

NEWSIN brief

Indonesia plane missing in Sulawesi

AFP, Jakarta  
An Indonesian passenger plane carrying 10 people lost contact with air traffic control during a flight in Sulawesi island of Indonesia yesterday, officials said. The head of Indonesia's search and rescue agency confirmed an Aviatar Twin Otter DHC-6 aircraft lost contact shortly after taking off from the remote Masamba airport in North Luwu to the provincial capital Makassar at 2:29 pm.

UK teen jailed for Anzac Day terror plot

AFP, London  
Britain's youngest person convicted of terrorism was sentenced yesterday to a minimum of five years in jail for plotting an Islamic State-inspired "massacre" on an Anzac Day parade in Australia. The boy, nicknamed "the terrorist" by his classmates, was only 14 when he masterminded the plot to behead police officers at a memorial event in Melbourne, from his bedroom in Lancashire, northern England.

Aussie PM challenged over asylum policy

BBC ONLINE  
Australia's new PM Malcolm Turnbull is facing fresh calls to shut down offshore migrant detention centres. Australian of the Year and domestic violence campaigner Rosie Batty said on Thursday the "unsafe" camps must close. Nearly 450 staff at Turnbull's former university have also expressed concern about claims of torture by government employees and contractors.

Nigerian city attacked by girl bombers

BBC ONLINE  
Five young girls were behind a series of deadly explosions in the north-eastern Nigerian city of Maiduguri on Thursday evening, security sources say. Fourteen people, including the girls, died and 39 were injured in the attacks at a mosque and house of vigilante leader, the military said. More than 100 people died in similar attacks in the city two weeks ago.

Israelis shot dead in West Bank

AFP, Beit Furik  
Hundreds of Israeli troops searched the West Bank yesterday for the suspected Palestinian killers of a Jewish settler couple shot in front of their young children, the army said. As the manhunt was under way, numerous attacks on Palestinians were reported in the occupied West Bank, as tensions remained high between them and Israelis.



A woman leads a prayer-circle during a candlelight vigil in Roseburg, Oregon late on Thursday for ten people killed and seven others wounded in a shooting at a community college in the western US state of Oregon.

Who was Oregon college gunman?

MIRROR.CO.UK  
Oregon college shooter Chris Harper Mercer was British-born who appears to have become obsessed with the Nazis and the IRA.  
The 26-year-old also appeared to have an unhealthy fascination with US school killings and Virginia TV shootings gunman Vester Lee Flanagan before he carried out yesterday's massacre at Umpqua Community College.  
Harper Mercer was later killed in a shootout with police. The killer is reported to have been born in England, but moved to the US as a young child - according to reports in America.  
He lived with his mum Laurel Harper, a nurse practitioner, who appears to have moved to Oregon from California with her son in 2013.  
His dad Ian Mercer, has told reporters outside his home he is 'as surprised as anyone' that his son carried out the killings.  
But social media accounts appearing to belong to the mass murderer show a man fascinated with Nazism and the IRA.  
On his Myspace account he shared pro-IRA posters and newspaper front pages and a video showing IRA fighters holding guns and wearing balaclavas.  
A dating profile belonging to Harper Mercer on website Spiritual Passions is listed under the username Ironcross45 - a reference to the German military medal associate with the Nazis.



Chris Harper Mercer

OREGON SHOOTING  
Gunman singled out Christians

Says college victim; Angry Obama blasts US gun politics

AFP, Roseburg  
A visibly angry President Barack Obama has made an impassioned plea for gun control after a shooting at an Oregon college left 10 dead and seven wounded, saying such tragedies had become "routine".  
In the close-knit community of Roseburg, large crowds turned out for a candlelight vigil for the victims of Thursday's killing spree at Umpqua Community College, which ended with the assailant dying during a shoot-out with police.  
"Somehow this has become routine," Obama said of the attack, as he blasted Congress for its failure to act in the face of such killings.  
"We've become numb to this... It cannot be this easy for somebody who wants to inflict harm on other people to get his or her hands on a gun."  
"Prayers are not enough," the stony-faced



president said. "We can actually do something about it, but we're going to have to change our laws."  
One man whose daughter was wounded told CNN that the gunman ordered students to identify themselves if they were Christian and then shot them.  
"They would stand up and he said 'Good, because you're a Christian, you're going to see God in just about one second'," Stacy Boylan told CNN, relaying his daughter Ana's account.  
He said his daughter, who survived by playing dead, told him the shooter burst into the classroom and first shot the professor point blank.  
The gunman -- identified by US media as 26-year-old Chris Harper Mercer -- opened fire in a classroom, then moved to other rooms, methodically gunning down his victims.

MYANMAR POLLS  
Suu Kyi courts minority vote in Kachin

AFP, Winemaw  
Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday told voters in war-torn Kachin state that her opposition party represents the "whole" of Myanmar and not just the majority ethnic group, as she courts the crucial minority vote ahead of November's landmark polls.  
"The NLD does not represent any one ethnic group, including the (majority) Bamar ethnic group. We represent the whole union," she told voters in the former junta-run nation.  
"If you want change, please vote for the NLD," she urged the crowd.  
Kachin has become a key election battleground as ethnic parties are expected to make strong gains in the November 8 polls.

Taliban hold out in northern Afghan city

Claims shooting down US military plane in Jalalabad  
REUTERS, Kabul  
Taliban fighters were holding out against Afghan troops in Kunduz yesterday, a day after government forces recaptured most of the northern city that had fallen to the militants in their biggest victory of a 14-year insurgency.  
In Jalalabad in the east of the country, a US military transport plane crashed at an airfield just after midnight, killing all 11 people on board, the US military said.  
The Taliban said it had shot down the aircraft, but the US military, which still has several thousands troops in Afghanistan after Nato's combat mission ended, said there were no reports of enemy fire and described the crash as an accident.  
In Badakhshan province in Afghanistan's northeast, the Taliban took control of Warduj district late on Thursday after heavy fighting, according to Nawid Forotan, a spokesman for the provincial governor.  
Residents in Kunduz, a strategic city of 300,000 that fell to the Taliban in a stunning pre-dawn attack on Monday, said that while most Taliban fighters had fled, some were holed up in civilian homes fighting the army.  
Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said yesterday they had taken control of Kunduz, a claim denied by the Afghan government.  
"We have beaten up the enemy forces," Mujahid said.



Merkel tipped for 2015 Nobel Peace Prize

AFP, Stockholm  
Speculation mounted yesterday that Angela Merkel could scoop this year's Nobel Peace Prize for her leadership during Europe's migrant crisis after she was being tipped by one of Germany's leading newspapers and experts in Norway.  
Ahead of the Nobel prize season beginning on Monday, Germany's influential Bild newspaper said Merkel, 61, had "a good chance" of winning, in part over her open-door policy on refugees fleeing war and persecution.  
"Reasons: her actions in the Ukraine crisis and the refugee policies," the German daily said. A total of 276 nominations have been submitted for this year's peace prize -- two short of the record 278 last year.  
The Norwegian Nobel Institute never discloses the list, leaving amateurs and experts to resort to a guessing game ahead of the October 9 announcement.  
But Kristian Berg Harpviken, director of the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), is one of a few experts who has the audacity to make a bet. And according to him "Angela Merkel will get the Peace Prize," he told reporters in Oslo on Thursday.  
In his annual shortlist of possible winners, she is followed by the Colombian government and FARC rebels for their peace process, and Putin-critical Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta for its perseverance in independent reporting.

India rejects Pak PM's peace proposal

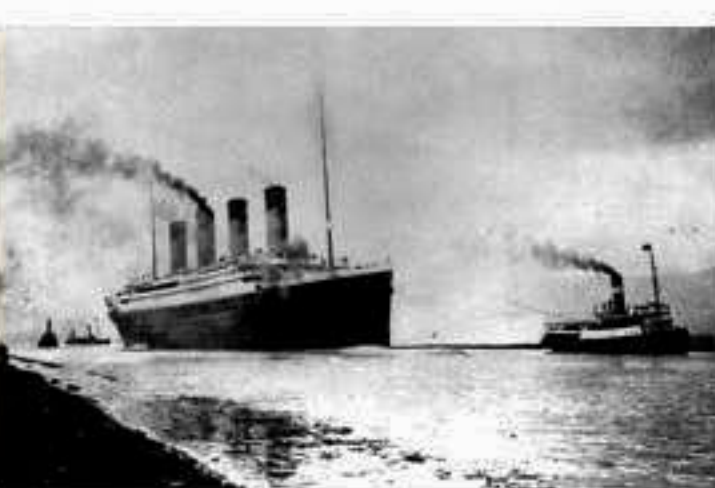
THE HINDU ONLINE  
India on Thursday rejected Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's four-point peace proposal, with External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj telling the UN General Assembly (UNGA) that Pakistan must "give up terrorism" if it wanted to improve ties.  
"Instead of four proposals, we need only one point: that Pakistan end support to terror groups," Swaraj said.  
On Wednesday, Sharif had told the UNGA that Pakistan had tried to reach out to India, and proposed formalising the ceasefire, demilitarising Kashmir and the Siachen Glacier, and agreeing to end the use of force.  
Responding to Sharif, Swaraj said India wanted to go ahead with talks, but in an atmosphere free from terror and violence. For this, she said, India wanted National Security Advisor-level talks on "all issues related to terrorism", followed by a meeting of Directors General of Military Operations of the two countries. "If the response is serious and credible, India is prepared to address all outstanding issues through bilateral dialogue."  
Addressing the UNGA in Hindi, Swaraj called on the world to unite on the challenge of terror, saying that the UN must pass the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the current 70th year of the world body.  
Taking another swipe at Pakistan, she said the world should oppose all countries which "finance, train, and support terror groups".



Men stand along a crater caused by what activists said was a Russian air strike in Latamneh city on Wednesday, in the northern countryside of Hama, Syria yesterday. STORY ON PAGE 16

Titanic's last lunch menu sells for £58,000

MAIL ONLINE  
The Titanic's last lunch menu, saved by a first-class passenger who climbed aboard a lifeboat whose crew was said to have been bribed to row away instead of rescue more people, has been sold at a US auction.  
The online New York auctioneer Lion Heart Autographs offered the menu, which sold for £58,166 and two other previously unknown artefacts from Lifeboat 1.  
Abraham Lincoln Salomon was among a handful of first-class passengers who boarded the lifeboat, dubbed the Money Boat or Millionaire's Boat by the press because of unfounded rumours one of them bribed seven crew members to quickly row the boat away from the sinking ocean liner.  
The menu, which lists corned beef, dumplings and other savoury items, is signed on the back in pencil by another first-class passenger, Isaac Gerald Frauenthal, who escaped on another lifeboat. It is believed the two men lunched together that fateful day in 1912.  
Salomon also took away a printed ticket from the Titanic's opulent Turkish baths, which recorded a person's weight when seated in a specially designed upholstered lounge chair.  
The ticket bears the names of three of the five other first-class passengers with him on Lifeboat 1. One of four weighing chair tickets known to exist, it sold for £7,270.



India vows ambitious green targets

AFP, New Delhi  
India set out a series of ambitious environmental targets yesterday including reducing its carbon intensity by 35 percent by 2030, but rejected calls to curb coal use, saying developed countries were mostly to blame for climate change.  
In an action plan submitted to the UN ahead of a major environmental conference in Paris, India also pledged to generate 40 percent of its electricity from renewable sources within 15 years.  
"We are confident we will achieve the 35 percent (target) by 2030," Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said, adding that "it is a huge jump for India, therefore it is a very ambitious target".

UKRAINE CRISIS  
Nato launches biggest military exercise

AFP, Brussels  
Nato launches its biggest military exercise since 2002 today, putting 36,000 alliance soldiers through their paces in Italy, Spain and Portugal to boost preparedness against the backdrop of the Ukraine crisis.  
"Trident Juncture" runs from Saturday through to November 6 and involves personnel from more than 30 countries, the Nato Allied Joint Force Command centre based in the Dutch city of Brunsum says on its website.  
The exercise will also involve Canada, Norway, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, together with operations in the Atlantic and Mediterranean.  
"Trident Juncture 2015 will demonstrate Nato's new increased level of ambition in joint modern warfare and will showcase a capable, forward-leading alliance equipped with the appropriate capability and capacity to meet present and future security challenges," the command centre said.  
The long-planned exercise has taken on a new significance after Russia's annexation of Crimea last year and its support of pro-Moscow rebels in eastern Ukraine.  
In response, Nato has rotated forces through newer east European members such as the Baltic states and Poland who fear Russia wants to restore its influence over the Cold War-era satellites.

Process to form new govt begins in Nepal

PM Sushil Koirala will ask the president to choose his successor  
AFP, Kathmandu  
Nepali Prime Minister Sushil Koirala yesterday said he would ask the president to begin the process of choosing his successor and forming the next government, following the country's adoption of a new constitution last month.  
"According to my public commitment and the present provisions of the constitution... I will ask the respected president to take forward the constitutional process to choose the new prime minister," Koirala told parliament.  
Koirala had pledged to step down after the constitution -- Nepal's first to be drawn up by elected representatives -- was adopted on September 20.  
It marked the final stage in a peace process that began when Maoist rebels laid down their arms in 2006 after a decade-long insurgency.  
The charter was meant to end years of inequality and cement peace but bitter disputes over its provisions have sparked deadly protests and a blockade of a key trade route by demonstrators that has forced nationwide fuel rationing.  
More than 40 people have been killed in clashes between police and protesters representing ethnic minorities who say a new federal structure laid out in the constitution will leave them under-represented in the national parliament.  
"I call on (protesting parties) to sit for dialogue and talks and solve the disagreements," Koirala said.  
He said the cabinet had agreed to suggest amendments to a key constitutional provision criticised by protesters, in a bid to bring them on board.

