# NEWS<sub>IN</sub> brief

### Shebab attacks AU base in Somalia

AFP, Mogadishu

Islamist Shebab militants mounted an attack against the headquarters of the African Union force in Somalia yesterday, with explosions and gunfire rocking the area, officials said. The African Union force said all of its personnel as well as UN staff were unharmed, disputing claims from a Shebab spokesman.

#### China city bans X-mas in schools!

AFP, Beijing

A Chinese city, Wenzhou, has banned schools from holding Christmas events, state media reported yesterday, highlighting official suspicions about the increasingly popular festival because of its foreign origins. China's Christian population, currently estimated at around 60 million, is rapidly growing and Christmas is increasingly marked in the country ruled by the officially atheist Communist Party.

### Iran kicks off massive **Gulf military drills**

AFP, Tehran

Iran launched extensive military drills on Thursday, local media reported, in a show of strength stretching several hundred kilometres from the Strait of Hormuz to the Gulf of Aden. The exercises are set to last six days and involve ballistic missile and drone testing, according to military offi-

#### Mauritania issues first apostasy death sentence

AFP, Nouakchott

Mauritania has delivered its first death sentence for apostasy since independence in 1960, ordering capital punishment for a Muslim man who wrote an article deemed blasphemous of Islam. Mohamed Cheikh Ould Mohamed, aged in his late 20s, fainted after the ruling. He has been in custody since January 2. His text challenged some decisions taken by Islam's prophet Mohammed and his companions during holy wars, the source said on condi-



tion of anonymity.

RIGHTS ABUSE PROBE UN chief calls on S Lanka to cooperate

AGENCIES

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has reiterated his call to Sri Lanka to cooperate with the ongoing UN investigation of alleged human right abuses.

Responding to a media

query on Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa reiterating that he will not participate with outside investigations, Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General, was quoted by the Lanka Page web site, as saying that the Secretary-General has always encouraged the Government of Sri Lanka to comprehensively

address the post-war agenda. Colombo has vehemently refused to cooperate with the UN Human Rights Council-led investigation.

The UN chief's call came after, Sri Lanka's on Tuesday promised a judicial inquiry into allegations that his troops killed thousands of Tamil civilians at

the end of the civil war. But President Mahinda Rajapakse reiterated that he would not cooperate with a UN-mandated investigation into the government's 2009 crushing of the Tamil Tiger rebellion.



Bodo villagers move to a safer place after their homes were attacked and set alight at Gossaigaon, in Kokrajhar District of northeastern Assam state, yesterday. More than 2,000 people have fled their homes in the restive Indian state of Assam after separatist rebels killed dozens of villagers, some of them children, an official said. (Story on page 16)

PHOTO: AFP

# World remembers tsunami victims

AFP, Banda Aceh

Thousands of people yesterday gathered at a memorial in Indonesia's Aceh province, the epicentre of the Indian Ocean tsunami, as the world prepared to mark a decade since a disaster that took 220,00 lives and laid waste to coastal areas in 14 countries.

On December 26, 2004 a 9.3-magnitude earthquake off Indonesia's western coast sparked a series of towering waves that wrought destruction across countries as far apart as Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Somalia.

Among the victims were thousands of foreign holidaymakers enjoying Christmas on the region's sun-kissed beaches, striking tragedy into homes around the world.

Tsunami survivors and rescue workers led several thousand people in a gathering at Banda Aceh's black-domed Baiturrahman Grand Mosque for memorial prayers yesterday. Aceh's governor gave an address at the mosque, one of

the few buildings which withstood the wrath of the massive earthquake and ensuing waves which left 1,70,000 people in the country dead or missing.

"Prayers are being held in memory of the victims who perished or went missing," tsunami anniversary committee chairman Azhari Hasan told AFP.

In Meulaboh, a fishing town considered to be the ground zero of the tsunami -- where 35 metre-high waves flattened almost everything -- Indonesian flags were flown at halfmast as residents prepared to hold night prayers.

But the main memorials were planned for this morning, starting in Aceh which was hit first by the waves.

There will also be events in Sri Lanka as well as in several European capitals to honour foreign nationals who perished.

# Days of terrorists are numbered: Pak PM

Pakistan unveils measures to eradicate terrorism

AGENCIES

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in his address to the nation yesterday said the days of terrorists were numbered in Pakistan and they would be dealt with an iron hand.

In his televised speech, the prime minister said the terrorist attack on Army Public School in Peshawar has changed Pakistan. Last week, Taliban fighters attacked the school, killing 152 people, including 133 children.

"The Peshawar atrocity has changed Pakistan, we need to eradicate

the mindset of terrorism to defeat extremism and sectarianism," he said.

"This horrendous attack has shaken the nation...the terrorists struck the future of this country when they murdered those children," the PM said, adding, "A strong action is needed to root out the menace of extremism from society."

He said Pakistan's politicians "should not wait for another tragedy to strike before we finally wake up".

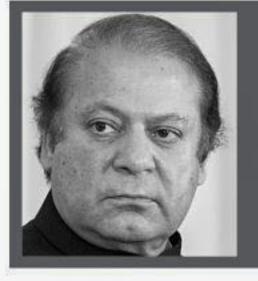
PM Sharif explained that political parties had reached a consensus on setting up military manned 'special tribunals' to deal with terrorism related cases. He said that the

courts will be set-up for a term of two years. The PM explained other points in the national action plan including the raising of

of militant groups on media, along with placing strict measures to prevent terrorists from using the internet and social media to spread their propaganda.

Other measures include making Necta functional, regularisation of madrassas, repatriation of Afghan refugees and cutting finances of terrorist groups.

He stressed that Pakistan will not allow its soil to be used for attacks on its neighbours and it expects the same from others in the region.



Complete funding cut to terrorist organisations The prime minister said banned outfits

Military courts to try

terror suspects

Complete media

blackout of militant groups

will not be allowed to operate under 'new' names and no armed militia will be allowed to form in Pakistan. Pakistan has stepped up its anti-terror

operations since the attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar on 16 December. The government lifted a moratorium on : the use of the death penalty shortly after the :

attack and has since executed six men. The military has also stepped up its cam- : across the Wagah-Attari an anti-terrorism task force. He also stressed paign against militants in the tribal areas in : border to Lahore to meet on the decision to put a complete blackout the northwest of the country.

## Modi wishes Sharif on his 64th birthday

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday greeted his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif on his birthday.

"On his birthday, I convey my good wishes to Nawaz Sharif and I pray that Almighty blesses him with good health," Modi said. Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif yesterday turned 64, reports PTI.

Sharif yesterday sent a bouquet of flowers to former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on the occasion of his 90th birthday.

Tahir Mehmood, an official of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi, delivered the bouquet of flowers to the former prime minister at the latter's Krishna Menon Marg residence in the national capital.

It may be recalled that Sharif and Vajpayee shared rare camaraderie when they were prime ministers of their respective countries in the late 1990s, reports ANI.

In February 1999, Vajpayee travelled by bus · with Sharif.

# Education shouldn't produce robots: Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday visited his Lok Sabha constituency to mark the Good Governance Day. Speaking at a function at the BHU, Modi said that "21st

century is an era of knowledge. We have to contribute something or the other that benefits the world at large". Criticising the present Indian education system, the PM

said that "our education apparatus can't be one that produces robots. That can happen in laboratory. There has to be overall personality development".

"Today the entire world requires good teachers. Good education is linked with good teachers. We need to think about how we can have good teachers," the PM said. "After my experience of 6 months, I can say the world is

"Every school can develop a mastery on any one aspect of Varanasi and this can be a great way to showcase Kashi," the PM added. "A tourist will come here drawn to

looking at India," he said.

the beautiful past but he or she will stay when we create systems that make them stay here," PM Modi Taking forward his Swachh

· Bharat campaign, Modi yesterday revisited his constituency and lauded people for helping rid the Assi Ghat of mounds of soil and garbage to restore the historical site to its old glory.

In the holy city to mark the Good Governance Day, he supervised the cleanliness campaign and also nominated various people and organisations to join the 'Swachh Bharat (clean India)' campaign launched by his government on Mahatma Gandhi's birthday on October 2 last.

"People, social organisations, municipal corporation and state government have played an important role and we are seeing today that the ghat, which was full of soil, is now back to its old beauty along side Mother Ganga," he said in a brief address.

### Saudi women drivers sent to 'terror' court

AFP, Riyadh

Two women's rights campaigners detained in Saudi Arabia have been transferred to a special tribunal for "terrorism", activists said yesterday after the women appeared in court.

The ruling came at a hear-

ing in Al-Ahsa, in the kingdom's Eastern Province, according to the activists who declined to be named. Loujain Hathloul has

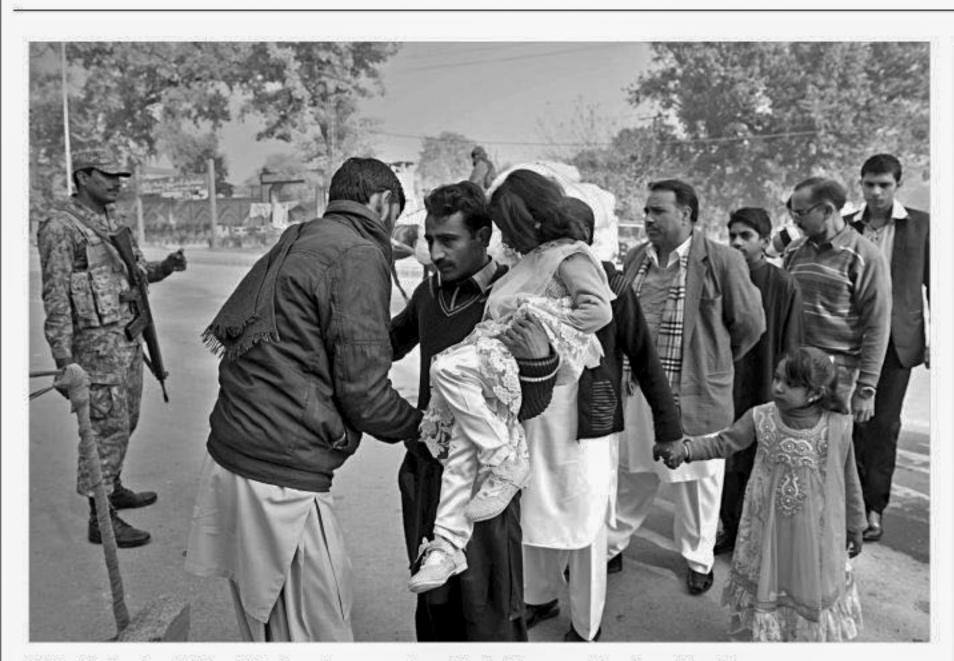
been detained since December 1 after she tried to drive into the kingdom from neighbouring United Arab Emirates in defiance of a ban.

Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world which does not allow women to drive. Maysaa Alamoudi, a UAE-based Saudi journalist, arrived at the border to support Hathloul and was

also arrested. Activists said investigations appeared to focus on the women's social media activities rather than their

driving. Reporters Without Borders, a watchdog, this year

named Saudi Arabia as one of 19 countries where government agencies are "enemies of the Internet" for their censorship and surveillance.



A Pakistani soldier (L) stands guard as Christians arrive to attend a Christmas mass at the Saint John's Cathedral Church in Peshawar, yesterday. Christians around the world are celebrating Christmas Day, a holiday commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.

PHOTO:

16.

GD-5026

### Religious Conversion in India

# 58 more embrace Hinduism

PTI, Kottayam

At least 58 persons, most of them belonging to Christian families, embraced Hinduism at two temples in Kottayam district under the initiative of Vishwa Hindu Parishad on Christmas day yesterday.

At least 42 members belonging to 20

families embraced Hinduism at the Puthiyakavu Devi temple in Ponkunnam while at another function at the Thirunakara Sri Krishna Swamy temple in Thirunakara, 16 were converted to Hinduism, VHP district president, Balachandran Pillai said.

One of the person who got converted is said to be a Muslim. Pillai said those who had converted had come on their own from Vaikom, Kumarakkam and Kanjirapally.

Similar functions are being held at various places. On Wednesday, 11 persons had embraced Hinduism near Kayamkulam in Alappuzha district in yet another case of conversion since the last week in the state.

A batch of 30 persons belonging to eight families of Scheduled Caste Christians had re-converted in the district on December 21. On conversion, Chief Minister Oommen

Chandy had said on Wednesday that the situation did not warrant a government intervention. Recently, Indian opposition MPs have

protested in parliament against Hindu nationalist groups for converting religious minorities to Hinduism. They accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of doing little to stop his hardline

supporters from forcibly converting

Muslims and Christians. The protesters forced the upper house of parliament to adjourn after shouting matches led to chaos. Conversions are legal if they do not involve force, fraud or inducement.



# Military Engineer Services

Directorate of Works & Chief Engineer (Army)

### Invitation for Tandors

| 1.  | Ministry/Division                     | 7      | Ministry of Defence.   |
|-----|---------------------------------------|--------|--|
| 2.  | Agency                                | •      | Military Engineer Services.  |
| 3.  | Procuring entity name                 | 4      | DW & CE (Army), Dhaka Cantt.   |
| 4.  | Tender name                           | •      | Construction of 2x Ammo Store including ancillary works for Inf Div at Shaheed Salahuddin Cantt.   |
| 5.  | Invitation for tender No.             | 11:5   | 59 of 2014-2015/E-6 Dated 21 December 2014.  |
| 6.  | Procurement method                    |        | Open Tendering Method.   |
| 7.  | Source of funds                       | •      | GoB.   |
| 8.  | Tender publication date               |        | 30 December 2014.  |
| 9.  | Tender last selling date              | 100    | 20 January 2015 up to 1430 hours.  |
| 10. | Tender submission date & time         |        | 21 January 2015, 12.00 hours.  |
| 11. | Tender opening date & time            |        | 21 January 2015, 12.30 hours.  |
| 12. | Name & address of the office(s):      |        |  |
|     | - Selling tender documents            | 0.988  | <ul> <li>a. Tender Selling &amp; Information Centre of DW &amp; CE(A) at GE (A Project, Dhaka Cantt.</li> <li>b. DW &amp; CE (Army), Dhaka Cantt.</li> </ul>                                 |
|     | - Receiving tender documents          | •      | Tender Selling & Information Centre of DW & CE(A) at GE(A) Project Dhaka Cantt.  |
| 8   | - Opening tender documents            |        | Tender Selling & Information Centre of DW & CE(A) at GE(A) Project Dhaka Cantt.  |
| 13. | Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting |        | Tender Selling & Information Centre of DW & CE(A) at GE(A) Project Dhaka Cantt, 20 January 2015, 1000-11.00 hours.   |
| 14. | Eligibility of tenderer               | (1.0°) | a. Contractors enlisted in MES Class 'A', 'B' & 'C'.     b. Contractors enlisted in other govt./semi-govt./autonomous organizations in similar capacity having necessary security clearance. |
| 15. | Price of tender document              | 8      | Tk. 5,000/- (non-refundable).  |

Tk. 8,20,000/-. Amount of tender security

17. Time of completion of wks 08 (eight) months. Contact details Phone: 9832678, Mili: 2678, Fax: (02) 9833284

Website: www.army.mil.bd Special instructions a. Tenderer shall submit copy of letter of valid enlistment & security

documents.

clearance with application on company letterhead when purchasing tender. Detailed requirements are mentioned in Tender Data Sheet of tender

 The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders. ISPR/Army DW & CE (Army)

Dhaka Cantt.