

NEWS IN
brief

Gunmen kill four

Egypt cops

AFP, Cairo

Masked gunmen on a motorcycle shot dead four Egyptian policemen south of Cairo yesterday, the interior ministry said. The gunmen opened fire on a police vehicle, killing those inside, in an area between the famed Giza pyramids west of Cairo and the Saqqara pyramids to the south, the ministry said in a statement.

Canada 'to admit Alan Kurdi family'

BBC ONLINE

Members of the family of Syrian boy Alan Kurdi, whose drowning off the coast of Turkey triggered an international outcry, are to be admitted to Canada, his aunt has said. Three-year-old Alan died along with his brother, five, and his mother trying to reach the Greek island of Kos. Images of Alan's body on a beach near Bodrum in September caused an outpouring of sympathy for those fleeing to Europe to escape Syria's civil war.



Nefertiti's tomb found at last!

AFP, Luxor

Scans of King Tutankhamun's tomb in Egypt's Valley of the Kings point to a secret chamber, archaeologists said yesterday, possibly heralding the discovery of Queen Nefertiti's long-sought mummy. A wife of Tutankhamun's father Akhenaten, Nefertiti played a major political and religious role in the 14th century BC, and the discovery of her tomb would be a major prize for Egyptologists. According to Reeves, professor of archaeology at the University of Arizona, 19-year-old Tutankhamun, who died unexpectedly, was buried hurriedly in an underground chamber probably not intended for him. Reeves' theory is that priests would have been forced to reopen Nefertiti's tomb 10 years after her death because the young pharaoh's own mausoleum had not yet been built.

CLIMATE PLEDGES

WHO'S DOING WHAT?

With one day to go to a crucial global warming summit, 170 countries have submitted pledges for greenhouse gas (GHG) curbs meant to underpin a 195-nation climate rescue pact. Those countries account for about 93 percent of the world population and are responsible for roughly 93 percent of emissions blamed for driving dangerous levels of climate change. Among the top 10 emitters, here's who has promised what:

1) CHINA - 24 PERCENT OF GLOBAL GHG EMISSIONS:

Envisages a peak in emissions "by around" 2030, and reducing carbon intensity (CO₂ emitted per unit of GDP) by 60-65 percent by 2030 compared with 2005 levels. The world's most populous nation will boost the share of non-fossil fuel in primary energy consumption from 11.2 percent in 2010 to 20 percent, and boost the volume of CO₂-absorbing forest by about 4.5 billion cubic metres.

2) UNITED STATES - 15.5 PERCENT:

Has pledged a 26-28 percent reduction in emissions from 2005 levels by 2025. Power plants are to cut carbon dioxide pollution by 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030.

3) EUROPEAN UNION - 10.8 PERCENT

The 28-member bloc intends to cut emissions by at least 40 percent by 2030 over 1990 levels, and has set 27 percent targets for renewable energy supply and efficiency gains.

4) INDIA - 6.4 PERCENT:

Plans to reduce carbon intensity by 35 percent by 2030 from 2005 levels, and to generate 40 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by the same date.

5) RUSSIA - 4.9 PERCENT:

Has mooted cutting emissions by 25-30 percent by 2030 from 1990 levels, conditional on the pledges of other "major emitters".

6) JAPAN - 2.9 PERCENT:

Has pledged a 26 percent reduction in emissions from 2013 levels by 2030, with nuclear energy -- offline since the 2011 Fukushima disaster -- providing 20-22 percent of electricity by then. Renewable electricity production, including hydro power, would be expanded to a 22-24 percent share, from 11 percent in 2014.

7) BRAZIL - 2.1 PERCENT:

Will cut emissions 37 percent by 2025 from 2005, and 43 percent by 2030.

8) IRAN - 1.6 PERCENT:

Iran has made an unconditional pledge to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 by four percent compared with a "business as usual" scenario. In addition, Tehran said it would reduce emissions another eight percent if it receives financial and technological support, and if what it describes as "unjust sanctions" were lifted.

9) INDONESIA - 1.6 PERCENT:

A 29 percent cut in emissions by 2030 compared with what the level would have been without any action. With financial and other help, this could be raised to 41 percent.

10) CANADA - 1.5 PERCENT:

Will seek to cut emissions by 30 percent from 2005 levels by 2030.

SOURCES: UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)



Demonstrators hold placards as they protest outside the entrance to Downing Street in central London yesterday, against the British government's proposed involvement in air strikes against the Islamic State (IS) group in Syria. Parliament is expected to vote on the issue next week after Prime Minister David Cameron pushed MPs to back the move in the wake of this month's Paris attacks.

PHOTO: AFP

'Enough is enough'

Says Obama after latest gun violence that killed 3

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama yesterday denounced the country's epidemic of gun violence and renewed a call for tougher controls on military-style weapons after yet another deadly shooting, saying "enough is enough."

The latest bloodshed came on Friday when a man entered a family planning clinic in the state of Colorado and allegedly opened fire, killing three people, including a police officer, and wounding nine others.

The motive of the suspect now under arrest was not yet known and police were to interrogate him Saturday.

The Planned Parenthood clinic located in Colorado Springs performs abortion, and the city's mayor suggested that deeply divisive issue in America may have been behind the assault.

"You can certainly infer what it may have been in terms of where it took place and the manner in which it took place," John Suthers told CNN.

The tragedy came a day after Americans celebrated their cherished Thanksgiving holiday, a time to relax with family, and which ushers in the holiday season in earnest.

Obama said the suspect had been armed with an assault weapon -- that was the first official word of this detail -- and he also disclosed for the first time that the man had held



hostages at the Planned Parenthood center from which he opened fire at people outside in an hours long standoff with police.

"We have to do something about the easy accessibility of weapons of war on our streets to people who have no business wielding them. Period. Enough is enough," Obama said in a statement.

The gunman had entered the Planned Parenthood clinic around noon Friday and started shooting from a window. Police surrounded the building, and after an exchange of gunfire and a standoff lasting more than five hours the gunman surrendered.

Local police yesterday identified the suspect as 57-year-old Robert Lewis Dear. News reports said he was from South Carolina.

Abortion is one of many services Planned Parenthood provides for women, and the association has become a lightning rod for criticism by US conservatives, among other reasons because it receives funding from the government for some health services.

Critics, many of whom seek to outlaw abortion in US, have falsely accused Planned Parenthood of selling fetal organs and body parts for profit, and encouraging women to have abortions in order to expand such operations.

Local media said that extra police were sent to protect the three other Planned Parenthood clinics in the Denver area.

Rocket attack on UN base in Mali kills 3

AFP, Bamako

Two UN peacekeepers and a civilian were killed and 14 others were injured yesterday in a rocket attack on a UN base in the northeastern Malian town of Kidal, UN and local sources said.

"Our camp in Kidal was attacked early this morning by terrorists using rockets," said an official from the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, adding that two Guinean UN peacekeepers and a civilian contractor were killed. 14 others were injured in the attack, including three seriously.

The attack came eight days after a siege at a luxury hotel in Mali's capital Bamako, in which 20 people died including 14 foreigners.

Two separate jihadist groups claimed responsibility for the hotel assault: the Al-Murabitoun group, an al-Qaeda affiliate led by notorious one-eyed Algerian militant Mokhtar Belmokhtar, and the Macina Liberation Front (LWF) from central Mali.

Muslim countries detest IS: poll

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

IS is almost universally detested across the Middle East, Asia and Africa, even in Muslim-majority countries, a new poll has shown.

Despite rhetoric about supposed "sympathy" for the terrorist group among Muslims in the UK and around the world, research by the Pew Research Centre indicated almost non-existent support in 11 surveyed countries and territories.

In Lebanon, where IS' recent bombing in Beirut killed 43 people, 99 per cent of respondents said they had a "very unfavourable" opinion of the group, while 94 per cent of Israelis and 89 per cent of Jordanians felt the same. In the Palestinian territories, 84 per cent of people had a negative view of IS, both in the Gaza Strip (92 per cent) and the West Bank (79 per cent).

Chris Doyle, director of the Council for Arab-British Understanding (Caabu), told The Independent that the results were no surprise.

In no country surveyed did more than 15 per cent of the population declare support for IS, but in Pakistan views appeared more mixed. The majority of respondents - 62 per cent - said they did not know how they felt, while almost a third held negative opinions and around nine per cent thought positively of the group.

MASS YAZIDI GRAVE FOUND

A booby-trapped mass grave containing the bodies of at least 110 people from the minority Yazidi sect has been found in northern Iraq, officials said.

The grave was found close to the town of Sinjar after it was recaptured from IS earlier in November. IS captured Sinjar in August 2014, with reports of massacres and enslavement and rape of Yazidi women and girls. This is said to be the sixth mass grave found in or near the town.

The UN has cited the Yazidis' treatment by IS as evidence that IS may have committed genocide and war crimes in Iraq.

Gulf countries should accept more refugees
Says France PM

AFP, Paris

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls has called on the Gulf states to accept more refugees fleeing Syria, saying that a "humanitarian disaster" could erupt in the Balkans if Europe does not control its borders.

"I'll say it again, Europe cannot accept all the refugees coming from Syria. ... Every country must play its part; I'm thinking particularly of the Gulf states," Valls said on Friday.

Most of the roughly four million Syrian refugees who have fled their country have travelled to neighbouring Libya, Jordan or Turkey. But Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE and other Gulf states have remained closed to them.

More than 800,000 migrants have arrived in Europe by sea since the beginning of the year.

Meanwhile, Macedonia started building a fence on its border with Greece yesterday to better control the influx of migrants passing through the Balkan country, an AFP photographer at the frontier said.



C'wealth gets first female secy general

AFP, Valletta

The Commonwealth appointed its first female secretary-general on Friday when leaders chose lawyer Patricia Scotland to take over the running of the 53-country organisation.

At their biennial summit in Malta, Commonwealth heads of government chose Scotland, a former attorney general to the British government, to take over from Indian diplomat Kamlesh Sharma on April 1, 2016.

While Queen Elizabeth II is the head of the Commonwealth, the secretary-general's duties involve representing the organisation globally and promoting its values and principles, chiefly democratic standards and development.



From left, Demonstrators in Manila, Geneva and Tokyo hold rallies in support of a climate deal ahead of the UN climate summit COP21 in Paris yesterday. Protesters joined a worldwide wave of marches yesterday demanding leaders craft a pact to avert a climate catastrophe when they gather in Paris tomorrow.

PHOTO: AFP

And what if 2°C isn't good enough?

AFP, Paris

Locking in an action plan to cap global warming at two degrees Celsius will be the ultimate yardstick for success or failure at the Paris climate summit that opens tomorrow.

Under the UN flag, the 2°C (3.6 Fahrenheit) target has been embraced by 195 countries, most of whose leaders will descend upon France's terror-struck capital on November 30.

But is that goal truly adequate to shield humanity from record heat waves, superstorms engorged by rising seas, and other devastating impacts?

Is two degrees, in other words, good enough?

The consensus view of thousands of climate scientists who have huddled on this question over the last six years is: "probably".

The fuzzy answer stems in part from the target's confused heritage.

It emerged from the nearly collapsed 2009 Copenhagen climate summit, where world leaders cobbled together a face-saving, non-binding "accord" with 2°C as its centrepiece.

"The traceability to the science is not clear," Peter Cox, a professor at the University of Exeter in England, told AFP. "It is definitely a political target."

Which does not mean it is arbitrary -- science says that reaching this goal will stave off worst-case scenarios.

Keeping the mercury from going up by

more than two notches, the UN's climate science panel has concluded, will help prevent mass migration, water wars, and expanding vectors of disease and poverty.

It's certainly better than the 4°C world we are headed for if we do nothing to curb fossil fuel emissions.

But the 2°C boundary is best seen as an "upper limit" and not a "guardrail," cautions a scientific report published by the UN's climate body in June.

"In some regions and vulnerable ecosystems, high risks are projected even for warming above 1.5°C (2.4°F)," the report says.

For many, this comes as no surprise.

Indeed, 43 nations home to a billion people banded together this month in a bloc called the Climate Vulnerable Forum, which is pushing for a 1.5°C cap over pre-Industrial Revolution levels, instead of 2°C.

At the very least, they want to see the lower threshold included in the Paris agreement as an option.

It is not hard to see why.

The global thermometer has so far risen one degree, but already many nations are living a climate-addled nightmare.

"Today we experience extreme weather, have floods on some of our islands and drought on others, and have severe erosion,

coral bleaching and salt-inundation in our food crops and ground water," Tony de Brum, Foreign Minister for the Marshall Islands, told AFP.

"Can you imagine what it would be like if we get another degree?"

Low-lying river deltas in Bangladesh, Vietnam, China and Egypt face similar threats, while people in Sub-Saharan Africa are already retreating from expanding deserts.

Ultimately, it is money, and not just extreme weather, that will determine who can best adapt to these changes.

A subsistence farmer in the Sahel -- an arid zone that stretches across the African continent -- is far more vulnerable than his counterpart in California's Central Valley, even if both are confronting historic drought.

Adaptation needs "will induce inequalities," former US Energy Department official and New York University professor Steven Koonin recently commented in the New York Times.

"The rich can adapt more easily than the poor," he said, arguing that preparing for climate impacts should trump what he called failed efforts to curb greenhouse gases.

"The rich can adapt more easily than the poor," he said, arguing that preparing for climate impacts should trump what he called failed efforts to curb greenhouse gases.

With carbon-cutting pledges made by some 170 countries in the run-up to the Paris meeting, scheduled to close on December 11, the rate of emissions still increases but on a less sharp curve.

Even if the promises are met, we are on track for a 3°C world.