

NEWS IN  
briefBlast kills 40 at  
Iraq mosque

REUTERS, Hilla

At least 40 people were killed when a suicide bomber blew himself up at a Shia Muslim funeral in a southern Iraqi town yesterday. Police said some bodies were still trapped beneath the debris. At least 50 people were wounded. Those inside had been mourning the death of a man killed a day earlier by militants.

Britain recruiting  
cyber-warriors

AFP, London

Britain is to set up a dedicated military unit to counter cyber attacks, the defence secretary announced yesterday as he issued a call for tech-savvy new recruits.

The Ministry of Defence is looking to recruit hundreds of computer experts to help defend Britain's national security. The "cyber reservists" would work alongside regular forces in the new Joint Cyber Reserve Unit in a bid to protect key computer networks and safeguard data.

Israel announces  
arrest of Iranian 'spy'

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's Shin Bet security service yesterday announced the arrest on September 11 of an Iranian "spy" carrying photographs of the US embassy in Tel Aviv.

The suspect, holding a Belgian passport, was sent to Israel by Iran's elite Republican Guards and arrested at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion international airport, Shin Bet charged in a statement.

Mumbai collapse  
death toll hits 61

AFP, Mumbai

The confirmed death toll from the collapse of a residential block in Mumbai rose to 61 yesterday as the search ended with all the missing accounted for, officials said.

The five-storey block in the Indian city's east, home to 22 families and owned by the municipal authority, came crashing down at daybreak on Friday.

Sudan's largest  
newspaper shut

AFP, Khartoum

Sudan's most popular newspaper, which has been a regular critic of a controversial government decision to cut fuel subsidies, has been ordered to stop publishing, its director said yesterday.

The move against Al-Intibaha comes as journalists complain of worsening censorship since the fuel-subsidy decision and resulting price increases sparked deadly protests last week killing dozens.



A Pakistani man runs past burning vehicles at the site of a bomb explosion in the busy Kissa Khwani market in Peshawar, yesterday. Inset, men carry an injured blast victim at the site of the explosion.

PHOTO:  
AFPManmohan, Sharif agree to  
reduce Kashmir tensions

AFP, New York City

The leaders of India and Pakistan yesterday pledged to find ways to restore calm on their disputed border in Kashmir as an initial step toward reconciliation, an Indian official said.

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who has advocated an end to historic tensions with India since he swept to power in May elections, held his first meeting with his counterpart Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the annual UN summit.

An Indian official said that the two leaders, who met for more than an hour in a New York hotel, decided to task senior military officers to "find effective means to restore the ceasefire" in divided Kashmir.

"Both agreed that the precondition for forward movement in the

relationship, which they both desire, is really an improvement of the situation on the LoC," Indian national security adviser Shivshankar Menon told reporters.

The talks come after militants raided an Indian army base in Kashmir on Thursday, killing 12 people in an attack seen as aimed at holding back reconciliation efforts between the historic rivals.

India accuses Pakistan of sponsoring militants, though the violence has subsided sharply since the 1990s and early 2000s.

Sharif and Singh extended invitations to visit the other country, but no dates were set, Menon said.

Sharif, in a speech to the UN General Assembly on Friday called for a "new beginning" with India and denounced the developing nations' years of intense military development as a waste of resources.

But Singh, who did not speak publicly yesterday, has said that Pakistan must stop being "the epicenter of terrorism" in South Asia.

Sharif, who earlier in his career maintained relations with Islamist groups, has tried to reassure India after his election as he puts top priority on reviving Pakistan's troubled economy.

After his election, Pakistan freed nearly 340 Indian fishermen in a goodwill gesture and Sharif called for greater economic cooperation with the larger neighbor.

Sharif was prime minister during the mini Kargil war in 1999 when Pakistan-linked forces infiltrated Indian side of Kashmir, just months after India's then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee traveled across the border with high hopes of reconciliation.

Boko Haram storm  
Nigeria dormitory

## Kill 40 sleeping college students

AFP, Kano

Boko Haram gunmen yesterday opened fire in a college dormitory in northeast Nigeria as the students slept, killing at least 40 people, in the latest massacre blamed on the Islamist insurgents.

All of the dead were said to have been students of the College of Agriculture in the town of Gubra, some 30 kilometres from Damaturu, the capital of Yobe state.

The early morning attack was carried out by "Boko Haram" terrorists who went into the school and opened fire on students while they were sleeping, the military spokesman in Yobe, Lazarus Eli, told AFP.

An official at the Damaturu Specialist Hospital, who requested

anonymity, said "40 bodies", all of whom appeared to be of university student age, had been received so far from Gubra.

Four others were being treated for gunshot wounds, he told AFP.

Yobe has seen a spate of attacks on schools and universities, all blamed on Boko Haram, an extremist group that has killed hundreds in its four-year insurgency.

The name Boko Haram means "Western education is forbidden" and the group has become notorious for slaughtering students of various ages in recent years.

In July in the town of Mamudo in Yobe, Islamists threw explosives and sprayed gunfire into dormitories in the middle of the night, killing 41 students.

Blast hits Pak  
market; 39  
killed

AFP, Peshawar

A car bomb killed at least 39 people yesterday in Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar, officials said, the third deadly strike to hit the city in a week.

The bomb caused carnage in the busy Kissa Khwani market in the city, the gateway to tribal regions which are a stronghold of militants linked to the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

A senior official at Peshawar's Lady Reading Hospital, Dr Arshad Javaid, confirmed the new death toll and said 91 people were still in hospital after several of the injured were treated and sent home.

The dead included eight women and six children aged five to nine.

The remote controlled car bomb went off near a police station but officials said it did not appear to have been the target.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who is in New York for the UN General Assembly, strongly condemned the blast.

The blast caused major destruction, toppling a two-storey building and gutting several shops, an AFP reporter at the scene saw.

Two weeks ago Pakistan's main political parties backed the prospect of peace talks with the militants, an idea floated several times by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. But a series of attacks since then, including the killing of a senior army commander, have led many to question the strategy.

## US drone kills 3

A US drone strike yesterday killed three militants in a restive Pakistani tribal region near the Afghan border, officials said.

The area targeted by the drone is said to be the stronghold of Afghanistan's Haqqani network, a guerrilla faction linked to the Taliban.

ODDLY  
enough

## Fatal 'lovemaking'

AFP, Kiev

A Ukrainian couple's inability to rein in their passion for each other ended in tragedy when a woman was killed by a locomotive and her partner had his legs torn off during pre-dawn love-making on a railway track, police said yesterday.

The accident took place in the southeastern Ukrainian region of Zaporizhia early Saturday. A police spokesman told AFP that the pair was believed to have been drunk.

The woman died on the spot while the man was hospitalised with his legs torn off below the knee.



Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Muhammad Nawaz Sharif shake hands during a meeting on the sidelines of the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly at the New York Palace Hotel in New York, yesterday.

PHOTO:  
AFPModi defends Manmohan!  
Blasts Rahul, Pak PM for 'insulting' Indian PM

TNN, New Delhi

PM had "no stature" before the PM of a nation of 1.25 billion (people), he added.

Referring to the UPA government, Modi said, "We may have political differences, but that does not mean we will allow any other country to



insult our prime minister."

Modi then went on to take a dig at Manmohan Singh and wondered if he would be able to take a tough position when he meets Pakistani prime minister later in the day.

"Please don't let down the kin of soldiers who have sacrificed their lives for the country," Modi said. Exhorting people to vote for the BJP, Modi said, "In 2014, India needs a dream team and not a dirty team."

US-bound Netanyahu aims  
to nix Iran 'charm offensive'

AFP, Jerusalem



But that has not stopped his confidants speaking out, and President Shimon Peres warned that the tone of much of the commentary was dangerously scornful of Israel's key ally.

"You can agree or disagree (with the Americans) but I don't like this scornful tone," Peres told army radio.

"Other people have brains to think too, not just us. We should talk to them and try to influence them."

After meeting Obama, Netanyahu is due to address the UN General Assembly tomorrow, the same forum where last year he used a cartoon bomb as a prop to underline how close he believed Iran was to being able to build one.

Israel, the Middle East's sole if undeclared nuclear-armed power, remains adamant that Iran is bent on developing a weapons capability under cover of its civilian nuclear programme, something it regards as a threat to its existence.

Israeli leaders have repeatedly vowed to take military action rather than see the Islamic republic develop a bomb and have called on Washington to take tougher action against Tehran, saying they see no real change of policy under Rohani.

ITALY IN FRESH CRISIS  
Berlusconi quits  
Italy coalition

AFP, Rome

Italy was mired in a fresh political quagmire yesterday after Silvio Berlusconi pushed his party's ministers to quit the fragile coalition government, a move Prime Minister Enrico Letta called a "crazy act".

All five ministers from the People of Freedom (PDL) party Saturday took the decision to step down at Berlusconi's urging, said deputy prime minister Angelino Alfano, the number two in government who was among the resignations.

Italy newspapers put the blame for the new government crisis squarely at the ex-prime minister's feet.

"The convict has made Italy fail," read the headline in the leftist daily *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, alluding to Berlusconi's conviction for tax fraud. The centre-right *La Stampa* and newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore* decried "the madness" of the actions taken by the media mogul who has dominated Italian politics for most of the last two decades.

The flamboyant billionaire, who turned 77 yesterday, dismissed as "unacceptable" a demand by Letta on Friday for parliament to express support for the government next week, in a bid to end a crisis that has plagued the bickering ruling coalition.

Now President Giorgio Napolitano will have to mediate to find a way out of the latest political impasse.

Letta's government was cobbled together following a two-month stand-off after an inconclusive general election in February. The premier of the centre-left Democratic Party (PD) had won the confidence of financial markets by managing to keep together the improbable right-left coalition.

Syria will comply with  
UN resolution: Assad

## UN experts to begin work amid raging violence

AFP, Damascus



Syria will comply with a UN resolution to destroy its chemical arsenal, President Bashar al-Assad said yesterday, as weapons experts prepared to head to Damascus to begin the task.

In the latest violence, an air raid hit a high school in the northern rebel-held city of Raqa killing 16 people, including 10 students, as troops battled rebels on several fronts, a watchdog said.

A team of around 20 inspectors from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is due in Damascus tomorrow and will immediately meet regime officials, an OPCW official said.

"At this point, we have absolutely no reason to doubt the information provided by the Syrian regime," the official told journalists at its headquarters in The Hague yesterday.

Another group of UN inspectors is due to wrap up a probe into several alleged chemi-

cal attacks today.

They hope to draft by late October a comprehensive report, which will also cover the August 21 attack in Damascus suburbs said to have killed hundreds of civilians with the nerve agent sarin.

The regime and the rebels have traded accusations of chemical weapons use during the 30-month war that has killed more than 110,000 people and forced two million to flee.

In his first comments since the resolution was passed on Friday, Assad told Italy's Rai News 24 television his regime "will comply" with the resolution.

"Of course we will comply with it, and history proves that we have always honoured all treaties we have signed," he said, according to the state news agency SANA.

Assad also said warming relations between the United States and Syria's ally Iran could be beneficial for Damascus and the region, "so long as the United States is honest".