

# NEWS IN brief

## Six killed as train derails in US

AFP, Philadelphia  
Rescuers yesterday combed through the mangled wreckage of a derailed train in Philadelphia after an accident that left at least six dead, as the difficult search for possible survivors continued. Mayor Michael Nutter said the death toll could rise as some of the 243 people on the train had not been accounted for. Dozens were also injured. The cause of the crash was not immediately known, although there was no indication that it

## ISIS, army cash kills 48 in Syria's Homs

AFP, Beirut  
The Islamic State jihadist group has seized large parts of a strategically located town in Syria's central Homs province in clashes that killed 48 soldiers and militants, a monitor said

## MH370 search finds uncharted shipwreck

AFP, Sydney  
The hunt for missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 has uncovered a previously uncharted shipwreck deep underwater, leading officials to say that if the plane is in their search zone they will find it. The Australian-led team is scouring the southern Indian Ocean seabed in hope of finding the final resting place of MH370, which vanished on March 8, 2014 en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. No wreckage from the flight, which was carrying 239 people, has ever been found in one of aviation's



## Burmese ruby sells for record \$30 m

AFP, Geneva  
A 25.59 carat "pigeon blood" ruby sold for a world record \$30.34 million at auction in Geneva yesterday while a rare pink diamond believed to have once belonged to Napoleon's niece fetched \$15.9 million, Sotheby's said. After competitive bidding, the ruby went to an anonymous telephone bidder for 28.25 million

## 6.8 earthquake hits northeastern Japan

AFP, Tokyo  
A strong 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of northeastern Japan early yesterday, the United States Geological Survey said, but authorities did not issue a tsunami warning and there were no immediate



Kathmandu residents sleeps in the open yesterday after a second 7.3 earthquake strike the Himalayan nation. Inset, A Nepalese mother walks past damaged homes in Bhaktapur. Thousands of traumatised survivors spent the night outdoors, afraid to return to their houses after Tuesday's quake hit, less than three weeks after the country was devastated by its deadliest quake in more than 80 years.

PHOTO: AFP

# 43 Pak Shias slaughtered

### Bloodbath as gunmen stop bus and open fire on passengers

AFP, Karachi  
Pistol-wielding gunmen in Pakistan's biggest city Karachi stormed a bus carrying members of the Shia Ismaili minority yesterday, killing at least 43 in the first attack in the country officially claimed by the Islamic State group.  
The ISIS claims, posted on Twitter, are set to raise fears over the Middle East-based jihadists' growing influence after they announced in January the creation of a branch in what they called "Khorasan province", encompassing Afghanistan, Pakistan and parts of surrounding countries.  
"Thanks be to Allah, 43 apostates were killed and around 30 were wounded in an attack carried out by Islamic State soldiers on a bus transporting Shia Ismaili infidels in the city of Karachi," the extremist group said in an Arabic statement, citing a higher number of injured than Pakistani officials.  
Pakistani police also found leaflets claiming ISIS responsibility at the

scene of the attack in the city's eastern Malir district, while the homegrown Jundullah militant faction, which some analysts suspect of having ties to ISIS, made a separate claim of responsibility to AFP.  
Pakistan has experienced a rising tide of sectarian violence in recent years, particularly against Shias, who

**ISIS CLAIMS FIRST MAJOR ATTACK IN PAKISTAN**

make up around 20 percent of the country's predominantly Muslim population of 200 million.  
"According to the initial information which we have received from hospitals, 43 people have been killed and 13 wounded," Ghulam Haider Jamali, police chief of Sindh province told reporters.  
"Six terrorists came on three motorcycles, they entered the bus and began

firing indiscriminately. They used 9mm pistols," he said.  
Paramilitary Rangers conducted a series of targeted raids in Sohrab Goth and Safoora Goth neighbourhoods after the attack and arrested 18 suspects, the Rangers said in a statement, giving no further details.  
The killings were condemned by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who arrived in the city yesterday evening and chaired a high-level meeting involving the country's army chief General Raheel Sharif and other senior officials.  
General Sharif, meanwhile, cancelled a pre-scheduled trip to Sri Lanka.  
There have been concerns recently about the IS group tapping support in Pakistan, a country awash with dozens of militant groups.  
Leaflets backing ISIS jihadists have been seen over recent months in parts of northwest Pakistan and pro-ISIS slogans have appeared on walls in several cities, but Wednesday's claims are the first official ones to be made by

## Taliban kill 6 in Afghan mosque siege

AFP, Kandahar  
Two heavily armed Taliban gunmen stormed a mosque in southern Afghanistan yesterday, officials said, killing at least six people in a fight with security forces that lasted several hours and ended with their deaths.  
The incident took place in Lashkar Gah, the capital of the volatile poppy-rich province of Helmand, the latest attack in the militants' annual spring offensive that they have waged since being ousted from power in late 2001.  
Padsha Gul Bakhtyar, the province's deputy police chief said the attackers, who were disguised in police uniform, had arrived by motorcycle.  
He said at least two of the victims were members of the Ulema Council of Helmand, a top religious

## ISIS deputy leader 'killed in air strike'

BBC ONLINE  
The second-in-command of Islamic State (ISIS) has been killed in a US-led coalition air strike in northern Iraq, the Iraqi ministry of defence said yesterday.  
Abdul Rahman Mustafa Mohammed, also known as Abu Alaa al-Afari, was at a mosque near Tal Afar that was targeted, spokesman Brig-Gen Tahsin Ibrahim said.  
There was no immediate confirmation from the US military or on ISIS media.  
In recent weeks, there were unconfirmed reports that Afari had taken temporary charge of ISIS operations. Iraqi sources claimed IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had been incapacitated as a result of an air strike in Iraq in March.  
Gen Ibrahim told the BBC that Afari was killed alongside dozens of militants who he had been meeting at the al-Shuhada (Martyrs) mosque in the village of al-Ayadiya, near Tal Afar, where he was reportedly a well-known preacher.  
Tal Afar, in the northern province of Nineveh, was seized by ISIS in June 2014.  
The general did not specify which country carried out the air strike, but the US has been responsible for the vast majority since the coalition campaign began last August.  
The ministry of defence separately published video purportedly showing the strike.  
The Governor of Nineveh, Atheel al-Nujaifi, told the BBC in Washington that his contacts had confirmed Afari's death and that the air strike took place on Monday.

# Philippines factory fire kills dozens

### 28 confirmed dead; toll expected to rise

AFP, Manila  
At least 28 people were killed and dozens more feared dead after a fire tore through a factory producing flip-flops in the Philippine capital Manila yesterday, the city's fire marshal said.  
Firemen said they counted 28 bodies but were only able to retrieve three as the gutted building threatened to collapse after the blaze, which began before noon (0400 GMT), destroyed the building.  
"They were lying side by side, but all I could see were their bones," the Manila fire marshal, Senior Superintendent Sergio Soriano told AFP.  
Rex Gatchalian, mayor of the industrial suburb of Valenzuela where the blaze occurred, told AFP before the death toll was announced that 67 workers were unaccounted for.  
Factory guard Mervin Ardes, one of the survivors, told AFP "more than 50" people were at work at the time of the disaster.  
The fire sent a huge column of black smoke above the metropolis of 14 million people.  
"It happened so fast that few people were able to escape," he said, adding workers downstairs who were blocked by flames and smoke also fled upstairs where the bodies were later seen.  
Huge and sometimes deadly fires at sprawling slums as well as factories are a common occurrence in the Philippine capital, where fire safety regulations are sometimes wilfully disregarded.



## COUP IN BURUNDI

Demonstrators take part in a protest in Bujumbura, yesterday. A top Burundian general yesterday announced the overthrow of President Pierre Nkurunziza, following weeks of violent protests against the president's bid to stand for a third term. The president is in Tanzania for talks with regional leaders on ending the crisis which has killed more than 20 people.

# EU, UK clash over migrant plan

AFP, Brussels  
The European Union clashed with Britain yesterday as it launched a new plan to save thousands of migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean that includes controversial resettlement quotas for refugees.  
British interior minister Theresa May called for economic migrants to be sent back, saying the EU's policy of dealing with asylum claims of people rescued at sea encouraged more to risk their lives by attempting the journey.  
The EU plan's most controversial elements are a mandatory redistribution of asylum seekers across the 28-member bloc and the use of European military force against smugglers in Libyan waters.  
Britain, Ireland and Denmark have the ability to opt out of the plan, which comes amid an unprecedented wave of migrants fleeing conflict and poverty in North Africa and the Middle East.  
"I wonder how anyone could maintain that this could make the situation worse," European Commission First Vice President Frans Timmermans told a press conference in response to May's comments.  
"If we then do nothing, we make the situation worse for people in trouble and lose credibility in the eyes of our citizens who have demanded that we do something about the tragedies in the Mediterranean."  
Timmermans, the right-hand man to European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker, called on EU states to show "solidarity" with countries such as Italy, Greece and Malta, which bear the burden of most migrant arrivals.  
More than 5,000 migrants, many escaping civil war in Syria, have died over the past 18 months while trying to cross the Mediterranean, often on flimsy rubber dinghies or fishing boats.  
Writing in The Times newspaper, May confirmed that Britain would take no part in the Commission's quota plan and said the EU should be pushing back economic migrants.  
"I disagree with the suggestion by the EU's high representative, Federica Mogherini, that 'no migrants' intercepted at sea should be 'sent back against their will'," she wrote.  
"Such an approach would only act as an increased pull factor across the Mediterranean and encourage more people to put their lives at risk."  
May's comments also underscore the clashes to come between newly re-elected British Prime Minister David Cameron and his European partners as he pushes for reform on migration and other issues ahead of a referendum on Britain's EU membership.



## Ceasefire takes hold in Yemen

AFP, Sanaa  
Aid agencies began delivering help to desperate civilians yesterday as a temporary ceasefire took hold in Yemen after nearly seven weeks of Saudi-led air strikes against Iran-backed rebels.  
The five-day humanitarian pause -- which began at 11:00 pm (2000 GMT) on Tuesday -- is the first break in the air war in support of exiled President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi since its launch on March 26 and has strong backing from Washington.  
Saudi Arabia's King Salman also used the first day of the pause to announce the doubling of the kingdom's aid commitment to Yemen to some \$540 million.  
More than 1,500 people have been killed since the conflict began in March, according to UN.

# 'North Korea's defence chief executed for insubordination'

South Korea says he was killed with anti-aircraft fire  
AFP, Seoul  
North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un had his defence minister executed with anti-aircraft fire for insubordination and dozing off during a formal military rally, South Korean intelligence said yesterday, hinting at possible instability in the Pyongyang leadership.  
If confirmed, it marks another demonstration of Kim's ruthlessness in dealing with even the most senior officials suspected of disloyalty, following the execution of his uncle and one-time political mentor Jang Song-Thaek in 2013.  
It also points to possible power struggles within the top leadership, following Kim Jong-Un's decision to cancel a scheduled visit to Moscow last week in order to deal with "internal issues".  
Late last month, the South's National Intelligence Agency (NIS) reported that Kim had ordered the execution of 15 senior officials so far this year, including two vice ministers, for questioning his authority.  
In a briefing to a parliamentary committee yesterday, Han Ki-Beom, the deputy director of NIS, said hundreds of people witnessed the execution of defence minister Hyon Yong-Chol, which was believed to have been carried out around April 30 at a military academy in northern Pyongyang.  
Han told lawmakers that intelligence sources suggested Han was shot to pieces using an anti-aircraft gun firing 14.5mm calibre rounds.  
Such a violent method of execution has been cited in various unconfirmed reports as being reserved for senior officials who the leadership wishes to make examples of.  
Last month, the US-based Committee for Human Rights in Korea published an October-dated satellite image of the same academy that analysts said showed a shooting range with anti-aircraft guns lined up in what appeared to be preparation for an execution.

