

NEWSIN
brief

Ban Ki-moon not
visiting N Korea: UN

AFP, United Nations

UN chief Ban Ki-moon has no plans to visit North Korea in the coming days, the United Nations said Tuesday, dispelling reports that he would meet with the nation's diplomatically reclusive leader Kim Jong-Un. South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported Monday that Ban would visit Pyongyang in his official capacity later this week, though no precise dates were given.

Security forces kill
17 in Xinjiang

REUTERS, Beijing

Chinese security forces in the restive far western region of Xinjiang have killed 17 people, including women and children, accused of involvement in an attack at a coal mine that left at least 50 dead, US-based Radio Free Asia said yesterday. Hundreds of people have died in unrest in Xinjiang, home to the mostly Muslim Uighur people, and other parts of China over the past three years or so. China blames the violence on Islamist militants.

Wildfires kill 4 in
Western Australia

AFP, Sydney

Four people have died in one of a series of wildfires sparked by lightning in Western Australia, police said yesterday, a deadly start to the country's summer bushfire season. Western Australia police said the deaths occurred in the North Cascade fire near Esperance, in the state's southwest, where some 300,000 hectares have been burned. The blaze is one of three major fires burning in the state since Sunday.

'Hottest October
ever recorded'

AFP, Miami

Last month was the hottest October in modern history and the first 10 months of the year have also set new records for worldwide warmth, US government scientists said yesterday. October marked the sixth month in a row that heat records were shattered across the planet. The latest data means that 2015 is firmly on pace for being the most scorching since 1880, as global warming concerns mount ahead of key climate talks in Paris starting later this

Obama ups ante on
China at Apec

BBC ONLINE

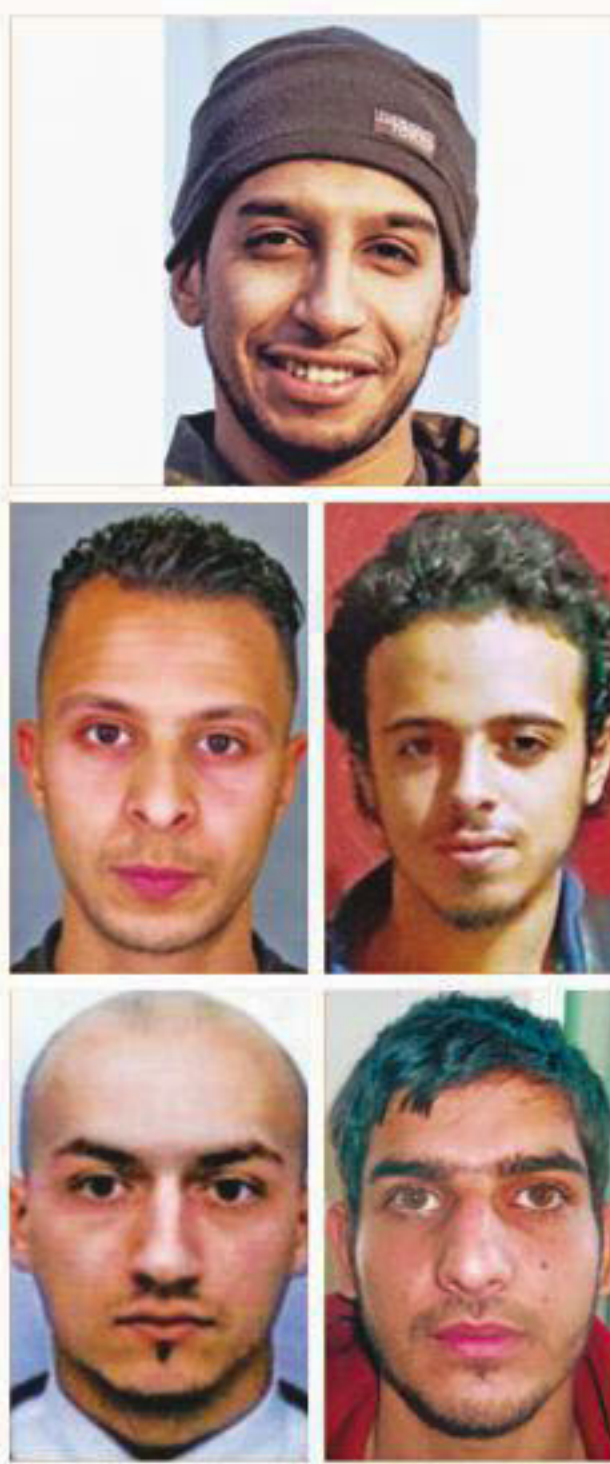
US President Barack Obama yesterday put a firm focus on the South China Sea dispute, as an economic summit of Asia-Pacific nations begins in Manila. Obama said China must stop land reclamation in the disputed waters, a day after committing monetary and naval assistance to the Philippines, which has competing claims with



AFTERMATH OF PARIS CARNAGE

(From top left, anti-clockwise) French aircraft carrier Charles-de-Gaulle leaves the southern French port of Toulon yesterday on its way to eastern Mediterranean to boost operations in Syria as Paris intensifies a bombing campaign against the Islamic State group there; a man is evacuated after being arrested by policemen in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis city center; and a combination of photos shows the suspected mastermind of the November 13, 2015 Paris attacks, 28-year-old Belgian IS group's leading militant Abdelhamid Abaaoud (Top), French Bilal Hadfi (bottom L) one of the suicide bombers who blew himself outside the Stade de France stadium, Samy Amimour (center R), one of the suicide bombers who attacked a Paris concert hall, suspect at large French Salah Abdeslam (center L), and an unidentified man (bottom R), whose passport was found at one of the carnage sites, suspected of being involved in the attacks. (Story on page 16)

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS



IS again
kills
foreign
hostages

AFP, Beirut

The Islamic State jihadist group yesterday said it has killed a Chinese and a Norwegian hostage, two months after it had demanded a ransom for the pair's release.

The group's English-language Dabiq magazine featured graphic photos of what appeared to be the bloodied bodies of Chinese hostage Fan Jinghui and Norwegian Ole-Johan Grimsgaard-Ofstad.

The bodies were pictured adjacent to photos of the blindfolded captives apparently taken just before their execution-style killings.

A stamp-like caption overlaid on the full-page photo read, "Executed after being abandoned by the kafir (disbeliever) nations and organisations." It was unclear how they were killed, but their heads were bloodied by apparent gunshot wounds.

The Norwegian prime minister's office said the photos "seem to show that the hostage Ole-Johan Grimsgaard-Ofstad was executed. We are still verifying it."

It was the 12th edition of IS's publication, one of many branches of the jihadist organisation's multilingual media machine.

The magazine's cover photo featured what appeared to be French aid workers at the scene of Friday's bomb and gun attacks in Paris that killed 129 people and were claimed by IS.

The caption read "Just Terror".

In 2014, IS declared a self-styled "caliphate" across territory in Iraq and Syria where it imposes its extreme interpretation of Islamic law.

It has used its magazine and other media arms to publicise its gruesome murders, including the beheadings of American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, Japanese

70 YEARS AFTER NUREMBERG TRIALS

Germany tries to
right old wrongs

AFP, Berlin

Seventy years after the trials of top Nazis began in Nuremberg, Germany is racing against time to prosecute the last Third Reich criminals to make up for decades of neglect.

The cases aim to bring to justice "even the most minimal participant" in the crimes under Hitler, but also to "allow the last survivors to speak", historian Werner Renz told AFP.

The approach is intended to serve "judicial, pedagogical and social" purposes in a nation still working to atone for past atrocities.

Around a dozen investigations are currently under way against former SS officers, just months after the so-called "Bookkeeper of Auschwitz" Oskar Groening was sentenced to four years in jail as an accessory to murder in 300,000 cases in which Hungarian Jews were sent to the gas chambers between May and July 1944.

A 91-year-old woman and two men, aged 92 and 93, who worked at Auschwitz could still face trial next year for their alleged part in exterminating Jews.

"It is too late for those who actually took the decisions, so we have to stretch the notion of guilt to a ridiculous point to try the lackeys," renowned French Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld complained before the Groening trial.

Taken as a whole, however, the record is damning: looking only at Auschwitz, where 1.1 million people died, fewer than 50 of the 6,500 SS officers who worked there and survived the war were ever convicted.

The late German writer and Holocaust survivor Ralph Giordano called it his country's "second guilt".

"First of all, it is a political failure. Then it is a failure of the justice system," said Renz, who argues that the refusal of post-war West Germany to integrate the concept of "crimes against humanity" into its laws left the courts with "inadequate instruments" to hear cases on Nazi atrocities.

The Nuremberg trials, beginning on November 20, 1945 and presided over by judges from the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain and France, established a new legal precedent by prosecuting war crimes suspects in a proper court of law, each with a lawyer, in full view of the world.

The court passed down death sentences on 12



'IS can be defeated in months'

Russia tells West to drop Assad's departure demand if they want unity

AGENCIES

The head of intelligence and security in Iraqi Kurdistan yesterday said he hopes last Friday's attacks in Paris will act as a wake-up call to Western powers.

Masrour Barzani told the BBC that the Islamic State group (IS) could be defeated within months if the world community became fully engaged.

He was speaking after Kurdish forces drove IS out of the strategic Iraqi town of Sinjar. IS still controls large areas of Syria and Iraq.

Speaking at a command headquarters near the Sinjar front, Barzani told the BBC's Jim Muir that despite setbacks, IS had not been significantly weakened.

And he said he hoped that the attacks in Paris, in which 129 people died, would be a game changer, spurring Western powers to become

more involved in fighting the militants.

But the difference between United states and Russia remains despite talks between Barack Obama and Vladimir Putin by the sidelines of G20 summit in Turkey.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov yesterday said the West had to drop its demands about the political

WAR ON TERROR

exit of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad if it wanted a genuinely international coalition against Islamic State militants.

Lavrov, who said there was still no agreement about Assad's political fate after international talks in Vienna, said he had detected a change in the West's position since the Paris attacks and the bombing of

a Russian passenger plane.

Russia, which views Syria as its closest Middle East ally, has long been at odds with the West over Assad's future with Moscow saying only the Syrian people should decide if he steps down. The United States and others want Assad to step aside during or at the end of a transition period.

Earlier, US President Barack Obama said that Russia had to shift its focus from propping up Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and concentrate on the war against Islamic State.

Meanwhile, Turkey and the United States yesterday said they will intensify operations aimed at flushing Islamic State militants from a strip of northern Syria's border with Turkey in the coming days.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said on Tuesday his country would start an



Anup Chetia waves to the media outside a court in Guwahati, India, yesterday. Chetia, the founder of militant separatist group United Liberation Front of Asom (Ulf), was remanded for five days yesterday and one Ulf leader who met him in court said he will 'certainly cooperate' with a peace process aimed at to stop a long running insurgency in the region that killed thousands.

PHOTO: AFP

Two Saudi cops
shot dead in
kingdom's east

AFP, Riyadh

Two Saudi policemen were shot dead yesterday when they came under fire in the kingdom's east, where most of the minority Shia community live, the interior ministry said.

The pre-dawn attack happened near a farm in the Saihat area of Qatif, on the Gulf coast.

A ministry spokesman said the suspect or suspects in the "terrorist crime" had not immediately been identified.

Hussein al-Nemr, who lives in the area, said the early morning shooting happened near a highway checkpoint.

It is the latest incident in Eastern Province as police continue to hunt suspects on a list of 23 wanted people issued in 2011 after Shias began protests.

Shias in the Sunni-dominated kingdom have complained of marginalisation.

Last week, two Indian passersby and a policeman were wounded when officers came under fire from a farming area in Qatif.

Many suspects on the wanted list have already been detained or killed in shootouts.

In early October, gunfire erupted in the Shia town of Awamiya, near the Gulf coast city of Dammam, after police sealed it off with armoured vehicles.

Police seized a large amount of ammunition during a search of a farming area there, the interior ministry said.

Over the past year, Saudi Shias have been targeted by suicide bombings and shootings claimed by Sunni extremists of the Islamic State group, who consider them heretics.

In the latest attack, a gunman killed five Shias in Saihat last month during commemorations of Ashura, one of the holiest observances of their faith.

Obama hits out at 'hysteria'

AFP, Washington

President Barack Obama slammed US "hysteria" about the security risks posed by Syrian refugees Tuesday as Republicans took steps aimed at freezing White House programs to resettle them in the wake of the Paris attacks.

In an unusually fierce rebuke, Obama struck out at his political foes, accusing them of demonizing "widows and orphans."

The discovery of a Syrian passport near the body of one assailant in the Paris attacks that killed 129 people last Friday has stirred fears among US lawmakers and governors that jihadists are seeking to blend in with refugee masses in order to strike later.

"We are not well served when in response to a terrorist attack we descend into fear and panic," Obama said.

"We don't make good decisions if it's based on hysteria or an exaggeration of risks," he added, speaking from Manila.

His comments came as House Speaker Paul Ryan called for a "pause" in the Syrian resettlement scheme,

joining more than half of state governors urging Obama to suspend the program and fully review the vetting process to ensure that would-be attackers do not slip into the country as refugees.

REFUGEE ROW IN US



"Our nation has always been welcoming but we cannot let terrorists take advantage of our compassion," Ryan told reporters. "This is a moment where it's better to be safe than to be sorry."

Some Democrats shared similar views including senior Senator Chuck Schumer.

Republican leaders and House committee chairs appeared to be coalescing around draft legislation

that would freeze the program for Syrian as well as Iraqi refugees.

Should the legislation pass it could be a major roadblock for Obama's program aimed at taking in up to 10,000 Syrian refugees in fiscal year 2016.

Another bill, by presidential hopeful Senator Ted Cruz, reportedly would ban all Syrian Muslims from resettling in the United States.

Obama, in his remarks, defended the refugee policy, insisting that screening was sufficiently stringent, and would weed out jihadists.

"They are subjected to the most rigorous process conceivable," he said of the refugees.

The issue has become a political football in the race for the White House. Several Republican candidates including Donald Trump and Ben Carson have announced their strong opposition to the refugee program.

The top Democrat in the race, former secretary of state Hillary Clinton, lashed out at suggestions from Cruz and Jeb Bush that aid be prioritized for Christian refugees over Muslims.

"The idea that we'd turn away

Iran has begun
dismantling
nuke facilities

Says UN watchdog

AFP, Vienna

Iran has begun dismantling parts of its nuclear programme, as agreed under July's landmark deal with major powers, a UN atomic watchdog report showed yesterday.

Iran "has started removing centrifuges and related infrastructure" at both the Natanz and Fordo enrichment facilities, said a restricted quarterly report, seen by AFP.

Under the July 14 deal that ended a potentially dangerous decade-long standoff, Iran agreed to reduce two-thirds of its nuclear centrifuges.

In return, the six major powers -- the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany -- have agreed to lift sanctions imposed on the Islamic republic.

Blast at market in
Nigeria kills 32

Facebook activates 'Safety Check'

AFP, Yola

A blast struck a market in the northeastern Nigerian city of Yola on Tuesday evening, killing 32 people and wounding 80 others, both the Red Cross and National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said.

The explosion occurred at a fruit and vegetable market beside a main road in the Jimeta area of Adamawa's state capital around 8pm (1900 GMT).

There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the blast bore the hallmarks of militant Islamist group Boko Haram which has killed thousands over the last six years in its bid to create a state adhering to strict Sharia law in the northeast. More than 80 people were also wounded in the blast.

Meanwhile, Facebook activated its "Safety Check" feature in Nigeria the attack.

Mark Zuckerberg, founder of the social network, made the announcement in a post on his account early yesterday.

Facebook's decision to implement the feature - which allows users to "check-in" and let family and friends know they're safe - comes after the network received a heavy backlash for activating it for the attacks in Paris on Friday - but not after bomb blasts hit the Lebanese capital, Beirut, a day earlier.

Critics accused the San Francisco-based website of valuing the lives of Western victims more than those in