

NEWSIN brief

18 dead in Syria regime bombing

AFP, Beirut

At least 18 civilians, four of them children, were killed in Syrian army bombardment and air strikes in the south of the country yesterday, a monitoring group said. More than 180,000 people have been killed in Syria since an uprising against President Bashar al-Assad's regime began in 2011, escalating into a multi-sided civil war that has drawn thousands of jihadists from overseas.

'7 witches' burned to death in Tanzania

AFP, Dar Es Salaam

Seven people accused of witchcraft have been burned alive in Tanzania, police said yesterday, adding they have arrested 23 people in connection with the crimes. Belief in witches and black magic remains strong in many parts of Tanzania. A local rights group has estimated as many as 500 "witches" are lynched every year, based on reports that counted some 3,000 people killed between 2005 and 2011.

7 killed, 40 hurt in Pakistan stampede

AFP, Multan

At least seven people were killed and forty others wounded in a stampede yesterday following a political rally by opposition politician Imran Khan in central Pakistan, officials said. The deaths occurred in Multan city after the cricketer-turned-politician addressed a crowd to press his demand for the resignation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Three civilians killed in Ukraine's Donetsk

AFP, Kiev

Three Ukrainian civilians died overnight in mortar fire around Donetsk airport, where government forces held out against pro-Russian rebels in the latest deadly violation of a ceasefire, officials said yesterday. The uprising in the east, sparked by the February ouster in Kiev of a Russian-backed administration, has claimed some 3,400 lives and raised security concerns across eastern Europe.

UKIP wins first seat in British parliament

AFP, Clacton-on-sea

The British anti-EU UK Independence Party won its first elected seat in parliament in a resounding victory yesterday that will rattle the Conservative-led government seven months from a general election. Winning its first ever elected seat in Westminster is a coup for the once-fringe UKIP party, which won the most votes in Britain's elections to the European Parliament in May.

Boston 'time capsule' is a red book!

MAIL ONLINE

The highly-anticipated Thursday opening of a time capsule that been hidden in the head of a lion statue atop a historical landmark for more than a century yielded nothing but a red book.



The Bostonian Society had expected the time capsule to include letters, newspaper clippings and other items from 1901, the year it was placed in the statue on the Old State House. Papers were found, along with the red book inside the copper box roughly the size of a modern shoebox. The book had no visible markings, and nothing was taken out of the box because of the items' fragile condition. So, the contents of the book remain a mystery, for now. The time capsule was sealed inside the lion's head since 1901 and then forgotten — until recently. Rumors of its existence were confirmed last month when the statue was taken down from the Old State House for refurbishing.



Pro-democracy demonstrators attend a rally next to the central government offices in Hong Kong, yesterday. Hong Kong's democracy protest leaders implored supporters to bring tents and dig in for the long haul, threatening to expand their occupation of key parts of the city after talks with the government collapsed.

PHOTO: AFP

DEMOCRACY PROTEST

HK protesters dig in for long haul

AFP, Hong Kong

Hong Kong's democracy protest leaders yesterday implored supporters to bring tents and dig in for the long haul, threatening to expand their occupation of key parts of the city after talks with the government collapsed.

Crunch negotiations between protesters and Beijing-backed city officials were slated for yesterday, but fell apart Thursday after the government pulled out, blaming students for attempting to escalate demonstrations.

Demonstrators are calling for Beijing to grant the former British colony full democracy and for the city's Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying to resign. Under plans unveiled by China in August, Hong Kongers will be able to vote for Leung's successor in 2017, but only two to three vetted candidates will be allowed to stand — something detractors have dismissed as a "fake democracy".

INDO-PAK BORDER CLASHES Pause in fighting brings respite for civilians

AGENCIES

Fighting between India and Pakistan paused yesterday after days of heavy shelling and gun battles across their disputed Himalayan border, the worst skirmishes between the nuclear-armed rivals in more than a decade. Despite escalating tensions, Pakistan said war with India was not an option and that both sides should work to try and defuse the conflict, reports Reuters.

Nine Pakistani and eight Indian civilians have been killed since both sides' security forces started firing more than a week ago along a 200-km stretch of border in mostly Muslim Kashmir.

Relative calm returned to the region yesterday after a heated exchange of rhetoric, with New Delhi warning Pakistan it would pay an "unaffordable price" if shelling continued. Islamabad had said it was capable of responding "fittingly".

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Pakistan has been taught a "befitting lesson" with the Army "shutting their mouth", reports Times of India.

Addressing an election rally in Maharashtra yesterday, Modi said those

living close to the border with Pakistan who had to leave their homes following nine days of heavy mortar shelling and firing will be adequately compensated by the Centre.

Pakistan's top civilian and military leadership also warned India of strong military response to its unprovoked firing across the Line of Control (LoC) and the working boundary between the two neighbouring countries.

At a meeting of the National Security Committee yesterday in Islamabad, leaders expressed their disappointment over the fact that Pakistan's sincerity has not been reciprocated by India, reports Dawn.

"Sadly, the unprovoked violations of ceasefire by the Indian Security Forces occurred in total disregard of the auspicious and festive occasion of Eidul Azha," said an official statement issued after the meeting. "The Committee expresses its full confidence in the capability of our Armed Forces to defend the country against any aggression and safeguard the territorial integrity of Pakistan."

Since they split 67 years ago, the two nations have fought each other in three wars, two over Kashmir.

Ebola spread bigger than expected: WHO

BBC ONLINE

Leading global health experts did not anticipate the scale of the Ebola outbreak, a senior health official has told the BBC.

Chris Dye from the World Health Organization (WHO) said the international response was helping but needed to continue.

Ebola is now entrenched in the capitals of the worst-affected states — Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, WHO says. The outbreak has killed more than 3,860 people, mainly in West Africa. More than 200 health workers are among the victims.

In April, the medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) warned of the potential spread of the virus, but the WHO played down the claims, saying that Ebola was neither an epidemic, nor was it unprecedented.



Demonstrators march through the streets of St Louis protesting the October 8 killing of 18-year-old Vonderrit Myers. An internal police investigation was underway after a white officer shot and killed the African-American teen not far from where a similar shooting in August led to weeks of unrest.

PHOTO: AFP

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE 2014

MALALA YOUSAFZAI

Nobel Peace Prize for promoting girls' education



"One child, one teacher, one pen and one book can change the world."

JULY 12, 1997: Born Mingora, Swat Valley, Pakistan

2009: Comes to prominence for her BBC blog on life under the Pakistani Taliban

2011: Wins Pakistan's National Peace Award

2012: Shot in the head by Taliban gunmen on her school bus

JULY 2013: On 16 birthday, vows in speech to Un to fight for right of all children to attend school

AUG 2013: Wins International Children's Peace Prize

2013: Youngest winner of EU's Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought

OCT 10, 2014: Youngest winner of Nobel Peace Prize

KAILASH SATYARTHI

Nobel Peace Prize for campaign against child slavery



"If not now, then when? If not you, then who? If we [can] answer... perhaps we can wipe away... human slavery."

JAN 11, 1954: Born Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh, India

1980: Begins raids on Indian factories to free child slaves (78,500 freed by 2014)

1995: Creates GoodWeave, ethical trademark for hand-woven carpets made without child labour

1998: Founders Global March Against Child Labour, a worldwide anti-slavery alliance Campaigns include football, garment and cocoa industries

1998: Sets up rehabilitation/education centre for rescued children

2004, 2011: Survives attacks on his life by circus mafia, garment factories

OCT 10, 2014: Wins Nobel Peace Prize

SOURCES: NOBEL.ORG, KAILASHSATYARTHI.NET

Malala dedicates award to 'voiceless' children

AGENCIES

Education rights campaigner Malala Yousafzai yesterday dedicated her Nobel peace prize to "voiceless" children around the world, and called on the Indian and Pakistani prime ministers to attend the award ceremony for the sake of peace.

The 17-year-old, who heard the news while she was in a chemistry lesson at school in Birmingham, central England, said she was honoured to be the youngest person and the first Pakistani to receive the accolade.

"The award is for all the children who are voiceless, whose voices need to be heard," Malala told a press conference.

Malala arrived in Britain from Pakistan for medical treatment after being shot in the head by a Taliban fighter in October 2012, an attempt to silence her vocal advocacy of the right of girls to go to school.

Malala was hailed as the "pride of Pakistan" by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. But the award also drew some sceptical responses from Pakistani conservatives suspicious of western motives.

"There are lots of girls in Pakistan who have been martyred in terrorist attacks, women who have been widowed, but no one gives them an award. So these out of the box activities are suspicious," said a right wing religious party leader in Pakistan.

'Prize will highlight children's plight'

AGENCIES

Indian activist Kailash Satyarthi yesterday said his Nobel Peace Prize would help highlight the plight of children around the world, and invited fellow winner Malala Yousafzai to work with him.

Satyarthi said his heroes are the children he has saved from slavery. He also said the Nobel prize "is an honour for my fellow Indians and for all those children whose voice has never been heard before in the country".

Described as a tireless campaigner for children's rights, Satyarthi founded Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) — "save the childhood movement", roughly translated from the Hindi — in 1980. The organisation has sought to educate the tens of thousands of children it has rescued, reintegrating them into society. Satyarthi has led rescue missions for children and others working in bonded labour in manufacturing industries, surviving several attacks on his life in the process.

Speaking to journalists outside his office on the outskirts of New Delhi, Satyarthi said he had only heard of his win through the media.

"After receiving this award I feel that the people will give more attention to the cause of the children in the world," said the activist, who has a relatively low profile even in India.

Satyarthi heads the Global March Against Child Labor, a combination of some 2,000 social groups and union organisations in 140 countries.

Satyarthi, who is scheduled to meet India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi later yesterday, also credited his country's "alive" and "vibrant" democracy for the success of his campaign.

Koreas trade fire as mystery grows over Kim's absence

AFP, Seoul

The two Koreas traded heavy machine-gun fire across their border Friday, as "missing" North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un's failed to attend a key political event, fuelling further speculation about his physical health and political future.

No casualties were reported in the exchange of fire which South Korea said was triggered by the North Korean military trying to shoot down balloons carrying anti-Pyongyang leaflets that were launched by activists in the South around 2:00pm.

Local residents of Hwangsan-ri township in the border area of Yeoncheon were evacuated to shelters as a precaution.

The balloon launch from Hapsuri was one of several planned to coincide with North Korea's celebration of the 69th anniversary of its ruling Workers' Party. Some of the balloons carried messages denouncing North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un, who has not been seen in public for more than a month.

Competing theories for his disappearance range widely from an extended rest period to a leadership coup, via a long list of possible illnesses and ailments including broken ankles, gout and diabetes.

Yesterday, Kim was not listed by the state KCNA news agency among the officials who visited the mausoleum housing the remains of his father and grandfather — an annual show of respect to mark the party anniversary.

Kim was last seen on September 3 and his absence yesterday was considered significant as he had attended the ceremony each year since coming to power in 2011.

Cheong Seong-Chang, an analyst at the Sejong Institute think-tank in Seoul, said his disappearance was almost certainly down to a health problem that would have little impact on his leadership — at least in the short term. "But if he's forced to stay away for an extended period, it could cause murmurings within the political elite and weaken Kim's control," Cheong said.



BRITISH QUEEN MAKES JOLIE A DAME

US actress Angelina Jolie is presented with the Insignia of an Honorary Dame Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael and St George by Britain's Queen Elizabeth II in the 1844 Room at Buckingham Palace in central London, yesterday. The renowned actress was awarded the honorary damehood for services to UK foreign policy and the campaign to end war zone sexual violence. PHOTO: AFP