

NEWS IN brief

Mother Teresa to be canonised in 2016

IANIS, Kochi
 Mother Teresa would be canonised in September 2016, senior priest and spokesperson of the Syro Malabar Church Paul Thelekat said yesterday. Pope John Paul-II beatified Mother Teresa on October 19, 2003. The Albanian-born Teresa turned a nun and was given Indian citizenship in 1948. She founded the Missionaries of Charity and worked for the welfare of poor and the downtrodden. Mother Teresa breathed her last on

BBC journo arrested over Qatar WC camps

AFP, Doha
 A BBC journalist invited to Qatar to examine the living conditions of workers building infrastructure for the 2022 football World Cup was detained for more than 24 hours, the broadcaster reported yesterday. Mark Lobel, a BBC business correspondent based in Dubai, said he and colleagues were detained in the capital Doha as they went to film a group of Nepalese



Drought: California paints lawns green

AFP, Escondido
 The heat is stifling, the soil dry as a bone, and a new law in drought-stricken California restricts sprinklers. But far from saying farewell to their beloved lawn, some Californians are coping with the drought by... painting it green. With a simple squeeze of a spray gun, dried-out yellow grass regains its lush green color before the eyes of its proud owners. It is a kind of make-over which is becoming increasingly common among homeowners in California, which is now in the fourth year of a

'White Widow' liable for 400 deaths

IANIS, London
 Britain's most wanted female terrorist, Samantha Lewthwaite, commonly known as the "White Widow" is believed to have killed 400 people and has directed terror raids, suicide attacks and car bombings in Somalia and Kenya, a media report said yesterday. According to official security reports, Lewthwaite, 32, and a mother of four, is believed to be responsible for last month's attack at a university in Kenya in which 148 people were killed.



Protestors raise their hands behind a barricade during a demonstration in the Musaga neighborhood of Bujumbura, yesterday. Burundi's president sacked his defence and foreign minister yesterday after a failed coup bid, as hundreds of protesters defied warnings to end demonstrations and resumed weeks of anti-government street marches.

YEMEN CRISIS Saudi strikes resume as truce expires

AFP, Sanaa
 Saudi-led coalition warplanes resumed strikes on rebel positions in southern Yemen yesterday after a five-day ceasefire expired, jeopardising efforts to deliver desperately needed aid. The humanitarian truce ended at 2000 GMT Sunday despite calls from a UN envoy and relief agencies for an extension. An hour later, air raids hit the rebel-held presidential palace in the main southern city Aden as well as a base of the pro-rebel special forces there, military officials and witnesses said. The coalition also targeted rebel positions in Aden's neighbourhoods of Tawahi and Khor Maksar, said the sources, without providing details on casualties. The Saudi-led regional coalition has waged an air war on the Iran-backed Shiite Huthis rebels and their allies since late March in an effort to restore the authority of exiled President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi. A Western diplomat in Riyadh said Saudi Arabia has accused the Huthis of using the ceasefire to position long-range artillery, rockets and other weapons close to its border. "They say this is a direct violation of the ceasefire agreement," the diplomat said. Yemeni political parties began talks Sunday in the Saudi capital but the Huthis are boycotting the three-day meeting, insisting the talks be held in Yemen. Several representatives of the General People's Congress party of ousted president Ali Abdullah Saleh, who is accused of backing the rebels, did take part. The United Nations has expressed deep concern about the civilian death toll from the Saudi-led bombing as well as the humanitarian impact of an air and sea blockade imposed by the coalition. It says more than 1,600 people have died in the conflict since late March.

Ramadi falls to militants

Iraqi Shia militias converge on the besieged Sunni city; 500 killed

AFP, Baghdad
 Shia militias converged on Ramadi yesterday in a bid to recapture it from jihadists who dealt the Iraqi government a stinging blow by overrunning the city in a deadly three-day blitz. The loss of the capital of Iraq's largest province was Baghdad's worst military setback since it started clawing back territory from the Islamic State group late last year. Days after a rare message from ISIS supreme Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi urging mass mobilisation, the group came close to also seizing one of Syria's most famed heritage sites, ancient Palmyra, but the army pinned it back. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi had been reluctant to deploy Shia militias to Anbar province for fear of alienating its overwhelmingly Sunni Arab population. He favoured developing locally recruited forces, a policy that had

strong US support. But militia commanders yesterday said that Ramadi's fall had shown that the government could not do without the Popular Mobilisation units (Hashed al-Shaabi). Various militias announced they had units already in Anbar - including around the cities of Fallujah and Habbaniyah - ready to close in on Ramadi and engage the

WAR ON ISIS

city's new masters. A spokesman for Ketaeb Hezbollah, one of the leading Shia paramilitary groups, said his organisation had units ready to join the Ramadi front from three directions. "Tomorrow, God willing, these reinforcements will continue towards Anbar and Ramadi and the start of operations to cleanse the areas recently captured by Daesh will be

announced," Jaafar al-Husseini told AFP, using an Arabic acronym for ISIS. Asad Ahl al-Haq, one of the groups that has most routinely been accused of abuses, said it was discussing the details of its deployment with the government. The fall of Ramadi, some 100 kilometres (60 miles) west of Baghdad, came when beleaguered security forces pulled out of their last bases on Sunday. The jihadists used several waves of suicide car bombs to thrust into government-controlled neighbourhoods on Thursday and Friday. The black flag of ISIS was soon flying over the provincial headquarters and, with reinforcements slow to come, thousands of families fled the city. Anbar officials said at least 500 people died in three days. Muhannad Haimour, adviser to the Anbar governor, said fighting was continuing in some pockets of the city. Iraqi military officials said all main security bases had been abandoned.

Texas biker gangs' gunfight kills 9

REUTERS, Texas
 Nine people were killed and 18 were injured on Sunday when a simmering feud among rival biker gangs boiled over at a sports bar in Waco, Texas, leading to a gun battle in the parking lot, police said. The clash took place outside the Twin Peaks Sports Bar and Grill at a shopping mall in the central Texas city, police said. Eighteen people were taken to area hospitals with injuries that included gunshots and stab wounds, said Waco Police Sgt. Patrick Swanton. The fight, which involved members of at least three gangs, erupted shortly after noon and quickly escalated into a brawl involving clubs, knives and chains, Swanton said. The fight may have been tied to a dispute over a parking spot, Swanton said. When the bikers began shooting, officers moved in, some of them also firing their weapons. When the shooting ended, bodies were scattered across two parking lots. "These are very dangerous, hostile biker gangs," Swanton told reporters. "A lot of innocent people could have been injured today." There would likely have been more casualties, Swanton said, but police were on the scene when the fight erupted, anticipating "issues" with what he called "criminal" gangs. All of the fatalities were bikers, and no officers were hurt.

Obama to curb cops' use of military gears

REUTERS, Washington
 President Barack Obama plans to put in place new restrictions on the use of military equipment by police departments, following unrest in US cities over the deaths of black men at the hands of police officers, the White House said yesterday. Obama will ban police use of equipment such as explosive-resistant vehicles with tracked wheels like those seen on army tanks, the White House said in a fact sheet. For other types of equipment, such as MRAP (mine-resistant ambush protected) vehicles and riot shields, departments will have to provide added justification for their use. Obama will announce the steps, which are the result of an executive order, during a visit later yesterday to Camden, New Jersey, where he plans to push efforts to encourage trust-building between police and the communities they serve. The recent turmoils in Ferguson and Baltimore highlighted divisions between black and white Americans. In a Reuters/Ipsos poll taken after the protests in Baltimore, 69 percent of respondents said America has a serious issue with race. Nearly three-quarters said there is more racism in the United States than the country is willing to admit. The Reuters/Ipsos poll is measured with a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 1.8 percentage points.



US Secretary of State John Kerry (C) holds up 8-month-old Andrew Belz as he poses for photos with the children of US troops and US Embassy personnel at Collier Field House at the Yongsan Garrison in Seoul, yesterday. Kerry yesterday said that the United States is discussing with China imposing further sanctions against North Korea as the reclusive country is "not even close" to taking steps to rein in its nuclear weapons program.



Renowned US daredevil dies in jump accident

AFP, Los Angeles
 A world-renowned extreme athlete died along with another man during a stunt at the Yosemite National Park in California, US media said Sunday. Tributes poured in from all over the globe for Dean Potter following his death on Saturday. The 43-year-old and fellow BASE jumper Graham Hunt, 29, died while attempting a wingsuit flight from the 7,500 ft (2,286m) Taft Point promontory in Yosemite National Park, a park spokesman said. Media said the pair had been attempting a wingsuit flight from Taft Point but smashed into a rocky outcrop when they tried to fly through a narrow gap in the mountains. On Potter's official Facebook page - where he describes himself as "artist, adventurer, athlete" - extreme sports enthusiasts from all over the world paid tribute to the man admired for his fearlessness and incredible courage. In an interview with The New York Times in 2008, Potter said: "Part of me says it's kind of crazy to think you can fly your human body."

Nepal appeals for \$2b to rebuild quake-hit country

Imposes temporary ban on all new constructions
 AFP, Kathmandu
 Nepal's prime minister has appealed for \$2 billion to rebuild his country, shattered by two massive earthquakes in three weeks that have killed thousands and devastated the impoverished nation's infrastructure. Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, whose year-old government has faced criticism over the speed of its response to the quakes, said Sunday that the administration has set up a national rehabilitation and reconstruction fund, and urged donors to help. Earlier this month the UN said it had received just \$22 million of the \$415 million it had appealed for following the disasters. On April 25 a 7.8-magnitude quake, the deadliest to hit the country in more than 80 years, killed more than 8,500 people and destroyed half a million homes, making it the most deadly natural disaster of the Himalayan country. That was followed weeks later by a second massive tremor that triggered landslides and brought down houses, triggering fresh misery for people still traumatised by the earlier quake. The disasters have also left their mark on the impoverished Himalayan nation's infrastructure and development. Meanwhile, Nepal yesterday imposed a temporary ban on all constructions of houses and buildings, including those which are already under construction or whose maps have been approved for construction before the recent earthquake.



EU approves naval mission against human traffickers

AFP, Brussels
 EU ministers yesterday said they would approve plans for an unprecedented naval mission to stop people smugglers as Nato warned that Islamic militants might be hiding among the flood of migrants crossing the Mediterranean. The ambitious operation starting in June will involve the deployment of warships and surveillance aircraft off the coast of Libya, the epicentre of the humanitarian disaster unfolding on Europe's southern shores. The European Union's military plan also includes the possible destruction of smugglers' boats in Libyan waters, although that will require a UN Security Council resolution to be in line with international law. Already 2015 is shaping up as the deadliest year for refugees crossing the Mediterranean, with more than 1,800 dying this year. In total more than 5,000 have died in the past 18 months. EU diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini said approval by the 28-nation bloc's foreign and defence ministers at a "very intense" meeting in Brussels would help push the United Nations into action. "I have seen no major political resistance" during recent talks at the UN, she said. Mogherini has insisted there is no question of EU "boots on the ground" in Libya, where political chaos and the rising threat of Islamic State militants make it the main launching point for people risking their lives in flimsy dinghies or overcrowded fishing boats. Pressure has grown on governments to act after an overcrowded migrant boat sank in the Mediterranean last month, leaving more than 750 dead in a case that sparked international outrage. But Nato head Jens Stoltenberg, also attending the meeting, yesterday warned that fighters from Islamic extremist groups could also be making the crossing, posing an additional security threat. Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain have already promised to deploy warships for the mission, a rare joint EU military venture. Rights groups have criticised the military option, saying it will not solve the problem of complex smuggling networks and of a huge number of people fleeing war and poverty. Andrew Stroehlein of Human Rights Watch said it was "utter madness". The naval operation is part of a wider EU blueprint launched last week which envisaged sharing the migrant burden more evenly among member states and increased cooperation with source countries to help stem the tide of people seeking a better life in Europe.

MIGRANT CRISIS IN EUROPE