

NEWS IN
briefPak Taliban threat
to kill Musharraf

AFP, Peshawar

The Pakistani Taliban yesterday issued a fresh threat to assassinate former military ruler Pervez Musharraf, who is currently facing a barrage of legal cases in police custody.

The retired general has been detained in his farmhouse on the edge of the capital Islamabad since April 19 on charges of conspiracy to murder former premier Benazir Bhutto, sacking of judges when he imposed emergency rule in 2007, and the 2006 death of a Baluch rebel leader.

Before his arrival in March, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) threatened to kill him for his alliance in the US-led "war on terror" and attempts to clamp down on militants.

Myanmar bus
crash kills 11

AFP, Yangon

Eleven people were killed and 16 injured after a bus rammed into a bridge after suffering a puncture in central Myanmar, state media reported yesterday.

The Yangon to Mandalay bus, which was carrying 27 passengers, hit a traffic island after its tire burst and then "plunged headlong" into the side of a bridge on Saturday, according to the state-run Myanmar language newspaper Myanma Ahlin.

A monk, four men and five women died at the scene in central Bago region, while an 18-year-old male died of his inju-

Two freight trains
collide in Missouri

REUTERS, St Louis

Two freight trains collided at a rail intersection in rural Missouri on Saturday, triggering the collapse of a highway overpass when at least a dozen rail cars derailed and struck a support pillar, authorities said.

None of the seven people hurt in the fiery crash - two train workers and five occupants of two cars on the overpass - suffered life-threatening injuries, Scott County Sheriff Rick Walter

China defends secret
police system

TNN, Beijing

China's Communist Party has defended 'Shuanggui', its secret police investigating allegations of corruption against party officials.

This came as a response to a controversy about the party's high-handed ways after a recent death in custody.

The death of an employee of an investment company, Yu Qiyi, caused a major uproar online last April causing embarrassment to the party.

Lin Zhe, an expert on anti-corruption at the Party School of the CPC Central Committee, said that the interrogation methods used by the party's inspectors are actually "soft" and not

Karzai brother to
run in Afghan polls

REUTERS, Kandahar

Afghan President Hamid Karzai's older brother Qayum will run in next year's presidential election, their younger brother said, as the country's most powerful family seeks to maintain a political hold in Afghanistan.

President Karzai is constitutionally prohibited from running for a third term when the country votes for a new head of



David King, founder and chairman of the Seed Library of Los Angeles, speaks to activists during a protest against agribusiness giant Monsanto in Los Angeles on Saturday. Marches and rallies against Monsanto and genetically modified organisms (GMO) food and seeds were held across the US and in other countries with protesters calling attention to the dangers posed by GMO food.

PHOTO: AFP

French soldier
stabbed in Paris

REUTERS, Paris

A French soldier patrolling a business neighborhood west of Paris was stabbed in the neck and injured on Saturday by a man who fled the scene and is being sought by police, President Francois Hollande said.

The 23-year-old was patrolling in uniform with two other soldiers as part of France's Vigipirate anti-terror surveillance plan when he was approached from behind around 6 pm and attacked with a knife or a box-cutter.

A police union spokesman said surveillance footage of the attacker showed him as tall and bearded, aged about 35, possibly of North African origin and wearing a white Arab-style tunic.

Hollande, in the Ethiopian city of Addis Ababa, commented on the stabbing to say police were hunting for the attacker but did not provide any details about his identity or any possible motivation for the attack.

"We still don't know the exact circumstances of the attack or the identity of the attacker, but we are exploring all options," Hollande told journalists.

Three days after a British soldier was killed in a London street by two men who said they acted to avenge violence against Muslims, the attack near Paris raised questions about a possible copycat attempt to kill a French soldier.

Interior Minister Manuel Valls noted the similarity in an interview on France 2 TV saying the attacker was clearly trying to murder his victim, but he added that it was too early to offer any theories.

LONDON SOLDIER KILLING ROW
Anti-Muslim actions rise in UK
Suspect arrested in Kenya in 2010: BBC

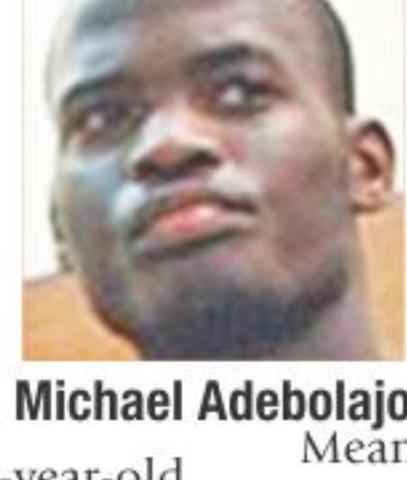
AP, London

Police, politicians and activists in Britain are warning of rising anti-Muslim sentiment following the slaughter of an off-duty British soldier in a London street, an apparent act of Islamic extremism that has horrified the nation.

Metropolitan Police investigating the killing of Lee Rigby, a 25-year-old soldier who was run over by attackers then butchered by knives, arrested three more men in the murder investigation Saturday. Stun guns were used on two of the three men, aged 24 and 28, police said.

The latest arrests came as an estimated 1,500 members of an extremist right-wing group called the English Defense League marched in the northern English city of Newcastle, chanting Rigby's name. In the southern English city of Portsmouth, police arrested two men for a racially motivated assault as hundreds of demonstrators gathered near one mosque, while several more people were detained for alleged racist offenses elsewhere.

The two men suspected of killing the soldier, Michael Adebolajo, 28, and Michael Adebowale, 22, remained under armed guard in separate London hospitals after



Michael Adebolajo

police shot them at the scene. Police have not officially named the suspects because they have not been charged, but British officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to discuss the investigation, have confirmed their names to The Associated Press.

Meanwhile, suspect Michael Adebolajo was arrested in Kenya in 2010. He was believed to have been preparing to fight with Somali militant group al-Shabab, a Kenyan government spokesman told the BBC, and was later deported.

Wednesday's murder in southeast London's Woolwich area shocked the nation partly because the horrific scenes were recorded on witnesses' cellphones, and a video picked up by British media showed one of the two suspects, his hands bloodied, making political statements and warning of further violence as the soldier lay on the ground behind him.

Counter-terrorism police also are questioning a friend of Adebolajo who was arrested Friday night immediately after he gave BBC Television an interview detailing why he thought Adebolajo may have become radicalized.

MAOIST AMBUSH ON CONGRESS LEADERS

It is an attack on
democratic values

Says Congress chief; death toll hits 23

AP, Raipur

A heavily-armed gang of nearly 300 Maoist rebels killed at least 23 people in an attack on a convoy carrying local Congress party leaders and supporters in central India, police said yesterday. The land mine and gun attack on Saturday was the deadliest in three years.

Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, who rushed to the Chhattisgarh state capital Raipur along with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh after the ambush, condemned what she called a "cowardly act" by the Maoists.

"It is not an attack on Congress or its leaders, but an attack on democratic values," she told Congress party workers after visiting the injured, according to the Press Trust of India news agency. Narendra Modi, senior leader of the main national opposition Bharatiya Janata Party, slammed the attack and called for unity against "naxalism".

State Congress chief Nand Kumar Patel, his son Dinesh, and former state home minister Mahendra Karma-who had set up a controversial anti-Maoist group in 2005-were among those killed in the assault in a remote tribal belt of the state.



Activists from India's Congress party shout slogans and wave placards as they take part in a protest in Allahabad yesterday, after a Maoist attack on Congress party leaders in the Indian state of Chhattisgarh.

PHOTO:
AFPINDIA PM'S JAPAN VISIT
Manmohan wants civil
nuke deal with Japan

AP, Tokyo

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has called for an early accord on civil nuclear cooperation with Tokyo and more Japanese investment ahead of an official visit, reports said yesterday.

Singh, who will travel to Japan in the coming week for talks with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, made the remarks during an interview with Japanese media in New Delhi on Saturday.

The Indian leader said he would "use this visit to strengthen our strategic and global partnership, which also includes trying to reach an agreement with regard to civil nuclear energy cooperation," according to Kyodo News.

Japan-India negotiations on a civil nuclear energy agreement have been suspended since Japan suffered a nuclear crisis triggered by a massive earthquake and tsunami in March 2011.

Singh also called on Japanese industry to boost investment and contribute toward India's economic growth, describing his country's inadequate infrastructure as "a big bottleneck".

"I see an enormous role for Japanese industry to contribute not only to infrastructure development of India, but also to accelerate the tempo of the manufacturing sector," he said.

The premier said that to help Japanese and other foreign investors, he had set up a cabinet committee on investment to look at those bottlenecks that hamper development of the infrastructure sector.

Mt Everest marks 60
years of human spirit

AFP, Kathmandu

Sixty years ago this week two men became the first to stand on the roof of the world in a remarkable feat of endurance and strength of the human spirit.

As the May 29 anniversary of Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary's summit of Mount Everest approaches, hundreds of people from all walks of life, and with varying motivations, are trying to follow in their footsteps.

With May the ideal month to climb in the Himalayas, some 500 have already succeeded this year, including an octogenarian, the first female amputee, the first women from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and the first female climber to summit twice in one season.

US military must end
'scourge' of sex violence

Says Defence Chief Chuck Hagel

AP, New York

US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel on Saturday called for the "scourge" of sexual assaults within the military to be "stamped out," in a speech at the West Point military academy in New York.

Speaking at a graduation ceremony for newly commissioned officers, the Pentagon chief emphasized it would be their responsibility as rising leaders to "bring the best out" of themselves and their fellow soldiers.

"Sexual harassment and sexual assault in the military are a profound betrayal of sacred oaths and sacred trusts," Hagel said, adding "this scourge must be stamped out."

One day earlier, President Barack Obama made similar remarks to the graduating class at the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, warning that sexual assaults



"threaten the trust and discipline that makes our military strong."

Their remarks follow a wave of high-profile sexual assault incidents in the military, prompting outrage and calls for new legislation.

One of the most recent sex abuse scandals emerged at West Point itself when an instructor was accused of filming some of the female cadets without permission, including while they were showering.

West Point has around 4,500 students, of whom 15 percent are women.

A Pentagon report issued this month showed a sharp rise in reports of "unwanted sexual contact" over the past two years, with prevention efforts so far failing to stem the tide.

Reports of sexual violence rose six percent a year, rising to nearly 3,400 cases in 2012, alone.

Available styles include simple colors, zebra or cheetah print and polka dots, so men wanting to gift their wives with their favorite shoes for cheap are bound to find something they like.

Rockets hit Beirut after
Hezbollah vows victory

Regime to attend Geneva conference: FM

AGENCIES

Two rockets hit a Shia Muslim district of southern Beirut yesterday and wounded several people, residents said, a day after the leader of Lebanese Shia militant movement Hezbollah said his group would continue fighting in Syria until victory, reported Reuters.

It was the first attack to apparently target Hezbollah's stronghold in the south of the Lebanese capital since the outbreak of the two-year conflict in neighboring Syria, which has sharply heightened Lebanon's own sectarian tensions.

One of the rockets landed in a car sales yard next to a busy road junction in the Chiah neighborhood and the other hit an apartment several hundred meters away, wounding five people, residents said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility and the army said it was investigating who was behind the attack.

The rocket strikes came

hours after Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, a powerful supporter of President Bashar al-Assad in neighboring Syria's civil war, said his fighters were committed to the conflict whatever the costs.

"We will continue to the end of the road. We accept this responsibility and will accept all sacrifices and expected consequences of this position," he said in a televised speech on Saturday evening. "We will be the ones who bring victory".

Meanwhile, Syria's foreign minister said on Sunday that his government will take part in a peace conference in Geneva, terming it a "good opportunity for a political solution" to the civil war in Syria, reported AFP.

CIVIL WAR IN SYRIA

Kerry presses Egypt
on economic reform
Says aid depends on it

REUTERS, Addis Ababa

Secretary of State John Kerry urged Egypt to act swiftly on economic reforms to secure a \$4.8 billion International Monetary Fund loan, saying the measures were needed to get further aid from the US Congress, an American official said.

Kerry met Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi for about an hour on the sidelines of an African Union summit on Saturday, discussing Syria's civil war, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, human rights in Egypt and the country's faltering economy, the official said.

Egypt's Islamist-led government has been resistant to introducing the austerity measures needed to win the IMF funding, including raising taxes and cutting fuel subsidies, fearing such painful reforms could provoke social unrest.

However, an IMF deal could help shore up investor and donor concerns after two years of political instability since the overthrow of former president Hosni Mubarak in early 2011. The instability has depressed tourism, a crucial industry for Egypt.

The US official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Kerry had made the argument that the reforms were necessary to persuade American lawmakers to proceed with further economic support for the country, which borders US ally Israel.

"He urged action on making reforms happen now to move towards requirements to get the IMF package," the official said.

ODDLY enough

Chocolate
high-heels



STAR DESK

Combining two of women's favorite things in the world, chocolate and shoes, Texas chocolatier Andrea Pedrazza creates what can only be considered the perfect Valentine's Day gift for the ladies - chocolate high-heels.

Master chocolatier Andrea Pedrazza pours the brown goodness into plastic high-heel molds and decorates them with gourmet ingredients to make them look as realistic as possible.

Unsurprisingly, her most popular creations are chocolate Christian Louboutin shoes which sell for \$35.

To recreate the designer's signature red soles, the food artist uses red ganache.

Available styles include simple colors, zebra or cheetah print and polka dots, so men wanting to gift their wives with their favorite shoes for cheap are bound to find something they like.