

Israel to tackle Iran 'alone'

Netanyahu says Tehran is fooling world, slams Rohani

AFP, United Nations

Israel is ready to act "alone" to stop Iran making a nuclear bomb, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday in a headline warning against rushing into deals with the new leadership in Tehran.

"Israel will not allow Iran to get nuclear weapons. If Israel is forced to stand alone, Israel will stand alone," Netanyahu told a UN summit in a fierce attack on overtures made by Iran's President Hassan Rohani.

Netanyahu linked Rohani, who held a landmark conversation with US President Barack Obama while in New York last week, to past militant attacks blamed on Iran.

"He fooled the world once. Now he thinks he can fool it again. You see, Rohani thinks he can have his yellow cake and eat it too," Netanyahu said in a speech in which he demanded that sanctions be maintained.

Last year Netanyahu used a cartoon drawing of a bomb to illustrate his warning at the UN that Iran was close to the nuclear bomb threshold.

There was no repeat this time, but Iran



immediately condemned Netanyahu's comments as "saber-rattling" and renewed its denial of Western accusations that it seeks a nuclear bomb.

"I wish I could believe Rohani. But I don't," Netanyahu said.

"Iran wants to be in a position to rush forward to build nuclear bombs before the international community can detect it and much less prevent it," he alleged.

A nuclear-armed Iran would be a bigger threat than North Korea, Netanyahu added.

Netanyahu gave a stark challenge to the international powers who have broadly welcomed the apparent change announced

by Rohani, while warning that they are also looking for concrete signs of cooperation from Tehran.

Obama told Netanyahu at a White House meeting on Monday that the Western powers had to "test" diplomacy with Rohani.

"But we enter into these negotiations very clear-eyed. They will not be easy, and anything that we do will require the highest standards of verification in order for us to provide the sort of sanctions relief that I think they are looking for," Obama added.

Netanyahu's speech adds to the complications for Rohani, who said last week that he wanted a deal within months to end international doubts about Iran's nuclear intentions.

The West and Israel accuse Iran of seeking to develop nuclear weapons, a claim Tehran rejects.

Rouhani's telephone talks with Obama last week marked the first conversation between US and Iranian leaders since the 1979 Iranian revolution.

Western negotiators are to hold new talks with Iranian representatives in Geneva this month in a first test of the overtures.

One in eight around the world go hungry

REUTERS, Milan

One in eight people around the world is chronically undernourished, the United Nations' food agencies said yesterday, warning world leaders that some regions would fail in halving the number of hungry by 2015.

In their latest report on food insecurity, the UN agencies estimated that 842 million people were suffering chronic hunger in 2011-13, or 12 percent of the world's population, down 17 percent from 1990-92.

The new figure was lower than the last estimate of 868 million in 2010-12 and 1.02 billion in 2009, but the report said progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goal to halve the prevalence of hunger in the world by 2015 was uneven.

Many countries were unlikely to meet the goal adopted by world leaders at the United Nations in 2000, said the Food and Agriculture

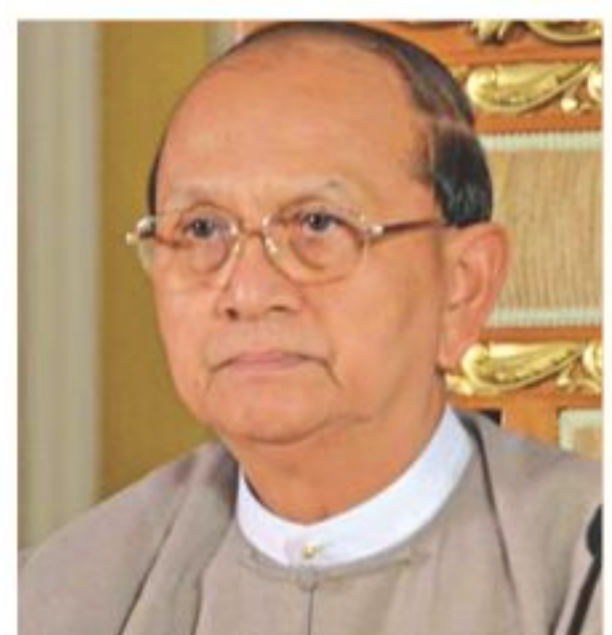
Organisation (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

"Those (countries) that have experienced conflict during the past two decades are more likely to have seen significant setbacks in reducing hunger," the report said.

"Landlocked countries face persistent challenges in accessing world markets, while countries with poor infrastructure and weak institutions face additional constraints."

FAO, WFP and IFAD define undernourishment, or hunger, in the State of Food Insecurity in the World 2013 report as "not having enough food for an active and healthy life" and an inability to "meet dietary energy requirements".

Policies aimed at boosting agricultural productivity and food availability were crucial in reducing hunger even where poverty was widespread, the agencies said.



Riots rock Myanmar

AFP, Yangon

Anti-Muslim riots shook western Myanmar yesterday with a mob of hundreds setting homes ablaze and stabbing a 94-year-old woman to death, police said, as President Thein Sein made a rare visit to the region.

Thein Sein, making his first trip to Rakhine state as president, was due to hold meetings with Buddhist and Rohingya Muslim communities during his two-day visit, according to a presidential office official.

Unrest began rippling through rural areas near the town of Thandwe in the early morning, with a mob of 800 ethnic Rakhine Buddhists from nearby villages descending on one settlement, according to a police official in the state who asked not to be named.

"They burned about 18 houses. After that a 94-year-old Kaman Muslim woman was stabbed (to death)," he said.

Several more homes were burned in another village, as security forces fired some 30 warning shots to disperse two opposing groups of Buddhists and Muslims that had formed near the police station.

He said a military presence has been increased in the Thandwe area, which Thein Sein is due to visit today. He spent Tuesday visiting a different area of Rakhine populated mainly by Rohingya Muslims.

Around 250 people have been killed and more than 140,000 left homeless in several outbreaks of violence around the country since June 2012, mostly in Rakhine.

NEWSIN brief

Abdullah, 2009 runner-up, enters Afghan vote

AFP, Kabul

Abdullah Abdullah, the suave former foreign minister who came second in Afghanistan's fraud-tainted 2009 election, yesterday entered next year's presidential race as the deadline for nominations loomed.

Abdullah pulled out of a second-round run-off in 2009 after collecting about 30 percent of the vote, allowing President Hamid Karzai to retain power in an election that was badly marred by cheating and violence.

Typhoon Wutip batters Vietnam; 3 killed

AFP, Hanoi

Typhoon Wutip left a trail of destruction in its wake with at least three people reported dead in Vietnam yesterday, roofs ripped off thousands of homes and dozens of fishermen missing.

High winds ripped the roofs off around 95,000 houses and tens of thousands of hectares of crops were destroyed after the typhoon -- packing winds of up to 103 kilometres an hour -- hit the communist country late Monday.

Sanjay Dutt gets 14-day leave from jail

PTI, Pune

Actor Sanjay Dutt yesterday left the Yerawada jail here for Mumbai on a 14-day leave sanctioned to him on eligibility criteria, jail authorities said.

Dutt, serving sentence under the Arms Act for illegal possession of weapons in the 1993 Mumbai blasts case, granted bail on ground of good conduct, jail authority said.

Suicide bomber kills five Iraq police

AFP, Tikrit

A suicide bomber killed five police in Iraq yesterday, an officer and a doctor said, as an al-Qaeda front group claimed a wave of deadly bombings.

The attack in Tikrit, which hit the counter-explosives police headquarters for Salaheddin province, also wounded seven police. The bombing came a day after 13 bombs in and around Baghdad killed at least 50 people.



US Park Police officers stands guard in front of the closed Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, yesterday. The National Mall and all monuments and large sections of the government remain close due to government shut down after Congress failed to agree on spending.

PHOTO: AFP

'Yankees go home' Venezuela expels top US diplomats

AFP, Caracas

President Nicolas Maduro ordered the expulsion of the top US diplomat in Venezuela and two other embassy officials Monday, accusing them of plotting acts of sabotage with the opposition.

Maduro gave charge d'affaires Kelly Keiderling, who has held the post since 2011, and the two other diplomats 48 hours to leave the country.

"Yankees go home, get out of Venezuela!" the leftist leader said in a public address, adding that he had instructed Foreign Minister Elias Jaua to throw out the three Americans.

The United States and Venezuela have been without mutual ambassadors since 2010, making Keiderling the most senior US diplomat in Caracas.

A US embassy official told AFP that the two other diplomats, Elizabeth Hunderland and David Mutt, work in the mission's political section.

The official said the embassy had yet to receive an official notification of expulsion from the government.

Venezuela has endured blackouts for years, and the government has accused the opposition of plotting outages and economic sabotage before.

Earlier this month, Maduro blamed the opposition for causing a major power breakdown that affected 70 percent of the country.

US generals sacked over Afghan failures

AFP, Washington

The commandant of the US Marine Corps on Monday sacked two generals in the wake of a deadly attack last year by the Taliban on a major Nato base in Afghanistan.

The extraordinary decision came after a military investigation found Major General Charles Gurganus and Major General Gregg Sturdevant failed to take sufficient action to safeguard the base from a possible assault by insurgents, the Marine Corps said in a statement.

It was the first time an American general had been fired over battlefield negligence since the Vietnam War, officials said.

Manmohan says he won't resign over Rahul jibe

PTI, On Board PM's Special Aircraft

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh yesterday ruled out his resignation in the wake of Rahul Gandhi's carping attack on his government on the issue of ordinance to protect convicted lawmakers.

"There is no question of resigning," he told reporters asserting that he does not get "upset easily".

Manmohan Singh said he will meet Rahul Gandhi tomorrow morning to discuss the Ordinance issue.

The prime minister ruling out resignation comes in the wake of demands and taunts from opposition parties that the attack by Rahul Gandhi on the government that the ordinance was "complete nonsense" and should be "torn up and thrown away" amounted to an insult of him and undermining his authority, especially when he was on a foreign visit.

Singh said he would try to find out the



reason why Rahul Gandhi made a public statement and "why it had to be that way". "I am not the master of what people say. It has happened and as I said when I go back I will try to find the reason why it happened that way and how do we handle it," he said.

Speaking to journalists on way back home from Frankfurt, the prime minister said he would discuss the issue with Rahul and that "it is always possible to change one's mind". He will also "take into confidence" his Cabinet colleagues on the matter.

Rahul publicly rubbished the Ordinance on September 27, a few hours before Singh was to meet US President Barack Obama in Washington.

The Ordinance was approved by the Cabinet on September 24, a day before the Prime Minister left on his US tour. The decision has generated a huge controversy and President Pranab Mukherjee has refused to sign it.

Marry me

Philippine politician woos bride live in parliament

AFP, Manila

A Philippine politician has stunned his girlfriend and won new fans with a nationally televised wedding proposal in congress.

Acedillo, 36, said he lured his lover Ocampo, 28, to congress with a white lie -- saying he was about to deliver an important speech on the budget and needed moral support.

"I took the floor, knelt down on one knee and looking at her, I asked, will you do me the honour by being my wife?" he said.

"She was taken by surprise and didn't know what was happening at first. But of course, she said yes."

Some colleagues who knew of the plan then gave the stunned woman flowers.

And television crew who were covering the budget debates instantly had a feel-good story that made primetime news.

'War on illegal drugs failing'

AFP, Paris

The global war on heroin, cocaine and cannabis is failing to stem supply, as prices of these drugs have tumbled while seizures of them have risen, according to a study published Monday.

Researchers analysed data from seven government-funded programmes that tracked the illegal drug market over more than a decade.

Three of the programmes monitored international drugs trafficking; three focused on the United States; and one tracked the drugs business in Australia.

"During this time, seizures of these drugs in major domestic markets generally increased," said the study's authors, led by Evan Wood of the Urban Health Research Initiative in Vancouver, Canada.

"With few exceptions... illegal drug prices have generally decreased while drug purity has generally increased since 1990," they added.

The global supply of illicit drugs had likely not been reduced in the last two decades, the study said, and the availability of cannabis and opiates like heroin may even have increased.

ODDLY enough

Free burgers for US govt workers

AFP, Washington

A fast-food chain in Washington is promising free hamburgers to federal workers who find themselves furloughed if the US government shuts down, its founder and proprietor said Monday.

The offer is open to furloughed federal employees and contractors upon presentation of an ID card, as well as municipal workers in Washington, which as a federal district is over-



Is he the world's 'shortest' man?

AFP, Kathmandu

An elderly Nepalese man who is just 41 centimetres (16 inches) tall is stepping up his campaign to be recognised as the world's shortest person.

Master Nau, 73, is staking his claim as the shortest person in an "immovable" category, which according to the Guinness World Records recognises a person who cannot walk. His fellow countryman, Chandra Bahadur Dangi, 74, holds the current record for the world's shortest man. He measures 54.6 centimetres.