

# NEWS IN brief

### 10,000 killed in Yemen war: UN

REUTERS, Sanaa

At least 10,000 people have been killed in Yemen's 18-month-old civil war, the United Nations yesterday, almost double the estimates of more than 6,000 cited by officials and aid workers for much of 2016. The conflict has displaced three million Yemenis and forced 200,000 people to seek refuge abroad, UN said. Some 14 million of Yemen's 26 million population need food aid and 7 million are suffering from food insecurity, it added.

### Obama to meet 'punisher' Duterte

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama will meet controversial Philippine leader Rodrigo Duterte next week, the White House said, despite concerns over a war on crime that has claimed more than 2,000 lives. The White House said Obama would meet the firebrand leader on the sidelines of a summit in Laos, which begins on September 6. The Philippines, a former US colony, was regarded as one of the United States' most loyal allies in Asia until

### Curfew reimposed in Indian Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

Authorities reimposed a curfew in parts of India-administered Kashmir following fresh clashes Monday between protesters and Indian security forces. Hours after the government announced an end to a 52-day lockdown. The current violence was triggered by the July 8 killing of a popular rebel leader, Burhan Wani, in a gunbattle with soldiers. At least 68 civilians and two police officers have been killed and thousands injured since then.



US Secretary of State John Kerry meets Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj before the start of their meeting in New Delhi, India, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

## India-US military logistic deal could irk China, Pak

### China media says deal may cost Delhi's strategic independence

AGENCIES

Attempts by India to join US's alliance could "irritate" China, Pakistan or even Russia and bring "strategic troubles" to New Delhi while making it a centre of geopolitical rivalries in Asia, China's state-run media commented yesterday.

The US and India signed an agreement on Monday governing the use of each other's land, air and naval bases for repair and resupply, a step toward building defense ties as they seek to counter the growing maritime assertiveness of China.

In an editorial written ahead of defence minister Manohar Parrikar and US defence secretary Ashton Carter signing a logistics agreement, state-run Global Times said India may lose strategic independence if it leans towards the US.

The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) allows India and US militaries to access each other's military facilities for refuelling and replenishment.

#### INDIA-US LEMOA

It would help both countries in governing the use of each other's land, air and naval bases for repair and resupply, a step toward building defence ties as they seek to counter the growing maritime assertiveness of China.

New Delhi insists deal does not agree to set up US bases in India.

The deal will promote practical cooperation in areas of mutual interest, such as counter-terrorism, maritime security, special operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

It will emphasise on strengthening defence ties across many areas: from strategic and regional cooperation, to deepened military-to-military exchanges, to expanded collaboration on defence technology and innovation.

"This is undoubtedly a leap forward in US-India military cooperation. US media highly applauded this deal, with Forbes hailing it as a 'war pact' and believing that India is shifting away from Russia, its Cold War ally, toward a new alliance with the US," the editorial said.

ance system, it may irritate China, Pakistan or even Russia. It may not make India feel safer, but will bring strategic troubles to itself and make itself a centre of geopolitical rivalries in Asia," it said.

While India has adopted a prudent attitude so far refraining from joining US alliance, some defence analysts expressed worries that India may lose strategic independence and warned that the pact may render New Delhi a "follower" of Washington, it said.

Due to its non-alignment policy, India has been given attention from all the major powers such as the US, Japan, China and Russia in recent years, it noted.

"However, in recent years, Washington has deliberately wooed New Delhi to become its quasi ally so as to impose geopolitical pressure on China. It is possible that the (Narendra) Modi administration is trying an unconventional way to lean toward the US with the logistics agreement," the editorial said.

## CHINESE EMBASSY BLAST

### Car bomb attack in Kyrgyzstan kills 1

REUTERS, Bishkek

A suspected suicide car bomber rammed the gates of the Chinese embassy in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek yesterday, killing the attacker and wounding at least three other people, officials said.

Officials from both countries described the assault as a terrorist act, and Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev ordered the government to take extra counter-terrorism measures in the capital and regions, his office said in statement.

China condemned the attack and urged Kyrgyz authorities to "quickly investigate and determine the real situation behind the incident."

"China is deeply shocked by this and strongly condemns this violent and extreme act," foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a regular news briefing in Beijing.

The ministry later said China would "resolutely strike against all forms of terrorism" and protect the safety of its people and government organisations overseas.

A Kyrgyz Interior Ministry spokesman said the car exploded inside the compound. Police cordoned off the embassy and adjacent area, and the GKNB state security service were investigating the bombing that occurred at about 10:00 am.



Security forces assist Abdalla Boss, a Somali Member of Parliament who was wounded following a car bomb claimed by al Shabaab Islamist militants outside the president's palace in the Somali capital of Mogadishu yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

## 6,500 rescued from Med

CNN ONLINE

A five-day-old newborn peers out from a pink blanket. His dark, almond-shaped eyes stare directly at the camera, his tiny hand tucked underneath his chin.

His short life has been anything but easy. He, his twin brother and his mother were among the 6,500 refugees and migrants rescued in a 30-hour period while attempting to make the treacherous journey across the Mediterranean.

Médécins Sans Frontières' ship Dignity 1 and the Spanish humanitarian group Proactiva Open Arms rescued people who were aboard 15 rubber boats and one wooden vessel Monday.

As many as 3,000 of the migrants were rescued off the coast of Libya by MSE, Proactiva Open Arms and Italian coast guard crews and one rescue took place in Maltese waters.

A total of 40 different organizations were responsible for bringing in the 6,500 migrants and refugees, including EU's Marine mission "Sophia," which fights smugglers; and Frontex, the European Agency tasked with border security.

The Italian coast guard said the rescued migrants are being taken to ports in Calabria and Sicily.

The number of people plucked from sea on Monday was much higher than the average. Just two weeks ago, in the week that started August 14, the route was used by 2,197 migrants, according to the International Organization for Migration. Monday's rate nearly tripled that weekly amount.

Most of the migrants rescued this week came from sub-Saharan Africa. Many of them using the central Mediterranean route, which runs roughly from Libya or other north African countries to Italy, are from Nigeria, Eritrea and Gambia, according to the IOM.

According to the IOM, migrants are taking advantage of Libya's ongoing political chaos to escape over the mostly open borders. The Libyan crisis has helped boost a lucrative smuggling business, with African migrants who reach southern Libya being transported through the desert to northern beaches where they board boats bound for Europe.

This year, 264,513 people arrived in Europe by sea, landing mostly in Greece and Italy, according to IOM estimates released in mid-August.

Of those who attempted the crossing, 3,165 people have died at sea, authorities said. At this rate, according to the IOM, the number of deaths will likely exceed last year's total of 3,771.

#### MIGRANT CRISIS



## LIFE IN WAR-TORN SYRIA

### Child with severe burns 'treated with mud'

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

Upsetting images have been released of a badly burned child in a rebel-held area of Syria being treated with mud for wounds allegedly sustained by a weapon similar to napalm.

The footage, released by the Homs Media Centre on Sunday, purports to show the aftermath of several air strikes on Saturday night on the besieged al-Waer neighbourhood of Homs, the country's third largest city.

"After the bombing by war planes stopped, they began firing napalm," a doctor in the district said. "Some of the patients were burned."

One video shows a young boy writhing in pain as a man rubs mud on to the child's head before removing his bandages and rubbing the thick sludge into his wounds.

Nedal, a Homs-based member of the Syrian Civil Defence, a volunteer rescue group that operates in rebel-held territory, said the man was forced to use mud as a cooling agent for the burns as there were no longer any medical supplies or materials in that part of the city.

Two children were killed and at least five others wounded by the napalm-like incendiary weapons, Nedal said. Photos showed the charred remains of two children, identified as Hamzah, a four-year-old boy, and Ayah, a seven-month-old girl.

"We have had two child fatalities and another five children were seriously wounded by the use of napalm," Osama Abou Zeid, the head of the Homs Media Centre, told Al Jazeera.

#### TURKISH INCURSION IN SYRIA

## US campaign in dilemma

AFP, Washington

Turkey's dramatic intervention in Syria could prove a setback for the US -- but it forces the US to make a difficult choice between two unpredictable allies.

Washington has been relying on the Kurdish YPG militia to provide on-the-ground muscle for its campaign against the jihadists, much to the outrage of its Nato partner Ankara.

Turkey regards the YPG -- the armed wing of Syria's PYD Kurdish party -- as little more than an arm of the PKK, and the PKK as a "terrorist" movement waging a separatist war inside Turkey.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has made it clear that Turkey's seizure of the border town of Jarabulus was as much to halt a YPG advance as it was to deny ground to the IS "caliphate."

Bloody clashes have already broken out between US-backed Kurdish fighters and Turkish-backed forces on the ground in northern Syria, and Washington has been left scrambling for a clear response. Earlier this month, US officials had praised the YPG-dominated "Syrian Democratic Forces" for their liberation of the IS-held town of Manbij on the western side of the Euphrates.

Then last week, on a visit to Turkey, Vice President Joe Biden said the YPG would "under no circumstances" get US support unless they honored what he said was a pledge to retreat east of the river. The Pentagon has now suggested that Kurdish fighters have largely obeyed the request to withdraw, but fighting has nevertheless erupted west of the river, drawing anger from Washington.

#### DEFEAT FROM JAWS OF VICTORY

"The US is risking grabbing defeat from the jaws of victory," said Matt Bryza, a former member of president George W Bush's National Security Council. Bryza and others argue that the US has been urging Turkey to take a stronger stance against the IS for two years and would be foolish to offend Erdogan now by sticking by the Kurds.

"What that policy ought to be, I think, is that the United States will work with Turkey to make sure that the YPG goes back east of the Euphrates," he told AFP.

But not everyone in Washington lays the blame on the US side for the new tension -- some point to the Erdogan government's ambivalence in the fight against Islamist extremism and anti-American tone.

"The YPG was not America's first choice as a partner and ally in combating ISIS on the ground, it was really all we were left with," said John Hannah, who advised former vice president Dick Cheney. But, whatever Washington and Ankara's disagreements in the past, the latter's new determination to play a more forceful role could be a sign of hope for a broader political settlement in Syria.

Kemal Kirisci, director of the Turkey Project at the Brookings Institution, said Turkey appears to have abandoned its dream of a total Sunni Arab Islamist victory in Syria's civil war.

#### ONGOING BLOODSHED

That, along with Erdogan's partial rapprochement with Russia and Iran, could provide an opportunity for a settlement that could end the bloodshed and should not be hostage to Turkish-Kurdish enmity.

"What's happening here, whether we like it or not, is that Turkey is standing up for what it sees as its national interests, which awkwardly overlap and conflict with the ones the US has," Kirisci said.

"Every player there is trying to muddle through, but there is another level of game that I think is trying to unfold and possibly lead the way to a possible resolution of the conflict."

## Judgment vote looms for Brazil's Rousseff

AFP, Brasilia

Brazil's suspended president Dilma Rousseff faces judgement Tuesday in a Senate vote expected to remove her from office despite her dramatic claim of being the victim of a coup.

The country's first female president confronted her accusers in a marathon session Monday, telling the Senate that she is innocent and warning that the Brazilian democracy is in danger.

She is accused of having taken illegal state loans to patch budget holes in 2014, masking the country's problems as it slid into its deepest recession in decades.

The Senate is set to hear closing arguments from



lawyers for the two sides on Tuesday before holding a final debate ahead of voting -- with the session possibly stretching into today. Two thirds, or 54, of the 81 senators must vote in favor of impeachment to strip Rousseff of the presidency.

Recalling how she was tortured under Brazil's military dictatorship in the 1970s, the leftist leader urged senators during her testimony to "vote against impeachment, vote for democracy... Do not accept a coup."

However, momentum to push her out of office appears unstoppable, fueled by deep anger over Brazil's devastating recession, months of political paralysis and a vast corruption scandal centered on the state oil giant Petrobras.

#### BB HEIST

## 6 US senators for prioritising cyber crime at G20 summit

REUTERS, New York

Six US senators have urged President Barack Obama to prioritise cyber crime at this weekend's Group of 20 summit in China, in the wake of the theft of \$81 million from Bangladesh's central bank, according to a letter obtained by Reuters.

In the letter sent to the White House ahead of the Sept 4-5 summit, Sherrod Brown, a senior Democrat on the Senate Banking Committee, and five other Democratic senators say they want the US president to press leaders from the world's 20 biggest economies to commit in joint communiques to a "coordinated strategy to combat cyber-crime at critical financial institutions".

The letter, dated Monday, suggests that concern among US lawmakers is growing over the February incident in which hackers breached Bangladesh Bank's systems and used the SWIFT banking network to request nearly \$1 billion from an account held at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Some of the dozens of orders were filled, with much of the lost \$81 million disappearing into Philippines casinos -- prompting months of international finger-pointing, an ongoing investigation, and several requests from members of Congress for answers from the Fed and from SWIFT, the secure messaging service that banks use to transfer money around the world.

"Our financial institutions are connected in order to facilitate global commerce, but cyber criminals -- whether independent or state-sponsored -- imperil this international system in a way few threats have," the senators, headed by Gary Peters of Michigan, wrote in the letter to Obama.

Copies of the letter from the US senators were also sent to Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen and US Treasury Secretary Jack Lew.



## Guterres still leads race to be UN chief

AFP, United Nations

Portugal's former prime minister Antonio Guterres is still the frontrunner to become the next secretary-general of the United Nations following a third straw poll held Monday, diplomats said.

Guterres, who served as UN refugee chief for 10 years, received 11 votes of encouragement, three "discourage" votes and one "no opinion" during the informal vote by the 15-member Security Council.

It is the third time that the 67-year-old has taken the number one spot in the contest to succeed Ban Ki-moon, who steps down on December 31 after 10 years as the world's top diplomat.

## IS spokesman al-Adnani killed

AFP, Beirut

The Islamic State group yesterday said its spokesman Abu Mohamed al-Adnani was killed while monitoring military operations in the Syrian province of Aleppo.

Quoting a "military source", the IS news agency Amaq said "Sheikh Abu Mohamed al-Adnani, the spokesman of the Islamic State, was martyred while surveying operations to repel the military campaigns against Aleppo".

It said he died after a "long voyage crowned by sacrifice" and vowed "revenge" at the hands of a "new generation born into the Islamic State". IS has regularly urged followers to target disbelievers.