

NEWS IN brief

Five UN peacekeepers killed in northern Mali

AFP, Bamako

Militants killed five United Nations soldiers from Burkina Faso yesterday in Mali's restive northern desert, sources from the organisation's peacekeeping mission told AFP. Another source within the mission said nine peacekeepers were wounded in the attack. The UN says 35 peacekeepers have been killed in combat since MINUSMA's inception in 2013, not including Thursday's attack, making northern Mali the deadliest theatre on earth for its personnel.

Al-Qaida's Pak head killed in security raid

PTI, Lahore

The head of Al-Qaeda's Pakistan wing has been killed in a raid by counter-terrorism commandos earlier this week near Lahore, foiling their plot to attack the offices of a spy agency, Punjab home minister said on Wednesday. The deceased Al-Qaeda head has been identified as Abdali who hails from Muridke, Punjab home minister colonel (R) Shuja Khanzada told a press conference here.

India reinstates Khobragade

TNN, New Delhi

India's ministry of external affairs (MEA) has reinstated Devyani Khobragade and made her director of the important States division. But with a US arrest warrant still pending against her, the 1999 IFS officer has not been able to travel abroad. Khobragade's detention and strip-search in USA over an allegation that she under paid a domestic aid had triggered a major breach in US-India ties last year.

5 more aftershocks recorded in Nepal

PTI, Kathmandu

Five mild aftershocks have been recorded in Nepal in the last two days as the country was still reeling under the impact of the deadly temblor that struck two months ago and claimed nearly 9,000 lives. In total 335 numbers of aftershocks with 4 or more magnitude have been so far recorded.

Turkey restricts social media in schools

AFP, Istanbul

Turkey has restricted students from posting pictures and opinions about school life on Facebook, Twitter and other social media, local media said yesterday. The changes, put forward by the Education Ministry, took effect after being published in the Official Gazette on July 1, Dogan news agency said. Violators will face disciplinary action including possible expulsion.

'English Schindler' dies

Tributes pour in for Nicholas Winton who saved hundreds of Jewish children from Nazis during WWII

AFP, London

Nicholas Winton, a Briton who saved hundreds of Jewish children in Prague from the Nazis in the run-up to World War II, has died at the age of 106, his family said on Wednesday.

Son-in-law Stephen Watson said Winton died peacefully in his sleep at Wexham Hospital in Slough, west of London.

Born in London of German-Jewish parents, Winton travelled to Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia -- which split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993 -- as a young employee of the London Stock Exchange.

It was there that he organised trains that transported 669 children, most of them Jews, to Britain in 1939, saving them from concentration camps and near-certain death.

An additional train was set to leave on September 3, 1939, the day Britain declared war on Germany, but the

India 'won't announce' emissions peak year

BBC ONLINE

India will not announce a target year for its carbon emissions to peak, its environment minister tells the BBC.

Prakash Javadekar said that Delhi would submit plans to cut emissions to the UN, but would not announce a target date for when it expected its total carbon emissions to drop.

His comments came two days after China told the United Nations that its emissions would peak around 2030.

India is the world's third largest carbon emitter, after China and the US.

Scientists say global emissions need to peak and drop soon if the world is to avoid catastrophic climate change.

"The world is not expecting... India to announce its peaking year," said Prakash Javadekar, in an exclusive interview with the BBC.

The peaking year is when a country's emissions reach the highest level before they begin to drop.

Beijing went public with its peak year when it submitted its climate plan to the United Nations climate convention. The US has pledged to cut its carbon emissions by 26-28% by 2025.

All 190 plus countries in the convention have been asked to submit their climate plans - known as Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) - in the UN negotiations. Over 40 countries have submitted them and many eyes are now on India.

The INDCs will give a rough idea of cuts in carbon emissions globally and indicate whether they will be enough to limit the temperature rise to a 2C threshold.

Experts say India's position is key if a climate change deal is to be signed in Paris later this year.

AFP, Vienna

Foreign ministers from major powers returned to tough Iran talks yesterday warning that a breakthrough was not yet in sight, as the UN atomic watchdog head met Iran's president in Tehran.

"I don't think we are at any kind of breakthrough moment yet," British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said as he arrived in the Austrian capital for a sixth day of intense negotiations ahead of the new July 7 deadline.

But Hammond stressed: "The work goes on. You're going to see over the next few days ministers coming and ministers going to maintain the momentum of these discussions."

The P5+1 powers -- the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany -- are seeking to finalise a long-sought accord which will put a nuclear bomb beyond Iran's reach, in return for lifting biting sanctions against the Islamic republic.

It would end a 13-year standoff over Iran's suspect nuclear programme, and draw the curtain on almost two years of intense negotiations which resumed in earnest

after President Hassan Rouhani came to power in August 2013.

"It is clear that we are not there yet. There are small and big obstacles, and we are working on removing these," said German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

"Whether everyone's will and

"We have confidence that finally the parties concerned will arrive at a fair, balanced and just agreement... I think there is high possibility" of a deal, Wang said through an interpreter.

Iran rejects allegations that it has been seeking to develop nuclear arms, and has resisted moves to give the

IRAN NUCLEAR TALKS



courage will be enough at the end of the day is a question that we can't answer yet."

"Some issues have progressed, others not yet," added French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi was more upbeat, saying all sides "need to make positive efforts".

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) unparalleled access to sensitive military sites to verify its claims.

The visit of IAEA head Yukiya Amano to Tehran yesterday, at Iran's invitation, is aimed at jump-starting a stalled probe.

"Any deal which ensures the pursuit and progress of the peaceful

nuclear industry as well as the unconditional lifting of the unjust and illegal sanctions will be seen as positive," said the chairman of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Ali Shamkhani, after meeting Amano.

Late yesterday Tehran time Amano went into a meeting with Rouhani, Iranian television reported.

Asked by journalists waiting outside the elegant Coburg Palace where the talks are being held if he was confident of a deal, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif replied from the balcony of his room: "I have to be hopeful."

He also denied reports he was returning to Tehran again for further guidance, saying: "No I am here."

"We are working very, very hard and we have some very difficult issues," US Secretary of State John Kerry said Wednesday, a day after the deadline for a deal was effectively extended to July 7.

Tough issues include the pace and timing of sanctions relief, the mechanism for their "snapback" -- reimposing sanctions swiftly if Tehran violates the deal -- and Iran's future development of faster nuclear equipment.



A Pakistani army helicopter takes part in a rescue operation after train compartments fell into a canal in Wazirabad in the Punjab province yesterday. At least 8 people were killed when the train carrying soldiers and military hardware fell into the canal, following the partial collapse of a bridge, officials said.

PHOTO: AFP

Google tags black couple as gorillas, apologizes

AFP, San Francisco

Google apologized after an identification program in its new photo app put a "gorillas" label on a picture of a black couple.

"We're appalled and genuinely sorry that this happened," a Google representative said late in an email to AFP. "We are taking immediate action to prevent this type of result from appearing."

Google apologized and went to work fixing the problem earlier in the week after the offensive blunder was pointed out in a Twitter message from @JackyAlcine.

"Google Photos, y'all (messed) up," Jacky Alcine said in a series of emphatic messages.

"My friend's not a gorilla." Google engineer Yonatan Zunger put the blame for the labeling on the artificial intelligence software designed to let machines learn how to recognize places, people and objects in pictures.

Google and Facebook are among Silicon Valley technology giants investing heavily in artificial intelligence to get machines to think more like the way people do.



Gorillas

Afghan appeal court spares blasphemy mob killers

AFP, Kabul

An Afghan appeal court has overturned death sentences given to four men for the mob killing in March of a woman falsely accused of blasphemy in Kabul, a judge said yesterday.

The woman, Farkhunda, 27, was savagely beaten and her body set ablaze in broad daylight, triggering protests around the country and drawing global attention to the treatment of Afghan women.

Police arrested 49 people in connection with the attack, including 19 police officers, some of whom were shown standing by doing nothing to stop the lynching in cellphone videos recorded by bystanders.

In May a court sentenced four men to

death and eight others were handed 16-year jail terms after a three-day trial broadcast live on national television.

The appeal was heard behind closed doors and reportedly reached a verdict on Wednesday, according to local media.

Farkhunda's brother Mujibullah told AFP the family had not been told of the court's decision or invited to the session.

Eleven Afghan policemen were also sentenced in May to one year in prison for failing to protect Farkhunda from the angry mob.

Farkhunda was attacked on the banks of the Kabul River after an amulet seller, whom she had reportedly castigated for peddling superstition, falsely accused her of burning a copy of the Quran.

WAR CRIMES TRIAL IN CAMBODIA Khmer Rouge leaders begin appeal hearings

AFP, Phnom Penh

Two former Khmer Rouge leaders yesterday began appeal hearings against landmark convictions for crimes against humanity last year which saw them handed life sentences by Cambodia's UN-backed court.

"Brother Number Two" Nuon Chea, 88, and ex-head of state Khieu Samphan, 83, were the first top leaders to be jailed from a regime responsible for the deaths of up to two million Cambodians from 1975-1979.

"Brother Number One" Pol Pot who led the brutal regime died in 1998 without ever facing justice.

But their lawyers quickly appealed, accusing the court of a string of errors and the judges of failing to remain impartial due to their personal experiences under the communist regime.

The pair sat in court yesterday when Nuon Chea's lawyers called upon their first witness, as 300 people watched the proceedings from the public gallery.

Sao Van, formerly a local Khmer Rouge chief, described a different picture of life under the communist rulers who dismantled modern society in their quest for an agrarian utopia and wiped out nearly a quarter of Cambodia's population through starvation or execution at forced labour camps.

He claimed that by 1977 there were sufficient food rations for everyone in his sub-district in southern Kandal province as the regime established "collective cooperation and communal dining".

"There was no instruction for the cadre to starve people. In fact, it was on the contrary. If any cadre failed to resolve livelihood issues in their area then they were subject to disciplinary action," the 74-year-old said.

Nuon Chea, wearing his trademark sunglasses, left the room during questioning to watch the hearing remotely from a holding cell, with his lawyers saying he had back pain.

The tribunal, known as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), is a complex hybrid court on the outskirts of Phnom Penh combining elements of international and domestic law.

It was set up following an agreement between Cambodia and the UN to prosecute senior Khmer Rouge leaders "most responsible" for the regime's crimes with both Cambodian and international judges.

There are four Cambodian judges and three international judges in the Supreme Court Chamber of the ECCC where the appeal is being heard. In order to reach a judgement, at least five out of seven judges must vote in accord.

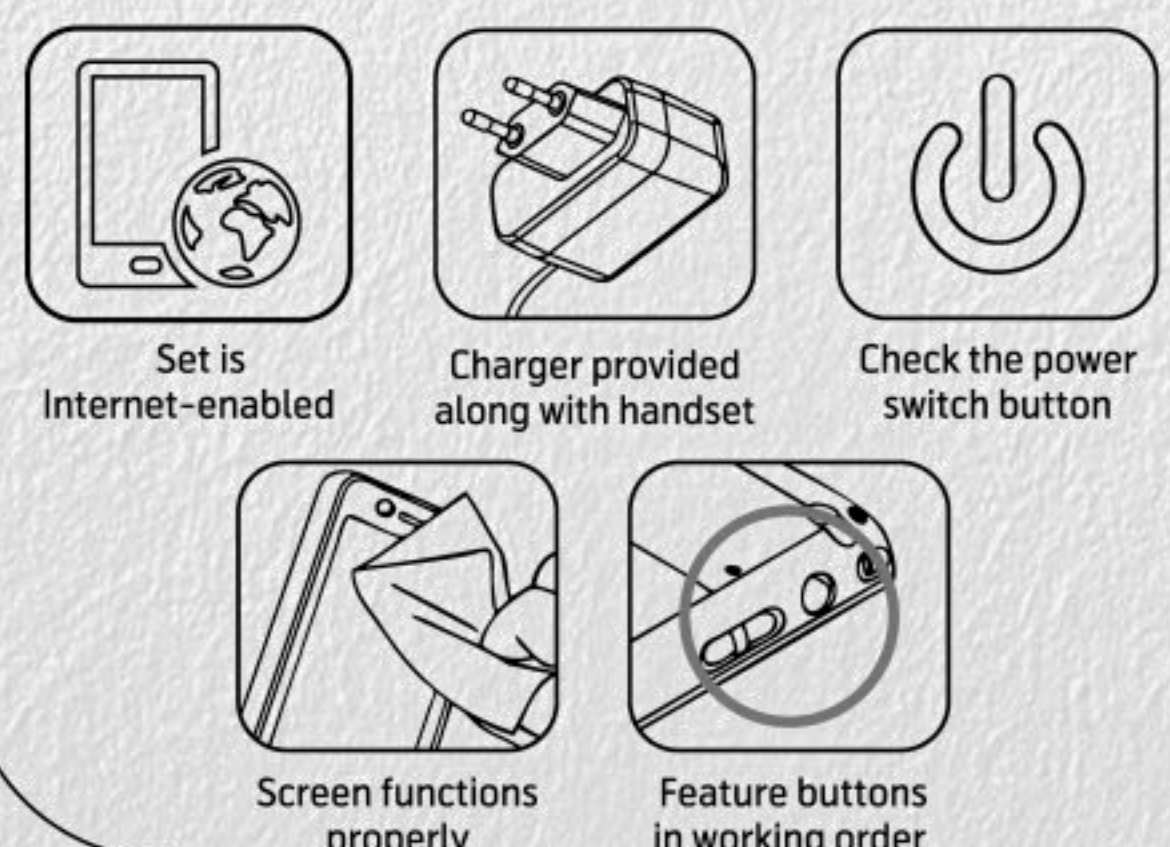


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Graphics Designer Shahin from Chapainawabganj now earns income in dollars by selling logos in a freelance website. Beauty, who is a receptionist in a government office, is not sitting idle either. In her free time, she sells three-piece kameez sets online through Facebook. Milton from Dhaka now got a break in his career by uploading his CV on LinkedIn.

There's also another side to this too! Meena is stuck in her path to success simply because she does not own an Internet enabled phone. Full of energy, excitement and ambition, tales of her skilled handwork and craftsmanship are renowned throughout the village. Once, a few foreigners touring through the village saw Meena's crafts and were amazed by her skill and the intricately fine details of her handicrafts! There are many such Meenas spread throughout the country. Only one Internet-enabled handset will help fulfill their dreams in a far more powerful way.

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