### NEWSIN brief

#### UNSC authorises Syria aid convoys AFP, United Nations

The UN Security Council adopted a resolution Monday authorising humanitarian convoys to Syria without the consent of the Damascus regime, to help more than one million civilians in rebel-held areas. The council -- including Russia and China, who have vetoed four Western-backed draft resolutions on Syria since the start of the conflict in 2011 -- unanimously approved the measure. More

#### Mumbai gang-rapes: teenagers convicted

than 10.8 million Syrians

are in need of aid, according

AFP, Mumbai

to UN officials.

A Mumbai court yesterday convicted two teenage boys over separate gang-rapes that shocked the city in a verdict that came days after an Indian minister said juvenile suspects should be treated as adults in rape cases. Officials said the pair, two 17-year-olds, would be sent to a reform institution in Maharashtra state, of which Mumbai is the capital, for three years.

#### Mubarak's party can take part in Egypt polls INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A Cairo appeal court ruled on Monday that leaders of the former ruling party of the ousted President Hosni Mubarak will not be barred from running for elections. The decision by the Cairo Appeals Court for Urgent Matters overturns an earlier ruling that banned leaders of Mubarak's National Democratic Party from taking part in any elections. The party was dissolved following the uprising that toppled Mubarak in 2011.

#### Indian govt to accept self-attested docs

PTI, New Delhi

In what may come as a major relief to citizens, Indian government has decided to do away with the necessity of filing affidavits from a gazetted officer or a notary for a big chunk of government-related work and instead to promote selfattestation of documents.

It has also asked states to review the existing requirement of attaching such affidavits with various application forms, said an official.

### Pak man sentenced to death for 'blasphemy'

AFP, Lahore

A court in Pakistan has passed a death sentence on a man convicted under controversial blasphemy laws of insulting the Prophet Mohammed, lawyers said

yesterday. Zulfiqar Ali, aged in his 50s, was arrested in April 2008 in the eastern city of Lahore and accused of writing blasphemous slogans on walls.



A Palestinian mother kisses the body of four-year-old girl Sarah Sheik al-Eid after she was killed along with her father and uncle in a Israeli military strike the previous day, during their funeral in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday. Israel resumed raids on Gaza yesterday after a Egypt-backed truce failed to get off the ground.

# Political deadlock eases

Parliament elects speaker; forces push into Tikrit

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq's fractious parliament elected a speaker yesterday, setting the stage for the government formation process to proceed after extensive delays, as security forces advanced into militant-held Tikrit. World powers and Iraq's top Shiacleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-

Sistani, had piled pressure on MPs to put aside their differences to help counter a major jihadist-led onslaught that has overrun swathes of territory north and west of Baghdad. After two sessions in which they made no progress, MPs elected

Salim al-Juburi parliament speaker, a post traditionally held by a Sunni Arab that must be filled before the process of forming a government can go ahead. Acting speaker Mahdi Hafez announced that Juburi,

an MP from Diyala who ran on an independent list, won 194 of 273 votes cast. It was not immediately clear if his election was part of a

package deal involving the two outstanding senior posts of president and prime minister, but yesterday's progress after previous deadlocked sessions indicates that some type of accord has been reached. Lawmakers must now elect a president, who will then give the

biggest bloc the first chance to form a government. The UN's Iraq envoy, Nickolay Mladenov, has warned politi-

cians that "failing to move forward on electing a new speaker, a new president and a new government risks plunging the country into chaos".

Earlier yesterday, security forces began an attack on Tikrit, aiming to revitalise an operation to retake it that began more than two weeks ago but became bogged down south of the city. "Iraqi forces began a military operation to liberate the city of

Tikrit and our forces were able to control the southern part of the city," Ahmed Abdullah Juburi, the governor of Salaheddin province, of which Tikrit is the capital, told AFP. Tikrit was seized by militants on June 11 as part of a sweeping

offensive that has overrun large areas of five provinces since it began last month. Tribesmen and security forces also battled militants in

> (50 miles) north of Baghdad. Violence also struck south of Baghdad yesterday, with bombings in the Madain area killing nine people, includ-

the town of Dhuluiyah on Thursday, just 80 kilometres

ing four soldiers, officials said. The fighting and bombings came a day after the Pentagon said American military teams sent to Iraq last month had completed their assessment of Iraqi security forces.

The details were not released, but The New York Times said one conclusion was that only roughly half of Iraq's units are capable enough to be advised by US personnel, if the decision is taken to

## 80pc victims civilians: UN

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Almost 80 per cent of Palestinians killed in Gaza by Israeli bombardments have been civilians, the UN has said. The death toll in Gaza has risen to 192 and more blood- · main suspects in the brutal

shed was feared yesterday as Hamas did not follow the : murder of an Arab teenager Israeli Government's approval of ceasefire terms proposed : on 2 July that ignited the by Egypt.

the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Ocha) 77 per . dousing their 16 year old cent of fatalities since the start of Operation Protective Edge : victim with petrol and burnon 7 July have been civilians. Of the 138 killed when the report was completed, 36 : Monday. Mohammed Abu

were children, and 1,361 Palestinians had been injured. Out : Khdeir was found burned to of wounded Palestinians, almost 390 were children and 250 · death after disappearing on were women. Israel has targeted the homes of Hamas leaders and build- : his remains suggested he was

ings, including mosques, allegedly used to store weapons and as : still alive when he was set meeting points for militants.

The military has repeatedly claimed that the buildings are legitimate targets but the UN report said the targeting of civilian homes is a violation of international humanitarian law unless the homes are being used for military purposes.

More than 1,250 homes have been destroyed or severely damaged so far. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have already fled their homes in northern Gaza following leaflets warning of an Israeli ground offensive and 17,000 have taken refuge at UNoperated schools.

### THE GAZA CRISIS Palestinians killed\* including 36 children civilians

#### ISRAELIS BACK NETANYAHU

Judging from a random sample of Israelis at a falafel restaurant and an ice cream parlour in the middle class Beit Hakerem neighbourhood of Jerusalem, Israelis are ready to keep going and are worried that if the army stops now, without Hamas decisively defeated, the rocket problem will resurface soon.

"We can't stop now or the same thing will happen again a year from now," said Adi Eliav, a 49-year old building contractor between bites of falafel. Near him a television flashed on the screen the latest news of Hamas rocket · attacks - "eight year old boy lightly wounded in Ashdod" "Rockets against Ashkelon, Gan Yavne and Lachish" and "Interceptions in Ashdod."

"We can stop when we've eliminated all their stores of rockets and hurt them in a way that it will be hard for them . Rights. The air raids came to come back. We're not there" Eliav said. Eliav credits Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with

managing the war effort well. Ofer Shemtov, 28, who buys and sells real estate, said that

"going towards a ceasefire now means accepting that this will happen again and that Hamas will improve its capability." "I'm sure there will be international pressure [to stop] but ;

the government has to stand against this pressure," he said.

### Brief on **GAZA CRISIS**

#### 3 Israeli Jews admit : killing Palestine teen INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

: The three Israelis who are the

· worst unrest in Jerusalem in According to figures from the United Nations Office for · years have confessed to · ing him alive, police said on - 2 July. Forensic analysis of alight. Police believe the killing was revenge for the murder of three Israeli teenagers abducted while hitchhiking near a West Bank settlement.

### Arab League backs truce plan

- AFP, Cairo

. Arab foreign ministers in Cairo early yesterday called on "all parties" to accept an . Egyptian proposal to end the : raging conflict between Israel and Hamas, after the Palestinian militant group signalled its rejection of the truce. The ministers, meeting · for an extraordinary Arab : League session, also backed a Palestinian demand for "international protection."

#### Israel hits Syrian Golan; four killed : AFP, Beirut

casualties.

Israeli warplanes struck three administrative and military targets in Syria's Golan at dawn yesterday, killing two security guards and two women, said the Syrian Observatory for Human after the Israeli army said a rocket fired from Syria hit · the Israeli-occupied sector of the Golan Heights, falling on

## Moscow metro tragedy kills 21

AFP, Moscow

Twenty-one people died and scores more were wounded after a train derailed in Moscow's packed metro during rush hour yesterday in the worst accident ever to hit one of the world's busiest subways.

Russian television described scenes of chaos and panic on the capital's famed system, saying passengers fell like dominoes when the train travelling at 70 kilometres an hour braked abruptly and three carriages derailed and crumpled. Rescue teams were still combing through the mangled

metal carriages hours later in an attempt to extricate several bodies. President Vladimir Putin, who is on a trip to Brazil,

ordered a criminal probe into the tragedy that put a huge strain on the city of some 12 million and snarled traffic on its notoriously clogged roads amid a heatwave. The Investigative Committee said it was looking at a

number of possible causes including a mechanical flaw in a carriage and a power failure. A terror attack has been ruled out, the committee said. Health Minister Veronika Skvortsova told Russian agencies

that 21 people had died. More than 160 people were hospitalised, including 42 still in intensive care, the head of Moscow's health department Georgy Golukhov told journalists. Moscow's ornate metro is considered one of the world's

busiest and carries some nine million people every day. In the last serious accident on the Moscow metro in 1982, eight people died when an escalator broke down.

## Aliens, UFOs in 10,000-yr-old rock paintings!



PTI, Chhattisgarh

India's Chhattisgarh state department of archaeology and culture plans to seek help from Nasa and Isro for research on 10,000-year-old rock paintings depicting aliens and UFOs in Charama region in Kanker district in tribal Bastar region.

According to archaeologist JR Bhagat, these paintings have depicted aliens like those shown in Hollywood and Bollywood flicks. Located about 130km from Raipur, the caves come under village Chandeli and Gotitola.

in prehistoric times may have seen or imagined beings from other planets which still create curiosity among people and researchers. Extensive research is needed for further findings. Chhattisgarh presently doesn't have any such expert who could give clarity on the subject," Bhagat told TOI.

locals in these villages. While few worship the paintings, others narrate stories they have heard from ancestors about "rohela people" — the small sized ones — who used to land from

"The findings suggest that humans sky in a round shaped flying object and take away one or two persons of village who never returned.

"The paintings are done in natural colours that have hardly faded despite the years. The strangely carved figures are seen holding weapon-like objects and do not have clear features. Specially, the nose and There are several beliefs among mouth are missing. In few pictures, they are even shown wearing space suits. We can't refute possibility of imagination by prehistoric men but humans usually fancy such things," the archaeologist said.

### **NUCLEAR DEAL**

open ground and causing no

### Iran calls for extension of deadline

AFP, Vienna

called for an extension of a looming deadline to strike a potentially historic nuclear deal with world powers, after surprise talks with US Secretary of State John Kerry. Kerry's unscheduled meeting

Iran's foreign minister yesterday

with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, capping two days of intense talks in Vienna, came as he was poised to fly home to discuss extending the July 20 deadline with President Barack Obama.

"As we stand now, we have made enough headway to be able to tell our political bosses that this is a process worth continuing," Zarif

told reporters. "This is my recommendation. I am sure secretary Kerry will make

the same recommendation."

Both Zarif and Kerry stressed that they still hoped to secure a deal by the Sunday deadline.

Briefing the press earlier, Kerry said that despite some "tangible progress" there remained "very real gaps on other key issues".

discuss whether more time was needed. An interim accord struck in

He and Obama would now

November between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany expires on July 20.

Earlier, in an interview with the New York Times, Zarif said Iran could accept limits on its nuclear programme, freezing its current capacity for up to seven years on condition it would then be free to

operate without any special restric-Extending the deadline has always been a possibility in order to keep the parties talking, but Washington in particular has stressed it will not agree to such a

move without key concessions from Iran first. The mooted accord is aimed at eradicating fears that Iran might

develop nuclear weapons under the guise of its civilian programme after a decade of rising tensions and threats of war. Iran denies seeking the atomic

bomb and wants the lifting of crippling UN and Western sanc-The six powers want Iran to

dramatically reduce in scope its nuclear programme for a lengthy period of time and agree to more intrusive UN inspections.

This would greatly expand the time needed for the Islamic republic to develop a nuclear weapon, should it choose to do so, while giving the world ample warning of any such "breakout" push.

Iran on the other hand has

stated it wants to expand its nuclear facilities, insisting they are for purely peaceful purposes and that it has the perfect right to nuclear activities under international treaties.

Philippines hunkered down in evacuation centres while three people TURK. were reported missing yesterday as a typhoon pounded its eastern coast amid warnings of giant storm surges and heavy floods. **AFGHANISTAN** KABUL .

PAKISTAN

The eye of Typhoon Rammasun struck Legazpi city in the eastern Bicol region in the early evening, with Manila and other heavily populated regions expecting to be hit on today afternoon, the state weather service said.

Officials said damage to the region was expected to be "moderate". The Philippines is hit by about 20 major storms a year, many of them deadly. The country is often the first major landmass to be struck

after storm build above the warm Pacific Ocean waters. In November Super Typhoon Haiyan unleashed giant seven-metre high storm surges that devastated the

coasts of the eastern islands of Samar and Leyte, killing up to 7,300 people in one of the nation's worst ever natural disasters. More than 96,000 families were moved to evacuation centres yester-

day as a precaution, Social Welfare Minister Corazon Soliman said. The government declared a school holiday for areas in the typhoon's path, while ferry services were also shut down and dozens of

flights cancelled.

## Hague stands down as UK foreign secretary

Hammond takes his place in major cabinet reshuffle As well as Hague,

AGENCIES

Britain's William Hague announced his surprise resignation as foreign secretary on Monday, as Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron overhauled his government to set

ministerial jobs.

**William Hague** the battle-lines for elections next year. Cameron named arch-eurosceptic Philip

Hammond as his new foreign secretary. Former defence secretary Hammond supports Britain leaving the European Union unless significant powers are returned to London before a referendum promised for 2017. Yesterday's reshuffle is the biggest since

Cameron's Conservative-led coalition government took office in 2010 and marks a bid in May 2015.

to broaden his party's appeal at the election Newspapers billed the reshuffle as a cull of the "pale, male and stale" which opened the door for a new wave of women to get



**Philip Hammond** 

ters are leaving Cameron's government. Many are being replaced by younger women only elected in 2010 but whose stock has been rising. These include Nicky Morgan, a former lawyer who will take over from Michael

around a dozen middle-

aged, white male minis-

Gove as education secretary, and Liz Truss, who takes the environment portfolio. Hague's announcement that he was quitting as foreign minister, and would not seek reelection next year, signals the end of

"one of the leading lights of the Conservative Party for a generation". He led the Conservatives during a torrid period between 1997 and 2001.

the political career of a man Cameron called

Hague will remain in the cabinet as leader of the Commons, in charge of managing the government's legislative programme, before stepping down as a lawmaker at next year's election.

#### Car bomb kills 89 Typhoon hits Philippines Thousands evacuated in Afghan market AFP, Manila Tens of thousands of people in the

**PAKTIKA** 

The district governor of Orgun District,

One man who witnessed the attack said

The attack occurred hours after two men

Mohammad Raza Kharoti, earlier told the BBC

that most of those killed were shopkeepers and

the blast was huge and destroyed dozens of

working for the media team of outgoing

people doing their Ramadan shopping.

hospital, he added.

cars and shops.

BBC ONLINE

At least 89 people were killed and dozens injured in a suicide attack at a busy market in eastern Afghanistan's Paktika province yesterday, local officials said.

They said the attacker drove a 4x4 vehicle into the market in Orgun district and detonated the explosives. The market was full of people doing their

shopping for the Muslim festival Ramadan

at the time of the attack. No group has claimed the attack, but Taliban insurgents said they had not carried it out.

Eyewitnesses and medical staff said local hospitals were overrun with casualties after one of the deadliest attacks in months in Afghanistan. The eastern province of Paktika shares a border with Pakistan's restive and volatile tribal areas.

though members of the Haqqani militant network are thought to have a presence there. A spokesman for Afghanistan's defence ministry told the BBC that most of the 89

Orgun is one of Paktika's safest areas,

bodies recovered from the rubble were

President Hamid Karzai were killed by a women and children. roadside bomb in Kabul. The Taliban took Some 42 injured people were taken to responsibility of the attack.