

NEWSIN brief

Germany plans border controls citing terror

Germany will extend border controls indefinitely amid the 2015 mass refugee and migrant influx by another six months until May 2018, Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere said yesterday. He justified the move with the continued threat of terrorism, illegal migration into Schengen zone.

US Homeland Security chief nominated

A senior White House official with background in infrastructure and cyber security issues was nominated Wednesday to head the Department of Homeland Security. Trump said he was nominating Kirstjen Nielsen to run the massive department with 230,000 employees.

Abe nears majority in Japan election: polls

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling coalition is heading for a two-thirds majority in Japan's forthcoming election, surveys suggested yesterday. Abe's conservative LDP and its junior coalition partner Komeito are likely to win around 300 of 465 seats in the October 22 election, according to polls by Kyodo News.

Macron to visit India for solar summit

France's President Emmanuel Macron will attend a summit to launch a solar power alliance in India in December, authorities announced yesterday. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres also expected to attend the event organised by India's leader Narendra Modi in New Delhi on December 8-9.

Duterte threatens to expel EU diplomats

Alleges blood warrants to remove Philippines from UN

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday threatened to expel European ambassadors, accusing their governments without evidence of plotting to get Manila expelled from the United Nations. Duterte signalled in a fiery speech he would not tolerate European criticism of his drug war, which has since he took office 15 months ago and led rights groups to warn of a potential crime against humanity. Duterte accused the European Union of interfering in the Philippines' domestic affairs, and alleged it wanted to get the Philippines expelled from the UN. "Just like that you tell us, 'You will be excluded in the UNS. Son of a whore go home,'" Duterte said yesterday. "European nations are taking advantage of the Philippines being poor."



"You give us money then you start to orchestrate what things should be done and which should not happen in our country... We are past the colonisation stage..." Duterte said he was prepared to expel European ambassadors out of the country if their governments tried to expel the Philippines. "You think we are a bunch of morons here. You are the me. Now we the ambassadors of those countries listening now, tell me, because we can have the diplomatic channel cut tomorrow. You leave my country in 24 hours, all, all of you..." The EU has made no public comments about wanting to remove the Philippines from the United Nations. However the EU parliament issued a resolution last year expressing concern over the "extraordinarily high numbers killed during police operations" in the drug war. It urged Duterte to "put an end to the current wave of extrajudicial executions and killings".

Woman uses Facebook to annul her marriage

A young Indian woman has proved in court she was illegally married off as a minor after submitting evidence from her husband's Facebook page, a child rights activist said yesterday. Sushila Bisshnoi, 19, appeared to a court in Rajasthan that proved their marriage was underage. "Many of his friends had posted congratulatory messages on his Facebook page," said Kirti Bharti, an activist whose Sarathi Trust charity has annulled many child marriages in Rajasthan. "The court accepted the evidence and declared the marriage invalid," she said of the ruling Monday. The couple were married at a secret wedding ceremony in Barmer district in 2010 when both were just 12 years old. Girls married off in Rajasthan often remain with their parents after the wedding ceremony until reaching 18 years of age when they are sent to live their husbands. India's highest court Wednesday declared sex with a minor child to rape even if the couple was married, a landmark ruling that closed a legal loophole around child marriage.



Palestinians celebrate in Gaza City after Hamas said it had reached a deal with Palestinian rival Fatah yesterday. Rival Palestinian factions Hamas and Fatah reached an agreement on ending a decade-long split following talks mediated by Egypt in Cairo, with president Hamad Abbas calling it a "final" accord.

'It takes two to tango'

Pakistan army chief says his country wants peaceful relations with 'belligerent' India

Pakistan has shown "genuine desire" to have peaceful relations with its "belligerent" neighbour India but it takes "two to tango", Pakistan's Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa said yesterday. At an event in Karachi to discuss security issues, General Bajwa said Pakistan needs to remove vulnerabilities well before they turn into threats. "With a belligerent India on our east and an unstable Afghanistan on our west, the region remains captive due to historical baggage and negative competition," the Army chief said. "But on our part, we are making a deliberate and concerted effort to pacify the western border through a multitude of diplomatic, military and economic initiatives..." "We have also expressed and demonstrated our genuine desire to have normal and peaceful relations with India; however, it takes two to tango," General Bajwa said. Despite what the Pakistani Army chief says, heavy shelling along the Line of

Control in Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistani forces happens frequently. On October 2, a 10-year-old boy and a teenage girl were killed and seven other people were injured in firing by Pakistani troops near Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district. On September 21, a two-day lull in cross-border firing and shelling, Pakistani troops targeted Indian border outposts and villages along the international border in Jammu and Samba districts, injuring three civilians. On Pakistan's economy, General Bajwa expressed concern about the country's "sky high" debts, saying the abysmally low tax to Gross Domestic Product ratio must change if the country has to "break the begging bowl". "We grew rich pickering but the debts are sky high. Infrastructure and energy have improved considerably but the current account balance is not in our favour," he said. According to figures released by Pakistan's Finance Ministry, the country's foreign debt and liabilities are at \$58 billion.



Qamar Javed Bajwa

Lanka recovers cash stolen from AFP bank

Sri Lankan authorities have recovered more than \$1.3 million stolen from a Taiwanese bank after two men were arrested in connection with the heist, an official said yesterday. An international manhunt was launched after a reported \$60 million was swiped when a criminal gang hacked into the Far Eastern International Bank's SWIFT system. The money was wired to accounts in the United States, Cambodia and Sri Lanka. The two men arrested over the theft had tried to withdraw large sums of money that had been wired to their accounts with a Sri Lankan bank in the capital Colombo. Police said yesterday the money had been sent by two Indian men, widening the scope of the investigation.

DAUGHTER, SERVANT MURDER CASE

Indian High Court acquits parents

An affluent Indian couple yesterday threw their appeal against a life jail term for the murder of their daughter and a servant in the latest sensational twist of a case that divided the nation and inspired a movie and a book. The Allahabad high court acquitted dentists Rajesh and Nupur Talwar after ruling there was insufficient proof that they slit the throats of 14-year-old daughter Aarushi and her Nepalese servant Hemraj Pakized in May 2008. The couple were not in the packed court for the hearing. They are in jail near New Delhi. Media reports said Rajesh Talwar hugged jail officials after hearing the verdict. Talwar's wife, a lawyer for the Talwars, told reporters outside the Allahabad court that the couple would be freed today. "The High court observed that they have been punished wrongly. They are not guilty," he said. "They were only present at home that night as parents and were punished. It was entirely wrong and an injustice against my clients..." "The court observed that the case against the Talwars was baseless. The evidence was weak," declared the lawyer. India has been riveted by the case ever since the first details of the double murder in the affluent New Delhi suburb of Noida emerged. The Talwars were convicted by a lower court in 2013 and sentenced to life prison. The film "Talwar" based on the murder packed cinemas in 2015 while journalist Avroon Sen published a bestselling book "Aarushi" the same year.

CONTEMPT OF COURT CASE

Pak EC issues arrest warrant for Imran

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) yesterday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in the contempt of court case against him for "repeatedly failing to appear for the hearing and for failing to send a written apology to the ECP for his absence in court..." The ECP has ordered that the PTI chairman be arrested and brought to the court in the case filed by PTI director and one of the party's founding members, Akbar S. Babar, on October 26. According to PTI spokesperson Naeemul Haq, the PTI is set to challenge the warrants in the Islamabad High Court (IHC). In yesterday's hearing — headed by Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Raza — the ECP suspended the proceedings as soon as they began and the members recovered in the chambers. During the meeting, the ECP denied a



Imran Khan

issue non-bailable warrants for Khan. Earlier on September 14, the ECP had issued bailable arrest warrants for Imran Khan following his failure to show up for the contempt of court proceeding, which was later suspended by the IHC on the PTI's petition. "A new warrant is issued in the same case where a [bailable] warrant was already suspended. We will also look into whether this is contempt of the IHC's full bench or not, and then [the party] will challenge it," said PTI member and lawyer Babar Awan. In August, the ECP had issued a second show-cause notice to Imran Khan after he failed to reply to court proceedings against him. Imran Khan had initially challenged the contempt of court proceedings against him. Imran Khan had regularly contested maintainability of the contempt petition and raised objections over the ECP's jurisdiction to initiate contempt proceedings against him; the commission, however, continued to issue show-cause notices and the legal right to hear the contempt case.



Rescuers load boats with boxes of food, mostly instant noodles, that will be distributed to local residents in Thach Thanh district, central province of Thanh Hoa, Vietnam yesterday.

Floods kill 37 in Vietnam

At least 37 people have died and another 40 are missing as floods and landslides ravage north and central Vietnam, destroying homes and leaving rescuers scrambling to find survivors, disaster officials said yesterday. Tens of thousands were evacuated after heavy rains lashed swathes of the country this week, as forecasters warned of more bad weather to come. Northern Hoa Binh is the hardest hit with 11 dead and 21 missing, prompting a state of emergency to be declared. "We are mobilising all forces to search for the missing," a disaster official told AFP by phone, declining to be named. Rescue efforts were hampered because of water and mud submerged roads in several areas, including in Hoa Binh where eight died in an overnight landslide. "People should be evacuated from dangerous areas, the safety of people and their belongings must be ensured," deputy prime minister Trinh Dinh Dung said on state-run Vietnam television. A terrified resident described severe flooding in another part of the province. "The flash flood was terrible. Water poured down from the hill, like a surge three metres higher. Traffic has been blocked by debris. The flood is Phat Ba Dien (old state-controlled TVExpress news site). A journalist from Vietnam News Agency reporting on the floods was swept away, with four other people as an overflowing river demolished a bridge in northern Yen Bai province Wednesday. One survived and authorities are still looking for the other four yesterday. Images on state media showed people wading through knee-deep water and tracts of forest that had been wiped out by landslide.

Taliban hostage family freed by Pak troops

A North American family that had been held hostage by the Afghan Taliban has been freed following an operation in Pakistan, the Pakistani military said yesterday. The hostages are "safe and sound and are being repatriated to the country of their origin", the army said in a statement, after the rescue in Kermi district, part of the semi-autonomous tribal belt along the Afghan border. "Pak Army recovered 5 Western hostages including 1 Canadian, a US and 3 National wife and their three children, from terrorist custody", it said in the operation, which was launched after Pakistani authorities received intelligence from US officials. It did not name the family, but Canadian Joshua Boyle and his American wife Caitlan Coleman were kidnapped by the Afghan Taliban during a backpacking trip in Islamabad 2012, and are believed to have had at least two children while in Pakistan. Pakistani officials provided no details about the operation. "We welcome media reports that a family including US citizens has been released from captivity," a US embassy spokesman in Islamabad told AFP without confirming the identity of the released hostages. Pakistan has been under increased pressure from Washington to crack down on alleged militant sanctuaries inside its borders after US President Donald Trump lambasted the country in a televised address last August. During the speech, Trump accused Islamabad of sheltering "agents of chaos" and suggested ties with Pakistan would be adjusted immediately but offered few details.



Portrait of a woman, likely a member of the Taliban hostage family.

ELECTION STANDOFF

Kenya bans protests in central Nairobi

Kenyan authorities banned protests in central Nairobi and other hotspots as they tried to keep a lid on presidential political turmoil in the build-up to a repeat presidential vote. The order issued yesterday covered business districts in Nairobi, the western city of Kisumu and the port of Mombasa — the scenes of repeated demonstrations since the Supreme Court annulled the latest vote in August, citing irregularities. The main opposition, which has held rallies calling for electoral reforms and the sacking of vote officials, said it would take to the streets again today, and on a daily basis from Monday, despite the ban. "The protests are covered by the bill of rights in the constitution. We do not hold the protests as a favour by the State," Dennis Ochieng, the spokesman for opposition leader Raila Odinga, said. Politicians and activists from all sides have traded insults and accusations since the court ruling, raising fears of a repeat of the ethnically charged violence that killed around 1,200 people after a contested 2007 vote. President Uhuru Kenyatta, whose August election victory was annulled by the court ruling, is due to stand again against Odinga on Oct 26.