



ALEPPO CRISIS

(Clockwise from left) Children play while waiting to be evacuated with others from a rebel-held sector of eastern Aleppo; a view shows burning buses while en route to evacuate ill and injured people from the besieged Syrian villages of al-Foua and Kefraya in Idlib province; a woman poses for a picture in the government controlled area of Aleppo; and a boy sits with belongings he collected from the rubble of his house in Aleppo's Al-Arkoub neighbourhood. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: REUTERS



NEWSINbrief

13 killed in Indonesian military plane crash

AFP, Jakarta

Thirteen people have died after an Indonesian military transport plane crashed in the east of the country yesterday, officials said. The Hercules C-130 plane took off from Timika city in Papua province carrying 12 crew and one passenger, but came down in a remote mountainous region shortly before its scheduled landing, official said. Bad weather is thought to be the reason of the crash.

Airstrikes near Palmyra killed 38 IS jihadists

AFP, Beirut

At least 38 Islamic State group fighters have been killed in US-led coalition air strikes this week near Syria's ancient city of Palmyra, a monitor said on Saturday. The jihadists retook Palmyra in central Syria on December 11, just eight months after the army backed by Russia drove them out. Palmyra is a Unesco World Heritage site, and its recapture by IS gave the jihadists a propaganda boost.

New Indian army chief appointment sparks debate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

Lieutenant General Bipin Rawat's appointment as army chief has become the latest flashpoint between the government and Opposition, days after a political row over the recall of high-value currency washed out Parliament's winter session.

The Congress said it wasn't questioning Rawat's abilities but wanted to know why two senior people were superseded, going against a three-decades old tradition of elevating senior-most officers.

"Is it that all these officials who were superseded were not able? Or was it cherry picking?" Congress leader Manish Tewari asked.

Such political sparring over the army chief's appointment is unusual as parties usually steer clear of commenting on what is seen as an apolitical institution. But within hours of Rawat's appointment on Saturday, the Congress and the Left had criticised it.

Hostage taken in Jordan after gunmen kill 5

REUTERS, Amman

A Canadian woman was killed and several other tourists were taken hostage by gunmen who holed themselves up in a medieval castle in southern Jordan yesterday after killing at least four police officers in a shooting spree. Police in the mountainous city of Karak freed 10 people, including foreign tourists, but some were still being held in the Crusader-era castle from where the gunmen shot at security forces who were surrounding it, a security source said.

Police said the violence began when gunmen started shooting at officers patrolling the town before entering the castle, perched on top of a hill.

The identity of the assailants was not immediately clear.

China to return US drone Slams Washington for 'hyping up' the incident

REUTERS, Beijing

China will return an underwater US drone seized by a naval vessel this week in the South China Sea, both countries said on Saturday, but Beijing complained that Washington had been "hyping up" the incident.

The drone, known as an unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV), was taken on Thursday, the first seizure of its kind in recent memory. The Pentagon went public with its complaint after the action and said on Saturday it had secured a deal to get the drone back.

"Through direct engagement with Chinese authorities, we have secured an understanding that the Chinese will return the UUV to the United States," Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said in a statement.

The drone, which the Pentagon said was operating lawfully was collecting data about the salinity, temperature and clarity of the water about 50 nautical miles northwest of Subic Bay, off the Philippines.

It was seized just as the USNS Bowditch was about to retrieve it, US officials said.

China's Defense Ministry said a Chinese naval vessel discovered a piece of "unidentified equipment" and checked it to prevent any navigational safety issues before discovering it was a US drone.

"China decided to return it to the US side in an appropriate manner, and China and the US have all along been in communication about it," the ministry said on its website.

"During this process, the US side's unilateral and open hyping up is inappropriate, and is not beneficial to the smooth resolution of this issue. We express regret at this," it added.

The drone incident has raised fresh concerns about China's increased military presence and aggressive posture in the energy-rich South China Sea, through which about \$5 trillion in trade is shipped every year. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also have claims to the waterway.

New satellite imagery shows China has installed weapons, including anti-aircraft and anti-missile systems, on all seven artificial islands it has built in the South China Sea, a US research group said this week.

Iran discusses nuke ships plan with IAEA chief

AFP, Tehran

Iran discussed its plans for nuclear-powered ships with UN nuclear chief Yukiyo Amano yesterday, saying it would present details within three months.

Amano did not comment on Tehran's plans to produce nuclear-powered engines, but said Iran had so far met all of its commitments under last year's nuclear deal.

President Hassan Rouhani told Amano he hoped "Iran and the IAEA can have good technical cooperations on the production of nuclear propellants for maritime transport," the government's website reported.

Ali Akbar Salehi, head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation said they "discussed the nuclear-powered engines in detail," adding that talking points included the level of uranium-enrichment required for the ships.

'Let them keep it'

Trump responds in war of words with China over seized US drone

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Donald Trump has said the United States should let China keep the US Navy drone it seized in the South China Sea.

In his second tweet about the controversy on Saturday, the President-elect said: "We should tell China that we don't want the drone they stole back - let them keep it!"

His comment came a few hours after the US military announced it had reached an understanding with China for the return of the underwater glider.

According to the Pentagon, the drone was seized on Thursday while collecting unclassified scientific data in the South China Sea, which China claims virtually in its entirety.

China said its military seized the glider to ensure the safe navigation of passing ships, but said it would give it back.

It was unclear what effect, if any, Trump's tweet would have on the agreement with the Chinese.

Initially misspelling "unprecedented," Trump tweeted on Saturday morning: "China steals United States Navy research drone in international waters - rips it out of water and takes it to China in unprecedented act."

He later deleted and then reposted the tweet to correct the spelling.

Relations were already tense between the US and China after Trump's decision to talk with Taiwanese president Tsai Ing-wen by phone on 2 December.

The President-elect later said he did not feel "bound by a one-China policy" regarding the status of Taiwan, unless the US could gain trade or other benefits from China.



PHOTO: REUTERS

People carry goods taken from a supermarket after it was broken into, in Ciudad Bolivar, Venezuela, on Saturday. Desperate Venezuelans looted delivery trucks and clashed with police as a botched plan to introduce new banknotes left people without cash -- the latest shortage in a spiraling economic crisis.

100,000 displaced: IOM

AFP, Baghdad

More than 100,000 people have been displaced as a result of the massive operation to recapture Iraq's second city Mosul, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said yesterday.

Iraq launched the operation to retake Mosul -- the last Iraqi city held by the Islamic State jihadist group -- on October 17.

Since the battle began, 103,872 people have been displaced, the vast majority from Nineveh province, of which Mosul is the capital, the IOM said on its displacement tracking webpage.

Iraqi Displacement and Migration Minister Jassem Mohammed al-Jaffi told AFP that 118,000 people had been displaced since the operation started, a figure that includes those who fled the IS-held Hawijah area in another province.

Aid organisations had warned that a million or more people could be displaced

by the Mosul operation, but those figures have yet to materialise.

Forces from Iraq's elite Counter-Terrorism Service have advanced deep into eastern Mosul, and nearly half of that side of the city has been recaptured.

But forces on the southern front have stalled south of Mosul, and those north of the city have also not entered it so far.

West of Mosul, Iraqi paramilitaries aim to retake Tal Afar, located between the city and Syria, but have yet to launch an assault on the town itself.

IS overran large areas north and west of Baghdad in 2014, but Iraqi forces have since regained much of the territory they lost that year.

The humanitarian situation of the besieged population is causing alarm amid reports of food, water and fuel shortages, while the fighting is making access to hospitals difficult.

The story of five women killed for having fun

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

It was just a few seconds, a video clip of several young women laughing and clapping to music, dressed for a party or a wedding in orange headscarves and robes with floral patterns. Then a few more seconds of a young man dancing alone, apparently in the same room.

The cellphone video was made six years ago, in a village deep in Kohistan, a rugged area of northwest Pakistan. It was the last time the young women, known only as Bazeegha, Sareen Jan, Begum Jan, Amina and Shaheen, have ever been definitively seen alive.

What happened to them remains a mystery. Their fates have been shrouded by cultural taboos, official inertia, implacable resistance from elders and religious leaders suspected of ordering their deaths, and elaborate subterfuges by the families who reportedly carried out those orders.

According to court filings and interviews with people who investigated it, the families confined the girls for weeks, then killed them and buried them somewhere in the Kohistan hills. Later, when investigators appeared, relatives and community leaders insisted that the girls were still alive and produced a second set of similar-looking girls to prove it.

Today, the truth is finally beginning to emerge. The case was dismissed in 2012, but last month the high court reopened it and ordered a new investigation.

আমরা সবসময় জিজ্ঞেস করতে পারি, 'বাচ্চা কী খাচ্ছে?'

জন্ম থেকে দুই বছর বয়স পর্যন্ত শিশুদের মায়েরা প্রায়ই দুটি প্রধান অসুবিধার সম্মুখীন হন। মায়েরা যখন এ দুটি অসুবিধার সম্মুখীন হন তখন একজন ডাক্তার মাকে সাহায্য করতে পারেন, সমস্যা দু'টি হলো—

● বাচ্চা ঠিকমতো দুধ পাচ্ছে না এবং

● বাচ্চা খেতে চায় না

আমরা মায়েরদের সঠিক পরামর্শ দিয়ে সাহায্য করতে পারি, মায়েরদের বলুন—

মায়ের দুধ বাড়াতে হলে—

● বাচ্চাকে সঠিকভাবে ধরতে ও বুকে লাগাতে হবে

● দিনে-রাতে সময় নিয়ে ঘন ঘন দুধ দিতে হবে

● একবার একটি স্তন থেকে সম্পূর্ণরূপে দুধ দেয়া শেষ করে অন্য স্তন থেকে দুধ দিতে হবে। এতে আরো বেশি পরিমাণ দুধ তৈরি হবে

● প্রথম ৬ মাস পর্যন্ত শুধুমাত্র মায়ের দুধ দিতে হবে, একফোঁটা পানিও দেয়া যাবে না

যখন বাচ্চা দিনে-রাতে কমপক্ষে ৬ বার প্রস্রাব করবে, ভালোভাবে ঘুমাবে ও খেলাধুলা করবে তখন একজন মা বুঝবে যে বাচ্চা যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে দুধ পাচ্ছে। এর বিপরীত হলেই বুঝতে হবে বাচ্চা ঠিকমতো দুধ পাচ্ছে না।

যেসব বাচ্চা খেতে চায়না, তাদের—

● জোর করে খাওয়াবেন না

● ধৈর্য ধরে সময় নিয়ে বাচ্চাকে খাওয়াতে হবে

● বাচ্চাকে ঘরের তৈরি বিভিন্ন ধরনের খাবার দিতে হবে

● জুস, বিস্কিট, চকলেট, চিপস দিয়ে বাচ্চার পেট ভরানো যাবে না, এতে তার ক্ষুধা নষ্ট হয়ে যাবে

● বাচ্চাকে রোগমুক্ত রাখতে হলে, তাকে খাওয়ানো আগে সাবান দিয়ে ভালোভাবে হাত ধুয়ে নিতে হবে

পরিবারে পরিচর্যা অবদান

স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ দপ্তর