

# NEWSIN brief

## Pakistan police arrest al-Qaeda suspects

Pakistan police have arrested five suspected members of al-Qaeda's newly formed South Asia chapter in the southern city of Karachi, officials said yesterday. Police and security officials said they believe one of those arrested is the Karachi head of the militant network's new South Asian wing.

## Ebola: S Leone cancels X-mas celebrations

Sierra Leone yesterday said it was banning any public Christmas celebrations as the spiralling caseload of Ebola infections continues to spread alarm. The World Health Organization yesterday said that 18,188 cases of the deadly virus had been reported across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, resulting in 6,583 deaths.

## New Iran nuclear talks on Dec 17

The European Union yesterday confirmed that talks between Iran and world powers on Tehran's nuclear programme will resume on December 17 in Geneva. The talks, first announced in a report from Iran on Thursday, will be at the level of senior officials rather than ministers, the EU's diplomatic service said.

## Sri Lankan military plane crash kills four

A Sri Lankan military transport aircraft crashed near the capital Colombo yesterday killing four people on board and injuring another crew member, police said. The Antonov AN-32 aircraft slammed into a rubber plantation in the suburb of Athurugiriya in bad weather and burst into flames, sources said.

## Indian 'ran ISIS Twitter handle'

Police in India are investigating claims that a Bangalore business executive is behind an influential ISIS Twitter account. On Thursday, Britain's Channel 4 News reported that the @ShamiWitness account was run by a senior member of staff at an Indian conglomerate in Bengaluru, only named as Mehedi. The account provided news on ISIS and celebrated its rise in Syria and Iraq. It had nearly 18,000 followers and was one of the main sources of information on the group in English.

## I couldn't educate her Korean Air CEO apologises for daughter's 'foolish act'

Former Korean Air executive Heather Cho has apologised for delaying a plane over a serving of nuts, in her first public appearance since the incident. Her father, airline chairman Cho Yang-ho, also apologised at a news conference, amid a simmering backlash in South Korea. He called his daughter's conduct "foolish", and added: "I beg the people to blame me for the current situation, because everything is my fault... I failed to properly educate my daughter." The government is probing the incident, which has dominated headlines. Ms Cho was onboard a Korean Airlines plane departing from New York for Incheon last week when she demanded a crew member to be removed, after she was served nuts in a bag, instead of on a plate. On Friday afternoon Ms Cho bowed in apology when she spoke to reporters outside a government building, where she was due to meet transport officials. Cho also announced that his daughter would step down from all her posts in companies under the Cho family-owned Hanjin Group, which also owns Korean Air.



Nobel Peace Prize winners Kailash Satyarthi (L) comforts a emotional Malala Yousafzai as they watch her blood stained school uniform when she was shot by Taliban at the opening of the Nobel Peace Prize exhibition at the Nobel Peace Center yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# World faces climate tragedy

### Warns Kerry as old divisions surface between rich and poor

BBC ONLINE

Climate talks in Lima have entered their final day with long-running issues still dividing the parties, despite an impassioned appeal from US Secretary of State John Kerry.

Kerry told the negotiators that the world was "still on a course leading to tragedy". An ambitious deal he said was "not an option, it is an urgent necessity".

But ongoing battles are threatening to limit any progress in the Peruvian capital. Many developed countries want to see a change in the way the nations are classified in the UN process.

Until now, the rich have been obliged to take on commitments to cut emissions while the poor have not.

Countries such as the US say that the old divisions are outdated and they want everyone to take on some form of obligation.

In his speech, Kerry reinforced this idea. No country should have a "free pass" anymore, he said.

"I know this is difficult for developing nations. We have to remember that today more than half of emissions are coming from developing nations, so it is imperative that they act too."

But this approach is being resisted by a number of countries, including China and many others, who want to adhere to the idea of "common but differentiated responsibilities".

Some countries are suspicious that the text being

developed here in Lima is an attempt to get round the concept of differentiation, which is embedded in 1992's UN framework convention on climate change.

The issue has become critical as the chairs of the talks introduced a new draft text that many felt watered down the original commitment.

A large group of developing nations known as the G77 objected. "This whole exercise is not meant to rewrite the convention, this is a firm basic position of the G77," said Antonio Marcondes, Brazil's representative at the talks.

"We stand behind the differentiation, we stand behind 'common but differentiated responsibilities', these are issues we hold very strong and these are definite red lines."

A further argument is over the idea that there must be some sort of review process before a new deal is signed. It would essentially be an effort to ratchet up ambition by comparing and contrasting what countries had promised in the run up to Paris.

The idea, called an "ex-ante review", is seen as very important by some, especially the European Union. But developing countries including India are dead set against it.

They say it is an issue of sovereignty. Outside parties, they argue, should not have the power to review what countries commit to by themselves.

These divisions are all variants of long-running splits between richer and poorer nations that have existed in the UN talks for 20 years.



# Swiss to host conference on occupied Palestine territories

AFP, Geneva

A conference will be held this month in Geneva to examine respect for international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territories, Switzerland announced Thursday.

Israel and the United States are however not expected to attend the December 17 conference devoted to the Fourth Geneva Convention, which defines humanitarian protections for civilians in a war zone.

The conference, long in the works, comes after a senior Palestinian official died in a confrontation with Israeli troops, adding to tensions that have threatened to boil over into another round of violence in the occupied territories.

Despite an expected boycott from Israel and the United States, Swiss President Didier Burkhalter told local media he expected "very large participation" in the

conference and that consultations had been ongoing for weeks.

"Our objective is to advance the cause of international humanitarian law," Burkhalter said.

"Even if Israel and the United States boycott the meeting, the international community must speak on the issue. There is no denigration of Israel planned" from Switzerland, he said.

In calling the meeting, Switzerland is responding to a recommendation from the UN General Assembly at the request of Palestinian authorities.

The assembly passed a resolution in 2009 asking Switzerland to lead consultations on holding such a conference.

The consultations had been suspended since 2011 before being re-launched in July and a "trans-regional critical mass of state parties have expressed their support" for the conference to be held, the Swiss foreign ministry said.



# Torture scam unlikely to clip CIA wings: experts

AFP, Washington

Detailed revelations of the torture used by George W Bush-era operatives against al-Qaeda suspects are only the latest morale-sapping scandal to envelop the Central Intelligence Agency.

But the searing US Senate Intelligence Committee report on CIA enhanced interrogation techniques is not likely to hamstring the effectiveness of the nation's premier spy shop or erode its power in the post-9/11 era, lawmakers, experts and former intelligence agents predicted Wednesday.

Criticism has trailed the CIA for decades, from the Bay of Pigs fiasco of 1961 and the Iran-Contra affair of the 1980s, to false intelligence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and the humiliating expulsion from Germany of a CIA station chief this year.

But while the CIA's reputation clearly took a hit with the 500-page torture report that documented extensive abuses and the misleading of Congress and the White House,

the agency will remain a vital force for intelligence gathering worldwide.

Funding for the secretive agency has ballooned by billions of dollars in the years since al-Qaeda's attacks on the United States in 2001, and its workforce has grown.

And despite Senate Intelligence Committee chair Dianne Feinstein calling the CIA's actions "a stain on our values and on our history," Congress for the most part backs the covert operations seen as intrinsic to battling adversaries like the Islamic State.

"This administration and almost surely those to come will continue to rely on the CIA for traditional intelligence work as well as counterterrorism operations around the world," intelligence expert William Banks, director of Syracuse University's Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism, told AFP.

"The agency really is essential to preserve US national security interests now and going forward. The torture episode is abhorrent, I believe, but aberrant," he added.



A protester hangs paper umbrellas at the pro-democracy protest site in the Causeway Bay district of Hong Kong, yesterday. Chinese state-run media yesterday triumphantly declared the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement "defeated" after police swept away its main protest site.

PHOTO: AFP

# CIA TORTURE REPORT WORLD REACTION

**China:** In a commentary published by the state-run Xinhua news agency, China blasted what it said was "the sheer hypocrisy of the United States as a defender of human rights." The commentary said Guantanamo Bay was "notorious for human rights violations since 2004," adding that neither President George W Bush nor President Barack Obama "has done anything to change the situation."

**Russia:** The Russian Foreign Ministry yesterday said that the information made public from the report "is another confirmation of gross systematic violations of human rights by the American authorities. We urge the human rights community to demand from Washington a disclosure of full information of offenses committed within the framework of the 'global war with terror' and to bring perpetrators to justice".

**Iran:** Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei responded to the report in a series of tweets, saying of the US: "Today, US govt is symbol of tyranny against humanity; even American ppl are faced w cruelty."

**Germany:** Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said on his verified Twitter account that the report findings pointed to "clear violations of democratic values". "This cannot be repeated," he added.

**Pakistan:** "We deplore the systematic torture of the detainees at various locations by the CIA," said Tasnim Aslam, a spokesperson for the Pakistani Foreign Ministry. He said that the report "reinforces that the international human rights and the international humanitarian law must be respected when encountering intelligence terrorism."

**United Nations:** UN Special Rapporteur on Counter Terrorism and Human Rights Ben Emmerson called on the US to prosecute those responsible for crimes outlined in the report. Emmerson said the program allowed "...systematic crimes and gross violations of international human rights law."

# UKRAINE CRISIS Poroshenko says ceasefire is now 'real'

AFP, Sydney

President Petro Poroshenko yesterday said a "real" ceasefire was in place in Ukraine after the first 24 hours in seven months without a military casualty, although he admitted the truce was fragile.

"I have positive news. Today is the first 24 hours for seven months... when we have a real ceasefire in Ukraine," he said in a speech during a trip to Australia.

"Everything is so fragile. But I pray that we should continue this process," he added. Poroshenko added that the conflict in his homeland was not just about Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity.

The ceasefire with pro-Russian rebels was introduced on Tuesday in the hope of ending an eight-month conflict that has claimed at least 4,300 lives and displaced close to one million people, according to United Nations figures.

Meanwhile, Ukraine says it will conscript 40,000 soldiers in 2015 and double its military budget as it tries to meet the demands of an ongoing conflict against pro-Russian rebels in its eastern provinces.

"We foresee calling up 40,000 men in 2015 and training 10,500 people who will do their service," Defence Minister Stepan Poltorak told parliament. The process is being closely watched in Europe, where concerns over Russia's support for the rebels has plunged East-West relations to their lowest ebb since the end of the Cold War.

The two sides -- along with Russian and European monitors -- are still trying to organise comprehensive peace talks.

# Historic Apple 1 sold at auction

BBC ONLINE

A fully operational Apple 1 computer has been sold at auction for \$365,000 (£230,000).

It is the only machine known to have been personally sold by Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, from a garage in California in 1976.

Fewer than 50 Apple 1 computers are now believed to be in existence.

Yet despite its rarity, the machine was sold at way below auction house Christie's estimate of \$400,000-\$600,000.

The original Apple Computer - now referred to as the Apple 1 - was hand-made by Steve Wozniak, an engineer who co-founded Apple, with Jobs, in the 1970s. When new, the machines sold for \$666.66.

To finance the building of the machines, Jobs sold his VW van, while Wozniak sold a calculator for \$500.



# Brazilian killed 41 'for fun'!

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A Brazilian man has confessed to the murders of 42 people since 2005, telling police he killed his victims "for the pleasure of it".

Sailson Jose das Gracas was arrested shortly after he allegedly stabbed a woman to death in the Rio de Janeiro suburb of Nova Iguaçu.

"He confessed he killed another 37 women, three men and a two-year-old girl over the past nine years," a police officer said. "He either stabbed his victims or strangled them."

Inspector Pedro Henrique Medina told the G1 news portal that das Gracas showed no remorse and warned he would kill again if he was ever released from prison.

The 26-year-old told police he killed for "pleasure" and the "adrenaline" and also operated as a killer for hire, Reuters editorial reports. He claims he killed the first person, a woman, when he was just 17-years-old.

His preferred victims were females, whom he allegedly strangled.

Experts were quoted by news agencies as saying Gracas was likely a psychopath who enjoyed the media spotlight and warned that his accounts should be carefully checked.

# Twin blasts hit Nigerian city

### At least 31 killed; Boko Haram blamed

AGENCIES

Activists said at least 31 people were killed Thursday when twin explosions rocked downtown Jos in central Nigeria in what appears to be the latest attack by Islamic extremists.

The blasts occurred as store owners were shutting their shops and Muslims were preparing for evening prayers.

The explosions were likely to have been carried out by Boko Haram, the state government said yesterday.

"It's an extension of the terrorist acts that have been penetrating all states and cities," Pam Ayuba, spokesman for the Plateau state governor Jonah Jang, told AFP by telephone.

One blast went off at an outdoor food stand called Mr Bigs and the other at the nearby entrance to the Terminus market in the centre of the city, according to witnesses who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

Soldiers and police said they were ferrying the wounded to hospitals. Rescue workers had evacuated 31 bodies and operations were continuing, civil rights lawyer Ahmed Garba told The Associated Press. Mark Lipdo of the Stefanos Foundation charity said rescue workers also told him at least 31 people were killed and several were injured, some critically.

Those attacks were blamed on Islamic extremists from the Boko Haram group and were seen as an attempt to ignite fighting between Muslims and Christians. Jos is in Nigeria's Middle Belt, where the mainly Muslim north and predominantly Christian south meet and violence between the two groups is commonplace.