

Pakistan is 'motherhood of terrorism'

Says Modi at BRICS

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged BRICS leaders yesterday to take a strong united stand against the "motherhood of terrorism" in the South Asian region, in a thinly veiled reference to Pakistan. Modi said a country in India's neighbourhood had links to "terror modules" around the world, which the emerging nations club of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa should strongly condemn. "In our region, terrorism poses a grave threat to peace, security and development," Modi told leaders at the BRICS summit in the tourist state of Goa.



Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is pictured among BRICS and BIMSTEC leaders in Cavelossim, in the western state of Goa, India, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Leaders vow closer ties

Agree to set up new credit rating agency, fight tax evasions; China leader says growing protectionism, anti-globalisation hampering world economy

Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday said a rising tide of protectionism and anti-globalisation was endangering the world economy's still fragile recovery as BRICS leaders vowed to forge closer business and trade ties. At a summit in the Indian tourist hub of Goa, host Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the leaders of China, Russia, Brazil and South Africa issued a joint declaration on a range of measures, including the setting-up of a new credit ratings agency and fighting tax evasion. They also agreed to work together to combat "cross-border" terrorism, but Modi's guests held off from signing up to his fierce condemnation of India's arch-rival Pakistan as the "motherhood of terrorism". BRICS was formed in 2011 with the aim of using members' growing economic and political influence to challenge Western hegemony. The nations, with a joint estimated

GDP of \$16 trillion, set up their own bank in parallel to the Washington-based International Monetary Fund and World Bank and hold summits rivalling the G7 forum. But the countries, accounting for 53 percent of world population, have been hit by falling global demand and lower commodity prices, while several have also been mired in corruption scandals.

BRICS SUMMIT

Both Xi and Modi said the group must stick together, insisting there was much to remain positive about even though its members have been beset by domestic woes and problems sparked by the 2008 financial crisis. The Chinese president said "deep-seated imbalances that triggered the financial crisis" were far from being resolved. "Some countries are getting more inward-looking in their policies. Protectionism is rising and forces

Modi turns China-Nepal talks into trilateral summit

HINDUSTANTIMES ONLINE

A meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Nepal's Prime Minister Prachanda on the sidelines of a BRICS dinner turned into an impromptu trilateral when Prime Minister Narendra Modi dropped by and spent more than 20 minutes with the two leaders. The incidence raised eyebrows as it is unusual for a scheduled bilateral meeting to go this way. It wasn't immediately clear why Modi joined the session. Officials familiar with the development said Prachanda was waiting for the Brazilian delegation to move before he could leave the venue and Xi chose to give him company. That is when Modi joined in, said an official on the condition of anonymity. Prachanda's son, Prakash Dahal, posted several photographs of the meeting on his Facebook page, which was quickly picked up by the social media. Dahal described the meeting as "coincidental". Writing in Nepali, he said, "with the help of right support from these major countries, Nepal's prosperity is possible". India and China compete to grow their influence in Nepal. Wedged between the giant Asian neighbours, the Himalayan nation is of strategic interest to both India and China. Xi was supposed to visit Nepal on his way to the BRICS summit, but the plan was dropped after a regime change in Kathmandu in August saw Prachanda replacing KP Oli, who was regarded as a closer ally of Beijing. After coming to power, Prachanda chose India as the destination for his first foreign visit last month.



Khan unveils plan to oust Pak PM

DAWN ONLINE

After keeping his friends and foes guessing for weeks, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan unveiled on Saturday his plan to paralyse Islamabad: party workers will block roads leading to government offices - particularly those continuously being mentioned in his speeches. "Now, Nawaz Sharif will have to either resign or will be held accountable for his proven corruption," Khan said at a gathering of Insaaf Professional Forum. Khan, however, hinted at the possibility of a change in the schedule of the Islamabad lock-down date. Earlier, he had announced Oct 30 as the final show-down date. Urging the masses to be ready for a longer show-down in Islamabad, the PTI chief said the workers would continue occupying roads and entrances of major government offices such as National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Federal Investigation Agency, Federal Board of Revenue and Election Commission of Pakistan. Saying that his struggle was against the corrupt mafia, he added the country could be strengthened if institutions were strengthened. "If you want to see Pakistan in its real vein, come and join the PTI in its decisive sit-in in Islamabad," he appealed to the masses while lauding them for their political awareness and enthusiastic participation in party's Sept 30 rally in Raiwind.



Thai women clad in black pray next to the wall of the Grand Palace at dawn in Bangkok, yesterday. On his birthday Thais wore yellow, when he got sick they put on pink, and now that King Bhumibol Adulyadej has passed Bangkok's streets have turned monochrome in an extraordinary display of collective grief. Government officials yesterday said Thailand's Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn wants his coronation held off for at least a year.

Trump's hope fading fast

Nationwide poll gives Clinton 11-point lead

AGENCIES

He has been accused by multiple women of sexual assault. He has boasted of not paying federal taxes, threatened to jail his opponent and claimed the system is rigged. And yet nothing seemed to stick. But now, a new nationwide poll published barely three weeks ahead of election day, suggests that Donald Trump has fallen a full 11 points behind Hillary Clinton. The poll by NBC News and The Wall Street Journal put Libertarian Gary Johnson at 7 per cent and the Green Party's Jill Stein at 2 per cent. The lead is even greater than the seven points Barack Obama beat John McCain nationally in 2008. Obama's margin of victory over Mitt Romney in 2012 was just four points. "Donald Trump's chances of winning this election have faded," Democratic pollster Fred Yang of Hart Research Associates told NBC. Yang's company conducted the survey with Republican pollster Bill McInturff and

his firm Public Opinion Strategies. "This poll is showing the writing on the wall," said Yang. This poll gives Clinton a greater lead than many others. A poll by The Washington Post scored Clinton 47-43 ahead of Trump, with Johnson on 5 per cent and Ms Stein at 2 per cent. An average of polls collated by Real Clear Politics gives Clinton a lead of 5.5 per cent.

Trump has spent most of the last week seeking to dismiss allegations from a growing number of women that he sexually assaulted them. In recent days, perhaps aware that the tide is against him, Trump has sought to suggest the election is "rigged" and claimed that the media is conspiring against him. But US Republican vice presidential candidate Mike Pence yesterday said his running mate will "absolutely" accept the election result, despite media "bias". His adviser Rudy Giuliani has also accused Democrats of "cheating".



IRAQ DROPS LEAFLETS OVER IS BASTION

AFP, Baghdad

Iraqi aircraft dropped "tens of thousands" of leaflets, some bearing safety instructions for Mosul residents, ahead of an operation to retake the city from jihadists, the military said. Iraq has dropped leaflets over Mosul before, and has also done so as part of operations to retake other cities seized by the Islamic State group in 2014 and 2015. Aircraft dropped "tens of thousands of newspapers and magazines on the centre of the city of Mosul carrying important news... to inform them of updates and facts and victories," said Iraq's Joint Operations Command, which distributed images of some of the leaflets. One image showed a leaflet containing safety instructions for Mosul residents, urging them to tape over windows to prevent the glass from shattering, to avoid the sites of air strikes for at least an hour after a place is bombed, and saying they should not drive if possible. The launch of the operation is expected to be announced soon, but it will mark only the start of a battle that is likely to be the most difficult and complex yet in the war against IS. The battle may spark a humanitarian crisis, with the United Nations warning that up to one million people may be displaced by the fighting as winter sets in. Even the recapture of Mosul will not mark the end of the war against IS, which still holds other territory in Iraq and is likely to turn increasingly to insurgent tactics such as bombings and hit-and-run attacks as it loses more ground.

CIA prepares revenge cyber attacks on Russia

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The White House is considering launching an unprecedented cyber attack against Russia in retaliation for their alleged interference in the US election, intelligence officials say. Current and former officials have said that the CIA has been asked to deliver options for "clandestine" cyber operations designed to "embarrass" the Russian government. The anonymous officials told NBC News the CIA were already operating cyber doors, selecting targets and making other preparations for an operation. The source said they had already gathered information that could potentially expose wrongdoing by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

IS jihadists flee 'doomsday' town

AFP, Beirut

Turkish-backed rebels captured the emblematic northern Syrian town of Dabiq from the Islamic State group yesterday, dealing a major symbolic blow to the jihadists. The defeat for IS came as US Secretary of State John Kerry was due to meet European allies in London as part of a new diplomatic push to end Syria's conflict, which has left more than 300,000 people dead since 2011. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Turkish state media and a rebel faction said opposition forces backed by Turkish warplanes and artillery had seized control of Dabiq yesterday. The town, in Syria's northern province of Aleppo, is of little strategic value. But Dabiq holds crucial ideological importance for IS and its followers because of a Sunni prophecy that states it will be the site of an apocalyptic battle between Christian forces and Muslims. The Observatory, a Britain-based monitoring group, said rebel forces "captured Dabiq after IS members withdrew from the area". Turkey's state-run Anadolu news agency said the rebels had taken control of Dabiq and surrounding villages and were working to dismantle explosives laid by retreating IS fighters.

It said nine rebels were killed and 28 wounded during clashes on Saturday. Dabiq has become a byword among IS supporters for a struggle against the West, with Washington and its allies bombing jihadists portrayed as modern-day Crusaders. Earlier this week, IS downplayed the importance of the rebel advance on the town. Turkey launched an unprecedented operation inside Syria on August 24, helping Syrian rebels to rid its frontier of IS jihadists and Syrian Kurdish militia. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday said Turkey would push further south to create a 5,000-square-kilometre (1,900 square-mile) safe zone in Syria. Kerry was to fly to London yesterday to brief Washington's European allies after "brainstorming" talks in Lausanne with the main players in Syria's conflict. But it did not produce a concrete plan to restore the truce that collapsed amid bitter recriminations between Washington and Moscow and new fighting on the ground. Kerry is expected to meet on Sunday with his counterparts from Britain, France and Germany, but hopes for a breakthrough have been dim. British foreign minister Boris Johnson is expected to propose "no-bombing zones" for Syria - including Aleppo - during the meeting, the Sunday Times reported.

SYRIA CRISIS

THE DABIQ PROPHECY

The northern Syrian town of Dabiq has major symbolic importance for the jihadists. According to a Sunni prophecy, the town will be the site of an apocalyptic battle between Muslim and Christian or infidel armies. The Muslim army will be decimated but ultimately prevail, ushering in the end of days. The town in Aleppo province has little military value compared to the IS strongholds of Raqqa in Syria and Mosul in Iraq. But Dabiq has become a byword among IS supporters for a struggle against the West, portraying Washington and its allies as modern-day Crusaders. IS has also named its online magazine after the town. The Dabiq prophecy, mentioned in canonical sayings of the Prophet Mohammed, is told in several different versions, but all feature a great battle between a Muslim army and the forces of "Rome", a reference to the Christian West. IS supporters have taken a wide range of recent events as further evidence of its truth. Some have kept a close count of the US-led coalition's members - now at 64 countries - in anticipation of when the prophecy's "80 banners" are reached. Others have seen Turkish participation in the fight against IS as proof of the prophecy, which says Muslim victory in Dabiq will be followed by an assault on Constantinople, the former capital of the Christian Byzantines and present-day Istanbul. But in a recent edition of its al-Naba online publication, IS appeared to step back from their suggestion the battle at Dabiq would herald the apocalypse. It said the imminent fight against Turkish-backed rebels was not the one in the prophecy. SOURCE: AFP