

NEWS IN brief

Pak new chief justice takes oath

AFP, Islamabad
Pakistan's new chief justice was sworn in yesterday after signalling an end to years of judicial activism which have seen various Supreme Court decisions on political issues. Nasir-ul-Mulk, 63, the supreme court's most senior judge, took over as chief justice after his predecessor Tassaduq Hussain Jilani retired.

Merkel begins China tour

AFP, Beijing
German Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday arrived in China for her seventh visit since 2005, with economic ties topping the agenda and a high-powered business delegation in tow. Merkel was due to meet Premier Li Keqiang for dinner at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, where she will wrap up the first day of the three-day visit.

Wall collapse in southern India kills 11

AFP, New Delhi
A wall collapsed in southern India yesterday killing 11 people including a child, just a week after a building crumbled in the same state claiming 61 lives, officials said. The compound wall collapsed onto the huts of labourers following heavy monsoon rains in Tiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu state, a local government official said.

Nigeria army clashes Islamists; 59 killed

AFP, Abuja
Clashes between Nigerian armed forces and Islamists after a daring attack on the military in the country's restive northeast left 53 insurgents and six troops dead, a spokesman announced Saturday. The rebels attacked barracks and a police station in the town of Damboa, in Borno state, late Friday while most of the troops were out on patrol in surrounding villages, drawing an army response, an official said.

Pak honour killing father charged with murder

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK
The father of a pregnant Pakistani woman who was stoned and beaten to death outside a Lahore courthouse has, along with four other men in her family, been charged with murder. Farzana Parveen, 25, was killed on 27 May in front of a crowd of people by a mob reportedly angered by her decision to marry for love.

Jihadist 'caliph' demands obedience

Iran backs Maliki as PM but says open to change; IS expels 30,000 in Syria

AFP, Baghdad
Self-proclaimed caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi made an unprecedented appearance in the Iraqi city of Mosul, which his forces helped capture last month, and ordered Muslims to obey him, according to a video posted online.

IRAQ TURMOIL



Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi prays at Al-Nur mosque in central Mosul.

That marks a significant change for the shadowy jihadist, whose Islamic State (IS) group led a lightning offensive that overran swathes of five provinces north and west of Baghdad.

The onslaught has alarmed world leaders, displaced hundreds of thousands and piled pressure on Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki as he seeks a third term in office following April elections.

Meanwhile, Iran yesterday said it supports Nuri al-Maliki's bid to stay on as Iraq's premier but that it is ready to back any other candidate chosen by parliament in Baghdad.

Shia-dominated Iran has said it is willing to provide Iraq advice and military assistance in the fight with Sunni insurgents who overran large chunks of Iraqi territory last month and have now declared an Islamic caliphate.

The video posted Saturday showed a portly man clad in a long black robe and turban with a long greying beard addressing worshippers at weekly

prayers at Al-Nur mosque in central Mosul. "I am the wali (leader) who presides over you, though I am not the best of you. So if you see that I am right, assist me," said the man, purportedly Baghdadi.

"If you see that I am wrong, advise me and put me on the right track, and obey me as long as I obey God."

Text superimposed on the video identified the man as "Caliph Ibrahim", the name Baghdadi took when the group on June 29 declared a "caliphate", a pan-Islamic state last seen in Ottoman times, in which the leader is both political and religious.

Last year, IS expanded into Syria, becoming a major player in the war to oust President Bashar al-Assad.

The jihadist Islamic State group has expelled more than 30,000 people from their homes in the eastern Syrian town of Shuheil, a monitoring group said yesterday.

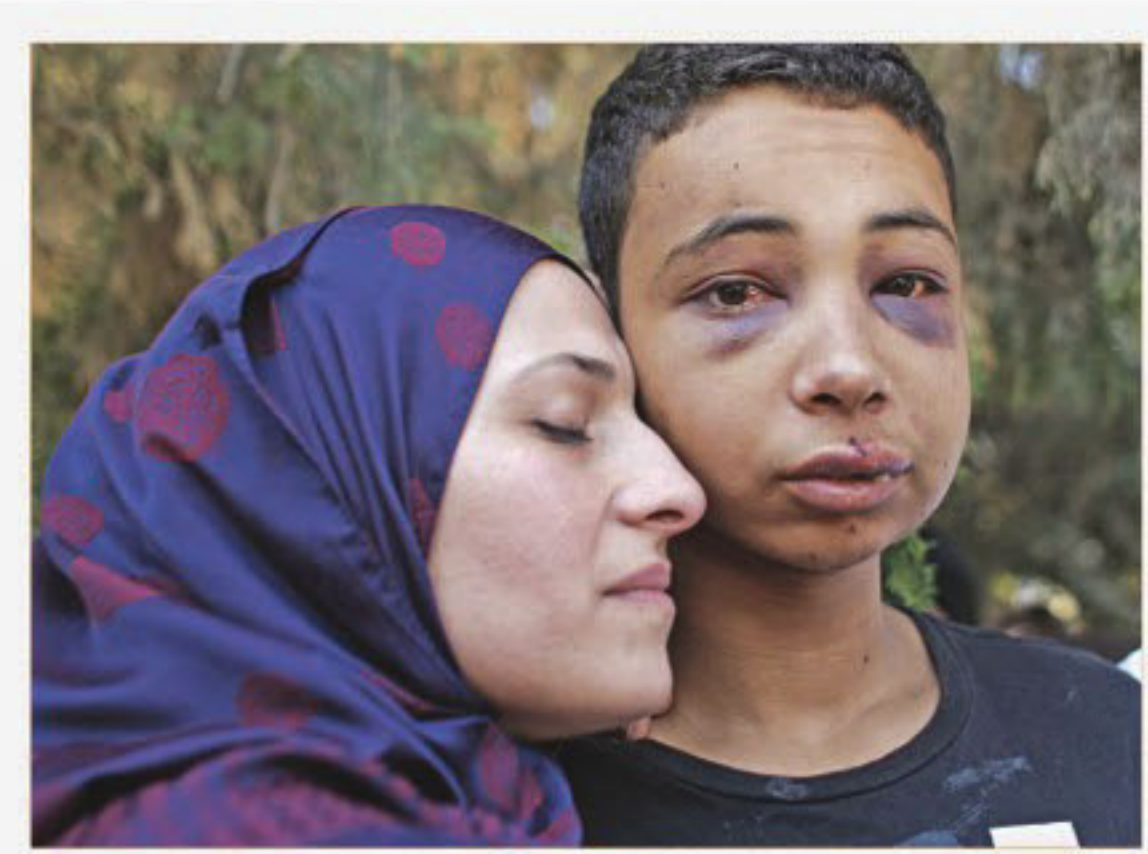
Another 30,000 residents have been forced from their homes in the towns of Khosham and Tabia Jazeera, also in eastern Deir Ezzor province, a Britain-based NGO said.

Baghdadi has cut all ties to al-Qaeda, and his influence now rivals that of that group's global chief, Ayman al-Zawahiri.

IS is known for its brutality, executing and crucifying opponents, and photographs emerged Saturday showing its militants demolishing Sunni and Shia mosques and shrines in Mosul and surrounding Nineveh province.

Iraqi security forces wilted when faced with the initial IS-led onslaught, and while they have since performed more capably, they have struggled to retake territory from insurgents.

An assault on Saddam's hometown of Tikrit has gone on for more than a week without retaking the city, while a suicide car bomb killed 15 people Friday near the sensitive shrine city of Samarra.



Tariq Abu Khder and his mother.

REVENGE KILLING OF PALESTINIAN TEEN Jewish extremists held after clashes

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli police have arrested a group of Jewish extremists in connection with the kidnap and murder of a Palestinian teenager who was burned to death in a suspected revenge killing.

The brutal murder on July 2 triggered four days of violent clashes which began in east Jerusalem and have spread to more than half a dozen Arab towns in Israel, with hordes of angry protesters hurling stones at riot police.

The Shin Bet internal security agency said the suspects were arrested yesterday. Other details of the case were subjected to a strict gag order.

The arrests followed days of growing suspicion that Wednesday's murder was carried out by extremist Jews in revenge for last month's abduction and murder of three Israeli teenagers in the occupied West Bank.

Tensions rose in the south Sunday with Gaza militants firing another 17 rockets and projectiles over the border, after a night of 10 air strikes. No casualty was reported.

Overnight, Israel police arrested 35 people. The grisly murder has sparked shock, disgust and an outpouring of condemnation from both Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas said he had asked UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to form "an international investigative committee on the terrorist crimes committed against the Palestinian people" by Israel, including Abu Khder's murder.

Brutally beaten and 'jailed'

A Jerusalem court yesterday ordered that a Palestinian American teenager, who was allegedly beaten in police custody, be released to house arrest for nine days pending an investigation into stone-throwing allegations.

Tariq Abu Khder, 15, a cousin of a murdered teen that sparked clashes, was arrested on Thursday in the east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Shuafat, and his parents said he was badly beaten in police custody. He has been freed on bail pending an investigation. His bail conditions include 10 days house arrest, a \$2,857 fine.

On Friday, a video surfaced on YouTube showing Israeli border police beating and kicking a handcuffed semi-conscious figure on the ground, before dragging him away. Washington said it was "profoundly troubled" by the report, prompting the Israeli justice ministry's police investigations department to begin an urgent investigation.



Participants celebrate the 'Chupinazo' to mark the start at noon sharp of the San Fermin Festival in front of the Town Hall of Pamplona, northern Spain, yesterday. A red-and-white sea of revellers soaked each other with wine in a packed Pamplona square to kick off Spain's most famous fiesta, the San Fermin bull-running festival.

PHOTO: AFP

Ukraine's first big win over rebels dims truce hopes

AFP, Kiev

Resurgent Ukrainian forces yesterday pursued retreating pro-Russian rebels after seizing their symbolic bastion in a morale-boosting win that appeared to dim hopes for a ceasefire in the bloody separatist insurgency.

Western-backed President Petro Poroshenko called the moment when his troops hoisted the Ukrainian flag over the militias' seat of power in Slavyansk "a turning point" in a campaign that has killed nearly 500 people and inflamed East-West ties.

The rebels admitted suffering heavy losses while abandoning the strategic city nearly three months to the day after its capture marked the onset of a new and even more bloody chapter in Ukraine's worst crisis since independence in 1991.

Most analysts think Poroshenko desperately needed a battlefield success one month into his presidency to secure the trust of Ukrainians frustrated by their underfunded army's inability to stand up to what they see as Russian aggression.

"This is not a full victory and no time for fireworks," the 48-year-old chocolate baron cautioned in a national television address.

He noted the insurgents were now regrouping around the million-strong eastern industrial hub of Donetsk and vowed to flush out "terrorists who are entrenching themselves in large cities".

A top commander in the Ukrainian irregular forces' Donbass battalion yesterday reported recapturing the cities of Druzhkivka and Kostiantynivka just south of Slavyansk.

Poroshenko tore up a 10-day ceasefire last Monday because of unceasing rebel attacks that killed more than 20 soldiers and -- according to both Washington and Kiev -- allowed the separatists to stock up on new supplies of heavy Russian arms.

Now, UK ministers to court Modi

AFP, New Delhi

Top British ministers were due this week to meet India's Narendra Modi to pursue deeper trade ties, the latest Western government to court the prime minister since his election in May.

Foreign Secretary William Hague and Finance Minister George Osborne were set to arrive in Mumbai today on a two-day visit for talks with their counterparts, a foreign ministry spokesman said yesterday.

The pair will also meet with reform-minded Modi, who has raised hopes for foreign investors with his pledges to open up the stumbling economy and spur investment.

"The focus is on bilateral trade and economic ties," spokesman Syed Akbaruddin told reporters.

"India and the UK have a trade relationship which is approximately \$15.8 billion. The trade is in favour of India," Akbaruddin said.

European governments and the United States boycotted Modi for a decade over deadly religious riots which occurred in 2002 while he was running his home state of Gujarat.

But they are now redoubling their efforts to make up for lost time, with France's foreign minister and Russia's deputy prime minister visiting in recent weeks.

Modi also met US Senator John McCain last week and expressed desire to increase trade between the two countries.

Modi will this month make his first trip outside the region since his landslide election win -- to attend a summit of the BRICS developing giants in Brazil on July 15.

The BRICS meeting of leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa is being held two days after the World Cup final.

During their visit, Hague and Osborne will hold talks with business leaders in Mumbai on Monday before heading to New Delhi.

The pair will meet Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj and Osborne will hold talks with Finance and Defence Minister Arun Jaitley in the capital on Tuesday.

They will be accompanied by a delegation that includes ministerial colleagues Gregory Barker, Oliver Letwin and Jo Johnson, the Indian foreign minister said in a statement.

The talks are expected to include bolstering defence sales to India, a major importer of military weapons and other hardware.

Britain, the former colonial power in India, was still holding out hope that a deal with France worth at least \$12 billion to supply 126 fighter jets to India could fall through.

India chose French company Dassault Aviation over other international rivals including the part-British Eurofighter jet, but the deal has been under final negotiation since January 2012 and has made slow progress.



Merkel Europe's 'greatest leader': Hillary Clinton

REUTERS, Berlin

Former US secretary of state Hillary Clinton called Chancellor Angela Merkel "the greatest leader in Europe" during a visit to Berlin yesterday and said it was high time America had a woman leader too, though without confirming she would seek the job.

Hillary also referred to Russian President Vladimir Putin as a "tough customer with a pretty thin skin" in an appearance at a Berlin theatre to promote her new book, "Hard Choices".

The former senator and wife of ex-President Bill Clinton is widely expected to run for the White House in 2016 and has cited Merkel as a good argument for the United States having a woman president soon.

"I think we are ready for a woman to break through the glass ceiling," she said in an interview with Bild am Sonntag newspaper, adding that she would decide whether to run for president "at the end of this year or early next year".

Hillary joked at the Schiller Theater about her and Merkel's shared taste for pants suits and voiced admiration for the chancellor's leadership of Europe in the euro zone debt crisis.

"I say in the book I think she is the greatest leader in Europe, I think she is a great leader globally, I think she carried Europe on her shoulders and it wasn't easy," she said.

The book has kept the former US senator and first lady hopping from event to event across the United States and Canada.

Taliban cut hair, beards to flee Pak offensive

AFP, Bannu

Hundreds of Taliban fighters rushed to disguise themselves with new haircuts in the weeks before a Pakistani army assault, it has emerged, as refugees revealed details of life under the militants -- and their taste for imported luxuries.

Azam Khan was one of the top barbers in Miranshah -- the main town of North Waziristan -- until he, like nearly half a million others, fled the long-awaited offensive unleashed by the Pakistan military on the tribal area in June.

He told AFP his business boomed in the month leading up to the army assault as the militants sought to shed their distinctive long-haired, bearded look.

"I have trimmed the hair and beards of more than 700 local and Uzbek militants ahead of the security forces' operation," he said while cutting hair in a shop in Bannu, the town where most civilians fled.

For years he cut Taliban commanders hair to match the flowing locks of former Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) leader Hakimullah Mehsud, killed by a US

Attacks kill 29 in Kenya

REUTERS, Mombasa

Gunmen killed at least 29 people in raids on two coastal areas of Kenya, the latest in a series of attacks claimed by Somali Islamists who have vowed to drive Kenyan forces out of Somalia, although police cast doubt on their role.

The Interior Ministry said one attack killed nine in the trading town of Hindi in Lamu County, the same district where about 65 people were killed by gunmen last month. Another was further south in the Gamba area, where 20 died.

"They went around shooting at people and villages indiscriminately," said Abdallah Shahasi, a senior official for the Hindi area, which lies near the old trading port of Lamu and Mpeketoni town, where gunmen launched raids in mid-June.

Virginity for sale Inside Cambodia's shocking trade

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Vannith Uy is the owner of what translates from Khmer as a "mobile nail salon", although the word salon is a stretch. It's a bicycle with a plastic crate on the back filled with hand lotions and nail polishes. Uy, 42, rides it around her Phnom Penh neighbourhood -- a tangle of alleys near the river where the residents' domestic lives spill out of their open front doors -- until a customer flags her down. She performs a manicure or pedicure on the spot, sitting on a plastic stool by the side of the street.

Three years ago, when she arrived from the countryside, Uy had a different plan. She wanted to open a hair and beauty salon on proper premises in the Cambodian capital. "But my family could find only dirty jobs," she says. "I wanted a place where my daughter and I could work together." So Uy did something she describes as her "only choice": she sold her 18-year-old daughter Chamman's virginity to a wealthy local man for £900.

The man was a police general who frequented the beer garden where Uy worked as a kitchen help, she says. He bought Chamman



Chamman Uy, 18, sold her virginity to a wealthy local man for £900.

for six days and nights. He installed her in a hotel room on Phnom Penh's outskirts and visited her many times to have sex. She was allowed to call her mother once a day. By the third day, Uy recalls, Chamman was so weak and distressed that the man summoned a doctor on his payroll to give her painkillers and a vitamin shot "so she had the strength to keep going until the end of the week".

Uy received cash payment in full, but her planned salon never materialised.

Often overlooked by more dramatic tales of enslavement in brothels, the trade in virgins is one of the most endemic forms of sexual exploitation in Cambodia. It is a market sustained by severe poverty and ingrained gender inequality. Its clients are influential Cambodian men and other members of Asia's elite who enjoy total impunity from a corrupt justice system. Most misunderstood of all, many of those involved in the transactions are not hardcore criminals. They are mothers, fathers, friends and neighbours.

Activists estimate that "many thousands" of virgins aged between 13 and 18 are sold every year.