



GUIDING FORCE FOR GOOD

World mourns loss of Kofi Annan

There was an outpouring of condolences from leaders around the world yesterday after the death of former United Nations Secretary General and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kofi Annan. Here are some of the tributes:

United Nations: Current UN chief Antonio Guterres voiced deep sadness at the news, describing his predecessor as "a guiding force for good". "In many ways, Kofi Annan was the United Nations. He rose through the ranks to lead the organisation into the new millennium with matchless dignity and determination. Like so many, I was proud to call Kofi Annan a good friend and mentor."

The UN high commissioner for human rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said he was grief-stricken. "Kofi was humanity's best example, the epitome of human decency and grace. In a world now filled with leaders who are anything but that, our loss, the world's loss becomes even more painful. He was a friend to thousands and a leader of millions. There are some human beings who will seem irreplaceable to us, rare human beings. Kofi Annan is high among them. Goodbye my dear friend... goodbye Kofi."

Ghana: Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo declared a week of mourning, saying the national flag will fly at half-mast at home and in the country's diplomatic missions around the world in honour of "one of our greatest compatriots".

Russia: President Vladimir Putin said he was "fortunate" to have been in personal contact with Annan while he lead the UN. "I sincerely admired his wisdom and courage, his ability to make informed decisions even in the most complex, critical situations. His memory will live forever in the hearts of Russians."

Britain: British Prime Minister Theresa May said her "thoughts and condolences are with his family". "A great leader and reformer of the UN, he made a huge contribution to making the world he has left a better place than the one he was born into," she said on Twitter.

Spain: Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said that "today we lose a great humanist". "Annan... has left us but his legacy remains to keep working for peace, security and to strengthen the defence of human rights," Sanchez tweeted.

Nato: Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg said he was saddened to hear the news. "His warmth should never be mistaken for weakness. Annan showed that one can be a great humanitarian and a strong leader at the same time. The UN and the world have lost one of their giants," Stoltenberg wrote on Twitter.

EU: EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica said he was "profoundly saddened" by Annan's death. "He was such a great source of inspiration for all of us and will be greatly missed," he tweeted.

The Elders: The Elders organisation -- a group of statesmen co-founded by Annan which speaks out on global issues -- hailed the former UN chief as "a voice of great authority and wisdom in public and private".

South Africa: South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC) said Annan was "an eminent and distinguished son of Africa". "Annan was a great friend of the people of South Africa who played an immeasurable role in shaping the global agenda in favour of the people of the developing south," the ANC said in a statement.

SOURCE: AFP

Thousands await rescue

Torrential rain, more landslides worsen situation; death toll to rise

AFP, Kochi

Rescuers in helicopters and boats fought through renewed torrential rain Saturday to reach stranded villages in India's Kerala state as the toll from the worst monsoon floods in a century rose above 320 dead.

Dozens of military and coast-guard helicopters took troops to high risk areas seeking people trapped on the roofs of submerged buildings. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the crisis as "devastating" after visiting Kerala.

Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced late Friday that the monsoon death toll had dramatically risen to 324.

Media reports said at least another 14 bodies were found yesterday and state officials said they expected the number to rise as more landslides were reported and dam levels remained dangerously high. No new official toll was



A man is being winched up to an Indian Air Force helicopter in Kerala. Inset, A woman cries after she was evacuated from a flooded area yesterday. PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

FLOODS IN KERALA

Death toll passes 324; more unconfirmed deaths reported

Desperate pleas to rescue surface on social media

given however.

With power and communication lines down, thousands remained trapped in towns and villages cut off by the floods amid growing shortages of food and water.

Helicopters have been dropping emergency food and water

supplies across Kerala, while special trains carrying drinking water and rice have been sent to the state.

With rain alerts hanging over much of the state, dozens of dam and reservoir gates across the state have had to be opened as the waters reached danger levels, inundating many villages down-

stream.

Particular fears have been raised for Chengannur, about 120 kilometers north of the state capital Thiruvananthapuram, which has been cut off for four days.

Troops and military boats have been sent to the town and media reports said bodies had been

found. The state government did not immediately give an updated toll early yesterday. Dozens of military helicopters stepped up rescue operations across the state.

Saji Cherian, who represents Chengannur in the Kerala assembly, said he feared there were at least 50 dead in the town and broke down in tears as he pleaded for more help on Asianet TV late Friday.

"Please give us a helicopter. I am begging you. Please help me, people in my place will die. Please help us. There is no other solution, people have to be air-lifted," he said.

With no end in sight to the rains, people all over the state of 33 million have made panic-stricken appeals on social media for help, saying they cannot make contact with rescue services.

Some say they are trapped inside temples and hospitals as well as submerged homes.

An immediate grant of \$75 million was offered by the central government. Other state governments promised nearly \$20 million.

Opposition Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi demanded though that Modi declare the flood crisis a "national disaster".

Trump is 'drunk on power'

Says Brennan; ex-CIA directors issue unprecedented Trump condemnation

AGENCIES

zied commentary" on television.

Brennan was reacting to a report in The Washington Post on Friday that said the decision to revoke his security clearance had been finalised in order to switch the news cycle's focus from former White House aide Omarosa

"The fact that he's using a security clearance of a former CIA director as a pawn in his public relations strategy I think is just so reflective of somebody who, quite frankly, I don't want to use this term maybe, but he's drunk on power. He really is, and I think he's abusing the powers of that office," Brennan told MSNBC's Rachel Maddow during an interview.

Trump announced on Wednesday that he was stripping Brennan, who has been an outspoken critic of the president, of his security clearance and accused the former CIA director of "lying" and giving "increasingly fren-

Meanwhile, former CIA directors and another half dozen of America's most senior spies have issued an unprecedented condemnation of Trump, after his decision to blacklist their colleague John Brennan.

In a statement, ex-CIA bosses appointed by Republican and Democratic presidents -- including Robert Gates, George Tenet, Porter Goss, Leon Panetta and David Petraeus -- denounced Trump's decision to strip Brennan of his security clearance.

Dozens of other former spies signaled their support for the statement.

"The president's action regarding John Brennan and the threats of similar action against other former officials has nothing to do with who should and should not hold security clearances -- and everything to do with an attempt to stifle free speech," the statement read.

SAUDI-LED AIR STRIKE ON YEMEN BUS

US supplied bomb that killed children: report

AFP, Washington

The bomb that killed 40 children and 11 others in a Saudi-led coalition air strike on a bus in rebel-held northern Yemen was sold by the United States under a State Department deal with Riyadh, CNN has reported.

The numbers on shrapnel, of which images were taken shortly after the attack this month, indicate that it was a laser-guided Mk 82 bomb manufactured by defense contractor Lockheed Martin, CNN said Friday, citing munitions experts.

Former president Barack Obama banned the sale of precision-guided weaponry to Saudi Arabia after it used a similar bomb in an October 2016 attack that killed 140 people at a funeral in the rebel-held capital Sanaa.

But President Donald Trump overturned that ban after taking office in 2017. Fifty-six children were also among the 79 people wounded in the August 9 strike on Saada province, a rebel stronghold that borders Saudi Arabia, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The coalition has promised an internal inquiry but analysts and aid groups have voiced doubt that it is ready to provide the transparency and accountability demanded by the wider international community.

NEWS IN brief

Egypt tightens internet controls

AFP, Cairo

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has signed off on a law tightening controls over the internet in the country, the official gazette said yesterday. The legislation on "cybercrime" allows authorities, through a judge, to order the blocking of websites that "constitute a threat" to Egypt's national security or economy. Those who administer or visit such websites, intentionally or "in error without a valid reason", can now face jail time and fines.

Farage returns to fight Brexit plan

AFP, London

Nigel Farage, who spearheaded the drive to get Britain out of the EU, yesterday announced he was returning to the fray in a bid to scupper the government's Brexit blueprint. Farage quit the UKIP leadership following victory in the 2016 referendum on Britain's EU membership, claiming his mission was complete.

US still holds 565 immigrant children

AFP, Washington

The US government continues to hold 565 illegal immigrant children in custody, three weeks after a court deadline to reunite them with parents or guardians, a court filing showed Friday. The Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement reported the parents of 366 of the 565 children were outside of the United States, making reunifications difficult. The parents of 154 of the children indicated they did not want to be reunified with the children, it said.



People mourn next to the coffins containing bodies of victims of the Genoa bridge collapse, at the Genoa Trade Fair and Exhibition Centre in Genoa, Italy, yesterday. Italy mourned the victims with a state funeral, as rescue workers yesterday kept searching for the last few unaccounted people buried in the rubble. PHOTO: REUTERS

'Presumptuous' China rejects report that says its bombers training to strike US

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday rejected what it called an "irresponsible" Pentagon report claiming Beijing's bombers are likely training for strikes against US and allied targets in the Pacific.

The Thursday report said China was leveraging its growing military, economic and diplomatic clout to rapidly establish regional dominance, while its bombers were developing capabilities to hit targets as far from the Chinese mainland as possible.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said the report was "presumptuous and irresponsible", stating it was "in total disregard of facts" in a Saturday statement.

Beijing's military development was defensive in nature and intended to safeguard its territorial integrity, he added.

"We urge the US side to abandon the outdated cold-war and zero-sum mentality... (and) stop issuing such irresponsible reports year after year," he said.

China is engaged in a decades-long build-up and modernisation of its once-backward armed forces, and military leaders have set a goal of fielding a world-class force by 2050.

The PLA may demonstrate the "capability to strike US and allied forces and military bases in the western Pacific Ocean, including Guam," said the Pentagon report.

In that measure, the 193-nation assembly tasked Guterres with the drafting of proposals for "an international protection mechanism" for the Palestinians.

UN chief proposes options to protect Palestinians

AFP, United Nations

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Friday presented four options aimed at boosting the protection of Palestinians in Israeli-occupied territories, from sending UN rights monitors and unarmed observers to deploying a military or police force under UN mandate.

The 14-page proposals were contained in a report requested by the General Assembly in response to a surge of violence in Gaza, where 171 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since late March.

The UN chief stressed that for each of the options, cooperation by Israel and the Palestinians would be necessary.

Israel yesterday rejected the report.

"Instead of suggesting ways to protect the Palestinian people from Israel, the UN should instead hold the Palestinian leadership accountable for

GUTERRES 4-POINT PROPOSAL

- Providing a "more robust UN presence on the ground" with rights monitors and political officers to report on the situation.
- Pouring in more UN humanitarian and development aid to "ensure the well-being of the population."
- Creating a civilian observer mission that would be present in sensitive areas such as checkpoints and near Israeli settlements, with a mandate to report on protection issues.
- Deploying an armed military or police force, under a UN mandate, to provide physical protection to Palestinian civilians.

continually endangering its own people," Israel's UN Ambassador Danny Danon said.

A UN mandate for a protection force would require a decision from the Security Council, where the United States could use its veto power to block a measure opposed by Israel.

A small European-staffed observer mission was deployed in the West Bank city of Hebron in 1994, but Israel has since rejected calls for an international presence in flashpoint areas.

In the report, Guterres said the United Nations was already undertaking many protection initiatives but that "these measures fall short" of the concerns raised in a General Assembly resolution adopted in June.

In that measure, the 193-nation assembly tasked Guterres with the drafting of proposals for "an international protection mechanism" for the Palestinians.

SPORTS STARS WHO SHONE IN POLITICS



President of Pakistan Mamnoon Hussain (C) takes an oath yesterday from newly appointed Prime Minister Imran Khan (L) during a ceremony in Islamabad.

Imran Khan's anointment as Pakistan's new prime minister caps a more than two decade transformation from a World Cup winning cricket captain to a world leader, placing him in charge of a nuclear armed state. But he is not the only one to have swapped playing fields for the hustings. Here are five other sport stars who have made a similar switch:

George Weah: Weah's elevation to premier is only matched by George Weah, who was inaugurated as Liberia's president in January. Weah first learned to kick a ball in the slums of Monrovia, but went on to become one of Africa's greatest footballers, playing for a string of top European clubs and winning both FIFA's World Player of the Year and the Ballon d'Or. Weah avoided the brutal civil war that destroyed much of Liberia but vowed to put his wealth and fame to use, unsuccessfully running for president in 2005. Twelve years later he was triumphant, succeeding Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia's first democratic transition since 1944.

Arnold Schwarzenegger: Before the silver screen and politics, Austria-born Arnold Schwarzenegger was one of the world's best bodybuilders. While beefing up in a bid to get on his local soccer team, Schwarzenegger became infatuated by body-building, racking up title after title, until he became the youngest-ever winner of the Mr Universe competition. He moved Stateside to pursue acting and, despite his thick accent, finally made the big time in the 1980s with roles such as



Vitali Klitschko Manny Pacquiao George Weah

Conan the Barbarian and the Terminator. A moderate Republican served as governor of California for two terms.

Manny Pacquiao: Manny Pacquiao is idolised by millions in the poverty-afflicted Philippines after rising from the streets to the pinnacle of boxing. The winner of an unparalleled 12 world titles in eight different weight divisions, he has successfully parlayed his boxing fame into a political career. He was elected to the House of Representatives and then, in 2016, to the Senate, a high-profile national position which can be a stepping-stone to the presidency, an office he openly admits to having aspirations for.

Vitali Klitschko: Two-metre (6 ft 6 ins)-tall Klitschko went from a heavyweight champion who never suffered a knockout, to a Ukrainian protest leader and current Mayor of Kiev. He was always viewed as something of a quiet intellectual on the world boxing circuit, a fighter fluent in several languages with a PhD in sports science who liked to relax with a thick Dostoyevsky novel.

Arjuna Ranatunga: Four years after Imran Khan captained Pakistan to World Cup cricket victory, Arjuna Ranatunga did the same for Sri Lanka in 1996. He entered politics soon after retiring, briefly serving as a junior tourism minister, before spending years in the opposition. In 2015 he became the first former Sri Lankan international to be named a cabinet minister and has held a slew of ministerial positions since, including his current job as petroleum minister.

SOURCE: AFP