

# NEWSIN brief

## China to launch moon rover tomorrow

AFP, Beijing

China will launch its first ever moon rover mission tomorrow, state media said, as Beijing embarks on the latest stage in its ambitious space programme.

A rocket carrying the vehicle, named "Jade Rabbit" in a nod to Chinese folklore, will blast off at 1:30am local time. China is aiming at creating a permanent space station by 2020 and eventually send someone to the moon.

## US apologises over Helmand drone strike

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

The United States has moved to end the tense standoff with Afghan president Hamid Karzai over his refusal to sign a security pact between the two countries by formally apologising for a US drone strike in Helmand province that killed a toddler and injured two women.

The apology was delivered in a phone call to Karzai late on Thursday by marine General Joseph Dunford, the top US and Nato commander in Afghanistan.

## 'No dismantling of Iran nuke sites'

AFP, London



Iran will not dismantle its nuclear facilities, President Hassan Rohani said

in an interview with The Financial Times published Friday after a historic deal between Tehran and world powers.

Israel has bitterly opposed the deal struck in Geneva last weekend, saying that any pact with Tehran must have the sole purpose of dismantling Iran's nuclear capability.

## Plane crashes in Namibia; 34 killed

REUTERS, Windhoek

A Mozambique Airlines plane en route to Angola crashed in a game park in northeast Namibia killing all 34 people on board, Namibian police said yesterday.

Flight TM 470 left Maputo on Friday for the Angolan capital of Luanda with 28 passengers and six crew members on board when it lost contact with air traffic controllers, the national carrier said in a statement.

## Smartphone app to give quake warning

AFP, Rio De Janeiro

A smartphone app designed to give early warning of earthquakes could be ready as early as next year, according to scientists at the World Science Forum in Rio de Janeiro.

Researchers from the University of California showed off the project this week at a conference on how to use technology to ward off natural disasters.

The app is based on technology used in an early warning system prepared by a team under Professor Richard Allen, director of the UC Berkeley Seismological Laboratory.

The smartphone app is capable of providing an alert between a few seconds and one minute before a tremor hits, depending on where an individual using it is in relation to the epicenter.



PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

Protesters clash with police on Independence Square in Kiev early yesterday morning. Inset, a Reuters photo journalist. Dozens of protesters were wounded in Ukraine's capital when police brutally dispersed demonstrators calling for President Viktor Yanukovich's ouster after he failed to salvage an EU deal, a lawmaker and a witness said.

# Thai protests turn violent

Tension boils as opposition deadline on toppling govt looms

REUTERS, Bangkok

Gunshots were fired and an anti-government crowd attacked motorcyclists and vehicles near a stadium rally by supporters of Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra yesterday, as tensions boiled over amid attempts to topple her from power.

Several people were wounded when shots were fired as chaos erupted in Bangkok's Ramkhamhaeng area, where protesters armed with sticks attacked a bus and taxi and badly beat two people, police and Reuters witnesses said.

The US embassy in Bangkok expressed concern about the rising political tension. It was unclear who had fired the shots and how many people were injured, Adul Saengsingkaew, national police commissioner-general, told Reuters.

With a Sunday deadline set by demonstrators for the ousting of the government, police called for military backup to protect parliament and Yingluck's office, Government House, where protesters tore down stone and razor wire barriers ahead of a planned move to occupy it.

Demonstrators have started to up the ante and briefly occupied the headquarters of the army on Friday, urging it to join them in a complex power struggle centred on the enduring political influence of Yingluck's billionaire brother, ousted prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Those attacked by the crowd were accused of being "red shirts", ardently loyal supporters of

Yingluck and Thaksin, who gathered in their thousands at the Rajamangala stadium to ward of any coup attempt against the government.

The tension heightens a nearly decade-long conflict that broadly pits Thailand's traditional establishment of top generals, royalists and the urban middle class against the mostly rural, northern supporters of Thaksin.

Protest leader Suthep Thaugsuban told supporters late on Friday to surround the headquarters of the national and city police, along with Government House and even a zoo today.

Yingluck's son was harassed by parents of other children at his school on Friday, according to Thai media. In an emotional plea, she urged them to leave her son alone. "I beg, if you have children you'll understand the heart of a mother," she said during a televised news conference. "If you're angry, please make it all about me."

A crowd of about 2,000 people massed outside state-owned telecoms companies yesterday and Suthep has urged his followers to move on the ministries of labour, foreign affairs, education and interior. It remains unclear whether he has the numbers to besiege multiple government offices.

The protests are the biggest since red-shirted Thaksin supporters paralysed Bangkok in April-May 2010 in a period of unrest that ended with a military crackdown in which 91 people, mostly Thaksin supporters, were killed.

# Chopper crashes into Glasgow Pub

## 8 killed, dozens hurt

AFP, Glasgow

Eight people have been killed when a police helicopter plunged into a busy Glasgow pub, police said yesterday, with 14 others seriously injured in hospital as rescuers battled to find survivors.

Police Scotland Chief Constable Stephen House said the two officers and the civilian pilot aboard the police helicopter and five people inside The Clutha bar were all killed by the accident late Friday.

The chopper smashed into the roof of The Clutha pub, where more than 100 revellers had packed in to watch a band play on Friday night ahead of St. Andrew's Day, Scotland's national day celebrating its patron saint.

Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond called it a "black day" for the nation as emergency service workers tried to make the one-storey building secure enough to permit full access to the scene.

Witnesses said the helicopter dropped like a stone, while people inside the pub heard a heavy thud before the roof caved in and the air filled with dust and screams.

Scottish flags on government buildings were to fly at half-mast for the rest of the weekend.

# US to destroy Syria chem arms at sea

AFP, The Hague

The United States will destroy the most dangerous of Syria's chemical weapon stockpile on a ship at sea, the world's chemical watchdog said yesterday.

"The neutralisation operations will be conducted on a US vessel at sea using hydrolysis," the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons said in a statement.

"Currently a suitable naval vessel is undergoing modifications to support the operations and to accommodate verification activities by the OPCW," the Hague-based watchdog added.

The ship operation will destroy what is known as "priority chemical weapons," the most dangerous of Syria's total arsenal and ones that have to be out of the country by December 31 under an international deal agreed to avert military strikes on Damascus.

OPCW member states have been thrashing out the details of how to destroy Damascus's arsenal ahead of the watchdog's annual meeting due to start tomorrow.

The OPCW earlier this month adopted a final roadmap for ridding Syria of its arsenal of more than 1,000 tonnes of dangerous chemicals by mid-2014.

The OPCW yesterday said that 35 commercial companies have expressed an interest in destroying the lower priority, less dangerous weapons.

Despite international consensus on destroying the chemicals outside war-racked Syria, no country had volunteered to have them destroyed on its soil.

# 90 firms emitted two-thirds of world's deadly gases: Study

TNN, New Delhi

Amid the ongoing debate over how to arrive at a global climate deal which may be acceptable to all nations, new research on greenhouse gas emissions has listed 90 companies - mostly belonging to rich countries - as the major culprits who emitted nearly two-thirds of the total carbon dioxide and methane emissions in the world since 1751.

The new research will help the developing countries push this argument further as it found that the majority of the companies that had contributed to global warming through high emissions during 1751-2010 was based in rich countries like the US, the UK, Germany, France, Japan and Canada among others. The research shows that 90 companies from across the globe had emitted 63% of total industrial emissions during 1751-2010.

In fact, 40% of the total such private entities operate in US - the country that had been most vocal while seeking to dilute the differentiation between 'developed' and 'developing' countries during the recently held climate talks in Warsaw, Poland.



US President Barack Obama speaks to people taking part in the Fast for Families calling for immigration reform on the National Mall in Washington, DC, yesterday. "The president told them that it is not a question of whether immigration reform will pass, but how soon," a US official told AFP quoting Obama.

PHOTO: AFP

# Jack the Ripper identified!

MAIL ONLINE

Crime writer Patricia Cornwell is promising to publish new research on the identity of Jack the Ripper which she claims will help to solve the mystery.

The best-selling author believes she has 'cracked' the case by unearthing evidence that confirms Walter Sickert, an influential artist, as the prime suspect.

Fans of the painter were critical of her first book for pointing the finger at the painter, but she has spent the last 11 years working to prove her theory.

"I feel that I have cracked it," she said.

Furthermore, Cornwell, 47, says the artist had links to the royal family - perhaps backing some kind of royal conspiracy in relation to the crimes.

The bestselling author has been working



with former Scotland Yard commander John Grieve to look through a selection of letters, held at The National Archives in Kew, allegedly sent to police by the killer.

While she admits her evidence is only circumstantial, Cornwell argues it hard to accept it is merely a coincidence that watermarks on some of the letters match paper used by Sickert.

The author acknowledged that even if the artist wrote some of the letters, it does not mean Sickert was the killer.

However, she added: "In court, a jury might struggle with that. They are very confessional and violent letters."

The writer has spent millions of pounds investigating the unidentified killer - who killed at least five prostitutes in Whitechapel in the late 1880s.

# China challenges US in East Asia

REUTERS, Hong Kong/Tokyo

China's new air defence zone, stretching far into East Asia's international skies, is an historic challenge to the United States, which has dominated the region for decades.

For years, Chinese naval officers have told their US counterparts they are uncomfortable with America's presence in the western Pacific - and Beijing is now confronting strategic assumptions that have governed the region since World War Two.

China's recent maritime muscle-flexing in disputes over the South China Sea and over Japanese-administered islands in the East China Sea has stirred concern and extensive backroom diplomacy in Washington.

But it took the events of the last week to spark an immediate and symbolic response from the United States - the unannounced appearance in the zone of two unarmed B-52 bombers from the fortified island of Guam, the closest US territory to the Chinese coast.

China's unilateral creation of the zone - accompanied by warnings that it would take "defensive emergency measures" against aircraft that didn't identify themselves - has raised the stakes in a territorial dispute with Japan over tiny, uninhabited islands in the area.

Shi Yinong, a professor of international relations at Renmin University who advises Beijing's State Council, said Washington should now acknowledge China needs its own "strategic space". "How the US and its allies recognize that will be vital to the future of the region," he said.

A Chinese analyst with ties to the military warned Tokyo and Washington against mistaking Beijing as a "paper tiger", adding that US surveillance flights near China's coast - such as one that sparked a fatal collision over Hainan Island in 2001 - "will never be allowed to happen again."

However, for all the apparent boldness of China's move, some regional analysts believe Beijing has over-reached, in comparison to earlier campaigns of assertion.

# Pakistan PM in Kabul, backs Taliban talks

AFP, Kabul

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif yesterday said he supported Afghan efforts to seek peace with the Taliban as he visited Kabul for talks with President Hamid Karzai.

The one-day visit was Sharif's first since he took office in May and came as Karzai is locked in a public dispute with Washington over a security deal covering the role of US soldiers who remain in Afghanistan after next year.

"The key to sustainable peace in Afghanistan in 2014 and beyond is an inclusive political settlement," Sharif told a press conference in Kabul.

"I... urge all the stakeholders to seize this moment and join hands to support peace efforts," he said. "It is imperative to reverse the destructive cycle of conflict."

Pakistan is seen as crucial to peace in neighbouring Afghanistan as it was a key backer of the hardline 1996-2001 Taliban regime in Kabul and is believed to shelter some of the movement's leaders.

# The return of Egypt's police state

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

It was late at night when the gang of armed police stormed into the home of Alaa Abd El Fattah, one of Egypt's most prominent activists.

The men, some of whom wore masks, reportedly beat Fattah before handcuffing him and whisking him away. His wife said she was slapped around the face after asking to see an arrest warrant.

The raid, which took place at about 10:00pm on Thursday, was a boot-through-the-door operation with all the hallmarks of



totalitarian security state. Fattah's crime? Organising a peaceful demonstration through the streets of central Cairo earlier this week. This is Egypt three years into the Arab Spring: a land where even the simple act of spontaneous protest has become illegal.

For some of the secular activists who supported the popular coup against the Muslim Brotherhood over the summer, the fate of Alaa Abd El Fattah - along with numerous other protesters and critics of the military-backed government - has led to a great deal of soul-searching about the direction in which their revolution is now heading.

Many enthusiastically welcomed the putsch that ousted Mohamed Morsi, seeing the generals as the only way to rid Egypt of an Islamist government which had become hugely unpopular and stood accused of numerous rights abuses. But five months on, that initial support has morphed into deep wariness among some of those who backed the army's intervention.

"The thing which brought the secular politicians and the military together was the Muslim Brotherhood," said Dr Khalil al-Anani, a Washington-based expert on Egyptian affairs. But some are now regretting it.

Much of the recent disquiet surrounds the passing of a new law which criminalises unplanned street protests. The legislation - drafted by the military-backed interim government and rubber-stamped last week - requires protesters to seek police consent if they intend to hold a political demonstration involving more than 10 people.

In addition, the interior ministry will have sweeping powers to cancel demonstrations and designate "protest-free" zones around public institutions.

Ahmed al-Hawary, an activist who helped formed the so-called June 30 Front in opposition to Mr Morsi, told The Independent that Egypt was now witnessing the "last breath of the fragile coalition" between pro-democracy secularists and the military. "It was an extremely fragile alliance," he said. "We knew the risks. We knew there was a possibility of going where we are heading now."

# Tehelka editor refused bail, faces arrest

NDTV ONLINE

Tarun Tejpal, the founder of Tehelka, who has been accused of rape, is likely to be arrested soon after a court in Goa rejected his anticipatory bail plea.

Tejpal is currently in the Goa crime branch office and the police will arrest him once they get a certified copy of the court order refusing his bail plea.

"We will arrest Tarun Tejpal. We will follow all procedures," Goa's Director General of Police told NDTV.

Tejpal is accused of raping the reporter at an annual Tehelka conference in Goa earlier this month. She did not press charges, but detailed her allegations against him to her boss at Tehelka, Shoma Chaudhary, in an email that was leaked.



Tarun Tejpal