

# NEWSIN brief

## Afghan mine collapse kills 27

AFP, Kabul

A coal mine collapse killed at least 27 miners in northern Afghanistan, officials said yesterday, with rescue efforts underway to save about 12 workers trapped underground.

Emergency teams rushed to the scene after the mine collapsed in a remote area of Samangan province on Saturday, and bodies were being brought out of the accident site.

The US conducted an aerial mining survey of Afghanistan in 2006, building on data from the Soviet occupation of the 1980s, and found evidence of \$1 trillion of minerals deposits.

## Minor gang-rape triggers outrage in Pakistan

TNN, Islamabad

The global outcry over the Nirbhaya rape and murder had its echoes in Lahore as the gruesome rape of a five-year-old girl triggered national protests and Pakistan Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftiqar Chaudhry ordered police in the Punjab province to submit a report to the court on the assault.

The girl, who was repeatedly raped before being dumped in an impoverished Lahore neighbourhood battled for life on Saturday in a city hospital.

In Pakistan, majority of rape cases aren't reported and convictions for crimes cases against women are rare.

## UK's Clegg opposes visa bond plan

AP, London

Britain's Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg on Sunday said he will try to block any attempt to make foreign visitors routinely pay a security deposit to come to the UK, an idea that has spurred outrage in countries such as India and Nigeria.

The government plans to begin a pilot project in November involving Nigeria, Ghana, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Some visitors will have to pay a 3,000 pound deposit, refunded upon departure.

## World's oldest man dies in NY at age 112

AP, Grand Island, Ny

The world's oldest man, a 112-year-old self-taught musician, coal miner and gin rummy aficionado from western New York, has died. He was 112.

Salustiano Sanchez-Blazquez died Friday at a nursing home in Grand Island, according to Robert Young, senior gerontology consultant with Guinness World Records.

Sanchez-Blazquez became the world's oldest man when Jiroemon Kimura died June 12 at age 116.

Born June 8, 1901, in village of El Tejado de Bejar, Spain, he was known for his talent on the dulzaina, a double-reed wind instrument that he taught himself and played at weddings and village celebrations. At 17, he moved with his older brother Pedro and a group of friends to Cuba, where they worked in the cane fields.

## Mexico hit by dual storms

BBC ONLINE

Mexico is being battered by two severe storms - one on its eastern coast and another on its west, officials say.

More than 5,000 people have been evacuated on the Gulf of Mexico coast ahead of Hurricane Ingrid which already has winds of 120km/h.

Tropical Storm Manuel has hit the western coast, on the Pacific Ocean, bringing almost twice the monthly rainfall in just three days.



US Secretary of State John Kerry shakes hands with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during a press conference at the prime minister's office in Jerusalem yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Kerry in Israel to discuss arms deal

AFP, Jerusalem

Washington's top diplomat arrived in Jerusalem yesterday for talks with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over plans to destroy Syria's chemical arms and peace talks with the Palestinians.

After landing at Ben Gurion airport near Tel Aviv at 08:25 GMT, US secretary of state John Kerry headed straight to Jerusalem where he was scheduled to hold hours of talks with Israeli leader before leaving for Paris.

His arrival in Israel comes a day after Washington and Moscow reached a deal over eliminating Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons following three days of talks in Geneva with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

Ahead of the meeting, Netanyahu said he hoped the US-Russian accord would see a complete destruction of the Syrian regime's chemical weapons stockpile.

"We hope that the Russian-US

agreement on Syria's chemical weapons will bear fruit but the real test will be in its implementation: the full dismantling of the regime's chemical weapons stockpile," Netanyahu said at a ceremony marking 40 years since the Yom Kippur War.

Media reports said on Sunday's talks with Kerry would touch on the consequences for Israel of the Geneva agreement which gives Damascus a week to hand over details of its chemical arms stockpile in order to avoid sanctions and possible US-led military action.

Although Israel's main newspapers hailed news of the US-Russian agreement, some commentators raised the question of Washington leaning on Israel to ratify the international treaty banning the use of chemical weapons.

"Kerry may tell Netanyahu the United States is working to remove one of the gravest threats on Israel's security, by combining a credible military threat with creative diplomacy.

# Assad's forces on attack after weapon deal

## Syria hails US-Russia treaty as a 'victory'

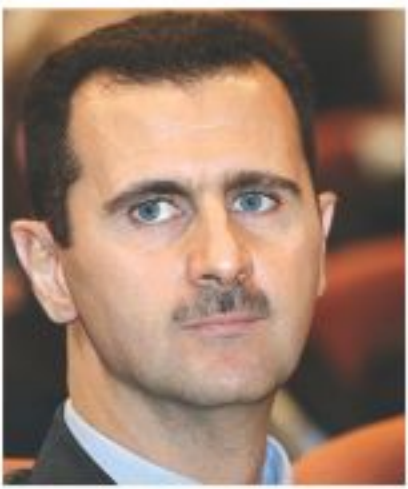
REUTERS, Beirut

Syrian warplanes and artillery bombarded rebel suburbs of the capital yesterday after the United States agreed to call off military action in a deal with Russia to remove President Bashar al-Assad's chemical weapons.

President Barack Obama said he may still launch US strikes if Damascus fails to follow a nine-month UN disarmament plan drawn up by Washington and Assad's ally Moscow. But a reluctance among US voters and Western allies to engage in a new Middle East war, and Russian opposition, has put any attacks on hold.

Syrian rebels, calling the international focus on poison gas a sideshow, dismissed talk the arms pact might herald peace talks and said Assad had stepped up an offensive with ordinary weaponry now that the threat of US air strikes had receded.

Meanwhile, a US-Russian plan to remove Syria's chemical weapons is a "victory" that averts a war, a Syrian minister



said Sunday, as Washington's top diplomat briefed Israel about the landmark deal.

"On one hand, it helps the Syrians emerge from the crisis and on the other it has allowed for averting war against Syria..." Minister of State for National Reconciliation Ali Haidar told Russian news agency Ria Novosti.

"It's a victory for Syria that was achieved thanks to our Russian friends."

His remarks came as US Secretary of State John Kerry met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to brief him on the plan to eradicate Syria's chemical weapons. Washington is seeking to bolster international support for the agreement inked in Geneva on Saturday, which demands action from Damascus within days.

International responses to Saturday's accord were guarded. Western governments, wary of Assad and familiar with the years frustrated UN weapons inspectors spent in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, noted the huge technical difficulties in destroying one of the world's biggest chemical arsenals in the midst of civil war.

## SNC names new interim PM

AFP, Istanbul

Syria's opposition National Coalition on Saturday named a moderate Islamist as its interim prime minister, in a key step towards forming a government.

Ahmad Toameh, elected during an opposition meeting in Istanbul, replaces Ghassan Hitto who resigned in July after just four months in the post without managing to form an opposition cabinet from among the fractious group.

Toameh, a 48-year-old dentist by training, now faces the arduous task of cobbling together a government to govern the regions in Syria under rebel control.

He vowed to form a cabinet that will work on the ground alongside rebels fighting the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, including to organise the distribution of humanitarian aid in the war-torn country where more than 110,000 people have been killed and millions displaced since the start of the crisis in March 2011.

He vowed that "a new republic will be established in Syria... It will be a humane republic, where there will be no room for killers and criminals... no room for any denial of civil rights".



Ahmad Toameh

## Jordan hosts over 2,100 Syria army defectors

AFP, Amman

More than 2,100 Syrian officers have fled to Jordan since the start of the conflict in their country in 2011, the kingdom's interior minister said in remarks published yesterday.

"Jordan is hosting around 2,130 Syrian officers of different military ranks in a special military complex," Hussein Majali told the government-owned Al-Rai daily.

"The kingdom will remain a safe haven for everyone but this will not be at the expense of Jordan's safety and stability. Jordan has the ability to deal with the situation in a balanced manner."

Amman and the United Nations put the number of refugees in Jordan at more than 500,000, although the kingdom says 1.2 million Syrians are living in the country, including those from before the conflict.

"If a military strike against Syria takes place, the biggest threat would be mass exodus to Jordan," Majali said.

"Jordan was prepared to receive additional 150,000 refugees from Syria -- 20,000 in the Zaatari camp and 130,000 in the Azraq camp."

The northern Zaatari camp near the border with Syria is home to more than 130,000 refugees.

Over two million people have fled Syria since the war broke out there in 2011, mostly to neighbouring Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq.

The United States and Russia on Saturday concluded three days of talks in Geneva with an ambitious agreement to dismantle and destroy Syria's chemical weapons arsenal by mid-2014.

## UN chief to present key Syria chemical arms report

AFP, United Nations

UN leaders have "agonized" over a report that Secretary General Ban Ki-moon will present today on chemical weapons in Syria that could renew pressure on President Bashar al-Assad, officials said.

Ban has already revealed that he expects the report by a UN investigation team to the UN Security Council to give "overwhelming" confirmation that arms were used in an attack near Damascus on August 21 in which hundreds died.

A Russia-US accord on the dismantling of Syria's chemical stockpile will also weigh heavily on Security Council consultations expected to be called Monday.



The US state of Colorado is continuing a large-scale rescue operation after severe flooding left five dead and hundreds unaccounted for. Thousands of people have been forced to evacuate from affected communities. The National Guard has been deployed to one town to supply food and water while inhabitants await rescue. Inset, a house on Linden Drive appears to be at risk of flooding after three days of heavy rainfall.

PHOTO: AFP

## India tests nuke capable missile

REUTERS, Bhubaneswar

India successfully test-fired for a second time a nuclear-capable missile yesterday that can reach Beijing and much of Europe, bringing a step closer production of a weapon designed to strengthen its nuclear deterrent.

"The test was successful," said Ravi Kumar Gupta, spokesman for the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). "It hit the target in a predefined trajectory. It met all the mission objectives"

A video distributed by the DRDO showed the Agni-V rocket blasting off from a forest clearing on an island off India's east coast state of Odisha.

India is trying to keep up with China's growing military strength and wants to have a viable deterrent against its larger nuclear-armed neighbour.

The two countries have generally warm relations, but they fought a brief Himalayan war in 1962 and a build up of conventional defences along their disputed border is a source of tension.



## Bomb kills 3 army officers in Pakistan

DAWN ONLINE

A roadside bomb attack yesterday killed Pakistan's two senior military officers and a soldier in the country's troubled northwest, the military said.

Major General Sanaullah and Lieutenant Colonel Touseef were visiting troop posts in the Upper Dir district of northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, along the Afghan border, when their vehicle hit a planted bomb killing them along with a soldier.

"Maj Gen Sanaullah and Lt Col Touseef embraced Shahadat (martyrdom) this morning. They were returning after visiting troops posts on Pak Afghan Border," the military said in a statement, adding that the incident resulted from an IED planted on the road near the border.

## COMMUNAL RIOT IN INDIA UP Chief Minister faces protests in Muzaffarnagar Govt suspends senior cop

PTI, Muzaffarnagar

Under attack from opposition parties and minority leaders over violence in Muzaffarnagar, UP chief minister Akhilesh Yadav yesterday visited the riot-hit district where he was greeted with black flags and slogan shouting from villagers.

Yadav first visited Kawal village, where three people were killed on August 27 over an eveasting incident after which tension has been running high in the district.

Waving black flags, the villagers shouted slogans against the "failure" of the administration in controlling the violence that has claimed 47 lives. The villagers also alleged that the chief minister did not receive a memorandum from them and only met 'outsiders'.

"The incident was saddening ... not only for those who lost their young sons but for us also. We have already appealed for peace to everyone and my government will take strict action to deal with those creating trouble", Akhilesh told reporters.

Later, the chief minister left for Malikpura and Kandhla to meet family members of victims.



Akhilesh Yadav

## ODDLY enough

### World's smallest roadworthy car

STAR DESK

Growing up, Phoenix-based Austin Coulson was always fascinated by all the cool automotive records he found in the yearly Guinness Book of Records, and dreamed of one day having his name mentioned in the famous publication.

He recently got his wish, after building the world's smallest roadworthy car.

29-year-old Austin Coulson says he developed a passion for tinkering with mechanical stuff very early in life. Two years ago, he saw a small go-kart with a car body on it, that made it look like a real miniature roadworthy vehicle.

It got him thinking whether someone could really build such a small car and make it street legal.

