people in Sudan's conflict-stricken South Kordofan are surviving on roots and leaves, a top UN official told the UN Security Council on Tuesday.

About 700,000 people in South Kordofan and neighboring Blue Nile states face "truly appalling" conditions while the Sudan government and rebels block access to international aid workers, UN humanitarian operations director John Gingsaid.

The conflict in the two states is said to be worsening with the Khartoum government stepping up aerial bombardments on rebel areas, according to UN officials and diplomats.

Ging told the council that most people in rebel-held areas of South Kordofan are surviving on "trees and leaves," according to diplomats in the closed meeting.

"We hear incredibly alarming stories about people



having to rely on roots and leaves," Ging told reporters afterwards.

"This is 2013 and to think that tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people are living in such desperate and deplorable circumstances and we can't get in to help them."

"People are dying in South Kordofan," Ging added. More than 200,000 people have fled to South

Sudan and Ethiopia and many have told horrifying stories of conditions in the conflict zones.

The UN Security Council passed a resolution in May last year which demanded aid access and threatened "additional measures" if it was not given. Ging called for the council to apply pressure to follow up its demand.

"We are appealing to the Security Council for help," he said.

Kordofan and Blue Nile are on the border with South Sudan and conflict erupted there after South Sudan broke away from the Arab-dominated north in July 2011.

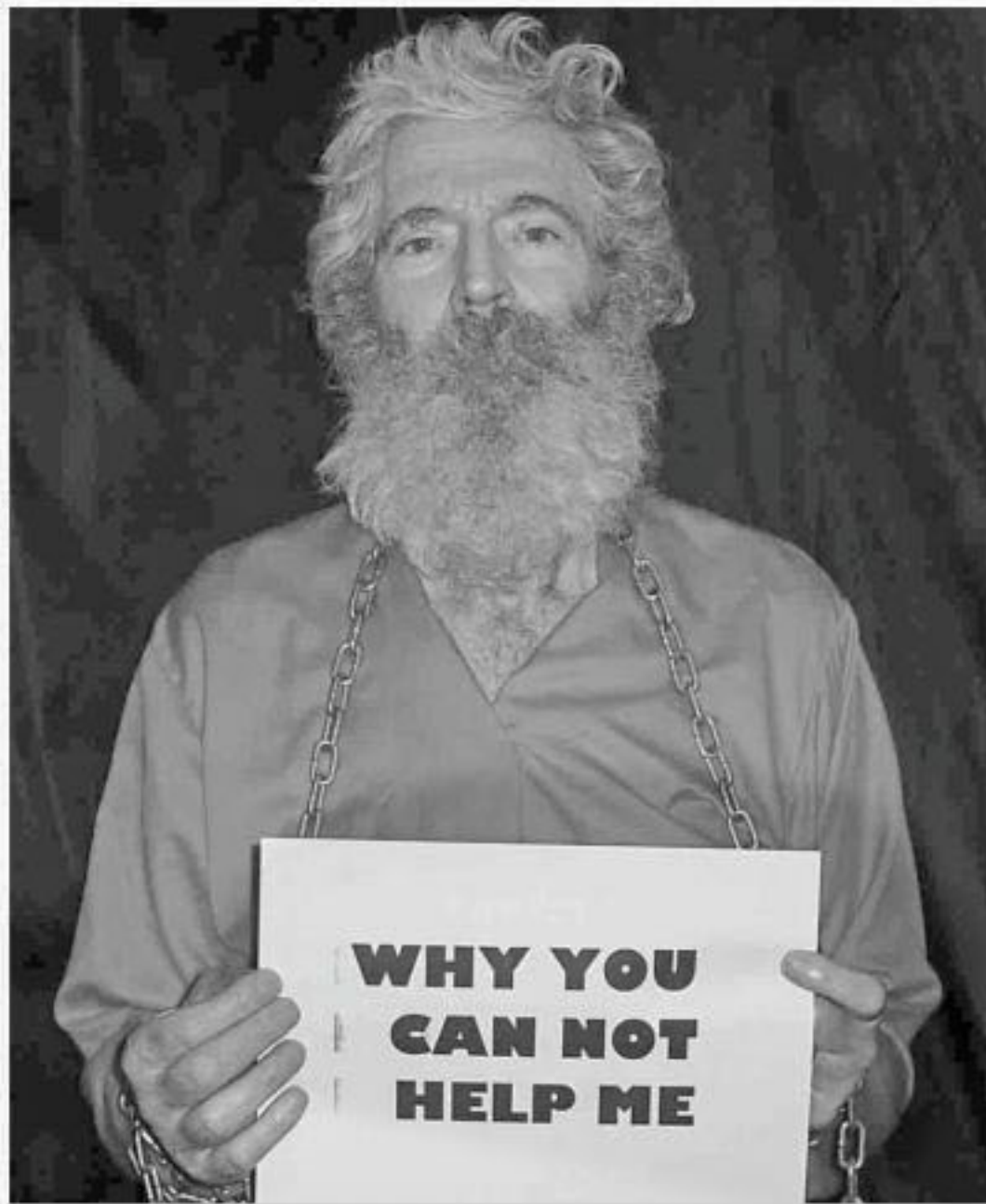


PHOTO: AFP

This undated photograph shows former FBI agent Robert Levinson, who vanished in Iran nearly six years ago, holding a placard. One of several similar photographs were released on Tuesday by the man's wife, who said these nearly two-year old pictures are the last news she has received about her missing husband.