

NEWS IN brief

Air strikes, fighting

kill 24 Yemen rebels

AFP, Aden

At least 24 rebels were killed yesterday in Saudi-led coalition air strikes and attacks by pro-government forces in Yemen's south, military sources said. Around 5,000 people have been killed in the conflict since March, more than half of them civilians, according to UN

UN appoints new refugee boss

AFP, United Nations

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday announced the appointment of Italian diplomat Filippo Grandi as the new UN refugee chief, tasked with handling the world's worst refugee crisis. The 58-year-old diplomat will replace Antonio Guterres, of Portugal, who was UN High Commissioner for Refugees since 2005, a UN statement said. He will take charge on January 1.



Woman who was raped '43,200 times'

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A woman who became coerced into Mexico's lucrative human trafficking industry has spoken out about her torment at the hands of the country's ruthless organized crime rings. Karla Jacinto believes she has been raped around 43,200 times after being forced to sleep with at least 30 men every day for 4 years, CNN reports. At 12, she recalls being targeted by a trafficker who lured her away from home and forced her into the trade. There are an estimated 20,000 trafficking victims in Mexico every

'25 dead' in Boko Haram raid in Niger

REUTERS, Niamey

Around 25 people were killed on Wednesday in a Boko Haram attack on a village in southern Niger and subsequent clashes between the Islamist militants and the army. Niger military officials said. Fighters from the Nigerian militant group killed five civilians in their initial attack on the village located in the West African nation's Bosso district. Niger soldiers drove back the militants, killing around 20 of them, officers said.



Heavy smoke billows during an operation by Iraqi Kurdish forces backed by US-led strikes in the northern Iraqi town of Sinjar yesterday, to retake the town from the Islamic State group and cut a key supply line to Syria.

PHOTO: AFP

IS hits Hezbollah bastion in Beirut

41 killed, more than 180 hurt

AFP, Beirut

At least 41 people have been killed and more than 180 wounded after twin suicide bombings claimed by Islamic State militants rocked a stronghold of Lebanon's Shia Hezbollah movement in south Beirut, officials said.

Police said two men on foot set off suicide vests in front of a shopping centre in Burj al-Barajneh, in the southern suburbs of the capital, where the movement is popular.

The Islamic State group claimed a twin bomb blast, in a statement posted online. The claim, which followed the usual format of IS official statements, said the first blast was caused by explosives planted on a motorbike, after which a suicide bomber set off an explosive belt.

Earlier, the Red Cross said 37 people had been killed and 181 wounded in the blasts, which happened around 6:00 pm.

An AFP photographer saw extensive damage to buildings around the site of the blast and bodies inside some of the nearby shops.

There was blood on the streets, and security forces were trying to cordon off the scene and keep people from gathering.

The blast is the first to target Beirut's southern suburbs since June 2014, when a suicide car bomb killed a security officer who had tried to stop the bomber.

But prior to that, a string of attacks targeted Hezbollah strongholds throughout the country. The groups claimed the attacks were in revenge for Hezbollah's decision to send thousands of fighters into neighbouring Syria to support President Bashar al-Assad.



Kurds launch Sinjar offensive against IS

APP, Mount Sinjar

Iraqi Kurdish forces backed by US-led strikes blocked a key Islamic State group supply line with Syria Thursday as they battled to retake the town of Sinjar from the jihadists.

A permanent cut in the supply line would hamper IS's ability to move fighters and supplies between northern Iraq and Syria, two countries where the jihadists hold significant territory and have declared a "caliphate".

And retaking Sinjar -- where IS carried out a brutal campaign of killings, enslavement and rape against the Yazidi minority -- would also be an important symbolic victory.

Kurdish "peshmerga" units successfully established blocking positions along Highway 47 and began clearing Sinjar, the US-led coalition against IS said in a statement, referring to the main route linking the jihadists' Iraqi hub of Mosul to Syria. And the autonomous Kurdish region's security council (KRSC) also said the highway had been cut, and that multiple villages near Sinjar were retaken.

"The attack began at 7:00 am (0400 GMT), and the peshmerga forces advanced on several axes to liberate the centre of the Sinjar district," Major General Ezzeddine Saadun told AFP.

Huge columns of smoke rose over Sinjar as coalition strikes and Kurdish shelling targeted IS positions in the town.

Up to 7,500 Kurdish fighters are to take part in the operation, which aims to retake Sinjar "and establish a significant buffer zone



to protect the (town) and its inhabitants from incoming artillery," the KRSC said.

"Coalition warplanes will provide close air support to peshmerga forces throughout the operation," it said.

The coalition carried out 24 strikes in the Sinjar area on Wednesday and eight more across the border in Syria's Al-Hol area.

Kurdish forces face an estimated 300 to 400 jihadists in the town, Captain Chance McCraw, a US military intelligence officer, told journalists in Baghdad.

But it is not just the jihadist fighters they will have to contend with. IS has had more than a year to build up networks of bombs, berms and other obstacles in Sinjar.

"This is part of the isolation of Mosul," the largest city in northern Iraq. Colonel Steve Warren, spokesman for the international operation against IS, said of the battle for Sinjar.

"Sinjar sits astride Highway 47, which is a key and critical resupply route" for IS, Warren said in Baghdad.

"By seizing Sinjar, we'll be able to cut that line of communication, which we believe will constrict (IS's) ability to resupply themselves, and is a critical first step in the eventual liberation of Mosul."

The fact that the Sinjar operation comes at the same time as others against IS in Iraq and Syria also increases pressure on the group.

In conjunction with the Sinjar operation, fighters from the Syrian Democratic Forces group are battling IS across the border in the Al-Hol area.

IS overran the Sinjar area in August 2014,

No climate accord if deal is not binding

Warns France after US says Paris deal would not include legally-binding commitments

AFP, Paris

France and the United States appeared to clash yesterday over the legal status of a global pact to be agreed in Paris in December to stave off dangerous climate change.

"If there is not a binding accord, there will not be an accord," French President Francois Hollande said in Malta while attending a European Union-Africa summit.

A day earlier US Secretary of State John Kerry made it clear the United States would not



sign a deal in which countries were legally obliged to cut greenhouse-gas emissions.

The Paris agreement, he told the Financial Times, was "definitively not going to be a treaty... They're not going to be legally binding reduction targets like Kyoto or something."

The 1997 Kyoto Protocol -- which Washington signed in 1998 but never ratified -- committed rich nations to limiting emissions, backed by tough compliance provisions.

Defining the exact legal status of the Paris

Europe cracks down on 'jihadist network'

BBC ONLINE

Police have targeted 17 people in raids in several European countries connected to a suspected "jihadist network".

Six suspects were detained in Italy, four in Britain, and three in Norway. Police believe some of the suspects may have travelled to Syria or Iraq.

Italy's Ansa news agency said the suspects were accused of international terrorism association.

The network was allegedly plotting to free its leader, Mullah Krekar, who is already in prison in Norway.

Krekar, born Najm Faraj Ahmad, and two others were arrested in Norway as part of the operation, on suspicion of plotting attacks in Norway and other European countries, according to Italian police.

They face extradition to Italy.

Krekar, the Iraqi Kurdish founder of the radical Islamic group, Ansar al-Islam, has served several jail sentences in recent years, including for praising the killing of staff at the French satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo.

The overarching goal of the Paris negotiations, which run to December 11, is to frame a deal to prevent Earth from warming by more than two degrees Celsius over pre-industrial levels.

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Reference of Amendment: APSCL/MD/Project-400 MW (East)/2015/3686 ; Dated: 12/11/2015

Subject : Amendment of Expression of Interest (EOI) for Project Implementation Consultancy Services of Ashuganj 400MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (East), APSCL, Ashuganj, Brahmanbaria, Bangladesh.

Reference of EOI Enquiry: APSCL/MD/Project-400 MW (East)/2015/3194; Dated: 03/10/2015

Amendment No.-2

Sl. No. of EOI	Existing as	Amended As
4.	<p>The consulting firm(s) should have demonstrated experience in design, engineering, approval of drawing, supervision of construction, installation, testing and commissioning of 300MW or higher capacity Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant (CCGT) units and the EOI should be submitted in 5 (five) copies including the following particulars,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Name ----- particulars. b. General ----- firm/lead firm. c. Specific ----- Plant. d. When ----- submitted. e. Names ----- profiles. f. Actual ----- years. g. Availability ----- skills. h. Tables ----- etc. i. List ----- years j. The ----- etc. 	<p>The EPC Contractor will be selected by using the ADB's Two Stage Bidding Document. The consulting firm(s) preferably should have experience in Project Implementation Consultancy Services (Review of engineering, supervision of construction, installation, testing and commissioning) for Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant (CCGT) and the EOI should be submitted with the following particulars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Name ----- particulars. b. General ----- firm/lead firm. c. Specific ----- Plant. d. When ----- submitted. e. Names ----- profiles. f. Deleted. g. Deleted. h. Deleted. i. List ----- years. j. The ----- Experience, etc.).

All the other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

12/10/2015
Md. Anwar Hossain
Project Director
Ashuganj 400 MW CCPP (East) Project
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Why Suu Kyi plans to be 'above president'

AP, Yangon

Coming from a politician who has spent her career fighting military rule, the statements seem rather authoritarian: "I'll be above the president," who (the president) "will be told exactly what he can do."

Some observers are dismayed by her willingness to place herself above not just the president but the law. Others say she's obeying the will of the people and subverting a military-dictated constitutional clause intended to lock her out of power.

No problem, Suu Kyi said at a news conference shortly before the election. She did not explain what she meant at the time, and may have been reacting to speculation that an estranged reformist leader of the ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party, House Speaker Shwe Mann, might cut a deal to serve as president in an NLD government. Such a prospect would have been dismaying to many of her followers, since Shwe Mann was a senior figure in the previous military government that Suu Kyi fought so hard against.

Two days after the election, as early returns pointed to a sweeping NLD victory, Suu Kyi responded to a question about being "above the President" in an interview with the BBC. "Well, I'll make all the decisions, it's as simple as all that," she said.

Pushed further in an interview that same day with Singapore's Channel NewsAsia, she seemed even more dismissive of political etiquette, saying that the president picked by her party would "have to understand this perfectly well, that he will have no authority. That he will act in accordance with the positions of the party."

It all sounded high-handed at best, especially to her many admirers outside Myanmar, formerly known as Burma. Was she now unwilling to respect the law and the norms of democracy, and act instead in a way that reeked of backroom politicking? But the concept of a proxy leader is not really that rare.

Thailand's Yingluck Shinawatra, ousted as prime minister by a military coup last year, was widely seen as fronting for her brother Thaksin Shinawatra. And though Indonesian President Joko Widodo has a considerable personal following of his own, he is ultimately beholden to Megawati Sukarnoputri, leader of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, a former president and daughter of the country's founding father, Sukarno.

Many observers agree that Suu Kyi is mousetrapped by the constitution, but some worry about the implications of her effort to work around it.

More sympathetic is Kelley Currie, senior fellow at the Project 2049 Institute, a democracy promotion organisation. She said Suu Kyi's comments on the presidency may sound awkward to Westerners, but they were bearing out what she made clear on the campaign trail that when people vote for the NLD, they are getting her leadership.

Suu Kyi's statements also revive longstanding questions about her leadership style, which some find heavy-handed.

Michael Buehler, a lecturer in Southeast Asian politics at the University of London, speculates that there is a bit of bluster in Suu Kyi's statements, bearing in mind that the military remains the ultimate power broker in the country. The constitution that blocks Suu Kyi from the presidency also enshrines much of the military's authority.

"She is either very naive, or deliberately downplays her relative weakness in the post-election political ecology of Myanmar. No political decision will be made without the military, and frankly, no policy will actually be successful



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