NEWS Pakistan on high alert after border bloodshed

Thai PM orders media to stop 'presenting news' on Thaksin AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's junta leader vesterday threatened to tighten controls of the media unless they stop "presenting news" about former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, after photographs of the billionaire cuddling a panda went viral.

"Do not present news (about Thaskin) as everyone knows that he has violated the law," Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha, who also heads the military council in charge of Thailand, told reporters.

use laws, power or force," added

Prayut, who has already imposed

sions in the media and society at

2006 coup as prime minister and

corruption conviction, sits at the

epicentre of Thailand's near decade-

Vasan splits Congress in Tamil

floating a new outfit. The name of the

The split was indeed more

a public meeting in Tiruchi.

floated by Vasan's father GK

party and its flag will be announced at

serious than was expected with many

senior leaders of the erstwhile Tamil

Manila Congress (TMC), which was

Moopanar, moving to the new outfit

former Member of Parliament Peter

Alphonse, who was till last week, in

president after BS Gnanadesikan quit

Vasan's supporters claimed that

the running for the post of TNCC

more than 30 of the 59 district

presidents of the TNCC and several

former MLAs and MPs have moved

into the new party and called it a

China unveils laser to shoot

China has developed a highly

accurate laser weapon system that

low altitude, state media reported

can shoot down light drones at

The machine has a two-

down "various small aircraft"

kilometre range and can bring

within five seconds of locating its

Xinhua showed pictures of

large metal boxes in camouflage

paint and the wreckage of a small

in ensuring security during major

activities, according to Xinhua.

Afghan deputy governor

shot dead while in class

A deputy provincial governor was

Thirty-two-year-old Abdul

injuries after a gunman opened

fire on him through the window

Qadeem Patyall died of his

of a classroom at Kandahar

University, Samim Khpolwak,

spokesman for the provincial

place late Sunday.

tal, said Khpolwak.

governor, said. The attack took

Patyall, who was studying to

become a teacher, was seriously

wounded and died later in hospi

President Ashraf Ghani has

family and described his killing as a terrorist attack, the presidential

palace said. A government delega-

tion will investigate the incident.

'No explosion' behind

spacecraft crash:

Richard Branson, the

hit out against "self-

ing an explosion was

behind the crash of the

company's spacecraft last

Evidence showed there

was "no explosion" behind

of SpaceShipTwo, he told

"I've never seen such

damaging innuendo," the

Sky News television.

tycoon said.

and corrected.

British billionaire founder

proclaimed experts" assert-

of Virgin Galactic, yesterday

Branson

AFP, London

sent condolences to Patvall's

Afghanistan's

province while

he was sitting in class at a

university, an

official said

yesterday.

southern

Kandahar

events in urban areas" and address concerns on unlicensed mapping

It is expected to "play a key role

drone, some of it burning.

target, the official Xinhua news agency said, citing a statement by the China Academy of Engineering Physics (CAEP), one of the devel-

"vertical split."

down drones

AFP, Beijing

Most significant of the lot was

lives abroad to avoid jail for a

long political rupture.

THE HINDU ONLINE

In a repeat of 1996, India's Congress in Tamil Nadu was

split into two yesterday with former Únion

shipping

minister GK

Vasan quitting the party and

Nadu

Thaksin, who was ousted in a

eastern city of Lahore. "Please do not make us have to The explosion, which wounded more than 120, was a rare attack in Punjab, Pakistan's richest and most populous province and Prime Minister martial law across the kingdom and sweeping curbs on political discus-Nawaz Sharif's powerbase.

AFP, Lahore

At least two different factions of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) have claimed the attack, the first major strike since the army launched an offensive against militant strongholds in the tribal northwest in June.

Pakistan was on high alert yesterday for the mourn-

ing processions of Ashura, a flashpoint for sectar-

ian violence, a day after the country's deadliest

A suicide bomber struck at the main Pakistan-

India border crossing on Sunday, causing carnage

among crowds leaving the colourful daily cere-

mony to close the Wagah frontier post, near the

bombing in more than a year killed 55 people.

The Wagah ceremony is one of Pakistan's few genuine tourist attractions, drawing people from all walks of life.

Security forces across the country were bracing yesterday for possible attacks as Shia Muslims mark Ashura, the anniversary of the death of



Pakistani troops patrol a street in Quetta yesterday.

Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Mohammed.

Thousands of minority Shias will take to the streets for mourning processions and the occasion has been marred by sectarian bloodshed in

Around 10,000 police and paramilitary Rangers have been deployed in Islamabad and its twin city Rawalpindi, officials said, and some mobile phone services have been shut down.

This is a tactic routinely deployed at sensitive times in Pakistan to try to stop militants using mobile phones to detonate bombs.

Meanwhile, Pakistani border guards went ahead yesterday with a colourful ceremony at a major border post with India, defying a suicide attack on the event a day earlier.

Indian soldiers also took part on their side of the frontier.

An editorial in Dawn, Pakistan's leading English-language newspaper, speculated on a possible link to the ongoing anti-militant army operation in North Waziristan tribal area.

People watching the ceremony may have been "deliberately targeted because of their perceived support for the security forces," Dawn said. Pakistan has suffered years of bloody Islamist

violence but even in a country inured to neardaily bombings, Sunday's strike has caused shock and revulsion. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi con-

demned the "shocking" attack, describing it as a "dastardly act of terrorism" and offering condolences to the bereaved families.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani also condemned the attack.

EBOLA CRISIS

US envoy cheers gains in battle

AGENCIES

The US envoy to the UN, Samantha Power, on Sunday credited a reported drop in new Ebola infections in West Africa to US and other international aid efforts. Power, who just returned from a tour of Guinea, Sierra

Leone and Liberia, the three countries worst-hit by the Ebola epidemic that has killed more than 4,900 people, said one of the biggest improvements was being seen in burial practices. "In Liberia, thanks to the presence of the CDC and the US

military, we see the rate of safe burial, which is a key part of the solution here, skyrocketing to close to 90 percent in the capital Monrovia, " she said on CBS's "Face the Nation" talk show.

"In Sierra Leone, the rate of safe burial within 24 hours is close to 100 percent," she said, citing British aid efforts there.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Powers said, estimate "around half to 70 percent of the infections

may well come from unsafe burial," she noted. She added that she had just spoken to the head of the UN's Ebola operation, who had recently toured rural areas,

reports AFP. "And he said wherever we have an Ebola treatment unit, a

lab and social mobilization -- infection rates are coming way down, where we don't, they're not," Powers recounted.

Meanwhile, authorities in Sierra Leone say a doctor has died of Ebola - the fifth local doctor in the West African nation to succmb to the disease.

Iraq on 'high alert' for ISIS attacks on pilgrims

AGENCIES

Iraq stepped up security amid fears of the Islamic State group launching major attacks as thousands of Shias flocked yesterday to the shrine city of Karbala for an annual pilgrimage.

The pilgrims are prime targets for the ISIS jihadists, who have carried out a series of mass executions in recent days, killing scores of members of a tribe in Iraq's western Anbar province. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims

from Iraq and abroad are heading to Karbala for today peak of Ashura, which marks the death of Imam Hussein, one of the most revered figures in Shia Islam.

At least 19 people were killed in bomb blasts targeting Shias in Baghdad on Sunday and Iraqi security forces were on alert for further attacks.

Authorities have deployed thousands of security personnel and allied militiamen to protect the pilgrims, in what will be a major test for the new

DEVELOPMENTS

recent years.

Canada conducts first airstrikes

Singapore to join coalition

Al-Qaeda forces mass near Turkey crossing

government headed by Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi.

Islamic State group jihadists beheaded eight Syrian rebels who had surrendered in a town on the border with Iraq last week despite pledges of an amnesty, a monitor said yesterday.

Meanwhile, Canada conducted airstrikes on Islamic State positions in Iraq for the first time on Sunday, while reports emerged that the jihadist group had executed more than 200 tribespeople in recent days.

"Today's strike demonstrates our

government's firm resolve to tackle the threat of terrorism and to stand with

tion on Thursday and conducted two days of reconnaissance before sending two CF-18s to attack jihadist positions around the city of Fallujah.

ISIS had slaughtered scores of people from the Albu Nimr tribe, which had taken up arms against the insurgents.

provide military support to the US-led coalition fighting the Islamic State group but would not take part in combat operations, reports AFP.

Syrian town on the Turkish border in what appears to be an attempt to seize a vital crossing from rebels, activists said yesterday.

Burkina army vows unity govt Protesters denounce power grab

AFP, Ouagadougou

Burkina Faso's military vowed to install a unity government after tightening its control over the west African nation on Sunday, firing tear gas and shots in the air to disperse protesters denouncing an army power grab.

Troops moved into Place de la Nation in the capital Ouagadougou and took over the national television headquarters in a show of force, despite calls by the international community and protesters for a return to civilian rule.

As international mediators brandished the threat of sanctions if the army refused to back down and allow a civilian transfer of power, the military pledged to put in place a transition government formed by "broad consensus". The military had stepped into the power

vacuum left by president Blaise Compaore, who was forced to resign in the wake of violent street demonstrations over his 27year-rule of the impoverished country that some have likened to the Arab Spring.

But the army said that it was acting only with the interest of the nation at heart and that "power does not interest us".

"What is currently at stake is more than self interest," it said in a statement issued after Isaac Zida -- the man it named as interim chief -- met with opposition leaders. International observers watching in alarm

urged the army to return power to the civilians, with UN envoy for west Africa, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, saying that he and African leaders had pressed the demand in a meeting with the country's top military brass.

If the army refuses, "the consequences are pretty clear", he said. "We want to avoid having to impose sanctions on Burkina Faso." The US State Department also called on

the military to immediately transfer power to civilian authorities, while the European Union urged the army to respect the people's right to peaceful protest. Hundreds of thousands of protesters,

furious at plans to extend Compaore's rule in the impoverished landlocked country, had massed on the streets of Ouagadougou on Thursday, some going on a rampage and setting the parliament and other public buildings ablaze.

Under Burkina Faso's constitution, the speaker of parliament was supposed to step in as interim head of state following the president's resignation.

Europe warns Russia over Ukraine rebel poll

AFP, Donetsk

Europe yesterday blasted Moscow's recognition of separatist elections in Ukraine, saying the polls, which sought to put a legal veneer on the bloody pro-Russian rebellion, violated a peace agreement.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said the elections went "against the letter and spirit" of an internationally brokered truce deal in September that was meant to halt the war in eastern Ukraine.

Steinmeier urged Russia to respect "the unity of Ukraine."

"We will judge Russia and President (Vladimir) Putin on their statements that the unity of Ukraine cannot be called into question," he said on Twitter.

Earlier, EU foreign affairs head Federica Mogherini issued a statement slamming the rebel leadership elections as "a new obstacle on the path towards peace in Ukraine." The angry European response, likely to be echoed in

Washington, raised the temperature in the West's dispute with Russia over its support for separatists who have torn a swathe of Ukraine's industrial heartland out from the pro-Western government's control.

Russia, which risks facing a ratcheting up of already punishing EU and US sanctions, ignored Western appeals ahead of the vote and gave its full backing to elections that the Ukrainian government branded an illegal "farce."



Daredevil Nik Wallenda wowed Chicago and the world Sunday with two hair-raising skyscraper crossings on high wires without a safety net or a harness, and performing one blindfolded. Wallenda performed numerous high-wire feats that include being the first person to cross Niagra Falls on a tightrope. PHOTO: GUARDIAN

PROTECTING MIGRATION RULES

Germany 'would accept UK exit from EU'

BBC ONLINE

Chancellor Angela Merkel has reportedly warned David Cameron she would rather see the UK leave the EU than compromise

German government sources as saying she feared the UK was near a "point of no

react to a future UK policy shift.

irresponsible innuendo and

Branson also vowed to "push on" with Virgin's passenger travel space programme once the reasons behind the accident, in which one test pilot died, had been worked out over the principle of free movement. Der Spiegel news magazine quotes

return". Chancellor George Osborne dismissed the story as the deadly crash last Friday speculation about how Germany may

> But he insisted ministers would act in the national interest in addressing public concerns about immigration.

He told BBC Breakfast that concerns

holding an in-out referendum.

about abuses of the benefit system were "calm and rational" way.

causing "great unhappiness" but the UK would approach future negotiations in a Cameron wants to renegotiate the terms of the UK's continued membership before

The prime minister has insisted that freedom of movement of workers would be "at the very heart of my renegotiation strategy for Europe". But Merkel is said by the magazine to

have made clear she will withdraw her support for the UK's continued EU membership if he continues to push for migration reform which requires fundamental changes to the principles of the

> organisation. The German chancellor's warning to

Cameron is reported to have come in a meeting on the fringes of the latest EU summit in Brussels last week.

Der Spiegel, quoting sources within the German chancellor's office and German foreign ministry, said this was the first time Merkel had acknowledged that the UK's exit from the EU was possible.

"Should Cameron persist (in this plan), Chancellor Angela Merkel would abandon her efforts to keep Britain in the EU," it quoted the sources as saying.

our allies against ISIL's atrocities against innocent women, children and men," Canadian Defence Minister Rob Nicholson said in a statement. Canada joined the anti-ISIS coali

The attacks followed reports that

Singapore said yesterday it would

Al-Qaeda fighters are massing at a

24 killed in Turkey boat sink

AFP, Istanbul

At least 24 migrants, including children, drowned yesterday when a boat taking them towards European Union waters sank in the Black Sea just off Istanbul, Turkish officials said.

Reports said those on board were mainly Afghans in search of a better life in the EU who had paid several thousand euros each to people smugglers for a seat on the overloaded vessel.

Seven people were rescued from the stricken boat, which had set off earlier from Istanbul and had travelled through the Bosphorus Strait on its way to Romania, the coastguard said in a statement.

Rescuers, aided by local fishing vessels, were still searching for at least nine people missing from the boat.

son for Compassion & Choices,

said on Sunday that Maynard

died "as she intended - peace-

fully in her bedroom, in the

Maynard posted a video to

YouTube in October publically

explaining that she had chosen

to die on 1 November, stating:

"I can't even tell you the

amount of relief that

it provides me to

know that I don't

have to die the way

that it's been

described to me, that

arms of her loved ones".

Nigeria gunmen free 132 inmates

AFP, Lagos

activity."

PRISON RAID

Gunmen armed with dynamite freed at least 132 inmates in a raid on a prison in central Nigeria's Kogi state, the same facility attacked by Boko Haram Islamists in 2012, police said yesterday.

"They blew up the thing with dynamite," national police spokesman Emmanuel Ojukwu told AFP of the attack which took place late Sunday. "Up to 132 inmates escaped," he said, but added that some have been re-arrested. Local media have reported much higher

figures for the number of prisoners freed. The Koton Karfi prison in Kogi is thought to hold many suspected Boko Haram fighters, but Ojukwu said the raid was not linked to the five-year Islamist uprising, blaming it instead on "criminal

Boko Haram claimed a February 2012 attack on the same prison that freed more than 100 inmates. A former spokesman for the insurgent

group known as Abul Qaqa, whom the has military claimed to have killed, said at the time that the raid was aimed at freeing several of its members. Kogi state governor Idris Wada toured

the site yesterday to assess the damage, his spokesman Jacob Edi told AFP.

Terminally ill patient ends life by assisted suicide

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A young woman who reopened the debate over assisted suicide after publically announcing she would take her own life, has died.

Brittany Maynard, 29, who campaigned for "Death with dignity", was suffering from an aggressive malignant brain tumour

and died in Oregon from taking lethal drugs prescribed by a doctor. Maynard was diagnosed with

cancer on New Year's

Day and was later

given six months to live. She and her husband Dan Diaz moved to

Oregon earlier this year due to the state's right-to-die laws. She became a nationally recognised advocate for the group Compassion & Choices, a

non-profit organisation that works to improve patients' rights and choices at the end of life. Sean Crowley, a spokesper-



Maynard died on November 1. Oregon was the first US

state to make it legal for a doctor to prescribe a life-ending drug to a terminally ill patient of sound mind who makes the request as part of its Death With Dignity Act. The patient must swallow the drug without help; it is illegal for a doctor to administer it.