

# NEWSIN brief

## Pak Taliban claim killing of minister

AFP, Peshawar  
The Pakistani Taliban have claimed the killing of a provincial minister for minority affairs who was shot dead in a restive northwestern district. Gunmen on motorbikes stopped Sardar Soran Singh's car in Buner district in northeast of Peshawar, Friday evening and opened fire, killing him on the spot. The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for the killing of Singh, who was minority affairs minister for Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province.

## Morsi espionage verdict postponed

AFP, Cairo  
An Egyptian court yesterday postponed its verdict and sentence in the trial of ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, who is charged with spying for Qatar. The head judge of the criminal court said the verdict was postponed to "May 7 to continue consultations," in brief remarks aired on television.

## 'N Korea tests sub-launched missile'

AFP, Seoul  
North Korea yesterday tested what appeared to be a submarine launched ballistic missile in the Sea of Japan, the South Korean defence ministry said. North Korea has been pushing to acquire SLBM capability that would take its nuclear strike threat to a new level, allowing deployment far beyond the Korean peninsula and the potential to retaliate in the event of a nuclear attack.

## Prince death: 'No sign' of suicide

BBC ONLINE  
There is "no reason to believe" that Prince's death was suicide, the sheriff of the Minnesota county where the singer had his home has said after a post-mortem examination. There was no sign of trauma on the body, Sheriff Jim Olson said, suggesting the singer had died alone. Prince, 57, was found dead in a lift on his Paisley Park estate on Thursday.



## Top Nepalese journo held for 'graft'

TNN, Kathmandu  
Nepal's Commission for Investigation into Abuse of Authority (CIAA) arrested Himal Southasian founding editor Kanak Mani Dixit on Friday for alleged corruption. The arrest is widely seen as vindictive and follows Dixit's opposition to Lokman Singh Karki's appointment as CIAA chief, who is known as "a permanent fixture" in Nepal's power politics. The anti-graft body has been investigating complaints accusing Dixit of amassing illegal property by "abusing" his position as cooperative bus service Sajha Yatayat chairman. Reports said around 20 policemen arrested him from Patan Dhoka, 15km from Kathmandu.



Syrian civil defence volunteers evacuate people from a damaged building following a reported airstrike in the rebel-held neighbourhood of Tareeq al-Bab in the northern city of Aleppo, yesterday. At least 27 civilians were killed yesterday in regime bombardment on rebel-held areas across Syria, including 12 in Aleppo. The airstrikes came a day after US President Barack Obama and the UN's special envoy warned that Syria's fragile ceasefire is in grave peril.

# US drops fight with Apple in New York

AFP, New York  
The US Justice Department on Friday dropped its effort to force Apple Inc to help unlock an iPhone in a drug case in New York after someone provided authorities the passcode to access the device. In a letter filed in federal court in Brooklyn, New York, prosecutors said that investigators late on Thursday used that passcode to access the iPhone at issue, and as a result "no longer needs Apple's assistance." The letter marked a sudden end to a closely watched case, in which the Justice Department had been appealing a ruling by a federal magistrate judge holding that he could not force Apple to assist authorities. The case gained further significance after prosecutors in March dropped a similar effort to force Apple to help access an iPhone used by one of the shooters in December's San Bernardino killings, after a third party provided a way to crack it. Justice Department spokeswoman Emily Pierce said the cases have "never been about setting a court precedent; they are about law enforcement's ability and need to access evidence on devices pursuant to lawful court orders and search warrants." An Apple spokesman declined comment. Previously, the company had argued in court that prosecutors had not provided any evidence to bolster their claim that they had exhausted other methods to get data from the phone. Apple said it was not even clear that they had asked the suspect and his associates. The majority of the technology industry bitterly opposes the measure, arguing that requiring back doors would make all communication more vulnerable to hackers and that U.S. citizens and companies would simply get their encryption from providers in other countries.

# CONTROVERSIAL MIGRANT SWAP DEAL Merkel in Turkey amid tensions

AFP, Nizip  
German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited a refugee camp on the Turkish-Syrian border yesterday, kicking off a high-stakes visit aimed at boosting a month-old migrant deal plagued by moral and legal concerns. Merkel, who was accompanied by European Council head Donald Tusk and European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans, headed to the Nizip 2 camp near Gaziantep after touching down in the country's south-east. "Welcome to Turkey, the country that hosts the most refugees in the world," read a huge banner hanging over the entrance to the camp, which hosts some 5,000 people in row upon row of white and beige prefabricated houses. The aim of the visit is to promote the six-billion-euro (\$6.7 billion) deal to return migrants arriving on Greek shores to Turkey, which has come under fire from rights groups, the UN refugee agency and some EU leaders. The funds are aimed at helping Turkey improve condi-

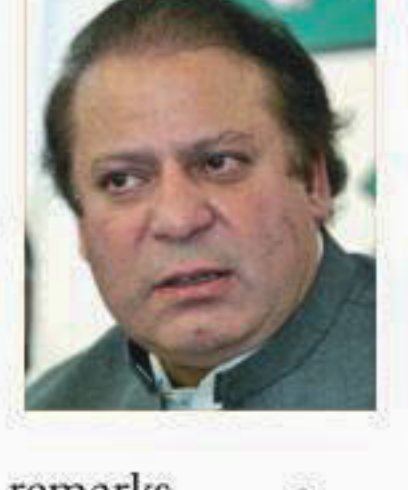
tions for the 2.7 million refugees it is hosting. Diplomatic relations are strained following President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's warning that the deal to curb the migrant flow to Europe would fall through if the EU did not keep up its end of the bargain by allowing visa-free travel for Turkish citizens. The bloc promised to present a visa recommendation on May 4 if Ankara complies with its side of the accord, but there has been growing unease in Europe over fears that security concerns are being fudged to fast-track Turkey's application. US President Barack Obama yesterday hailed Merkel's "courageous" leadership in handling the Syrian refugee crisis. But Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban said the EU had "sold out to Turkey" and the consequences were "impossible to predict", adding: "The security of the European Union cannot be in the hands of a power outside the EU." The success of the deal, which sharply reduced the number of people crossing from Turkey to Greece, was also called into question, with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) saying the numbers were "once again ticking up".



# PANAMA PAPERS SCANDAL Pak PM defiant amid pressure

AGENCIES  
Amid growing tension between him and the powerful army chief General Raheel Sharif, Pakistani PM Nawaz Sharif on Friday struck a defiant note, lashing out at those "plotting to destabilise him". In a dramatic TV address, Sharif said he was accountable only to Allah and awam (people), even as he said he was ready to face a probe into the Panama Paper disclosures about him and his family having offshore accounts. Sacking six top officers, Raheel had on Thursday said the fight against terrorism couldn't succeed unless corruption was uprooted - remarks seen aimed at the PM. Nawaz Sharif's decision to go public with his defiance came just a day after the army chief sacked six top serving army officers over grave corruption charges, in a move which was widely seen as designed to put pressure on the prime minister.

Sharif, who was ousted in coup by former dictator Pervez Musharraf, also took digs at his political rivals who have asked for his resignation in the wake of Panama Papers leaks. "When a sitting PM was handcuffed, put behind bars and then sent into exile by a military dictator, why nobody bothered? Why the doors of the Supreme Court were not knocked at that time for justice?" "I challenge all those who accuse me and my family of tax fraud. They should come forward and present evidence. If charges are proved against me, I will resign immediately," he said in his address. Sharif said he would write a letter to the chief justice of Pakistan to form a commission to probe the allegations levelled against him and his family. Election Commission on Thursday released the PM's assets statements for 2015, which make him one of the richest politicians in Pakistan with personal assets of Rs 2 billion, an increase of over a billion in just four years.



# SHAKESPEARE'S 400TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY Obama visits bard's Globe Theatre

AFP, London  
Barack Obama on Saturday strutted the stage of William Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London, joining in festivities to mark 400 years since The Bard's death. The US president was treated to scenes from Hamlet on his early morning visit to the Globe Theatre, a reconstruction on the banks of the River Thames of a theatre dating back to the 16th century. Actors from a company that embarked a two-year world tour in 2014, playing to more than 100,000 people in 197 countries, put on a special performance for the president. Obama stood in the open-air theatre watching intently, swaying back and forth on his feet to the music. He clapped loudly following the show and joined actors on the stage afterwards. "Let me shake hands with everyone. That was wonderful. I don't want it to stop," Obama said. He was also given a tour of the playhouse by Patrick Spottiswoode, director of Globe Education. "You're doing a great job," he told Spottiswoode. The Globe was rebuilt close to its original site and stages authentic period performances of plays by Shakespeare and others. William Shakespeare's hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon on Saturday leads the global celebrations to mark four centuries since his death, with star-studded plays, concerts and parades. Focal points for the celebrations include Shakespeare's family home in Stratford, where it is assumed he was born in 1564, and the Holy Trinity Church, where he was buried. From Warsaw, to Dubai and Las Vegas, Shakespeare's plays will also be playing to packed houses to mark the occasion, highlighting the international appeal of the English language's leading playwright.



# Separate US shootings kill 14 in 2 states

AFP, Washington  
Eight members of one family, including a teenager, were shot dead in rural Ohio on Friday, just before gunmen killed six people in Georgia. In Ohio, seven bodies were found at three houses close to each other and an eighth was later found at a separate site, Sheriff Charles Reader told reporters. The victims were "all adults except for a male juvenile" who was 16 years old, he said, and all members of a single family. Two babies -- one aged four days, the other six months -- and a three-year-old child survived the shootings, he added.

The authorities gave no possible motive. And, with at least one suspected gunman still on the loose, no arrests have been made. "Each one of the victims appears to have been executed, each one of the victims appears to have been shot in the head," Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine said. Several victims were in bed when they were shot, Reader said. The first and fourth crime scenes are separated by 30 miles (50 kilometers), the sheriff's office said. Meanwhile, six people were found dead in northern Georgia, in two separate incidents believed to be a domestic dispute, Columbia county sheriff's officials said, according to television reports.

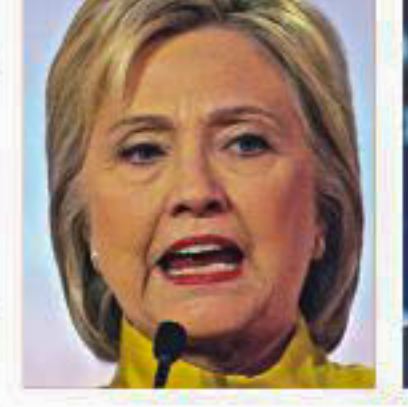


Protesters set up an inflatable 'Trojan Horse' as they demonstrate against Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) free trade agreement ahead of US President Barack Obama's visit in Hanover, Germany, yesterday.

# Trump bashes 'crooked' Clinton Promises not to become boring by becoming overly presidential

REUTERS, Hollywood  
Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump attacked his top Democratic rival Hillary Clinton on Friday, calling her "crooked," and promised his supporters that he would not bore them by becoming overly presidential. The comments undercut what his aides had said would be an attempt by the notoriously blunt-speaking Trump to project a more serious image after his win in New York's nominating contest this week, including by rolling out more policy details. "I can tell you that if I go too presidential, people are going to be very bored," the New York real estate baron told Fox News in an interview that will air on Saturday. He added that he worried his supporters would "fall asleep." He went on to say that Clinton "is a person who's got many, many flaws" and that she's "the worst possible representative a woman can have," as he shifted his focus away from Republican rivals and toward the Nov. 8 presidential election. "The only thing she's got going is the women card," Trump

said in the excerpts released by the network on Friday. "We call her 'Crooked Hillary' because she's a crooked person. She's always been a crooked person." Clinton said at a campaign event in Pennsylvania she would not respond to Trump's comments about her. Donna Hoffman, the head of the political science department at the University of Iowa, said Trump's fiery personality had put him in a bind at this stage of the race. "The impetus to become more presidential is coming from some of the elite organs of the GOP, but he got to where he is today because of his persona," she said. "To continue this way will keep him alienated from the party, but to change means his supporters will question his authenticity." In a strong signal that his persona matters, a January survey showed that among Trump's supporters about 43 percent said they liked him because he "speaks his mind," while only 8 percent cited his policies. The survey was conducted by the Working America arm of labor organization AFL-CIO.



# Who supplied 570 Portacabins to UN Peace Keepers?