

NEWSIN brief

UN calls for urgent aid for N Korea

AFP, United Nations

The United Nations is in urgent need of \$98 million to finance emergency aid for the people of North Korea, the UN coordinator for the impoverished country said yesterday.

North Korea faces chronic food shortages and suffered from famine in the mid-1990s that resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths. Nearly 2.4 million North Koreans need regular food assistance and 28 percent of children under five suffer

4 Bodies found in Indian sub

AFP, Mumbai

India's navy yesterday retrieved four charred bodies from a submarine that exploded in a Mumbai dockyard, and said it was unlikely any of the other 15 missing crewmen would be found alive.

The diesel-powered INS Sindhurakshak sank in a military dockyard early Wednesday, dealing a setback to India's naval ambitions just days after it unveiled its first domestically made aircraft carrier. Navy divers managed to enter the vessel, whose forward section was totally destroyed in the fire, but their progress was hampered by extreme heat, poor visibil-

80pc of Israeli Jews say peace impossible

AFP, Jerusalem

Almost 80 percent of Israeli Jews believe a peace deal with the Palestinians is impossible, an opinion poll found yesterday, two days after the resumption of negotiations in Jerusalem.

Asked whether "this time, we will reach a final agreement that will put an end to the conflict," 79.7 percent of respondents said no, and just 6.2 percent said yes. Another 14.1 percent

Powerful quake jolts New Zealand cities

AFP, Wellington

A powerful earthquake rattled major cities across New Zealand yesterday, sending terrified office workers fleeing as central Wellington shook "like jelly", but authorities reported no major damage.

The 6.5-magnitude quake struck at 2:31pm near an area where a series of quakes hit last month, the US Geological Survey said. It was felt from Christchurch in the South Island to Auckland in the North Island. A cluster of major aftershocks measuring up to 5.9 followed but no tsunami alert was issued.



Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood supporters carry a wounded pro-testor in Cairo's Ramses square yesterday after clashes broke out with police during a demonstration in support of Egypt's ousted president Mohamed Morsi. Thousands of Islamists protested across Egypt on "Friday of Anger" protest, sparking violence that killed at least 70 people and turned parts of Cairo into battle-fields.

PHOTO: AFP

UN Council urges Arab leaders tacitly back crackdown on Islamists

EU to review ties with Cairo as violence rages

AGENCIES

The Argentine president of the UN Security Council urged all parties in the crisis in Egypt to exercise "maximum restraint" Thursday, following an emergency meeting in New York.

Egypt has faced international condemnation since around 600 people were killed in clashes on Wednesday when police broke up protest camps of supporters of ousted president Mohamed Morsi, in Egypt's bloodiest day in decades.

Argentine Ambassador Maria Cristina Perceval said that the Council's 15 member states had regretted the loss of life in Cairo, called for an end to the violence and spoke of the need to advance "national reconciliation."

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has condemned the crackdown while UN rights chief Navi

Pillay has urged a wide-ranging probe.

Egypt had defended the crackdown and yesterday announced it would cancel naval exercises with Turkey to protest condemnation from Ankara.

Turkey, which backs Morsi, recalled its ambassador to Cairo over the violence, prompting a tit-for-tat move by Egypt.

Meanwhile, Germany yesterday said it would review its relations with Cairo, and EU foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton called on the bloc to adopt "appropriate measures" ahead of an emergency meeting on the situation on Monday.

The United States warned its citizens on Thursday not to travel to Egypt and called on those already there to leave. And Britain yesterday urged tourists visiting the Red Sea resort of Hurghada to stay in their hotels following a warning by Egyptian police in the wake of violent clashes this week.

AFP, Beirut

Most Arab leaders tacitly support Egypt's deadly crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood, fearing the group's growing regional influence since the Arab Spring threatens their own power, analysts say.

Among the Arab nations, only Qatar, a Brotherhood patron, and Tunisia, whose ruling Ennahda party is affiliated with the movement, strongly condemned the assault.

"All the Gulf monarchies, except for Qatar, and Jordan fear that the Muslim Brotherhood revolution will be exported to them," said Khattar Abou Diab, a professor at University of Paris-Sud.

"For that reason, they are hoping for a return to the classic situation of a strong power in Egypt, a pivotal country in the Arab world."

These countries, Saudi Arabia in particular, "have noted with disapproval the growing weight of Turkey and Iran... and their support for the Egyptian regime demonstrates their desire to



King Abdullah

return to a purely Arab regional system based on more classical lines."

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia yesterday called on Arabs to stand together against "attempts to destabilise" Egypt.

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, its people and government stood and stands by today with its brothers in Egypt against terrorism," he said in a statement read on state TV yesterday, backing Egypt's military leadership.

Hami Shadi, a Middle East expert at the Brookings Doha Centre, said what happened in Egypt "is a product of a big regional issue, which is this kind of 'Arab Cold War', and it is clear what side... is winning."

Stephane Lacroix, a professor at the Institute of Political Science in Paris and an expert on the group, said: "For the Emiratis and Saudis, the Muslim Brotherhood has regional ambitions that could be a danger to the monarchies of the Gulf."

"These monarchies consider it to be in their interest to have rather more dictatorships than democratic regimes, which are unstable and unpredictable in their eyes."

Modi shall not be granted US visa

Says key American official

PTI, Washington



A top American official has opposed grant of visa to Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi because of the "very serious" doubts that remain over his role in the "horrific" 2002 riots in the state.

"Modi shall not be granted the privilege of US visa because of the very serious doubts that remain and that hang over Modi relative to his role in the horrific events of 2002 in Gujarat," said Katrina Lantos Swett, vice-chairwoman of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.

The bipartisan government commission reviews the facts and circumstances of religious freedom violations and makes policy recommendations to the US president, the secretary of state and Congress.

When asked about the possibility of Modi's nomination as the BJP's prime ministerial candidate for the next Lok Sabha polls, she said, "It is no outside nation's or no individual's role to tell them who should be the next leader of India."

"For the people of India, I think it is important for them to consider very carefully who it is who they want to be their next prime minister," she added.



PHOTO: AFP

Lebanese civilians and emergency personnel gather at the site of a car bomb between the Bir el-Abed and Roueiss neighbourhoods, in the southern suburb of Beirut on Thursday. The powerful car bomb killed at least 22 people and more than 100 wounded in a stronghold of Shia movement Hezbollah, an army source and Lebanese Red Cross said.

Nehru permitted CIA spy planes to use Indian base

PTI, Washington

India allowed the US to use one of its air bases for refuelling the CIA's U-2 spy planes to target Chinese territories after its defeat in the 1962 war, a declassified official document said yesterday.

The then Indian Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, approved overflight by U-2 missions covering the border areas with China on November 11, 1962, the independent National Security Archive (NSA) said in a report based on the latest set of declassified documents it obtained from the CIA under the Freedom of Information Act.

According to the report the highly successful spying programmes conducted with the planes from 1954 to 1974. NSA said that the first deployment to Charbatia in May 1964 ended because Nehru died.

According to the CIA report, in October 1962, the People's Republic of China launched a series of massive surprise attacks against India's



frontier forces in the western provinces of Jammu and Kashmir and in the North-East Frontier Agency.

"The Chinese overran all Indian fortifications north of the Brahmaputra Valley before halting their operations. The Indian government appealed to the United States for military aid.

"In the negotiations that followed, it became apparent that Indian claims concerning the extent of the Chinese incursions could not be reliably evaluated," it said.

"(The, then) US ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith, therefore, suggested to the Indian Government that US aerial reconnaissance of the disputed areas would provide both governments with a more accurate picture of the Communist Chinese incursions."

"On 11 November 1962, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru consented to the proposed operation and gave the United States permission to refuel the reconnaissance aircraft (U-2s) in Indian airspace," it said.

Rocket attack on train kills 2 in Pakistan

AFP, Quetta

Unidentified militants yesterday killed two people and wounded 24 in a gun and rocket attack on a passenger train in restive south-west Pakistan, officials said.

Women and children were among the casualties in the attack, which came in Dozan area, some 35 kilometres southeast of Quetta, the main town of Baluchistan province, which is beset by separatist, Islamist and sectarian violence.

Kurd said the attackers were hiding in the mountains and first started firing and then fired at least three rockets at the train, which was travelling from Quetta to Rawalpindi, the twin city of Islamabad.

The attack came nine days after separatist gunmen shot dead 14 people, including three security officials in Mach area, close to Dozan.

Gunman shuts down Pak capital in televised drama

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani police yesterday defended their response to a gunman who shut down the heart of the heavily guarded capital for five hours in a standoff that ended with him being shot and wounded.

Waving two semi-automatic guns and occasionally firing into the air, Mohammad Sikandar was accompanied by his wife and children throughout the tense drama late Thursday that took place close to Islamabad's political quarter.

Broadcast live on Pakistan's freewheeling rolling news channels, hours of stalemate came to a chaotic end when Zamrud Khan, a senior member of the opposition Pakistan Peoples Party sent to negotiate, made a sudden lunge at the gunman.

Khan slipped and missed his man, but police opened fire, seriously wounding Sikandar in the chest and leg before arresting him, dragging him off as blood poured from his wounds. Doctors yesterday said he was improving.

Police said it appeared Sikandar was not part of any extremist outfit.

The standoff began around 5:30pm when police flagged down the car for a traffic offence on the central Jinnah Avenue neighbourhood. Sikandar then started firing into the air, forcing markets and shops in the area to close, before making a series of rambling demands including the resignation of the government, the imposition of Sharia law and the release of a son from prison in Dubai.

White House goes green with solar panels

AFP, Washington

The White House is going green. Solar panels are being installed on parts of the residence, a US official said Thursday -- making good on a pledge that dates back to 2010.

With President Barack Obama and his family vacationing in Martha's Vineyard for a week, workers equipped with cranes have been buzzing around the home in downtown Washington.

"The White House has begun installing American-made solar panels on the First Family's residence as a part of an energy retrofit that will improve the overall energy efficiency of the building," the official said.

In October 2010, then Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced that solar panels would be installed at the White House, in a bid to encourage Americans to adopt the green power generation technology.

Former president Jimmy Carter, a Democrat like Obama, had solar panels installed during his presidency in the late 1970s, during the oil crisis. But his successor Ronald Reagan had them removed.

Since taking office in 2009, Obama has made green energy a priority for his administration, but his efforts have been thwarted by Congress.

'No one is protecting us!'

Egypt Christians terrified after church attacks

AFP, Cairo

Egypt's Christians are living in fear after a string of attacks against churches, businesses and homes they say were carried out by angry supporters of ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi.

As police dispersed Morsi supporters from two Cairo squares on Wednesday, attackers torched churches across the country in an apparent response.

"People are terrified; no one dares leave home," Marco, a 27-year-old engineer, told AFP by phone from the central city of Sohag. "No one is protecting us!" he lamented.

The city has become a ghost town, he said, describing an atmosphere of terror where attackers "know where the Copts live" and torched several churches before turning to homes.

The Maspero Youth Union, a Coptic Christian youth movement, denounced what it called a "retaliation war" against the religious minority which makes up around 10 percent of Egypt's population.

The group accused Morsi supporters of targeting them in response to Coptic Pope Tawadros II's support for the July 3 coup that ousted the Islamist leader.

The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), a local NGO, says at least 25 churches were torched on Wednesday and Thursday, and that attackers also targeted Christian schools, shops and homes across 10 of Egypt's 27 provinces.

The attacks against the churches were not a surprise -- Christian religious buildings have been targeted before.

What is new is the torching of Coptic Christian homes and the looting of their businesses.

ODDLY enough



Iran politician 'too pretty' for city council seat

TIMES OF INDIA ONLINE

An electoral candidate who won a place on a city council in Iran has reportedly been barred from taking up the seat because she is too attractive.

Nina Siahkali Moradi secured 14th place among 163 candidates. But Moradi was disqualified and prevented from filling the vacancy. A senior official in Qazvin was quoted in the Times to have explained the decision by saying: "We don't want a catwalk model on the

Goa party is over: Govt bans dance bars

AFP, Panaji

India's popular holiday state of Goa has announced a ban on dance bars, further restricting the party scene in a destination once famous as a raver's paradise.

The state has progressively tightened controls on nightclubs and outdoor parties over the last few years after a series of high-profile crimes including the rape and murder of a British teenager in 2008.

Goa is now trying to be more family-