

## Israel arrests 80 in West Bank over missing teens

AFP, Hebron

Israel yesterday broadened the search for three teenagers believed kidnapped by militants, arresting 80 Palestinians overnight and imposing a tight closure on the southern West Bank city of Hebron. It was the biggest arrest operation in years and came after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered security forces to "use all tools at their disposal" to find the three teenagers he said had been kidnapped by Hamas. Most of those arrested belonged to the Islamist movement Hamas, and included several members of the Palestinian parliament,

## '110,000 Cambodians fled after Thai coup'

AFP, Phnom Penh

More than 110,000 Cambodians have fled Thailand to return home in the past week, fearing a crackdown on migrant workers after last month's military takeover, an official said yesterday. Labourers from Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar play a key role in Thai industries such as seafood, agriculture and construction, but they often lack official work permits. On Wednesday Thailand's military regime, which seized power in a coup on May 22, had threatened to arrest and deport all illegal foreign

## 4 TMC supporters killed in WB

HINDUSTAN TIMES ONLINE

Four Trinamool Congress supporters were killed on Saturday night in South 24-Parganas district in a fresh incident of post-poll violence, triggering a bout of blame game between the ruling party in West Bengal and opposition CPI(M). A series of attacks has rocked Bengal after the Lok Sabha elections, injuring scores of supporters of the Trinamool, CPI(M) and the Bharatiya Janata Party, which is trying to spread its base in a state where it was a fringe

## Violations of LoC by Pak must stop: Jaitley

PTI, Srinagar

The Centre yesterday asserted that dialogue with Pakistan cannot progress if ceasefire violations and infiltration continue, saying such hostilities "must stop" for the situation to "normalise".

"For the situation to normalise I think it is extremely important that these kind of violations which are taking place at the LoC must stop. That in itself is a confidence building measure before any country can proceed further," Indian Defence minister Arun Jaitley told reporters on the second day of his maiden visit to J&K after taking charge. He replied in the negative when asked if dialogue with Pakistan would go ahead if the ceasefire violations along the Line of Control (LoC) and infiltration in J&K continued. "Obviously not," Jaitley, who is on a two-day visit for reviewing security measures, said, adding ceasefire violations must stop for further progress. Indian PM Modi had invited his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif to his swearing in last month which was seen as a positive development in the troubled Indo-Pak ties.



**MASS EXECUTION** The picture allegedly shows militants of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) executing dozens of captured Iraqi security forces members at an unknown location in the Salaheddin province. A major offensive spearheaded by ISIL but also involving supporters of executed dictator Saddam Hussein has overrun all of one province and chunks of three others since it was launched on June 9.

PHOTO: AFP

# Iraq forces gain ground West must intervene

US sends warship into the Gulf; Iran warns against invasion

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq yesterday said it had "regained the initiative" against militants who seized vast swathes of territory, as former UN mediator Lakhdar Brahimi blamed the crisis on global neglect of Syria's civil war.

Washington responded to the sweeping unrest by deploying an aircraft carrier group to the Gulf, but Iran has warned against foreign military intervention in its Shia neighbour, voicing confidence that Baghdad can repel the onslaught.

The USS George HW Bush, which carries dozens of fighter jets, is heading for the Gulf, accompanied by two more warships.

But the US says no US troops will be deployed on the ground in Iraq and Secretary of State John Kerry has repeated American demands for Iraqi leaders to put aside their differences.

The militants, spearheaded by the powerful Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) jihadist group, have overrun all of one province and chunks of three more since launching their offensive late Monday.

Security forces have generally performed poorly, with some abandoning vehicles and positions and discarding their uniforms, though

they seem to be recovering from the initial onslaught and have started to regain ground.

Iraqi commanders have said their forces were now starting to repel the militants, and that soldiers had recaptured two towns north of Baghdad.

Officials added that security forces and tribal fighters repelled a militant assault in the strategic town of Tal Afar, which lies near the Syrian border and provides a critical corridor for militants to access conflict-hit Syria.

Iran yesterday warned that "any foreign military intervention in Iraq" would only complicate the crisis, voicing confidence that Baghdad "has the capacity and necessary preparations for the fight against terrorism". Iran earlier extended its helping hand to Baghdad on repelling the militants.

The situation on the ground has been further complicated as forces from the autonomous Kurdish region have made territorial advances.

A senior official said Sunday that Kurdish peshmerga forces had taken control of one of two official border crossings with Syria earlier in the week. Kurdish forces have also seized the disputed ethnically mixed northern city of

### JIHADISTS INVASION OF IRAQ



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi gestures as he is met by Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay (R) at Paro Airport, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Modi visits Bhutan to woo neighbours

AFP, Thimphu

India's Narendra Modi yesterday held talks in Bhutan on his first foreign trip as prime minister, as he steps up a charm offensive with neighbours to try to check China's regional influence.

The Hindu nationalist premier was greeted at the airport by his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay at the start of a two-day visit to the tiny Buddhist kingdom, a month after his landslide election victory.

Tobgay later wrote on Twitter that he had "very good discussions" with Modi, who shared his "passion for education, development and environment".

"He declared B4B: that Bharat (India) is there for Bhutan, ready to support in all our endeavours," Tobgay said.

Modi received a grand welcome with a ceremonial guard of honour, while schoolchildren in national dress lined the mountainous road between the airport and the capital Thimphu and waved the two countries' flags.

Ahead of his visit, Modi said relations with Bhutan would be "a key foreign policy priority" of his government.

The Indian premier had an audience with King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and later inaugurated Bhutan's Supreme Court, built with Indian assistance. He was expected to address a joint session of parliament today.

Tobgay was one of seven regional leaders invited to Modi's inauguration. Analysts say the decision to make Bhutan his first port of call is designed to underline the importance he places on neighbourly relations, which suffered under the last Indian government.

With the exception of Pakistan, India enjoyed generally close ties with its South Asian neighbours in the first six decades after independence.

## Pak air raids target militant hideouts

Dozens killed including Karachi airport attack 'mastermind'

AFP, Miranshah

Pakistani fighter jets launched air strikes early yesterday against militant hideouts in the country's troubled northwest, killing more than 50 insurgents, the Pakistan military said.

However local security officials put the death toll far higher, saying that about 150 militants died in the air strikes, which primarily targeted Uzbek fighters in a remote area of tribal North Waziristan.

One of those killed was Abu Abdul Rehman al-Maani, who is believed to have helped orchestrate the five-hour airport siege last Sunday, said two other officials. Uzbek fighters and the Pakistani Taliban both claimed responsibility for the attack on Jinnah International Airport, and the Pakistani Taliban said the two had worked together to carry it out, marking a disturbing increase of militant groups working together.

The attack killed 38 people, including 10 attackers, and all but destroyed a tentative peace process between the Pakistani Taliban

(ITP) and the government.

The mountainous Dehgan area, some 25 kilometres west of the main town of Miranshah in North Waziristan, is a stronghold for Taliban and al-Qaeda-linked militants on the border with Afghanistan.

"Today at about 0130 hours, a number of terrorist hideouts in Dehgan, Datta Khel in North Waziristan were targeted by jet aircraft. Over 50 terrorists, mostly Uzbek foreigners, were killed in the strikes," a statement from the Pakistani military said.

"There were confirmed reports of presence of foreign and local terrorists in these hideouts who were linked to the planning of the Karachi airport attack," it said.

Pressure has been mounting on the Pakistani government to launch a ground offensive in the Taliban-infested North Waziristan tribal district.

Locals in Pakistan's tribal regions say some of the world's most feared Islamist fighters are quietly slipping away from the area in anticipation of an increase in military operations against them.

AGENCIES

Tony Blair has urged western governments to recognise that they need to take an active role in the Middle East, saying the west should consider military options short of sending ground troops.

The former prime minister said there was a huge range of options available, including air strikes and drones as used in Libya.

Tony Blair also hit out at critics who linked the 2003 invasion of Iraq with the current violence in the country, blaming instead the West's failure to act in Syria.

The former prime minister, who led Britain into the US-led war to remove Saddam Hussein and is now a diplomatic envoy in the Middle East, also criticised the sectarianism of the government in Baghdad.

In a long article published on his website, Blair said arguments that there would be no crisis in the

region if the Iraqi dictator had remained in power were "bizarre".

But he said the Syrian conflict had provided the Islamic militants seizing swathes of territory in northern Iraq with battle experience and a base from which to launch their attacks across the border.

Blair said action in Syria needed not be another invasion, but said moderate rebels fighting President Bashar al-Assad should be "given the support they need".

Pointing out that as many people had been killed in Syria as in the whole of Iraq since 2003, Blair said he would have supported military intervention in Syria some time ago, and suggested that there may have to be accommodation with President Assad.

Blair was prime minister between 1997 and 2007 and is now representative for the Middle East Quartet, comprised of the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and Russia.



## Mandela aide's memoir set to ruffle feathers

AFP, Johannesburg

Nelson Mandela's widow was treated badly by members of his family as the peace icon was fighting for his life in hospital, excerpts from a memoir by his long-time aide have revealed.

In a book likely to ruffle some feathers within the large Mandela family, Zelda la Grange, Mandela's personal assistant for 19 years, tells of shabby treatment suffered by Graca Machel, even in the aftermath of her husband's death. La Grange's book "Good Morning, Mr Mandela" will be launched on Thursday.

In excerpts published by Sunday Times newspaper, La Grange recalled family squabbles over control of the revered statesman during his final days, sidelining Machel. She says politics within the Mandela family about his funeral took place for years before he died in December last year at the age of 95. Machel had refused to be party to such arrangements.

"I don't know of any person alive who has been treated with the amount of disrespect that people



## 11, including husband, gang-rape woman

PTI, Khandwa

In yet another shocking incident of crime against women, a tribal woman was allegedly gang-raped by ten persons, including her husband, paraded naked and forced to drink urine in front of her minor son following a land dispute.

After the woman lodged a complaint in which she alleged that the attack was carried out at the behest of her husband, all the accused were nabbed, police said yesterday.

In her complaint, she also mentioned that before committing gang rape, they allegedly manhandled her, paraded her naked and when she asked for water, they forced her to drink urine in front of her minor son, Rawat said quoting her complaint. There has been nationwide outrage in India on the string of incidents of sexual assault on women.

## New World Heritage nominees Inca trails, ancient French cave vie for the prestigious status

AFP, Doha

Inca trails spanning six countries and a French cave with some of the earliest known paintings are among the sites expected to get World Heritage status at a UNESCO meeting that started yesterday in Doha.

Altogether, at least 30 natural and cultural sites, including the Erbil Citadel in Iraq's Kurdistan, are vying to get the United Nations cultural body's prestigious distinction and add their names to an already 981-strong list.

The June 15-25 World Heritage Committee gathering will also mull whether to put London's Westminster Palace on its list of endangered sites.

And in a first for a developed country, Australia is asking that large swathes of its Tasmanian Wilderness -- one of the last expanses of temperate rainforest in the world -- be delisted to make way for loggers.

Inclusion on the list has significant economic implications as a World Heritage site is eligible for financial assistance towards preservation and the coveted status is also a powerful draw for tourists.

The listing of the Qhapaq Nan -- a huge network of roads once used by the mighty Inca Empire that snake over perilously high snowy peaks over more than 30,000 kilometres (18,600 miles) -- would benefit not one but six countries overall.

The trails go through Argentina, Bolivia,

Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru -- the last of which added the routes to its tentative list in 2001, and was later followed by the others.

Submitted by France, the Chauvet Cave, located in a limestone plateau of the meandering Ardeche River in southern France, contains some of the earliest known paintings, drawn more than 30,000 years ago.

The grotto has more than 1,000 pictures -



A picture from the Chauvet Cave

- many of which feature animals such as bison, mammoths and rhinos.

The cave was closed off by a rock fall around 20,000 years ago and remained sealed until its rediscovery in 1994. More drawings are expected to be found in remote parts of the grotto.

India, meanwhile, is hoping to have its Rani-ki-Vav stepwell on the banks of the Saraswati River in western Patan listed.



## Manning accuses US of lying about Iraq

CNN ONLINE

A US soldier imprisoned for leaking documents to WikiLeaks broke her silence in a fiery editorial accusing the United States of lying about Iraq.

Chelsea Manning was sentenced to 35 years in prison in 2013 for leaking 750,000 pages of classified documents to the anti-secrecy group.

But she was back Saturday, with an opinion piece titled "The Fog Machine of War" in The New York Times. In it, she accuses the US media of looking the other way when chaos and corruption reigned in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"As Iraq erupts in civil war and America again contemplates intervention, that unfinished business should give new urgency to the question of how the United States military controlled the media coverage of its long involvement there and in Afghanistan," Manning wrote.

"I believe that the current limits on press freedom and excessive government secrecy make it impossible for Americans to grasp fully what is happening in the wars we finance."

She said that during the 2010 elections in Iraq, the media duped the world into thinking that all was well.

She said at the time, she got regular reports detailing security forces' crackdown against dissidents "on behalf" of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki.

"I was shocked by our military's complicity in the corruption of that election," she said. "Yet these deeply troubling details flew under the American media's radar."