

NEWSIN brief

Sarkozy wins party leadership vote

BBC ONLINE

Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy has been elected head of the opposition UMP, in what is being seen as the start of a new bid for the presidency. Sarkozy gained 64.5% of the vote, well ahead of his nearest rival Bruno le Maire. He was under pressure to win by a wide margin, and hoped to get more than 70% to keep his re-election hopes alive.

Mubarak could get early release: Lawyer

AFP, Cairo

Egypt's jailed ex-president Hosni Mubarak could be released early after serving two-thirds of a corruption sentence and seeing murder charges dropped, his lawyer said yesterday. An Egyptian court on Saturday dismissed the murder charge against Mubarak over the deaths of protesters during the country's 2011 uprising.

Arab-Jewish school torched in Jerusalem

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Suspected Jewish extremists set fire to a classroom in an Arab-Jewish school in Jerusalem, police said yesterday, targeting a symbol of co-existence in a city on edge over a recent surge in violence. The premises were empty late on Saturday when assailants torched a classroom used by first-graders at the Hand in Hand school, where Palestinian and Israeli children study together in Hebrew and Arabic.

Kiev bans flights into eastern Ukraine

AFP, Kiev

Ukraine authorities on Saturday banned flights to the rebel-held east of the former Soviet republic, the head of Ukraine's aviation authority said. "Flights are banned for Russian companies to Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk for safety reasons," Denis Antonuk told AFP without elaborating. The two cities serve the rebel strongholds of Donetsk and Lugansk in eastern Ukraine.

Swiss voters reject immigration cap

AFP, Geneva

The Swiss looked set to reject three issues put to a popular vote yesterday, including calls to cap immigration in the name of saving the environment, according to the public broadcaster and initial results. A full 78.4 percent of voters in Geneva had rejected Ecopop, according to results from 95 percent of votes cast.

Lima climate summit begins today

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

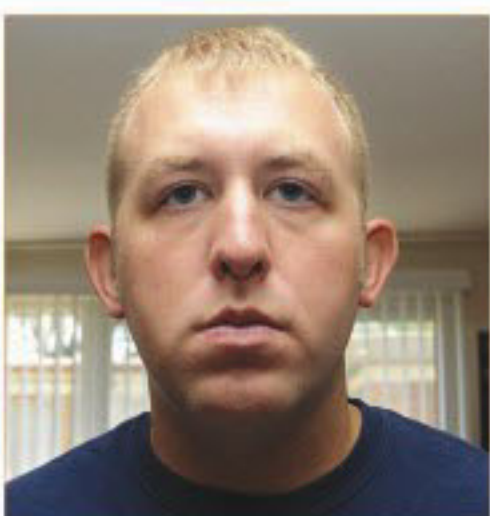
United Nations climate negotiations opening in Lima today have the best chance in a generation of striking a deal on global warming, diplomats say. The two weeks of talks in Peru are intended to deliver a draft text to be adopted in Paris next year that will commit countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions – without compromising the economic development of poor countries. Observers said there was fresh optimism surrounding the Lima talks after the US and China declared on 12 November that they would work together to cut carbon pollution. Under the deal, China committed to cap its output of carbon pollution by 2030 or earlier and to increase its use of zero emission energy to 20% by 2030. The US agreed to reduce its emissions to between 26% and 28% below 2005 levels by 2025. Todd Stern, the State Department climate change envoy, said the deal could push other big emitters such as India, Japan, Brazil and Russia to come forward with their own post-2020 targets.



Members of the NAACP and their supporters start out for the first day of Journey for Justice, seven-day 120-mile march from the Canfield Green apartments where Michael Brown was killed to the Governor's mansion in Jefferson City, Missouri in Ferguson, Missouri, on Saturday.



PHOTO: AFP



Ferguson 'killer cop' quits job

REUTERS, Ferguson

The white police officer who fatally shot an unarmed black teenager in a St Louis suburb has resigned, his lawyer said on Saturday, as activists set out on a 120-mile march to protest the killing and a grand jury's decision not to indict him.

The resignation of Darren Wilson from the Ferguson, Missouri, police force comes nearly four months after he killed 18-year-old Michael Brown and days after the announcement that he would not face criminal charges.

The incident, which has led to months of sometimes violent protests in Ferguson, has reignited a debate over race relations and the use of police force in the United States.

In a letter published by the St Louis Post-Dispatch, Wilson said he had been told that "my continued employment may put the residents and police officers of the City of Ferguson at risk, which is a circumstance that I cannot allow."

After a night of arson and looting in Ferguson following the decision, demonstrations this week spread to other major US cities.

On Saturday, activists shifted gears by setting off on a seven-day march from Ferguson to Jefferson City, the state capital. The march, reminiscent of the civil rights marches of the 1960s, was organized by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

The NAACP is calling for a reform of police practices, a new police chief in Ferguson and a national law to prevent racial profiling by police.

ISIS sustain heavy losses in Kobane

50 killed; wave of air strikes hit 'jihadist capital'

AFP, Beirut

Jihadists from the Islamic State group battling for control of the Syrian border town Kobane have suffered some of their heaviest losses yet in 24 hours of clashes and US-led strikes.

At least 50 jihadists were killed in the embattled town, in suicide bomb attacks, clashes with Kobane's Kurdish defenders and the air strikes, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Sunday.

The Britain-based monitor also reported that the US-led coalition battling the ISIS group hit at least 30 targets in and around Raqa, the jihadists' de facto capital.

There were no immediate details of a toll in the Raqa strikes, which the Observatory said was one of the larger waves of raids by the coalition since it began its campaign in Syria in September.

The deaths in Kobane came on Saturday after ISIS jihadists launched an unprecedented attack against the border crossing separating the Syrian Kurdish town from Turkey.

Kurdish officials and the Observatory alleged the attack was launched from

Turkish soil, a claim dismissed by the Turkey army as "lies."

In Raqa province, the US-led coalition carried out strikes against at least 30 IS targets on the northern outskirts of Raqa city and struck Division 17, a Syrian army base jihadists captured earlier this year.

The US-led coalition began carrying out air strikes against the Islamic State group on September 23, and stepped up raids in Kobane in a bid to prevent it falling to ISIS.

On Thursday, the coordinator of the US-led coalition, said at least 600 ISIS fighters had been killed in air strikes and that the group had made easy targets of its fighters by pouring them into Kobane.

But Syria's Foreign Minister Walid Muallem, speaking from Russia after meeting with key regime ally President Vladimir Putin, said the US-led strikes were having little effect.

"Is Daesh weaker today after two months of coalition strikes? All the indicators show that it is not," he told the pan-Arab Al-Mayadeen news channel.

He said unless Turkey closed its border to jihadists, the group would be unharmed by the US-led strikes.

Ebola death toll nears 7,000: WHO

REUTERS, Dakar

The death toll from the worst Ebola outbreak on record has reached nearly 7,000 in West Africa, the World Health Organization said on Saturday.

The toll of 6,928 dead showed a leap of just over 1,200 since the WHO released its previous report on Wednesday.

The U.N. health agency did not provide any explanation for the abrupt increase, but the figures, published on its website, appeared to include previously unreported deaths.

A WHO spokesperson was not immediately available for comment.

Just over 16,000 people have been diagnosed with Ebola since the outbreak was confirmed in the forests of remote southeastern Guinea in March, according to the WHO data that covered the three hardest-hit countries.

'China must improve ties with neighbours'

PTI, Beijing

China should firmly uphold its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights while handling disputes but at the same time, the nation should step up diplomatic efforts with neighbouring countries, President Xi Jinping has said.

"We should firmly uphold China's territorial sovereignty, maritime rights and interests and national unity, and properly handle territorial and island disputes," Xi told the Central Conference of the ruling Communist Party of China on Saturday.

He added, "We should promote neighbourhood diplomacy, turn China's neighbourhood areas into a community of common destiny, continue to follow the principles of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness, promote friendship and partnership, foster an amicable, secure and prosperous neighbourhood environment, and boost win-win cooperation and connectivity".

His speech in this week's conference will set the tone for Chinese diplomacy in trying to resolve disputes with a host of countries including India, Japan as well as the South China Sea dispute involving several southeast Asian countries.

"We should manage well relations with other major countries, build a sound and stable framework of major-country relations, and expand cooperation with other major developing countries," Xi said.

China should advance multilateral diplomacy, work to reform the international system and global governance, and increase the representation of China and other developing countries, he said.



'Saradha scam money used to fund Burdwan blast'

TNN, Kolkata

BJP president Amit Shah yesterday questioned the role of TMC government in Saradha chit fund scam and asked why chief minister Mamata Banerjee is protecting those accused in the ponzi scheme.

Shah, who was addressing a large rally outside Victoria Hall in Kolkata, said, "TMC MPs protest against black money in Parliament, I want to ask Didi whether Saradha chit fund money is black or white?"

Attacking the Mamata government relentlessly on the Saradha scam, Shah added, "Didi says CBI has framed TMC leaders, I challenge her to say that those interrogated by CBI are innocent."

Shah asked if Mamata has any responsibility towards the poor depositors whose money was lost in the chit fund scam. "It is clear that Trinamool leaders are involved in

the chit fund scam".

"Why did you close down the Shyamal Sen commission? You are now trying to save those who were involved in chit fund scam," Shah said.

Amit Shah continued his attack on the Mamata government and accused them of trying to shield the terrorists involved in the Burdwan blast. "TMC leaders are involved in this blast"

"Saradha chit fund's money was used in this blast, CBI is investigating this matter," Shah said.

Accusing the Mamata government of protecting illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, Shah said, "The people of West Bengal have elected you CM, not the infiltrators from Bangladesh. Stop giving them protection."

Exhorting Narendra Modi's call for a "Trinamool-free Bengal", Shah said that the countdown for the exit of the Mamata Banerjee government has begun.



Amit Shah



A Pakistani activist from the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party flashes a 'victory' sign during an anti-government rally in front of the parliament in Islamabad, yesterday. PTI leader Imran Khan announced the rally to renew his effort to topple the government there.

PHOTO: AFP

'I am an unperson'

DNA discoverer forced to sell his Nobel prize over 'racist comment'

MAIL ONLINE

A scientist who was part of the team that discovered DNA has been forced to sell his Nobel Prize after he was shunned by the scientific community for comments that linked race and intelligence.

James Watson sparked an outcry in 2007 when he suggested in an interview with the Sunday Times that people of African descent were inherently less intelligent than white people.

The American scientist said he had become an 'unperson' since making the controversial remarks and is now selling his prize in a bid to 're-enter public life'.

The medal, the first to be auctioned by a living recipient, is expected to fetch as much as £2.5million when it goes under the hammer at Christie's in New York next week.

Dr Watson shared the 1962 Nobel Prize, awarded for uncovering the double helix structure of DNA, with British scientists Maurice Wilkins and Francis Crick.

Dr Watson, 86, said that he was fired from the boards of a number of companies after making the inflammatory race comments, adding that he has not given any public lectures since.

He told the Financial Times: 'No one really wants to admit I exist'.



James Watson

Foreign tour just before retirement

FROM PAGE 16

the tour has generated criticism among the port officials and staffs as the tour is usually organised for those who would be able to apply their experience to enrich the Chittagong port, they added.

AKM Alauddin, a former senior outdoor assistant of CPA Traffic department, alleged that he was denied the opportunity to go on a similar tour in February 2012 although he had four months in hand before his retirement.

"The then shipping secretary told me that one requires to have at least six months before his tenure ends to go on a foreign tour," said Alauddin who was also the then executive president of CBA. CPA Chairman Rear Admiral Nizamuddin Ahmed and CPA Member

(Admin) Nazrul Islam could not be contacted over the phone even after repeated attempts.

Momtaz said though he was going to retire in December he could be able to contribute his experience to the port since as a CBA President he would still be a member of the Chittagong Port Advisory Committee.

CPA Director (Admin) Jafar Alam said usually they did not allow anyone having less than six months before his retirement age if the tour was for training purposes.

"Since this is mere a foreign visit and not for the purpose of training, the rule does not apply," he said.

Apart from Momtaz, two officers and three staffs of CPA, and another official from the shipping

ministry will go on the tour of Tianjin Port in China and Busan Port in South Korea.

The CPA officers are Director (Traffic) Golam Sarwar and Chief Personal Officer Mohammad Omar Faruk while the staffs are Audit Assistant Mohammad Liakat Ali and Senior Outdoor Assistant Md Mokarram Hossain. The shipping ministry officer is Nurul Islam.

The shipping ministry official was included in this tour as CPA Master Operator Golam Md Mohiuddin Dastagir, who had been selected for the tour earlier, expressed his unwillingness to join the tour.

All the expenses for the tour would be borne by the CPA, said sources adding that the six had already drawn Tk 19.5 lakh in advance for the tour.

Modi vows to stop

FROM PAGE 16

He urged the people of Assam to have faith in him and said: "There will be no compromise on Assam's security."

He promised to fulfil the poll promises he had made to the people of Assam during Lok Sabha elections.

"I know the sentiments of the people of Assam and the country," he said in his speech.

India and Bangladesh have been negotiating a land swap for years to resolve a long-running border conflict, reports Reuters.

Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi has been critical of both the BJP and the Asom Gana Parishad for opposing the land swap deal signed by the previous Manmohan Singh-led United Progressive Alliance government with Bangladesh.

He maintained that Assam was not going to lose out a single inch of land to Bangladesh as made out to be by the ACP and the BJP. He also alleged that the two parties opposed the deal with an eye

on 2014 Lok Sabha polls, reports The Hindu.

Modi, in his speech, warned the forces trying to harm the interests of Assam and the northeast and said that law would not spare them now. "Such forces should know that the government has changed in Delhi and the law will not spare them now," he said.

The development of the entire northeast region including Assam was a priority of his government, he said. The PM claimed that the BJP has compelled all political parties to make development the prime issue instead of issues of caste, region etc.

"We have turned the issue of development into an agenda of the country," he said and added that the country has seen performance and agenda of the government run by all others parties including the Congress, the Left parties, regional parties as well as family-run government and they have now seen the present BJP-led government at the Centre.