

NEWSIN brief

Japan secretly hangs killers

AFP, Tokyo

Japan hanged two men yesterday, bringing to eight the number of prisoners executed since the conservative government of Shinzo Abe came to power a year ago.

Apart from the United States, Japan is the only major industrialised democracy to use capital punishment. Surveys have showed the death penalty has overwhelming public support despite repeated protests from European governments and human rights groups.

Nasa reports coolant loop problem at ISS

CNN ONLINE

Nasa scaled back operations on the International Space Station on Wednesday after discovering a problem with a cooling system. A pump on one of the station's two external cooling loops shut down after hitting a temperature limit, Nasa said.

The station and six crew aboard were never in any danger, Nasa added.

India imposes polio bar for Pak travelers

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistanis travelling to India will require mandatory polio vaccination, the Indian embassy said, tightening cross-border travel rules with a new policy which also affects other nations impacted by the crippling disease.

Pakistan, one of only three countries where polio remains endemic, has struggled to combat the disease after the Pakistani Taliban banned polio immunisation following a fake CIA vaccination programme meant to help track al-Qaeda chief Osama Bin Laden.

Gaddafi son Seif appears in court

AFP, Tripoli

Seif al-Islam, the son of slain Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi, yesterday appeared in a court in the western city of Zintan on charges of threatening national security, his lawyer said.

The trial hearing lasted only five minutes and was adjourned to February 27 "due to the absence of the other accused," said Mohammed Busema, the court-appointed legal representative.

Court orders review of Pussy Riot verdicts

AFP, Moscow

The Russian Supreme Court has ordered a review of the guilty verdicts handed to two members of punk band Pussy Riot, three months before the pair are due to be released from prison, it said yesterday.

Maria Alyokhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova are serving two-year sentences in Russian penal colonies after being convicted of hooliganism motivated by religious hatred for performing an anti-Kremlin protest stunt in Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Saviour.

Australia's top court bans gay marriage

AFP, Sydney

Australia's top court yesterday struck down gay marriage in the nation's capital, ruling that parliament must decide on same-sex unions -- to the anguish of dozens who have wed under a landmark law.

In a unanimous judgment scotching the Australian Capital Territory's new same-sex marriage law, the High Court ruled that only parliament -- not state and territory authorities -- had the power to decide who could wed.



PHOTO: AFP

Indian schoolchildren hold placards and candles as a tribute to the victims of the 2001 attack on the Indian parliament at a ceremony in Amritsar, yesterday. The raid on Indian parliament today 13 years ago left 15 people dead and also brought nuclear-armed India and Pakistan to the brink of war.

Pakistan's new chief justice sworn in

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's new chief justice took his oath of office yesterday after his outspoken predecessor retired, ending an eight-year turbulent and at times controversial era.

Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain swore in Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani after Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry stepped down a day earlier.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Chaudhry and other top government officials including ministers attended the ceremony.

Chaudhry, originally appointed in 2005 during the military rule of Pervez Musharraf and who came to be one of the architects of the former general's downfall, has divided opinion. Some have praised him for fearlessly taking on politicians and security agencies, while others have criticised him for exceeding the proper authority of the chief justice and interfering in political matters.



Tassaduq Hussain Jilani

In June last year he chaired a Supreme Court bench that sacked the then-prime minister Yousuf Raza Gilani after convicting him of contempt of court.

The move, likened by some observers to a "judicial coup", marked the culmination of a long-running tussle between the judiciary and the government led by the Pakistan People's Party over corruption allegations against the then-president Asif Ali Zardari.

Chaudhry has also taken on Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies, which are often seen as untouchable, demanding they explain the fate of missing persons believed to have disappeared into their custody.

Legal circles see the 64-year-old Jilani to be a far quieter presence.

Jilani has been a Supreme Court judge since 2004 and, like Chaudhry, was sacked when Musharraf imposed emergency rule in November 2007.

Anna Hazare's fast enters third day

TNN, Ralegan Siddhi

Anti-graft crusader Anna Hazare's indefinite hunger strike pressing for passage in Parliament for Jan Lokpal Bill entered third day yesterday.

Meanwhile, Aam Aadmi Party convener Arvind Kejriwal, who was supposed to go to Ralegan Siddhi to support Anna Hazare, has dropped the plan due to his ill health.

"Kejriwal is suffering from high fever due to which he is unable to go to Ralegan Siddhi to support Hazare, who is on indefinite hunger strike for passage of Jan Lokpal Bill in parliament," AAP spokesperson Manish Sisodia said.

Instead of Kejriwal, party leader Kumar Vishwas and others have left for Ralegan Siddhi, he added.

Iran, S Arabia invited to Syria peace talks

AFP, Beirut

Iran and Saudi Arabia, which back opposite sides in Syria's war, are among more than 30 countries slated to attend a peace conference next month, diplomats said.

The so-called Geneva 2 conference, a follow-up to a 2012 meeting, is aimed at mapping out a political transition to end nearly three years of fighting that has killed more than 120,000 people and displaced millions.

But the January 22 meeting will actually be held at the lakeside Swiss city of Montreux because of a shortage of hotel rooms in Geneva, which will be hosting a luxury watch fair, a Western diplomat told AFP.

"At the moment there are 32 countries invited, but that number may increase because everyone wants to come," an Arab diplomat told AFP.

"In addition to the five permanent members of the Security Council (the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China), there are the neighbouring countries, as well as Saudi Arabia and Iran, and also Germany and Italy and others."

Shia Iran is a key ally of President Bashar

al-Assad's regime, while Saudi Arabia has strongly backed the Sunni-led rebels.

Most countries will be represented by their top diplomats and "each minister can speak for five minutes," the Arab diplomat said. Afterwards, many of the foreign ministers will attend the World Economic Forum in Davos, which runs from January 22 to 25.

The regime and the opposition will each send delegations to the meeting, and will hold bilateral talks hosted by UN-Arab League envoy Lakhdar Brahimi on January 24 in Geneva.

Composing the list could prove a daunting task for Syria's opposition, which is riddled with internal divisions and increasingly at odds with powerful rebel groups fighting on the ground, many of which have rejected the conference.

The Coalition has said it is going to the conference to discuss the removal of Assad from power, while the regime has said it will attend the negotiations "without preconditions".

Diplomats said they expected the atmosphere at the talks to be tense, and a European diplomat at the United Nations said UN officials would meet with the delegates ahead of the conference to explain



Narrow escape for Rahul at Delhi airport

TNN, New Delhi

Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi narrowly escaped a disaster while landing in Delhi when another aircraft was found to be still on the runway on which his private business jet had been cleared to land.

Just moments before his Cessna Citation jet was about to touch down on Tuesday, air traffic controllers asked Rahul's plane to abort landing and take off again to avoid a collision on the runway between the two planes. Luckily for the Gandhi scion and the crew on the aircraft, the pilots managed to pull the yoke and climb again.

"Rahul Gandhi was flying into Delhi from Rae Bareilly. The air traffic control here had given clearance to his business jet to land. Before his Cessna, an Ilyushin aircraft of Indian Air Force had landed on the runway. It was estimated that this aircraft will vacate the runway in time for the Cessna to touch down. However, that did not happen," said a source.

"When Rahul's plane was about to touch down, the Ilyushin was still moving slowly and was on the runway. At that point, the ATC asked Rahul's pilots to abort landing to avoid a collision. It was a very close shave," said the source.

Suicide bombers will go to hell

Says Saudi grand mufti

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's grand mufti Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah al-Sheikh branded suicide bombers as "criminals" who will go to "hell," Al-Hayat daily reported yesterday.

Suicide bombings are "great crimes" and bombers are "criminals who rush themselves to hell by their actions," Sheikh said during a lecture in Riyadh a few days ago, according to Al-Hayat.

Sheikh described suicide bombers as "robbed of their minds... who have been used (as tools) to destroy themselves and societies."

In February 2010, Sheikh denounced terrorism as un-Islamic and condemned the killing of civilians, saying such attacks have nothing to do with the Muslim religion.

His latest remarks come after a preliminary inquiry into a December 5 suicide car bombing and assault on a Yemen defence ministry complex found that most assailants were Saudis. Fifty-six people were killed in the attack. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has claimed responsibility for the attack.



Two Palestinian women stand in front of the Dome of the Rock at the Al-Aqsa mosques compound during snow fall on the holy city of Jerusalem, yesterday as a winter weather front hit the region, bringing early snow and a steep drop in temperatures.

PHOTO: AFP

Malaria down but big challenges remain

AFP, Washington

The fight against malaria has saved 3.3 million lives worldwide since 2000 but the mosquito-borne disease still killed 627,000 people last year, mainly children in Africa, the World Health Organization said Wednesday.

A shortage of funding and basic remedies such as bed nets mean that malaria is still a major threat, particularly in Africa and Southeast Asia, according to the WHO's Malaria Report 2013.

"The fact that so many people are infected and dying from mosquito bites is one of the greatest tragedies of the 21st century," said WHO Director-General Margaret Chan.

A surge in global funding over the past decade has led to great strides against malaria, but even levels as high as \$2.5 billion in 2012 are still only half what is needed to make sure everyone at risk of the disease has access to interventions, the WHO report said.

"This remarkable progress is no cause for complacency: absolute numbers of malaria cases and deaths are not going down as fast as they could," Chan said.

In 2012, there were an estimated 207 million cases of malaria, causing some 627,000 deaths, down from the WHO estimate of 660,000 deaths in 2011.

Malaria is caused by a parasite and symptoms include fever, vomiting, diarrhea and jaundice.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and India are the hardest-hit countries.

An estimated 3.4 billion people are at risk of malaria worldwide, with 80 percent of cases occurring in Africa.

Tangible progress has been seen in over half of the 103 countries with ongoing malaria transmission, with decreases in the incidence rate since 2000, said the report.

Death rates worldwide fell by 45 percent between 2000 and 2012 in all age groups, and by 51 percent in children under five.

"That is pretty astonishing, for a disease that was neglected and abandoned," said Robert Newman, a pediatrician who heads the WHO's Global Malaria Program.

Japan, S Korea hold drill in China air zone

AFP, Tokyo

The navies of Japan and South Korea yesterday said they had carried out a joint maritime rescue drill in international waters covered by China's new air defence identification zone.

Japan's Maritime Self Defense force used two warships and a helicopter, while its South Korean counterpart also used several pieces of military equipment for the routine training, a Japanese navy spokesman said.

The Japanese military did not inform China about the use of the helicopter, he added.

"It was conducted within what China said was its ADIZ (air defence identification zone)," he said.

"The drill had been planned for a long time, since before China's announcement. It was not organised in reaction," he added.

Last month, China declared the new ADIZ over a tranche of the East China Sea, including islands disputed with Japan as well as South Korea's ADIZ.



ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED

395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208

LOCAL TENDER NOTICE

Tender ref.: EDCL/PUR/LT/2013/180

Dated: 11/12/2013

Well reputed Vehicle dealers or importer are invited for submission of best competitive price offer for 01No. Covered Van (03 Ton) as per Tender schedule.

Name of Vehicle	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender Schedule
01. 03 Ton Covered Van ----- 01 No. Brand : ISUZU Model : Not before 2012 (Details as per Tender Schedule).	Tk. 2.5% of quoted amount	Tk. 1,250.00/set (Non refundable)

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The tender will be accompanied by an amount of Earnest Money as mentioned above in the form of Bank Draft / Pay Order / Bank Guarantee from any Schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of "Essential Drugs Co. Ltd." without which the tender will be considered as non-responsive.

The tenderers may drop their offer alongwith detailed specification (as per tender schedule) to the tender Box kept at the Purchase Departments, EDCL, Dhaka office till 12.00 Noon on 30/12/2013 which will be opened on 30/12/2013 at 12.15 PM in presence of the tenderers / their representatives (if any).

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Deputy General Manager
Planning & Procurement
For : Managing Director.