

NEWSIN brief

East Libyan warplanes hit Tripoli positions

Reuters, Tripoli

Eastern Libyan forces bogged down in street battles in a push to seize the capital Tripoli deployed warplanes on Friday to hit several government positions, as more civilians fled fighting. A week of battles has killed 75 people - mainly fighters but also 17 civilians - and wounded another 323, according to latest UN tallies. Some 13,625 people have also been forced out of their homes.

Man killed in cow lynching in India

AFP, New Delhi

Indian police yesterday said one man was killed and three injured in an attack by a mob while they were skinning a dead ox, in the latest case of so-called cow lynching. The latest incident happened in Jharkhand late on Thursday when men from a local Christian community were skinning the carcass of an ox in a field. Human Rights Watch said 44 people died in cow-related violence between May 2015 and December last year by Hindu vigilantes.

Pompeo says US won't quit fight in Venezuela

AFP, Santiago

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Friday defended sanctions on Venezuela and said the United States would not "quit the fight" in the socialist-run Latin American nation which is spiraling into deepening economic and political crisis. Pompeo is on a three-day trip to Chile, Paraguay and Peru, a clutch of fast-growing countries in a region where Washington's concerns are focused on China's growing presence as well as the Venezuelan crisis.

BITS OF HISTORY (APRIL 13)

- 1964: Sidney Poitier became the first black actor to win an Oscar, taking the best actor award for "Lilies of the Field".
- 1966: Abdul Salam Arif, president of Iraq, was killed in a helicopter crash.
- 1975: Christian militiamen in Lebanon killed 22 Palestinians on a bus in the Ain er-Rummaineh suburb of Beirut. This attack is generally accepted as the starting point of the Lebanese Civil War.
- 2016: Syria holds parliamentary election, denounced by opponents of President Bashar al-Assad and Western powers as illegitimate.

Things can get 'dark and dangerous': Kim

North Korea leader gives US until year end to change policy to continue nuke talks

Agencies

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is calling on the US to stop "its current way of calculation" if it is interested in continuing diplomatic talks, according to a report from the country's state news agency KCNA.

"First of all, it is necessary for the United States to stop the current way of calculation and approach us with a new way of calculation," Kim said in Pyongyang at the first meeting of the 14th session of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, KCNA reports.

"What is obvious is that if the United States sticks to the current political way of calculation, the prospects for problem solving will be dark and very dangerous."

In February, President Donald Trump cut short his Hanoi, Vietnam, summit with Kim with no joint agreement or statement after Kim insisted all US sanctions be lifted from his country. Since the tense summit, North Korea has threatened to suspend denuclearization talks with the United States.

Trump said on Thursday he is open to meeting Kim again, but in his speech on Friday, the North Korean leader said the outcome in Hanoi led him to question the strategy he embraced last year of international

engagement and talks with the United States. The US president said he wants sanctions on North Korea to remain in place, though he doesn't want to increase them.

The Hanoi summit "aroused a strong question if we were right in taking the steps with strategic decision and bold resolution, and evoked vigilance as to the US true willingness to improve its relations with the DPRK," Kim said, using the initials of North Korea's full name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The North Korean leader added that if the US were to ask for a third summit, it would be "with the condition that the US has the right attitude and finds a methodology that can be shared with us, we would be willing to try one more time."

Kim said he will "be patient" and wait until the end of this year for the US to decide if it wants another summit. "But it will be hard to get a good opportunity like the last time again," he said.

Responding to the comments from the North Korean leader, South Korea's presidential office said in a message to journalists in Seoul yesterday, "Our government will do what we can in order to maintain the current momentum for dialogue and help negotiations between the US and North Korea resume at an early date."



Protesters clash with police officers (unseen) as a car is set on fire during a demonstration called by the "Yellow vests" for the 22nd consecutive Saturday, in Toulouse, France has been rocked by months of weekly Saturday protests by the yellow vests, which emerged over fuel taxes before snowballing into a broad revolt against the French President.

AFP, Amritsar

The Amritsar massacre, 100 years ago this Saturday in which British troops opened fire on thousands of unarmed protestors, remains one of the darkest hours of British colonial rule in India.

Known in India as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, it is still an emotive subject with many demanding a British apology -- which so far has been unforthcoming.

The number of casualties on April 13, 1919 is unclear, with colonial-era records showing 379 deaths while Indian figures put the number at closer to 1,000.

In March 1919, the British colonial government passed the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, or the Rowlatt Act, extending repressive measures in force during World War I (1914-18). These included incarceration without trial, and caused widespread anger, particularly in the northern Punjab region, with Mahatma Gandhi calling for a nationwide general strike.

In Amritsar news that prominent Indian leaders had been arrested and banished from that city sparked violent protests on April 10. These saw soldiers fire upon civilians, buildings looted and burned, while angry mobs killed several foreign nationals and attacked a Christian missionary.

Brigadier General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer was tasked with ensuring order, and imposed measures including a ban on public gatherings.

On the afternoon of April 13



British High Commissioner to India Dominic Asquith lays a wreath at the Jallianwala Bagh martyrs memorial in Amritsar, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

some 10,000 people, including women and children, gathered at the Jallianwala Bagh, an area in Amritsar surrounded by high walls with only one exit.

It was also Baisakhi, a harvest festival in northern India.

Dyer, later dubbed "The Butcher of Amritsar", reached the spot with dozens of soldiers and sealed off the exit. Without warning, he ordered the soldiers to fire on the unarmed crowd. Reportedly the troops fired until they ran out of ammunition, letting off hundreds of rounds into the crowd before withdrawing.

Dyer said later that the firing was "not to disperse the meeting but to punish the Indians for disobedience." The event served to boost Indian nationalism and

harden support for independence.

Reaction in Britain varied, with Dyer receiving support in the House of Lords. Winston Churchill, then secretary of state for war, called the massacre "monstrous".

In 1997 the Queen laid a wreath at a site during a tour of India. In 2013 David Cameron became the first serving British prime minister to visit Jallianwala Bagh. He described the episode as "deeply shameful" but stopped short of a public apology.

He later defended his decision not to say sorry, explaining that the massacre happened 40 years before he was born and saying: "I don't think the right thing is to reach back into history and to seek out things you can apologise for".

Want to beat Trump? Read what Hillary Clinton says

Reuters, New York

Presidential hopefuls must walk a fine line to defeat US President Donald Trump, presenting their own views while fending off his attacks, said former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who lost to Trump in a bitter 2016 race.

Speaking on Friday, the fourth anniversary of the day she declared her bid for president, Clinton said in a New York appearance she was "delighted" about the diverse Democratic field, with a record six women, vying to challenge Trump in the 2020 election.

Clinton, who is also a former US senator and former first lady, lost to Trump in November 2016 in a stunning upset.

The defeat of the heavily favored Clinton, a Democrat, by the Republican Trump was largely unexpected by polls and political observers.

Candidates looking to oust Trump next year face a "balancing act," she said, speaking at a "Women in the World" conference of leaders, activists and others.

"You do have to present what you want to do - what is your vision, what is your hope for our country, how do you see the future," she said.

"At the same time, you have to be able to counter and ignore where possible, respond where necessary to the diversion and distraction that we see unfortunately working by the current incumbent in the White House," she said.

"Anger, resentment, prejudice are not strategies. They stop people from thinking," she said. "The job of a leader is to appeal to us to be more than we could be on our own."

She described the 2016 race against Trump as "dark" and "negative."

India hopes to avoid US sanctions

India is hopeful it will avoid US sanctions over its purchase of Russia's S-400 missile system, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told AFP. New Delhi has been "heard and understood" by the US administration over its accord to buy the S-400 missile defence system for \$5.2 billion, the minister said in an interview this week. India made the deal in October, defying US warnings of sanctions on countries buying Russian military equipment. The sanctions were part of measures to punish Moscow for its actions in Ukraine in 2014.

US mayors decry Trump sanctuary city threat

Democratic US mayors said on Friday their cities would welcome illegal immigrants, dismissing President Donald Trump's threats to transport people detained at the border to "sanctuary cities" as illustrating the White House's callous approach to the issue. Trump confirmed on Twitter that he wanted to transport people detained in his immigration crackdown at the US-Mexico border to sanctuary cities, an informal designation for localities that refrain from assisting federal immigration authorities in detaining people living in the country illegally.

\$22.6m for Zuckerberg safe!

Facebook Inc more than doubled the money it spent on Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg's security in 2018 to \$22.6 million, a regulatory filing showed on Friday. Zuckerberg has drawn a base salary of \$1 for the past three years, and his "other" compensation was listed at \$22.6 million, most of which was for his personal security. Nearly \$20 million went toward security for Zuckerberg and his family, up from about \$9 million the year prior. Zuckerberg also received \$2.6 million for personal use of private jets, which the company said was part of his overall security program.



EVM GLITCHES

Poll body works on PM's 'instructions'

Accuses Andhra Pradesh CM

ndtv Online

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu flew down to Delhi to meet officials of the Indian Election Commission to take his protests over allegation that 30 to 40 per cent of voting machines in his state did not work properly on Thursday, the first day of the national election. He has threatened a sit-in if there is no positive response from the election watchdog.

Naidu, who demanded a re-poll in nearly 150 polling stations due to non-functioning of electronic voting machines (EVMs), accused the election body of working on the instructions of the government.

"The Election Commission is an autonomous body. At the same time, they are working on instructions of (PM) Modi and the government of India," he told reporters after the meeting.

"This is a very big farce. Disaster for the nation," Naidu said on Friday. He claimed that as per "official information" 4,583 EVMs got stuck in the state and said it was a "major crisis."

25 parliamentary seats and 175 assembly seats in Andhra Pradesh voted in the first phase of the national election.

Amit Shah triggers outrage

Agencies

Critics have accused India's ruling party of promoting communal tensions after a top official promised to rid the country of all "infiltrators" in an apparent swipe at Muslims and other religious minorities.

"We will remove every single infiltrator from the country, except Buddha, Hindus and Sikhs," Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Amit Shah told supporters in West Bengal on Thursday.

Amit Shah referred such illegal immigrants as "termites", a description he also used last September, when he drew condemnation from rights groups. The US State Department also noted the remark in its annual human rights report.

"Infiltrators are like termites in the soil of Bengal," Shah said on Thursday at the rally as voting in India's 39-day general election started.

"A Bharatiya Janata Party government will pick up infiltrators one by one and throw them into the Bay of Bengal," he said, referring to illegal immigrants from neighbouring Muslim-majority Bangladesh.

BJP president terms 'infiltrators' as termites and vows to throw them into Bay of Bengal

Opposition, minority groups liken his speech to a suggestion of ethnic cleansing

He promised to do so by implementing the National Registry of Citizens nationwide. The NRC is a hugely controversial policy mooted last year in Assam, a region of India which shares a porous border with Bangladesh.

Proponents of the registry say it will help root out illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, but the move has prompted fears of possible deportation among

Assam's hundreds of thousands of Bengali-speaking Muslims, with an estimated 4 million people's citizenship at risk.

Implementation of the registry has been long delayed, but Shah's comments have put the issue front and center in the country's weeks-long general election.

In his speech, Shah said the government "won't send the Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Buddhists coming in from Bangladesh or Pakistan because they are our brothers and they've come here because they've faced persecution in



those countries."

"To a refugee in West Bengal, I want to say, you don't have to be afraid of anyone. We treat a refugee here as a son and daughter of India and they will be given citizenship," he added. "The BJP's pledge is to get rid of the infiltrators."

A Hindu nationalist party, the BJP has long faced accusations of anti-Muslim rhetoric.

As chief minister of Gujarat, Modi faced local and international criticism for violent rioting along communal lines in 2002 in which more 1,000 people were killed, most of them Muslims. He has never faced charges in connection with violence.

And since he became prime minister in 2014, critics have pointed to a rise in high-profile anti-Muslim rhetoric

The BJP and its supporters have also sought to label their critics as "anti-nationals" -- effectively, as anti-Indian -- or as in league with Pakistan, the country's main geopolitical foe.

A spokesman for the BJP did not respond to a request for comment Friday.

The comments from Shah, the right-hand man of Modi, drew criticism from the main opposition Congress party as well as minority groups. On Twitter, some users likened his speech to a suggestion of ethnic cleansing.

"The statement is a direct attack

on the identity and integrity of the nation as a secular state," the Kerala Christian Forum, a group from the southern state, said in a statement. It demanded an apology from Shah. Tony Joseph, a journalist and author of "Early Indians," said the BJP was the "true inheritor of Nazism."

BJP's political rivals also weighed in. Preeti Sharma Menon, spokeswoman for the Aam Aadmi Party, accused the BJP and Shah of "threatening large scale persecution, or maybe they will resort to their favorite method -- genocide?"

In a statement on its official Twitter account, Congress said the BJP "has made it clear that they have no respect for our Constitution (and) no remorse in dividing our nation on communal lines."

INDIAN POLLS

BJP will not cross 100 seats: Mamata

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Friday expressed solidarity with army veterans conveying outrage over alleged use of armed forces for political purposes and asked the BJP leadership not to build their identity riding on the sacrifices and achievements of the soldiers. The Trinamool Congress president said unlike Prime Minister Narendra Modi, she does not ask for votes in the name of the soldiers. Banerjee, an important leader of the anti-BJP bloc, claimed it will be difficult for the BJP to cross 100 seats in the ongoing Lok Sabha election.

BJP dividing society over caste, religion

Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav on Friday alleged that the BJP was dividing the society on the basis of caste and religion while the 'mahagathbandhan' (grand alliance) was committed to removing hatred. Yadav said that the BJP showed false dreams to the people and promised them "acche din (good days)" but in reality, did nothing for them. "The BJP is playing politics by dividing the society on basis of caste and religion. Our 'Mahagathbandhan' wants to remove the hatred and bring a change to save the Constitution," the former CM said.

SOURCE: THE HINDU