

IS MASSACRE OF MILITARY RECRUITS

Iraq hangs 36

AFP, Nasiriyah

Iraq yesterday hanged 36 men convicted over the 2014 massacre by Sunni jihadists and allied militants of hundreds of military recruits, officials said.

They had been found guilty of involvement in the "Speicher" massacre, named after a base near Tikrit where up to 1,700 recruits were kidnapped before being executed in a massacre claimed by the Islamic State group.

"The executions of 36 convicted over the Speicher crime were carried out this morning in Nasiriyah prison," a spokesman for the governor's office in Dhiqar, the province of which Nasiriyah is the capital, told AFP.

Following the death of more than 300 people in the worst ever single bomb attack to strike Baghdad



last month, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi had said he wanted to expedite the execution of inmates sentenced to death in terrorism cases.

The United Nations had criticised Abadi's call to speed up executions, which according to Amnesty already topped 100 for 2016 before Sunday's hangings.

The Speicher massacre is considered one of IS's worst crimes. Combined with a call by the country's top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani for Iraqis to take up arms against them, it played a key role in the mass recruitment of Shia volunteers to fight the jihadists.



(From top anti clockwise) People carry a coffin during a funeral for victims of last night's attack on a wedding party that left 51 dead in Gaziantep in southeastern Turkey; a boy looks at a damaged wall near the explosion scene; and women cry by a grave during the funeral. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: AFP, AP

NEWSIN

brief



Sadiq Khan calls on party to ditch Corbyn

AFP, London

London's Labour mayor Sadiq Khan yesterday urged party members to unseat boss Jeremy Corbyn in the upcoming leadership election, saying he had "failed to win the respect of the British people. Khan is backing Owen Smith in the upcoming party election, voting for which will begin today when ballot papers will be sent out to Labour members. Voting ends on September 21 with the result to be announced three days later.

3 'Pak militants' killed in Kashmir

REUTERS, Srinagar

India's army said it shot dead three militants from Pakistan yesterday following an attack by the gunmen two days earlier on an Indian border post in the disputed Kashmir region. The militants were killed in the Tangdhar sector of North Kashmir, it added. Indian troops have killed 103 militants in the restive Kashmir Valley so far this year, the highest toll in recent years. According to an official estimate, 56 militants have crossed into Kashmir this year through July, up from 36 in the same period last year.

Afghan forces retake district from Taliban

AFP, Kunduz

Afghan forces have recaptured a district that had fallen briefly to the Taliban, officials and residents said yesterday. Khan Abad district, which is around 30 kilometres east of Kunduz city -- the provincial capital where militants last year scored their biggest ever victory -- had fallen to the Taliban after they launched a pre-dawn attack on the district centre on Saturday, according to local officials.

Indonesian boat sinks; 10 killed, 5 missing

AFP, Jakarta

Ten people died yesterday when a boat sank in rough seas off western Indonesia, a navy official said, with a search underway for five others still missing. The small boat was carrying 17 passengers from the port city of Tanjung Pinang in Riau Islands province east of Sumatra when it encountered bad weather, navy spokesman Edi Sucipto told AFP.

Iran unveils missile defence system

AFP, Tehran

Iran released images of its first domestically built long-range missile defence system yesterday, a project started when the country was under international sanctions.

Images on multiple state news agencies showed President Hassan Ruhani and Minister of Defence Hossein Dehghan standing in front of the new Bavar 373 missile defence system.

The system was designed to intercept cruise missiles, drones, combat aircraft and ballistic missiles, according to earlier statements by Dehghan.

The project was launched as an alternative to the Russian S-300 system, the delivery of which was suspended in 2010 due to sanctions imposed over Iran's nuclear programme.

"We did not intend to make an Iranian version of the S-300 -- we wanted to build an Iranian system, and we built it," Dehghan told the IRNA news agency over the weekend.

In an earlier speech at Friday prayers, he said: "Our missile power is at such a level that we are able to destroy all our targets at any operational range."

Ruhani yesterday said in a televised speech that Iran's military budget had more than doubled compared with last year.

Ruhani also unveiled the first Iranian-made turbo-jet engine on Sunday, saying it was capable of flight at 50,000 feet.

Dehghan added that Iran was now looking to develop seaborne cruise missiles capable of supersonic speed.

'It's too late to say sorry'

Clinton tells Trump; NY Times reveals the NY billionaire's \$650m debt

AGENCIES

Democratic US Presidential nominee Hillary Clinton yesterday told her Republican opponent Donald Trump on Twitter that it was too late to apologize for the highly controversial remarks he's been making throughout his campaign.

Clinton's message to Trump - accompanied by a video compilation of Trump's comments - came after the real estate magnate on Saturday said at a North Carolina rally that he regretted saying things that "may have caused personal pain."

"It's too late now to say sorry," Clinton's tweet reads. The accompanying video begins with a clip from the rally where Trump attempted to express regret for his past comments. "Sometimes, in the heat of debate, and speaking on a multitude of issues, you don't choose the right words...And believe it or not, I regret it, particularly where it may have caused personal pain," he'd said.

In the video, the Clinton campaign interspersed the clip of that conciliatory statement with clips from older speeches and interviews featuring the Republican nominee. In these clips, he is seen calling Republican primary candidate Marco Rubio 'Little Marco,' (allegedly a reference to Rubio's height) calling for a ban on Muslims entering the US, and referring to an unnamed woman as "a disgusting pig."



The video goes on to show other controversial statements involving Trump - notably his suggestion that the mother of a fallen Pakistani-origin Muslim American soldier wasn't allowed to speak at the Democratic National Convention, while her husband famously criticized Trump's call for a ban on Muslims coming to America.

It also shows him categorically refusing - on a number of occasions - to express regret or apologize for his views and remarks, in response to questions from journalists. "I like not to regret anything," he is heard saying.

"What I say is what I say," Trump can be seen saying at the end of the compilation.

Meanwhile on Saturday the New York Times reported that companies belonging to Donald Trump have at least \$650 million in debt, more than twice the amount shown in public filings made by his presidential campaign.

In addition to the \$650 million liabilities, "a substantial portion of his wealth is tied up in three passive partnerships that owe an additional \$2 billion to a string of lenders," the Times said about debt that could significantly affect Trump's wealth.

The billionaire tycoon campaigns on what he says is his spectacularly successful real estate record, claiming to be worth \$10 billion and citing his business acumen as his major qualification for the presidency.



WAR ON DRUGS

Duterte threatens to leave UN

AFP, Manila

President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday threatened to withdraw the Philippines from the United Nations, as he launched another profanity-laced tirade against the organisation for criticising his bloody war on crime.

More than 1,500 people have been killed since Duterte took office and immediately began his law-and-order crackdown, according to police statistics, triggering fierce criticism from the UN and rights groups.

Duterte, a lawyer famous for an acid tongue who has repeatedly told the UN not to interfere, stepped up his rhetoric against the organization yesterday.

"Maybe we'll just have to decide to separate from the United Nations. If you are that disrespectful, son of a whore, then I will just leave you," Duterte said in a press conference in his home city of Davao.

Duterte said he may even try to set up a rival international organisation.

The UN's special rapporteur on summary executions, Agnes Callamard, last week said Duterte's promise of immunity and bounties to security forces who killed drug suspects violated international law.

Duterte lashed out yesterday, accusing the "stupid" UN of not doing anything in Middle East hotspots Syria and Iraq. And Duterte asked why police killings in the United States were not attracting the same kind of criticism as the Philippines.

NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS GROUP BID India, China 'spar' at BRICS meet

TNN, Jaipur

Instead of focusing on sustainable development goals (SDGs), the two-day summit of women parliamentarians from BRICS nations, which began in Jaipur on Saturday, witnessed a barely concealed war of words between India and China over membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), and digressed into subjects such as combating global terrorism.

The Indian delegates reiterated the country's demand for membership in the elite NSG as China pressed for a broader role in international forums. The strained relationship between the two nations, after China blocked India's entry into NSG recently, was on display at the meeting held at Bidhan Sabha.

During her address on 'Perspectives on implementation of SDGs,' Wen Ma, the head of Chinese delegation and chairperson of the International Judicial Affairs Committee, argued for China's bigger role in international affairs, proportionate to the country's clout in the world.

Her remarks didn't go down well with the Indian side which said that the nation had enough clout and deserved NSG membership.

The two nations have been at loggerheads since India failed to book a seat in NSG. The summit meant to discuss the role of women parliamentarians in achieving SDGs also deviated into discussions on terrorism.



The first tourists trying out the world's longest and highest glass-bottomed bridge in China, yesterday. The £2.6million structure is 430 metres long and spans a valley connecting two mountains in Zhangjiajie, Hunan Province. The platform, which opened to the public on 20 September, runs along Yuntai Mountain is elevated 3,540ft above the ground.

PHOTO: AP

Brother of Omran dies

AFP, Beirut

In video footage from the incident, Omran is seen quietly staring into space before raising his arms to touch his bloodied forehead, then looking at his hand and wiping it on the orange seat.

Omran, his siblings and parents were all plucked from the rubble wounded, but alive, following Wednesday's bombing on the Qaterji neighbourhood in rebel-held east Aleppo.



SHEBAAB ATTACK IN SOMALIA Car blasts kill more than 10

AFP, Mogadishu

At least 10 people were killed Sunday in two explosions in a town in central Somalia, police said.

The Shabaab militant group claimed responsibility for the blasts in the town of Galkayo, some 700 kilometers northeast of Mogadishu. The Shabaab carries out regular attacks against government, military and civilian targets using suicide car bombers and gunmen.

"There were two car bomb blasts which targeted the local government headquarters. More than 10 people have been killed," said police officer Mohamed Abdiqani.

Local residents said he counted a dozen bodies, some burned beyond recognition.

An Al-Qaeda aligned group, the Shabaab is fighting to overthrow the internationally-backed government and it is expected to try and violently disrupt elections due to be held in September and October.

China leader offers Myanmar same treatment as Pakistan

TNN, Beijing

China on Saturday offered a range of incentives including financial assistance and support for building energy projects to Myanmar during the ongoing visit by its de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Chinese president Xi Jinping even offered to upgrade relationship with Myanmar treating it almost on par with China's ties with Pakistan.

Xi offered to extent "comprehensive, strategic (and) cooperative partnership" to Myanmar in order to "bring more tangible benefits to the people of both countries," the official Xinhua news agency said. But Suu Kyi made no promises about relaunching construction work by Chinese

companies on a stalled \$3.6 billion dam project in Myanmar.

Suu Kyi struck to her stand an investigation commission must inquire into circumstances that resulted in the stalling of the project in 2011 before taking a decision on whether to reopen construction work on the project.

During talks with Chinese leaders, Suu Kyi emphasized the need for resolving disputes between armed ethnic groups operating along Myanmar's border with China.

State-run China Daily said in an editorial praised Aung Suu Kyi as a "political realist" who realises the importance of "reassuring" China. She would pursue the same "non-aligned" foreign policy as her predecessors, it said.

