

NEWSIN brief

Third Indian teen girl raped, killed in a week

AFP, New Delhi
A third teenage girl has been raped and burned alive in a week in India, the latest brutal sexual assault to shock the country. The 16-year-old died from the burns after being set alight by a 26-year-old man who acted after the young woman said she would tell her family about the rape. Two other teenagers were victims of similar attacks a week earlier.

Turkey detains 150 over 'coup links'

AFP, Istanbul
Turkish police yesterday detained 150 soldiers over suspected links to the movement Ankara blames for the 2016 failed coup, state media reported. The Istanbul prosecutor had issued arrest warrants for 300 soldiers, including 211 on active duty. Turkey accuses Gulen of ordering the failed coup.

Seven found dead in Western Australia

AFP, Sydney
Four children and three adults were found dead yesterday at a rural property near the Margaret River wine region in western Australia, in an apparent murder-suicide with two weapons found nearby. Police said they responded to an early-morning phone call and arrived to find a "horrific incident" in Osmington of Perth.

Top India cop kills himself

TNN, Mumbai
Himanshu Roy, former Maharashtra ATS chief and additional director general of police, committed suicide by shooting himself with his service revolver at his Malabar Hills residence in Mumbai yesterday. A suicide note recovered from his residence quoted Roy as saying that he was ending his life because he had been battling cancer for the past two years.



A demonstrator uses a sling to hurl stones at Israeli forces during a protest where Palestinians demand the right to return to their homeland, at the Israel-Gaza border in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. Inset, a wounded Palestinian is being evacuated from the protest site. The health ministry said a Palestinian man was shot dead during confrontation with Israeli soldiers.



PEACE EFFORTS IN KOREAN PENINSULA

No more ICBM tests: N Korea

AP, Tokyo
North Korea has informed a United Nations aviation agency that it will not conduct unannounced missile tests or further intercontinental ballistic missile launches because its nuclear arms program is now complete and it no longer needs to do such testing.

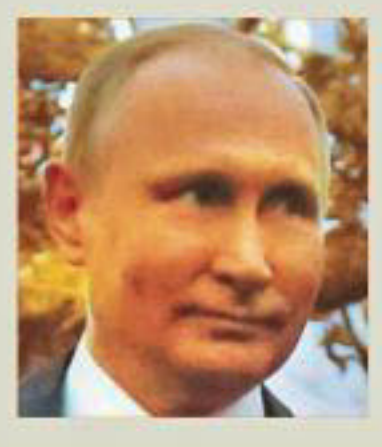
The pledge was made in meetings between North Korean officials and representatives of the UN's International Civil Aviation Organization who were in Pyongyang for talks this week, according to an ICAO statement yesterday.
Ri Yong Son, deputy director general of North Korea's aviation administration, said the tests will not be conducted because the North's "national nuclear arms program was complete," the statement said. Ri said North Korea will enhance its cooperation and communications between military and civil aviation authorities.
The ICAO statement said North Korea is seeking the reinstatement of suspended air services and wants to open new routes through its airspace for overflight traffic. It is also reportedly seeking approval for a route through South Korean airspace, though details on that were not mentioned in the final statement.
North Korea's pledge could open the way for airlines that now avoid its airspace because of worries about unannounced missile tests, allowing them to take more direct routes that would save fuel and time.
North Korea's missile tests have raised safety concerns in the past for commercial airliners and fishing vessels at sea, where debris from the missiles falls. North Korea tested its long-range missiles at a record pace last year, heightening such concerns and bringing a rebuke from the UN agency.

Putin, Merkel back Iran deal

Turkey says Trump was 'wrong' to pull out of 2015 nuclear accord

AGENCIES
Russian President Vladimir Putin has spoken with Germany's Angela Merkel and Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan in a bid to keep the Iran nuclear deal alive after the US decision to withdraw, the Kremlin said yesterday.
Putin has previously voiced "deep concern" over US President Donald Trump's decision and Russian officials have said they would work with European partners to preserve the agreement.
"The importance of preserving the deal from a point of view of international and regional stability was highlighted," the Kremlin said in a statement following a call between Putin and Merkel.
The two leaders also discussed the situation in Syria as well as Merkel's planned working visit to Russia next week, Moscow said.
Merkel has previously said Germany and its European partners would "do everything" to ensure Iran remains in the landmark 2015 nuclear deal.
The Russian president also spoke with his Turkish counterpart Erdogan, with the pair saying Trump was "wrong" to pull out of the accord, according to a Turkish presidential source late Thursday.
Ankara has been working closely with Moscow and Tehran over the past year on the Syrian peace process despite Turkey

and Russia being on opposing sides of the conflict and having a sometimes troubled relationship with Iran, reported AFP.
Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will visit Russia in the coming days as part of a diplomatic tour taking in Brussels and Beijing, his spokesman said yesterday.
The 2015 deal had been negotiated between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council -- Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States -- plus Germany.
Meanwhile, Europe's heavyweight economies took steps yesterday to safeguard their commercial and political interests in Iran, seeking to keep the nuclear deal with Tehran alive after Washington pulled out and said sanctions would follow.
Germany, France have significant trade links with Iran and remain committed to the nuclear agreement, as does Britain, and all three countries' foreign ministers plan to meet on Tuesday to discuss it, reported Reuters.
German Chancellor Angela Merkel said possibilities to save the deal without Washington needed to be discussed with Tehran, while France's Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said EU states would propose sanctions-blocking measures to the European Commission.
A member of Iran's clerical elite said yesterday Europeans could not be trusted after President Hassan Rouhani said Tehran would remain in nuclear deal with world powers.



European nations move to safeguard Iran interests
Iran should not trust Europe: elite cleric



Anwar to get royal pardon

Says Malaysian PM Mahathir, vows to recover billions of dollars lost in 1MDB graft scandal

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia's newly-elected Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday that the country's monarch has indicated he was willing to grant a full royal pardon to jailed politician Anwar Ibrahim immediately.
The Southeast Asian nation's political landscape has been shaped for decades by a bitter feud between Anwar and Mahathir, whose decision to sack Anwar as his deputy sparked an opposition movement, Reformasi, or Reform, in 1998.
But in 2016, Mahathir abandoned the long-ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition, and joined Anwar's opposition alliance to fight against scandal-hit former premier Najib Razak.
"It is going to be a full pardon, which means not only pardoned, but he is released immediately and after that he will be free to participate fully in politics," Mahathir told reporters a day after he was sworn to office following his alliance's shock win in Wednesday's election.
At 92, he is the world's oldest elected leader.
Mahathir said the king indicated he was willing to pardon Anwar immediately. A full

pardon by the king would mean Anwar can return to active politics.
Reporters and Anwar supporters gathered outside a hospital in Kuala Lumpur where he is recovering from a shoulder surgery. His wife, who visited Anwar in hospital, later told reporters he could be freed in days and pardoned within a week.
Anwar, 70, was due to be released on June 8 with time taken off his sentence for good behaviour. He began a five-year sentence for sodomy in 2015, a charge he and his supporters say was politically motivated.
Mahathir also vowed to reassure financial markets and return billions of dollars lost in a graft scandal at state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), which was a major factor in the election and in the ouster of Najib Mahathir's predecessor and former protégé.
The new prime minister said the country's attorney general was wrong to clear Najib in the 1MDB probe in 2016.
"He, in fact, has hidden evidence of wrongdoing, and that is wrong in law. We have to do what is permitted by the laws of this country," Mahathir said.



India's faith incomplete without Nepal: Modi

Aims to reset ties between neighbours

AFP, Kathmandu
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi prayed at a renowned Hindu temple with this Nepalese counterpart K P Sharma Oli yesterday as he started a visit aiming to reset strained relations between the neighbours.
"Nepal has welcomed me here as the prime minister of India, but this grand welcome is in honour of thousands of years of tradition between our two nations," Modi said at the Janaki Temple in Janakpur, which is dedicated to the Hindu goddess Sita.
"This will act as a foundation for our economic development, cultural ties and a strong people to people contact between the two nations."
Highlighting the strength of the Indo-Nepal ties, the prime minister said, "People of

India and Nepal are bound by mutual respect and admiration for each other. Nepal has been a tourism spot for decades for spiritualism. India's faith is incomplete without Nepal."
Modi has cast the visit as part of his "neighbourhood first" policy. It is the latest in a series of goodwill gestures by New Delhi, which has been alarmed by China's growing influence in Nepal.
In 2017, Chinese firms pledged more than \$8.3 billion in investment, dwarfing Indian commitments of \$317 million. In May last year, Nepal signed up to Beijing's ambitious One Belt, One Road infrastructure initiative.
Modi was due to fly to Kathmandu later where he will inaugurate construction of the India-backed \$1.4-billion Arun Three hydropower plant.



Iranians shout slogans during a protest against President Donald Trump's decision to walk out of a 2015 nuclear deal, in Tehran, Iran yesterday.

EBOLA OUTBREAK

WHO prepares for the worst in DR Congo

AFP, Geneva
The World Health Organization said yesterday it was preparing for "the worst case scenario" in a fresh outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
"We are very concerned, and we are planning for all scenarios, including the worst case scenario," WHO's head of emergency response Peter Salama told reporters in Geneva.
WHO has tallied 32 suspected or confirmed cases in the northwestern area of Bikoro, on the shores of Lake Tumbathe near the border with the Republic of Congo, including 18 deaths, between April 4 and May 9.
The cases include three healthcare workers, one of whom has died, Salama said.
The outbreak, declared by the DRC health ministry on Tuesday, is the country's ninth known outbreak of Ebola since 1976, when the deadly viral disease was first identified in then-Zaire by a Belgian-led team.
Ebola is one of the world's most notorious diseases, being both highly infectious and extremely lethal.
Salama said the strain raging in Bikoro was the Zaire strain, which also was responsible for the recent west Africa epidemic that killed more than 11,300 people.
He said the affected region of the vast strife-torn central African country is very remote and hard to reach.
This could have a benefit since it could slow down the spread of Ebola, but it also greatly complicates the response.
"It is an absolutely dire scene in terms of infrastructure," Salama said.

Japan's single women burden on state: MP

GULF NEWS ONLINE
An MP from Japan's governing party has drawn accusations of sexism after he said women should have multiple children and warned those who preferred to remain single that they would become a burden on the state later in life.
Kanji Kato, a member of prime minister Shinzo Abe's Liberal Democratic party, told a party faction meeting that when he is asked to give speeches at wedding receptions, he encourages the bride and groom to produce "at least three children."
When he encounters young women who say they do not intend to marry, Kato, who has six children and eight grandchildren, said: "I tell them that if they don't get married then they won't be able to have children, and that they'll end up in a care home paid for with the taxes of other people's children."
His comments, reported by TBS News, come days after official data showed the number of children in Japan fell to its lowest on record. As of 1 April 2018 there were 15.53 million children aged under 15, a fall of 170,000 from the previous year, according to the internal affairs ministry.
Last year about 941,000 children were born in Japan, the lowest number since records began in 1899.

PROBE INTO ALLEGED PAYMENTS FROM RUSSIAN OLIGARCH

Trump 'fixer' Cohen now target of prosecutors

AFP, Washington
As Donald Trump's longtime personal attorney, Michael Cohen earned a reputation as the "fixer" for the Manhattan real estate tycoon and a pit bull defender of his larger-than-life boss.
The brash 51-year-old New Yorker -- who once boasted of his office in Trump Tower -- is now in a fix of his own, under criminal investigation and accused of seeking to cash in on his access to the president.
His home and office have been raided by the FBI.
The White House on Wednesday brushed aside reports that Cohen received millions of dollars from a Russian oligarch and corporations seeking access to the administration.
"I haven't heard the president express any specific concerns about that," White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said when

asked about the revelations of the payments to Cohen.
"I would refer you to the president's outside counsel to address those concerns," Sanders said at the daily press briefing.
She also said she was not aware of any actions taken by the Trump administration to benefit the companies which made payments to Cohen.
The FBI probe was prompted by a tip from the office of Special Counsel Robert Mueller but the authorities have not said what crimes Cohen is suspected to have committed.
The various payments to Cohen were revealed by Michael Avenatti, the attorney representing porn star Stormy Daniels, who was paid \$130,000 just days before the November 2016 election to keep quiet about an affair she claims to have had with Trump a decade earlier.



Taliban kill 30 cops in Afghan province

REUTERS, Herat
Taliban fighters attacked Afghan bases in the western province of Farah, killing more than 30 police, officials said yesterday, as the insurgents stepped up their offensive in a region with vital opium smuggling routes into neighbouring Iran.
Farid Bakhtawar, head of the Farah provincial council, said fighters had stormed a police base overnight in Balabuluk, a district that has been under heavy pressure for months, killing at least 23 and wounding three.
In a separate attack in Farah city, Taliban fighters killed 11 police and seized a large quantity of weapons and equipment, he said.
The latest violence underlines the extent of the pressure faced by the Western-backed government of President Ashraf Ghani, already heavily criticized for a spate of suicide bombings in the capital, Kabul.
Last week, Taliban fighters, who challenge government control in almost half the country, seized a district in the northern province of Baghlan and there has been heavy fighting in areas from Faryab in the northwest to Ghazni, south of Kabul.
Farah, a remote and sparsely populated province between Iran to the west and the Taliban heartland of Helmand province in the south, has been a key battleground for the insurgents for months, with heavy fighting in Balabuluk district.