

NEWSIN brief

London bus smash injures passengers

AFP, London
A London bus ploughed into a shop on a busy street in the British capital yesterday, leaving two people trapped and others hurt after the driver blacked out, witnesses said. Pictures on social media showed shattered glass and paramedics tending to passengers on the upper deck of the red double-decker bus.

Dilip Kumar discharged from Mumbai hospital

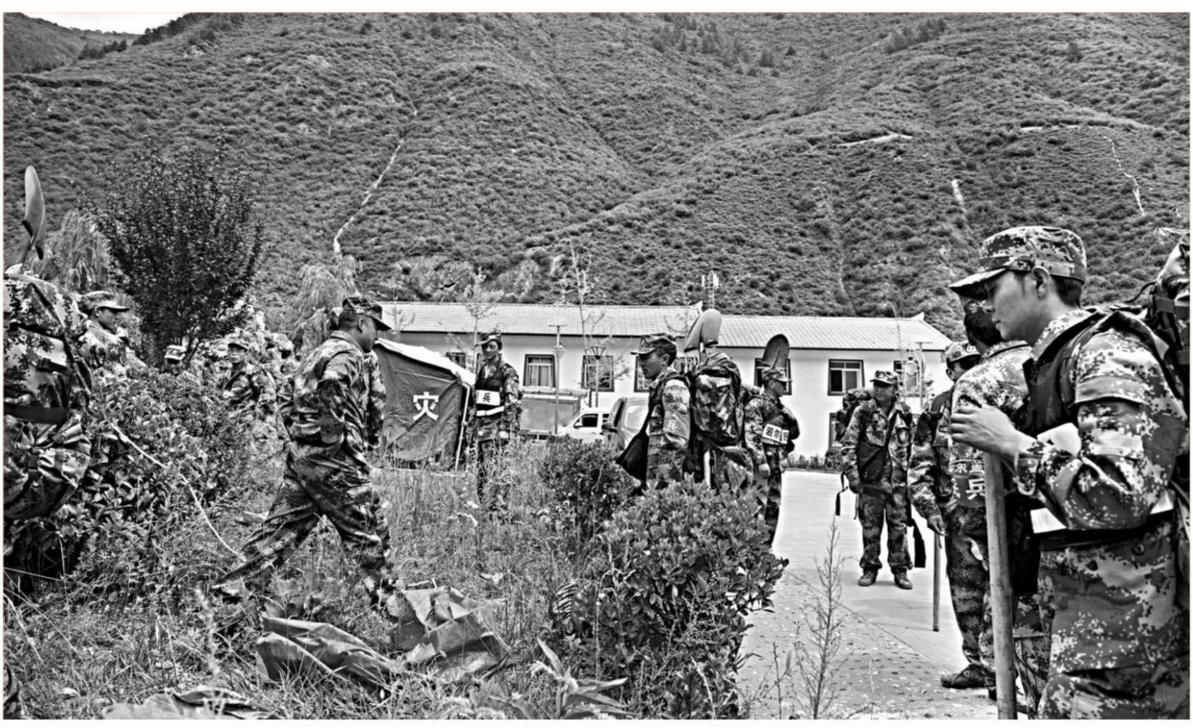
TNN, Mumbai
Bollywood veteran Dilip Kumar, who was admitted to Lilavati Hospital, Bandra in a critical condition last week, was discharged on Wednesday after his kidney functions normalised. The 94-year-old thespian's health condition deteriorated last Thursday after his kidneys nearly stopped functioning.

Pakistan's 'Mother Teresa' dies aged 87

REUTERS, Karachi
German-born nun Ruth Pfau, who devoted her life to eradicating leprosy in Pakistan, died yesterday in Karachi. She was 87. Widely known as Pakistan's Mother Teresa, Pfau was eulogised by the prime minister and army chief for her contributions towards freeing the country of the contagious disease.

Nepal criminalises 'period banishment'

AFP, Kathmandu
Nepal's parliament Wednesday criminalised an ancient Hindu practice that banishes women from the home during menstruation. Many communities in Nepal view menstruating women as impure and in some remote areas they are forced to sleep in a hut away from home during their periods.



Chinese soldiers with shovels prepare to set off on rescue operations at a temporary camp in Zhangzha yesterday, after a 6.5-magnitude earthquake hit Sichuan province. China ramped up its response to the earthquake that killed 20 people and injured hundreds, sending supplies and personnel into the mountainous zone as rescuers fanned out to search for more victims. PHOTO: AFP

Bhutan rejects China's claim on Doklam

TNN, New Delhi
The government of Bhutan yesterday refuted Chinese foreign ministry claims about Thimpu telling Beijing that the trilateral border stand-off area in Doklam in the Sikkim sector is not Bhutan's territory.
A top Chinese diplomat Wang Wenli had claimed that Bhutan had conveyed to Beijing through diplomatic channels that the area of the stand-off is not its territory.
Wang, who is the deputy director general of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs in China's foreign ministry, reportedly conveyed this information to a visiting Indian media delegation on Wednesday.
She, however, did not provide any evidence to back her claim, which has been strongly denied by Bhutan.
Official sources in the Bhutanese Government told ANI over phone, "Our position on the border issue of Doklam is very clear. Please refer to our statement which has been published on the web site of Bhutan's foreign ministry on June 29, 2017."
Reacting to the developments in Doklam, Bhutan had on June 29 issued a press release in which it clearly stated that the construction of the road inside Bhutanese territory is a direct violation of the agreements and affects the process of demarcating the boundary between the two countries.
In the press release, Bhutan said that the Chinese Army started constructing a motorable road from Dokola in the Doklam area towards the Bhutan Army camp at Zompelri on June 16, 2017.
It further said that boundary talks between Bhutan and China were under way and the two countries had written agreements of 1988 and 1998 stating that they agree to maintain peace and tranquility in their border areas.

Ouster was insult to voters

Says Ex-Pak PM while addressing a rally in Rawalpindi, calls top court's decision to depose him a 'joke'

AFP, Islamabad
Pakistan's former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said the Supreme Court's decision to depose him last month was a "joke" and an insult to voters as he addressed a rally in Rawalpindi late Wednesday.
The speech marks the first time Sharif has publicly commented on the court's ruling and comes as the former prime minister leads a defiant procession from Islamabad to his party's stronghold in the eastern city of Lahore.
"I was not allowed to complete my third term," he said from a bomb-proof vehicle specially designed for the journey.
"No prime minister in Pakistan has ever been allowed to complete his term. This joke has been repeated for 70 years and Pakistan can no longer bear it, it's an insult to the voters," he said.
Sharif asked thousands of supporters to stand up for the "rule of law" and the mandate they had given him.
The procession took 12 hours to travel just 20 kilometres from the capital to Rawalpindi. Sharif said he would stay the night there before continuing towards Lahore, where he hopes to bring tens of thousands into the streets in a show of force.
Thousands of police earlier sealed off main streets in Islamabad and surrounding areas as fears lingered over security after a truck bomb exploded in Lahore Monday,

killing one person and injuring dozens.
Supporters clogged the streets in the capital, waving flags and chanting political slogans.
"The Supreme Court's judgement to disqualify him is disputed, so people have not accepted it," Sharif supporter Arshad Iftikhar, a retired government official, told AFP.
Others lining the route voiced frustration with the political elite.
"Around 50 percent of the people here are those who have just come to watch the scene," said bystander Nazakat Ali.
"These politicians are not doing any good for the people."
Sharif was the 15th prime minister in Pakistan's 70-year history -- roughly half of which has been spent under military rule -- to be ousted before completing a full term.
The top court sacked him last month after an investigation into corruption allegations against him and his family, bringing his historic third term in power to an unceremonious end and briefly plunging the nuclear-armed nation into political uncertainty.
The controversy erupted last year with the publication of 11.5 million secret documents from Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca documenting the offshore dealings of many of the world's rich and powerful.
Three of Sharif's four children -- including his daughter Maryam Nawaz, his presumptive political heir -- were implicated in the papers.



"No prime minister in Pakistan has ever been allowed to complete his term. This joke has been repeated for 70 years and Pakistan can no longer bear it."

MYANMAR'S TROUBLED RAKHINE STATE

UN warns aid workers of rising Buddhist hostility

REUTERS, Yangon
The United Nations has warned aid workers in western Myanmar of rising hostility and imminent protests from troubled Rakhine state's majority Buddhists, some of whom say humanitarian agencies are giving support to Rohingya Muslim militants.
Reuters has obtained the text of a "precautionary security notification" distributed to the 300 or so UN staff and to international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in Rakhine on Wednesday.
It notes the "increased likelihood of civil unrest" and the possibility of demonstrations at aid agency offices in the state already racked by violence.
The Office of the UN's resident coordinator in Myanmar confirmed it had issued the notification as part of routine safety and security practice.
The perception that UN agencies were supporting Muslim militants, and even their support to the broader Muslim community, the note said, "fuelled renewed social media

rhetoric and incidents of expressed hostility by some more hardline elements."
"Rumour and misinformation will continue to be used to fuel anti-UN and INGO sentiment and hostility and elevate anxieties," it said. "As usual heightened vigilance and the immediate reporting of any security-related information are recommended."
About 1.1 million Rohingya Muslims live in Rakhine, but are denied citizenship and face restrictions on their movements and access to basic services. About 120,000 remain in camps set up after deadly violence swept the state in 2012, where they rely on aid agencies for basic provisions.
In October, Rohingya militants killed nine border police officers, sparking a security operation beset by allegations of rape, killings and torture by government troops.
Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi refuses to grant visas to UN investigators tasked with probing the claims and other abuses.

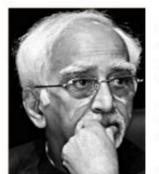


Unease among Muslims

Says former Indian vice president Hamid Ansari referring to incidents of intolerance, cow vigilantism

PTI, New Delhi
Former vice president Hamid Ansari said that there is a feeling of unease and a sense of insecurity among the Muslims in the country, asserting the "ambience of acceptance" is now under threat.
Ansari, whose second five-year term as the Vice-President ended yesterday, made these remarks in the backdrop of incidents of "intolerance" and cow vigilantism.
Stating that he had flagged the issue of "intolerance" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his cabinet colleagues, Ansari, 80, also described the questioning of citizens over their love for India as a "disturbing thought".
Asked in an interview on Rajya Sabha TV whether he shared his concerns with the prime minister, Ansari said that he had. "Yes...yes. But what passes between the Vice President and the Prime Minister in the nature of things must remain in the domain of privileged conversation," Ansari, who is

also the Rajya Sabha Chairman, said.
He said that he has also flagged the issue with other union ministers. "Well, there is always an explanation and there is always a reason. Now it is a matter of judgement, whether you accept the explanation, you accept the reasoning and its rationale," he said when asked about the response of the government.
In the interview on Wednesday, Ansari referred to incidents of lynching and 'ghar wapsi' and alleged killings of rationalists as a "breakdown of Indian values, breakdown of the ability of the authorities at different levels in different places to be able to enforce what should be normal law enforcing work and over all the very fact that Indianness of any citizen being questioned is a disturbing thought."
The Bharatiya Janata Party leader Shahnawaz Hussain hit back at Ansari for his comments. While speaking to ANI, Hussain said that there is no better country for Muslims than India dismissing Ansari's claims that there is unease amongst the community.



The mother of a Palestinian assailant stands next to the remains of his house after it was demolished by Israeli troops in the West Bank village of Deir Abu Mashal, near Ramallah yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Lanka FM quits over bond scam probe

AFP, Colombo
Sri Lanka's foreign minister resigned yesterday after being linked to a controversial financial trader under investigation for allegedly causing millions of dollars of losses to the island's coffers.
Ravi Karunanayake, 54, stepped down from the cabinet amid questioning over his connection to an insider trading scandal at Sri Lanka's central bank after the new government was elected in January 2015.
"I am not guilty of any of the allegations, but I am resigning my portfolio to ensure that opponents are not able to destabilise our unity government," Karunanayake said.
Karunanayake has testified before an investigation ordered by President Maithripala Sirisena into

New Delhi imposes ban on plastic bags

PTI, New Delhi
The National Green Tribunal (NGT) yesterday imposed an interim ban on use of non-biodegradable plastic bags which are less than 50 microns in the entire national capital.
A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Swatanter Kumar also announced an environment compensation of Rs 5,000 on anyone found in possession of such banned plastic.
The tribunal has also directed the Delhi government to seize the entire stock of plastic within one week from yesterday.
The bench asked the AAP-ruled city government and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee to file an affidavit by a senior officer and inform it how directions with regard to waste management in the city were being implemented particularly in respect to plastics.
The green panel had last year banned the use of disposable plastic in Delhi and NCR with effect from January 1, 2017 and directed the city government to take steps to reduce dumped waste.
The Tribunal had on July 31, slammed the Delhi government over indiscriminate and rampant use of plastic in the national capital despite its prohibition.
The bench had directed the city government to strictly enforce its ban order in the city and sought a status report on the issue.

Migrant 'Little Picasso' exhibits in Belgrade

AFP, Belgrade
A 10-year-old Afghan refugee dubbed "Little Picasso" exhibited his paintings and photographs in Belgrade on Wednesday, hoping to raise money for a Serbian child's post-cancer therapy.
Farhad Noory has lived in a refugee camp in the city with his parents and two younger brothers for eight months, during which time his paintings of famous people have made him a local media star.
His range of portraits include German Chancellor Angela Merkel, surrealist painter Salvador Dali and footballer Cristiano Ronaldo.
Noory's family were part of the huge wave of migrants from South Asia, the Middle East and Africa hoping to start new lives in western Europe in recent years, but they got stuck in Serbia after the so-called "Balkan route" was shut down in 2016.

The boy's gift for art was spotted during language and painting workshops in Belgrade that were organised by local aid groups for refugees and migrants.
"We quickly realised how talented he was and sent him to a painting school as well as a three-month photography workshop, so this is a retrospective of what he learnt there," Edin Sinanovic from the Refugees Foundation, a local NGO, told AFP.
In addition to holding his first exhibition, "Farhad wanted to help someone, so he chose to dedicate it to a six-year-old Serbian boy who needs funds for his therapy after brain cancer," Sinanovic said.
Dressed in a black T-shirt and jeans, Noory, who speaks just a little English, admitted that he was "feeling stressed" at his first exhibition.
The smiling young artist said he wanted to help a child in difficulty because "we need to be kind", and he hoped to meet the boy for whom he was fundraising.



ANTI-TUNNEL GAZA WALL

Israel warns Hamas not to foil its project

REUTERS, Jerusalem
Israel warned Gaza's Hamas rulers yesterday not to try to foil its construction of a border wall designed to stop tunnels between the two sides.
It said it had mapped militant emplacements hidden under civilian sites in the Palestinian enclave that may be attacked in any new war. Hamas accused Israel of belligerence.
The unusually detailed Israeli threat followed a rocket launch on Tuesday which caused no damage in Israel and went unclaimed by Gazan groups. Israel responded with an air strike on a Hamas facility.
Such flare-ups have been relatively rare since the last Gaza war, in 2014, with Hamas mostly holding fire and reining in smaller militant factions.
But as Gaza's poverty and political drift deepens, both sides worry another conflict could erupt.
In September, Israel went public with a sensor-equipped underground wall being planted on its side of the 37 mile- (60 km) long border, a counter-measure developed after Hamas fighters used tunnels to blindside its troops during the war.
Israeli media published new disclosures by the military yesterday about the project, costing \$1.1 billion and to be completed within two years under an accelerated schedule.



then-central bank governor Arjuna Mahendran, who was sacked last April.
Mahendran was accused of misconduct surrounding alleged favours for his son-in-law, Arjun Aloysius, a bond dealer.
At the inquiry proceedings last week, Karunanayake, who is also the deputy leader of the ruling United National Partner (UNP), admitted his family had dealings with the controversial bond dealer, but insisted he was not involved in bond dealings.
Karunanayake, who was finance minister when the scandal broke, was given the foreign ministry in a cabinet reshuffle in May.