

IAEA, Iran talks fail again

AFP, Vienna

The chief UN atomic inspector yesterday said that talks with Iran had failed again to reach a deal on enhanced inspections of Tehran's nuclear programme, two weeks before a major meeting with world powers.

"We had discussions on the structured approach document but could not finalise the document," Herman Nackaerts of the International Atomic Energy Agency told reporters at Vienna airport after returning from Tehran.

"Our commitment to continued dialogue is unwavering," he said.

No date was set for the next meeting, he added.



Indian students dance as they take part in a One Billion Rising rally in New Delhi yesterday. Flashmobs, marches, singing and dances were planned in about 200 countries as part of the campaign's day of action, timed to coincide with Valentine's Day and aiming to bring an end to violence against women.

Spate of Iraq attacks kill 7

AFP, Baghdad

Attacks mostly targeting Iraqi security forces north of Baghdad killed seven people yesterday, security and medical officials said, the latest in an uptick in nationwide violence.

Near the main northern city of Mosul, gunmen killed two brothers inside their home, according to officials. The soldier was a bodyguard for Iraqi parliament speaker. A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol also killed two policemen there.

And just north of Baghdad, separate shootings and bombings in Balad and Dujail left three people dead, including two anti-Qaeda militiamen, and seven people wounded. No organisation claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Syria rebels gain big as Kerry tells Assad to go

Iranian Guards' commander killed amid blood bath

AFP, Damascus

Rebels in northern Syria have seized most of a military base, their third major battlefield success in as many days, as US Secretary of State John Kerry called on President Bashar al-Assad to step down.

Kerry said Assad needed to abandon hopes of riding out the war and instead accept the "inevitability" of his departure, hours after a monitoring group reported rebels were almost in complete control of the base in Aleppo province.

In Moscow, a top Russian diplomat said Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem and Ahmed Moaz al-Khatib, the head of the opposition umbrella National Coalition, would make separate visits for talks in the coming weeks.

In Syria, at least another 145 people were killed across the country Wednesday, including 66 civilians, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

UPRISING ANNIVERSARY
Clashes kill 1 in Bahrain

AFP, Manama

A teenager was shot dead near Bahrain's capital yesterday as clashes erupted when hundreds took to the streets to mark the second anniversary of a Shia-led uprising against the kingdom's Sunni rulers.

The demonstrations, staged early morning in Shia-populated villages across the Gulf archipelago, turned violent when police fired shotguns and tear gas to disperse the crowds, wounding several people, witnesses said.

Bahrain has been in political deadlock since February 2011, with the government refusing to make political concessions. The unrest has left at least 80 people dead.

'Nasheed free to leave India's protection'

AFP, Male

The former president of the Maldives Mohamed Nasheed can leave the Indian embassy where he has taken refuge because the warrant for his arrest has expired, the government said yesterday.

Opposition leader Nasheed has said he would remain at the Indian High Commission (embassy) until authorities assure him that he will not be arrested and will be free to campaign for presidential elections due in September.

"Mr Nasheed is a free man and he can walk out of the embassy," government spokesman Masood Imad told AFP. "Police will not arrest him because the arrest warrant expired last night."

"The court has not fixed a date for the next hearing and there is no threat of arrest," Imad said. "He (Nasheed) has nothing to fear. He can come out of the embassy."

Armed police outside the diplomatic compound had withdrawn, Imad said.

There was no immediate comment from Nasheed or his Maldivian Democratic Party, which considers his trial on charges of abuse of power to be politically motivated. A conviction would prevent him from holding public office.

The stand-off comes amid political turbulence in the upmarket holiday destination a year after Nasheed, the nation's first freely elected leader, was ousted by violent protests and a mutiny by police and security forces.

Ukraine plane crash kills 5

AFP, Donetsk

Five people died when an Antonov AN-24 plane with dozens of football fans on board made an emergency landing in the eastern Ukraine city of Donetsk on Wednesday, officials said.

"Most of the survivors were able to walk off the plane by themselves," emergency ministry spokeswoman Svetlana Borodina told AFP, adding that there had been 44 people on board.

The cause of the accident was not immediately clear. Aside from the five dead, 12 people were injured in the incident.



Congress Chairperson Sonia Gandhi talks with France's President Francois Hollande during a meeting in New Delhi yesterday. Hollande embarked on a fresh push to clinch a USD 12-billion sale of Rafale fighter jets on his first visit to Asia since taking office.

2 succumb to injuries in Dhaka, Ctg

FROM PAGE 1
between police and Jamaat-Shibir men on February 6 hartal, succumbed to his injuries at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Bahadur Hossain, 55, of Amirabad in Lohagara upazila, Chittagong.

Bahadur suffered head injuries when attacked with hockey sticks and was undergoing treatment at neurosurgery unit of CMCH.

On Wednesday, a gang of Jamaat-Shibir activists, covering their faces with clothes, caught lift operator Zafar in front of his office during Jamaat's hit-and-run assault at 9:20am.

"They dragged him into a secluded place between

two buildings, pressed his mouth with their hands and hit him on the head and other parts of the body with iron rods," Abdus Sabur, an employee of the bank, said quoting some witnesses.

He said they rushed to the spot to rescue Zafar after some pedestrians informed them of the brutal attack by the masked Jamaat-Shibir activists.

Sabur and other staff of the bank said they hung a banner in front of their head office building at Dilkusha around 9:00am on Wednesday, demanding death penalty to the war criminals.

After rescuing Zafar, his colleagues rushed him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

As the intensive care unit of the hospital was full of patients, the doctors advised the bank's staff to take Zafar to a private hospital.

Suddenly, some armed men swooped on them, tore a portion of the banner and engaged in a scuffle with them.

"We caught four of them and handed them over to police which irked the Jamaat-Shibir activists," Sabur continued.

"We thought the incident was over. But within 20 minutes, around 100 Jamaat-Shibir men brandishing lethal weapons, iron rods and hockey sticks swooped on us," he said adding that they tried to resist them.

"We did not notice when they took Zafar away," Sabur said with tears rolling down his face.

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Zafar, of Gangadharti village under Bhanga upazila of Faridpur, has three children aged between four and eleven, he added.

He was later admitted to

AFTERMATH OF N KOREA NUKE TEST
US vows to protect Japan, S Korea

AFP, Seoul

Two days after North Korea's nuclear test, South Korea signalled the deployment of a new cruise missile capable of a precision strike on members of Pyongyang's high command as President Obama vowed to protect Japan in face of an aggression.

The defence ministry called in reporters for a special video presentation of the recently deployed missile being fired from a warship and a submarine.

"The cruise missile unveiled today is a precision-guided weapon that can identify and strike the office

window of the North's command headquarters," ministry spokesman Kim Min-Seok told reporters.

South Korea's military has been on a heightened state of alert ever since Pyongyang first threatened the nuclear test which was eventually conducted on Tuesday.

It was the North's third test, following previous detonations in 2006 and 2009.

Meanwhile, President Barack Obama pledged a "steadfast" commitment to defend Japan, including preventing nuclear attacks on its ally, the White House said on Wednesday.

In a telephone call, Obama and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe discussed steps to respond to the "highly provocative violation of North Korea's international obligations," a White House statement said.

Obama also "reaffirmed that the United States remains steadfast in its defense commitments to Japan, including the extended deterrence offered by the US nuclear umbrella," according to the White House.

US has 28,500 troops in South Korea and guarantees a nuclear "umbrella" in case of any atomic attack. In return, Seoul accepts limits on its ballistic missile capabilities.

Stop violence against women

FROM PAGE 1

demonstration in one location alone in Mohakhali. Another 3,000 formed a human chain from the Shooting Complex to Gulshan 1, while 4,000 people held hands to form another chain from Gulshan 1 to 2.

The longest one was formed from Mirpur to Asad Gate moving up to the parliament building, where lawmakers joined the human chain in solidarity with the movement to end violence against women.

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The name was chosen because, according to UN statistics, at least a billion women worldwide will experience sexual or physical violence in their lifetime.

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