

# ISIS Destroys History

The ISIS militant group has released a series of images purporting to show the destruction of the ancient Baalshamin Temple in Palmyra, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Images posted online and shared by ISIS-affiliated social media accounts showed fighters lining the 2,000-year-old monument with explosives. Explosives can be seen wired together both inside and outside the structure of the building, which experts said was one of the best-preserved and most completely intact examples of Greco-Roman architecture at the ancient site. Other pictures appeared to show the moment of the detonation, followed by the rubble left behind.

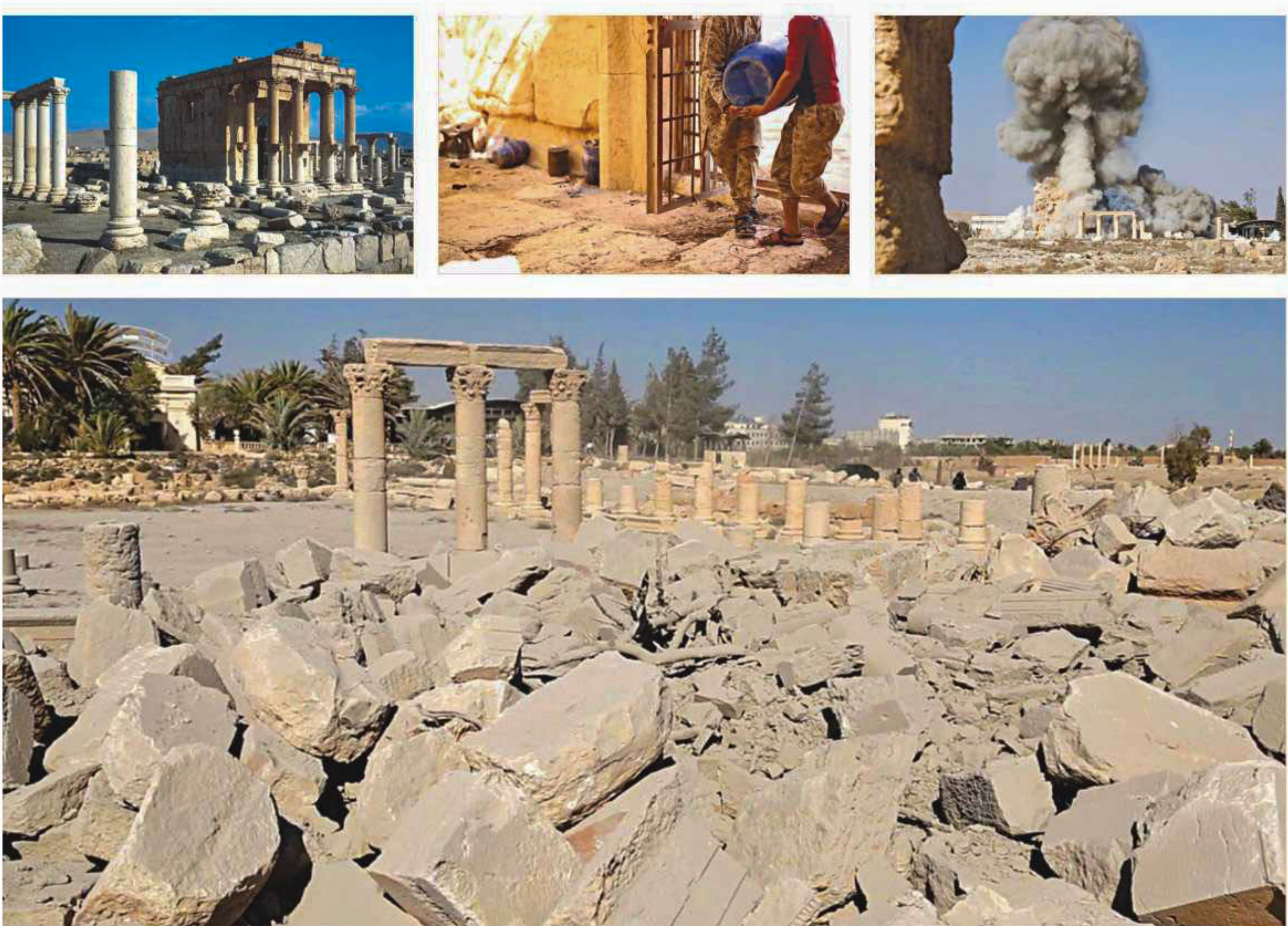
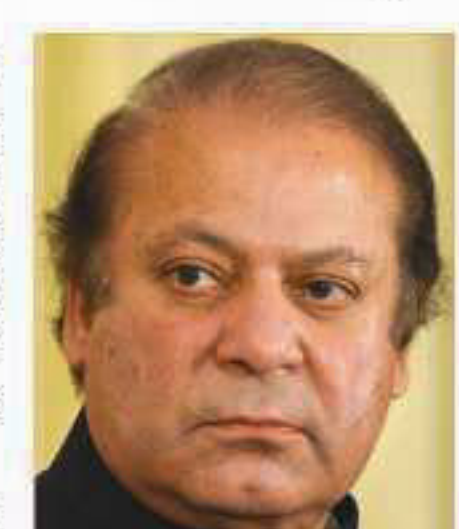


PHOTO: AFP

# Any talks sans J&K will be futile: Pak PM

Two days after a scheduled meeting between the national security advisers of Pakistan and India was called off, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said any dialogue between the two countries without the Kashmir dispute figuring will be pointless. "Any dialogue sans Kashmir issue will be futile," said Sharif in a cabinet meeting in Islamabad. Kashmiri leaders are an important party to this issue. Any decision on their future cannot be made without their opinion and consultation, Radio Pakistan cited Sharif as saying. His remarks came after adviser on foreign affairs Sartaj Aziz briefed the cabinet on the deadlock in the dialogue with India. Pakistan high commission in New Delhi had invited Hurriyat leaders for a reception on August 23 and Sartaj Aziz had planned to separately meet Hurriyat Conference leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, before his scheduled talks with Indian counterpart Ajit Doval. India had objected to this. Meanwhile, a junior commissioned officer (ICO) of Indian army was killed yesterday in cross-LoC firing by Pakistani troops in Kupwara district of Kashmir. The latest incident came a few days after Pakistan called off the NSA talks with India during which the issue of terrorism was to be discussed as per the understanding reached in Ufa, Russia, between Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Nawaz Sharif. In Ufa, the two countries had also agreed that heads of border guards — BSF and Pakistan Rangers — would meet soon to discuss how to bring peace on the border. There is still uncertainty on this meeting.



# PROTEST OVER NEW CONSTITUTION One killed as clashes erupt in Nepal

Nepal police shot dead a protester as fresh clashes erupted in the country's southern plains yesterday, a day after an 18-month-old boy and seven officers died during demonstrations against a new constitution. Monday's violence in Tikapur prompted the government to deploy troops in the town overnight, while the country's human rights watchdog sent a team to monitor the situation. In the latest clashes, police fired into a crowd of about 150 demonstrators who were throwing stones at security personnel in the town of Gaur in Rautahat district, 100 kilometres south of Kathmandu, a local official said. "Police were forced to use tear gas and fire (shots), a protester was hit and he died on the way to hospital," district chief, Madan Bhujel, told AFP. Further west, hundreds of demonstrators vandalised buildings in Tikapur, defying an indefinite curfew imposed on Monday after protesters attacked police with spears, axes and knives. "Small clashes have occurred today with a few groups defying the curfew," said Dhan Bahadur Kathayat, deputy superintendent of Tikapur police. "They torched a couple of houses, but our teams have put out the fires," Kathayat told AFP.

# Saudi Arabia executes a person every 2 days: Amnesty

Saudi Arabia has executed at least 175 people in the past year, at a rate of one every two days, according to a report by Amnesty International. The kingdom killed 102 convicted criminals in the first six months of 2015 alone, putting it on course to beat its 1995 record number for the calendar year of 192. Those killed included children under the age of 18 at the time of the offence, and disabled people. Amnesty, which alongside the AFP news agency keeps a record of the number of people the Saudi government kills, said the execution rate suddenly surged in August last year and continued to rise under the new King Salman from January.

# 'Worst migrant crisis'

UN expert urges European leaders to do more as thousands hit its border

Record numbers of refugees are streaming into EU member Hungary from Serbia, posing a new headache for regional leaders at a summit this week set to be dominated by Europe's worst migrant crisis since World War II. Almost 2,100 people, the highest ever daily total, crossed the border near the Hungarian town of Roszke on Monday, police said, just days before Hungary completes a vast razor-wire barrier to keep out migrants. They were part of around 7,000 refugees whose hazardous journey to the European Union had been temporarily blocked last week when Macedonia declared a state of emergency and shut its borders for three days to halt the huge influx of people mostly fleeing war in Syria. Authorities reopened the crossing after chaotic scenes involving police lobbying stunned grandees at the migrants trying to break through the border. "We were stopped in Macedonia

for two days, the riots were terrible, police used guns and teargas, I saw an old woman beaten, her money and papers taken," said a 29-year-old IT engineer from Mosul in Iraq who said he had left his home to escape the Islamic State group. He asked not to be named.



The UN's refugee agency said yesterday it expected the number of refugees moving through Macedonia to double from around 1,500 per day to 3,000 per day, many of them women and children. It warned that the situation was also worsening on the shores of Greece and Italy, where the number of

Mediterranean sea crossings was now approaching 300,000. Since the beginning of the year, more than 2,370 have drowned in the Mediterranean, already exceeding the death toll for the whole of 2014, according to the International Organization for Migration. The UN called on Europe to "establish a human-rights based, coherent and comprehensive migration policy", as the bloc struggled to find a response to the unprecedented numbers of refugees arriving -- from the thousands landing on the shores of Greece and Italy to the hundreds risking their lives to climb onto trucks to travel from France to Britain. "Let's not pretend that what the EU and its member states are doing is working," said the UN's special rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Francois Crepeau. He called for "opening up the regular labour markets through smart visas" to be issued to migrants.

# NEWS IN brief

- South Sudan president 'to sign peace deal'**  
AFP, Juba  
South Sudan's President Salva Kiir has finally agreed to sign a peace deal and power-sharing accord to end a 20-month civil war, his spokesman said yesterday. South Sudan's rebel leader Riek Machar, a former vice president, signed the deal last Monday, in line with a deadline to do so. Both sides in the conflict have been facing the threat on international sanctions if they refuse.
- Singapore sets snap polls on Sept 11**  
AFP, Singapore  
Singapore will hold a snap general election on September 11, officials said yesterday as Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong seeks a new mandate from voters worried over immigration and the high cost of living. The ruling People's Action Party (PAP), which has ruled for more than 50 years, is expected to keep its overwhelming majority in parliament against a fragmented opposition.
- Turkey to hold snap polls on November 1**  
AFP, Ankara  
Turkey will go to the polls on November 1 in snap elections after the failure of coalition talks, the top election body ruled yesterday, as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan tasked Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu to form a caretaker government. Erdogan on Monday called the early election saying no option left to solve the political deadlock.
- US to deploy F-22 jets in Europe**  
AFP, Washington  
The United States soon will deploy F-22 Raptors in Europe, sending the stealth fighter jets to reassure NATO partners concerned about Russia's actions in Ukraine, a Pentagon official has said. The F-22 was designed for air-to-air combat - attacking other warplanes - but also is capable of ground attacks.
- ISIS using toy cars to launch attacks!**  
PTI, London  
Islamic State terrorists are using computer game inspired remote-controlled toy cars for launching bomb attacks on front lines, according to a media report. Kurdish soldiers fighting the dreaded terror group in Syria and Iraq came across one of the cars, inspired by computer game Call Of Duty, after it failed to detonate, The Mirror reported. However, several others have exploded, killing and injuring enemy forces.



# Suu Kyi eyes poll majority

"Says 'concerned' about vote fraud" AFP, Naypyidaw  
Aung San Suu Kyi said yesterday she was confident her opposition party would win Myanmar's landmark elections if they are free and fair, but raised concern at the country's overall progress towards democracy. The Nobel Peace Prize winner told AFP in an interview she expects her National League for Democracy will secure a majority in November. It will be the first nationwide poll the NLD has contested for 25 years in a country strait-jacketed for almost half a century under army rule. The party won by a landslide in 1990 but was barred by the military from taking power. Asked if she was confident of winning a dominant share of seats Suu Kyi replied: "If the elections are free and fair, of course." But the veteran campaigner said she was also "very concerned" about irregularities in the run-up to the polls, stressing that the long-cloistered country still has a long way to go before it can be called democratic. Suu Kyi also raised concerns over election fraud, with particular fears about "using religion for political purposes" as the Buddhist-majority nation grapples with the increasing influence of radical nationalist monks. Suu Kyi, who turned 70 this year, confirmed to AFP that the NLD would reveal its presidential candidate only after the polls.

# TENSION IN KOREAN PENINSULA South stops propaganda broadcasts after deal

South Korea switched off loudspeakers blasting propaganda messages into North Korea after the two rivals reached a compromise deal and stepped back from the brink of an armed clash. The giant banks of speakers, which had lain silent for more than a decade, were drafted back into action two weeks ago after Seoul blamed Pyongyang for landmine blasts that maimed two patrolling South Korean soldiers. The South demanded an apology, while the North denied any involvement and threatened to attack the propaganda units as cross-border military tensions soared. With the situation pushed to the brink of conflict, the two sides secured an agreement yesterday morning on ending the crisis after more than 40 hours of intense day-night negotiations. North Korea "expressed regret" for the mine blasts and the South turned off the loudspeakers at midday yesterday.

South Korea's defence ministry said troops would remain on high alert until it confirmed that the North had stepped down from a "semi-war state" ordered by leader Kim Jong-Un. Technically, the two Koreas have been at war for the past 65 years since the 1950-53 Korean War ended with a ceasefire that was never ratified by a formal peace treaty. The latest crisis saw a rapid escalation in military movements, with South Korean and US fighter jets flying simulated bombing sorties and North Korea reportedly deploying dozens of submarines and doubling artillery units at the border.



The International Committee of the Red Cross said yesterday it had suspended its operations in Yemen's war-ravaged second city Aden after gunmen stormed its office.

# Air strikes, fighting kill 40 in Yemen

Red Cross suspends activity in Aden AFP, Aden  
At least 40 people have been killed in more than 24 hours of Saudi-led coalition air strikes and fighting in Yemen's central province of Baida, military sources said yesterday. The fighting and air raids in Mukayris, a town seen as a gateway to southern provinces recently recaptured by pro-government forces, left 19 rebels, 15 loyalists and six civilians dead. Coalition strikes against rebel positions in Baida continued yesterday as the fighting raged. The International Committee of the Red Cross said yesterday it had suspended its operations in Yemen's war-ravaged second city Aden after gunmen stormed its office.

# UN decries Nasheed's jailing, urges release

Says move a setback for rights AFP, Geneva  
The return to prison of former Maldives president Mohamed Nasheed is a setback for human rights in the country, the UN said yesterday, calling on the island nation's government to consider his early release. Just a month after Nasheed's 13-year prison sentence was commuted to house arrest, he was taken back to jail on Sunday night, as police used force and pepper spray on the ex-president's supporters gathered outside his home, the UN rights office (OHCHR) said. "The return of Mr Nasheed to prison in our view constitutes a serious setback to the human rights situation as well as to moves towards finding a political solution in the Maldives," OHCHR spokesman Rupert Colville told journalists. The OHCHR "has therefore urged the government to consider former President Nasheed's early release," Colville added. Nasheed, who was elected president in 2008 and served until he was toppled in 2012, was sentenced in March after a conviction under tough anti-terror laws, in a widely-criticised trial that the UN, United States and others said was deeply flawed.



# 75,000 apply for jobs fetching tea in India

AFP, New Delhi  
Overwhelmed Indian officials have cancelled plans to fill a handful of menial government jobs after being flooded with 75,000 applications -- some from university graduates. The Chhattisgarh state government's directorate of economics and statistics was left stunned after the wave of applications for 30 "peon" or servant jobs whose duties include fetching tea for 14,000 rupees (\$220) a month in wages. Directorate head Amitabh Panda said he has cancelled an exam planned for candidates after receiving 70,000 online applications and 5,000 in person, including from qualified engineers and management graduates. "This is surreal," Panda told AFP yesterday, saying the entire process was being reexamined. "We had made arrangements for 2,000 to 3,000 aspirants," he said. India's vast bureaucracies, a legacy of British colonial rule, are seen as an extremely secure place of employment compared with the private sector. Government jobs, even the lowest ones, are highly sought after, with regular reports of candidates paying thousands of rupees in bribes to try to clinch one. India's unemployment rate was 3.6 percent in 2013, according to the World Bank. But underemployment remains a critical issue in a country where 23 percent of the population lives on \$1.25 a day.

# Child bomber kills six in Nigeria

AFP, Kano  
A child bomber killed six people yesterday outside a bus station in the heartland of the Boko Haram Islamist insurgency in northeastern Nigeria. Witnesses reported seeing a "young girl" approaching the station in the Yobe state capital Damaturu around 7:00am and refusing to be searched by security guards at the gate before blowing herself up. "A private taxi... drove out of the park. As soon as the car came close, she detonated the explosives. Six people in the car were killed. She was also killed," bystander Sani Dankamasho told AFP. Reports said the bomber was aged around 12.

# Obama caught between Clinton, Biden ambitions

AP, Washington  
President Barack Obama is caught between the White House aspirations of two of his closest advisers: Vice President Joe Biden and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. For months, White House officials expected Clinton to be the Democratic nominee in the 2016 election. Some of Obama's top political advisers moved to New York to run her campaign and Obama appeared to give his tacit approval, saying she would be an "excellent president." But that bet on Clinton suddenly looks less certain. With Biden weighing his own presidential run more seriously amid signs of weakness in Clinton's campaign, the White House faces the prospect of a family feud over who will become heir to Obama's legacy. "Certainly he's got something at stake here," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Monday of Obama's interest in the 2016 election. In picking between Biden and Clinton, Obama would be making a choice between two of the most influential members of his administration. Of course, what's at stake for Obama in the 2016 election is more than just his personal relationships with Clinton and Biden. Much of his legacy is contingent on a Democratic president maintaining his policies on immigration, health care and climate change, as well as the nuclear agreement with Iran.

