



A worker is digging graves at the Paloko cemetery in Waterloo, Sierra Leone, yesterday. Inset, A mother who lost her son is being consoled by a sympathiser. Sierra Leone began a week of mourning as it emerged that 105 children were among more than 300 people who perished in mudslides and torrential flooding, in one of the country's worst natural disasters. Hundreds of people are still remain missing.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Landslide kills 40 in DR Congo

AFP, Bunia
A landslide has swept over a fishing village on the banks of a lake in the northeast Democratic Republic of Congo, killing 40 people, a regional official said yesterday.
Part of a mountain engulfed "a fisherman's camp after heavy rains caused a landslide" the deputy governor of Ituri province, Pacifique Keta, told AFP.
He said 40 people were killed in the disaster in the village of Tora on the banks of Lake Albert on Wednesday.
It follows devastating floods in the Sierra Leone capital of Freetown on Monday that killed some 300 people.
A doctor at the nearby Tshomia hospital, Herve Isamba, said they were treating four people injured in the landslide.
Keta said that two people were also killed Wednesday when an illegal mine flooded in the nearby Walendu Pit area.
The vast country has experienced a number of previous such disasters.
In May 2010, a mudslide that swept over the eastern village of Kibiriga killed 19 people: the bodies of 27 others were never recovered.
In February 2002, about 50 people were found dead after a wave of mud and rocks hit the eastern town of Uvira, submerging about 150 homes.
Fishing on Lake Albert is one of the main occupations in Ituri, which borders Uganda.
The province, rich in gold deposits, saw several outbreaks of violence during the Second Congo War between 1998 and 2003.
That ended with the aid of a French-led international military intervention.

US in 'economic war' with China

Says Trump strategist Bannon, dubs white nationalists 'clowns'

AFP, Washington

White House strategist Steve Bannon argued forcefully in an interview published Wednesday that the United States is in an "economic war" with China, and the confrontation with nuclear-armed North Korea is just "a sideshow."
"To me the economic war with China is everything. And we have to be maniacally focused on that," he said in the interview with the American Prospect, a left-leaning website.
"If we continue to lose it, we're five years away, I think, ten years at the most, of hitting an inflection point from which we'll never be able to recover," he said.
Bannon, an economic nationalist and former CEO of the extreme-right Breitbart news website, is reported to be on shaky ground with President Donald Trump, who gave him only a tepid endorsement this week.
But in a frank, freewheeling telephone interview with American Prospect editor Robert Kuttner, Bannon talked about the infighting in the White House, now engulfed in a storm over Trump's defensive response to deadly violence at a white supremacist rally in Virginia.
Far from defending Trump, Bannon spoke with disdain about the white nationalist movement he helped cultivate as a former head of Breitbart.



North Korea crisis is 'a sideshow' of China trade war

"Ethno-nationalism -- it's losers. It's a fringe element. I think the media plays it up too much, and we gotta help crush it, you know, uh, help crush it more," he was quoted as saying.
"These guys are a collection of clowns."
Bannon also was dismissive of Trump's vow to bring down "fire and fury" on North Korea if it continued to threaten the United States with missiles and nuclear weapons.
"There's no military solution [to North Korea's nuclear threats], forget it," he said. "Until somebody solves the part of the equation that shows me that ten million people in Seoul don't die in the first 30 minutes from conventional weapons, I don't know what you're talking about, there's no military solution here, they got us."
According to Kuttner's account, Bannon described his fight within the administration to take a harder line against China's trade practices, and not fall into the trap of hoping China would play the role of honest broker in restraining North Korea.
"We're at economic war with China," he said. "It's in all their literature. They're not shy about saying what they're doing."
"One of us is going to be a hegemon in 25 or 30 years and it's gonna be them if we go down this path. On Korea, they're just tapping us along. It's just a sideshow."
Of his adversaries in the State Department and Defense who want to enlist China's help Bannon said "they're wetting themselves."

Trump slams critics, media

Refuses to back down, says his comments were 'misrepresented'

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump hit back yesterday at critics of his response to racial violence in the Virginia city of Charlottesville, and defiantly reiterated his opposition to the removal of monuments to the pro-slavery Civil War Confederacy.
Trump has been engulfed in controversy, strongly rebuked by members of his own Republican Party and snubbed by a string of American business leaders, over his reaction to the unrest in Charlottesville on Saturday.
In a series of Twitter posts yesterday, Trump showed no sign of backing down.
He criticized efforts in a growing number of US states, including Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas, to remove statues honoring Confederate leaders.
Confederate symbols and monuments are viewed by many Americans as symbols of hate.
"Sad to see the history and culture of our great country being ripped apart with the removal of our beautiful statues and monuments. You can't change history, but you can learn from it," Trump wrote.
Trump also took a swing at his favorite punching bag, claiming his comments about the deadly

violence in Charlottesville were misrepresented by media.
"The public is learning (even more so) how dishonest the Fake News is. They totally misrepresent what I say about hate, bigotry etc. Shame!," the US president wrote on Twitter.
One protester was killed in violent clashes between neo-Nazi and so-called "Alt-Right"

CHARLOTTESVILLE VIOLENCE
UN chief: Racism, xenophobia must be opposed
Top US general condemns racism

demonstrators and counter-protesters in the Virginia college town of Charlottesville Saturday.
Both Democrat and Republican politicians criticized Trump's initial response -- when he condemned violence "on all sides" -- as inadequate.
On Monday he singled out the Klu Klux and neo-Nazis as "repugnant," but on Tuesday he

returned to his original position and said there had been "blame on both sides."
Trump's weak condemnation of the racist far-right set off a political firestorm across the US political spectrum. World leaders also criticized Trump's response.
Trump lashed out yesterday at Republican US Senators Lindsey Graham and Jeff Flake, two leading critics, as well as the media, and said he not had drawn any moral comparisons between white supremacists and those who opposed them.
Graham said on Wednesday that Trump's words suggested "moral equivalency" between the two sides and called on the president to use his words to heal Americans.
UN chief Antonio Guterres on Wednesday said racism and xenophobia must be countered in the United States as everywhere in the world.
"Racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or Islamophobia are... poisoning our societies and it is absolutely essential for us all to stand up against them everywhere and every time," he said.
The United States' top general also condemned "racism and bigotry" yesterday, joining other military leaders in their denunciation of

WAR ON DRUGS

Cops kill 25 more in Philippines

AFP, Manila

Police in the Philippine capital shot dead 25 drug suspects in another round of anti-drug raids, authorities said yesterday, as they followed President Rodrigo Duterte's call for dozens of deaths a day.
The killings, carried out in Manila from Wednesday to yesterday morning, came after police shot dead 32 drug suspects in the province neighbouring the capital early in the week in what was billed as a "shock and awe" operation against drug traffickers.
Duterte on Wednesday praised the killings of the 32 suspects in Bulacan province, describing the operations as "good".



A woman weeps near the body of a man who police said was killed in a spate of drug related violence in Manila, Philippines. Picture was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



HK Umbrella Movement leaders jailed

AFP, Hong Kong

Joshua Wong and two other young leaders of Hong Kong's huge Umbrella Movement rallies were jailed yesterday for their role in the 2014 pro-democracy protests, dealing a fresh blow to the campaign for political reform.
The sentences handed down by the city's Court of Appeal came as fears grow that Beijing is tightening its grip on the semi-autonomous city and that rule of law is being compromised.
Wong, who became the face of the mass protests while still a teenager, as well as Nathan Law and Alex Chow were given terms of six months, eight months and seven months respectively after the court upped their previous non-custodial sentences.
"The court has a responsibility to send out a clear message to society, that in activities such as rallies, marches and protests, when rights are freely exercised, participants must abide by the law," the judgment said.
Anyone who receives a jail term of more than three months is barred from running for Hong Kong's partially directly elected parliament for five years.
Wong turns 21 in October which would have made him eligible to run for lawmaker, something he had said he wanted to do.
As he was led away by security, Wong shouted: "Hong Kong people, don't give up!"

Fury as Muslim-baiter Aussie MP wears burqa in Senate

AFP, Sydney

Australian anti-immigration politician Pauline Hanson caused a furore yesterday when she entered the Senate wearing a full burqa, earning a blistering rebuke from the country's top lawyer for the "appalling" stunt.
Hanson wore the Islamic garment in the chamber to highlight what she said were the security issues it posed, linking it to terrorism as fellow senators heckled her.
"Will you work to ban the burqa in Australia in light of what is happening with national security?" she said after whipping off the garment to question Attorney-General George Brandis. She added: "Terrorism is a true threat to our country, many Australians are in fear of it."
Brandis said his conservative government had no such plans, warning Hanson she risked offending the Muslim community by

wearing a burqa when she was not a follower of Islam.
Brandis, his voice cracking with emotion, said that being a strict adherent Muslim, such as those who wear the burqa, was "absolutely consistent" with being a law-abiding citizen.
"We have about half a million Australians in this country of the Islamic faith and the vast majority of them are law-abiding, good Australians," he said.
Brandis' remarks prompted a standing ovation from his political opponents in the Labor and Greens parties.
Hanson first gained prominence in the 1990s, when she warned Australia was in danger of being "swamped by Asians".
After a 12-year hiatus from politics she returned in 2014, this time targeting Muslims and was elected to the Senate two years later as leader of the right-wing One Nation party.



Melbourne world's most liveable city

AFP, Sydney

Melbourne has topped a list of the world's most liveable city for the seventh year running but terrorism and diplomatic tensions are eroding living conditions worldwide, an annual report from the Economist has found.
The Australian city was ranked number one out of 140 cities, slightly ahead of the Austrian capital Vienna, with the Canadian trio of Vancouver, Toronto and Calgary competing the top five.
"This is a win for all Victorians, who contribute so much to making Melbourne the best place to live in the world," said Victorian state premier Daniel Andrews.
The survey, released Wednesday, scores cities on five broad categories: stability; healthcare; culture and environment; education and infrastructure.
The Economist's Intelligence Unit found that medium-sized cities in wealthy countries fared best.
"These can foster a range of recreational activities without leading to high crime levels or overburdened infrastructure," the report said.
Major hubs like New York, London, Paris and Tokyo were hives of activity but lost points due to high levels of crime and overcrowded public transport.
More broadly, global stability continued to weaken due to the increase in terror-related incidents world wide.
The United States had seen a decline in a number of its cities over the past few years related to growing unrest.

There will be no war

Says South Korea president; US says peace with North a 'possibility'

AFP, Seoul

There will be no war on the Korean peninsula, South Korean President Moon Jae-In said yesterday, saying Seoul effectively had a veto over US military action in response to the North's nuclear and missile programmes.
Tensions have soared on the peninsula in recent months, with Pyongyang carrying out its first successful tests of an inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM), bringing much of the US within range.
Last week it threatened to send a salvo of rockets towards the US territory of Guam -- although it appears to have backed off for now -- while US President Donald Trump promised "fire and fury" and said that Washington's weapons were "locked and loaded".
The intense rhetoric on both sides has raised fears of a miscalculation leading to catastrophic consequences -- Pyongyang has vast artillery forces deployed within range of Seoul, where millions of people live.
But Moon said: "I will prevent war at

all cost."
"I want all South Koreans to believe with confidence that there will be no war," he told a press conference marking his first 100 days in office.
Meanwhile, the chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff General Joe Dunford yesterday said peace with North Korea is a "possibility", but warned the US has "credible, viable military options" for dealing with the errant regime.
The United States has been the South's security guarantor since the end of the Korean War in 1953, which left the peninsula divided and technically still in a state of conflict with no peace treaty signed.
Washington has 28,500 troops stationed in the country to protect it from the North.
But Moon said Seoul effectively had a veto on military action by the US.
Washington and Trump had agreed that "no matter what option they take about North Korea, all decisions will be made after consulting with and getting agreement with the Republic of Korea".

