

NEWSIN
brief

Afghan colonel killed
in 'insider attack'

AFP, Ghazni

American troops opened fire after an "enemy insider" shot and killed an Afghan commander in central Afghanistan on Wednesday, officials said, in yet another deadly Taliban-claimed infiltration. According to the Afghan defence ministry, Colonel Mateen Mujtaba, who headed the 3rd army division in Ghazni province, was conducting a security assessment in Qarabagh district when an Afghan soldier started shooting.

6 Nigerian soldiers
killed in ambush

AFP, Kano

Six soldiers have been killed in an ambush by jihadists in northeast Nigeria's Borno state, two military sources told AFP yesterday. Heavily-armed fighters from the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) group opened fire on a patrol vehicle Wednesday near Jakana, 30 kilometres (18 miles) from the state capital Maiduguri, killing all the soldiers on board. "We lost all six soldiers in the ambush, including a colonel," said the first of two military sources, who both spoke on condition of anonymity.

Turkey court sentences
7 over journo murder

AFP, Istanbul

An Istanbul court has sentenced seven people in connection with the murder of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink 12 years ago that sent shockwaves around the country. Among those sentenced was Erhan Tuncel for 99 years and six months in jail over multiple charges, including "assisting a murder" and "being a member of an armed criminal organisation", state news agency Anadolu reported on Wednesday.

GRAFT CHARGES
Former Pak
PM Abbasi
arrested

REUTERS, Lahore

Pakistan's anti-corruption agency arrested former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi yesterday, drawing a furious response from opposition parties, which accused the government of trying to silence its opponents. The National Accountability Bureau said in a statement Abbasi had been arrested in a case that was opened last year over a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal project. The arrest, as Abbasi was on his way to a news conference in the eastern city of Lahore, adds to a political scene already thick with accusations of corruption and abuse of office with opposition parties planning a day of protest next week. "I believe today is



yet another black day in Pakistan's history," Ahsan Iqbal, a senior parliamentarian from Abbasi's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party, told reporters, accusing Prime Minister Imran Khan of trying to suppress opposition. "We are not afraid of your fascist acts. Don't think that you will gag our voices through such arrests," he said. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the head of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the other main opposition party, condemned Abbasi's arrest.

ROW OVER RUSSIAN S-400 MISSILES DEFENCE SYSTEM

Turkey says 'unfair' as US
bars it from F-35 program

AFP, Ankara

Turkey on Wednesday lambasted an "unfair" US move to exclude the country from the F-35 stealth fighter jet programme over Ankara's controversial purchase of a Russian missile defence system.

"This one-sided step neither complies with the spirit of alliance nor is it based on legitimate reasons," the Turkish foreign ministry said in a statement.

"It is unfair to remove Turkey, one of the partners in the F-35 programme," the ministry said, as it dismissed claims the Russian S-400 system would be a danger to the F-35s.

Turkey has ordered more than 100 of the F-35 fighter jets, while its defence industry has invested significant sums into the production of the warplanes.

"We invite the US to take back this error which will pave the way to irreparable damage to our strategic relations," the Turkish ministry added.

Earlier on Wednesday, the United States

confirmed Turkey's exclusion from the programme after repeated warnings.

The US-made F-35 Joint Strike Fighter "cannot coexist with a Russian intelligence collection platform that will be used to learn about its advanced capabilities," White House spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham said.

Turkish F-35 technicians and pilots training in the US would also be sent back by the end of this month.

The first delivery of the S-400 system from Russia began last week and further equipment has since been arriving every day by plane to an airbase in Ankara.

Relations between the Nato allies have deteriorated since

Ankara's purchase from Russia but there have been strains over multiple issues including US support to a Syrian Kurdish militia viewed as terrorists by Turkey.

The Turkish ministry called on the US to show the importance of the Ankara-Washington relationship "not just through words but through action and especially in the fight against terrorist organisations."

First delivery of S-400 system
from Russia began last week

Turkish ministry calls on US to
show importance of Ankara-
Washington ties

'Not Jason Bourne'
Trump mocked for tweet on arrest
of Mumbai attacks suspect

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistanis yesterday mocked US President Donald Trump's claim that the alleged Mumbai attacks mastermind had been arrested "after a ten-year search" while he was actually in the public eye for much of the decade.

Hafiz Saeed, a firebrand cleric accused by Washington and New Delhi of being behind the 2008 attacks, was taken into custody on Wednesday, days ahead of a trip by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan to Washington for his first meeting with Trump.

"After a ten-year search, the so-called 'mastermind' of the Mumbai Terror attacks has been arrested in Pakistan. Great pressure has been exerted over the last two years to find him!" Trump tweeted Wednesday.

But Saeed, who heads the UN-designated terrorist group Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and has a \$10 million US bounty on his head, has never been missing.

Instead, when he has not been in the custody of the Pakistani authorities, he has courted the limelight, giving public speeches and televised interviews and even attempting to launch a political party to contest last year's general election.

Among the wave of social media users pointing this out to Trump were journalists highlighting the easy access they have been given to Saeed over the years.

"It's Hafiz Saeed. Not Jason Bourne," tweeted Pakistani news anchor Amber Shamsi. "I also interviewed Hafiz Muhammad Saeed for @AJEnglish back in 2015 at a JuD-run mosque and school in Islamabad. Did not take a lot of finding that time, either," added a Al Jazeera correspondent.

India, Pakistan both claim
victory on ICJ spy case

COD SATRUSAYANG, ANN

The International Court of Justice, the top United Nations Court, on Wednesday ruled that Pakistan had violated international law by denying consular access to Indian Navy Officer Kulbhushan Jadhav.

The ICJ also ordered that Pakistan review the death penalty it handed down to Jadhav for spying.

Jadhav was arrested in a restive Pakistan province in 2016 that is home to a simmering insurgency which Pakistan blames on India. India says that Jadhav was kidnapped by Pakistan agents while he was in Iran.

In 2017, Jadhav was sentenced to death by a military tribunal. The ICJ ruled that Pakistan in this instance failed to inform the navy officer of his right and was breaking international law when it failed to allow consular access to the imprisoned man.

Despite the verdict, both India and Pakistan have claimed victory in the ICJ ruling.

Pakistan's Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Qureshi



Sudanese protesters chant slogans and wave national flags as they stand behind a banner showing the name of a killed protester during a demonstration in the capital Khartoum's Green Square yesterday. Demonstrators marched in the rallies a day after protest leaders and army rulers inked a power sharing deal to form a joint civilian-military ruling body that aims to install a civilian administration -- the main demand of demonstrators.

PHOTO: AFP

India demands
Pak release
accused 'spy'

AFP, New Delhi

India yesterday demanded that Pakistan release an alleged spy after the International Court of Justice called for a review of a death sentence against him.

The arch-rivals each declared victory after the world court ruling made late Wednesday. But with 49-year-old Kulbhushan Jadhav still held in secret, his case risked setting off new tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said Jadhav, a former navy officer, "is in the illegal custody of Pakistan under fabricated charges" as he welcomed the court ruling.

"Yesterday's judgement is not only a vindication of India and Mr Jadhav but for all those who believe in the rule of law and the sanctity of international conventions," the minister added.

Jaishankar insisted that Jadhav "is innocent of the charges levelled against him" and had been forced to confess without access to a lawyer.

"We once again call upon Pakistan to release and repatriate him forthwith."

The ICJ said Pakistan must give India consular access to the prisoner, give Jadhav proper representation and review the death sentence. But it rejected India's demand that Jadhav be freed.

Pakistan said Jadhav was detained in its southwestern province of Baluchistan in March 2016.

Indian officials say relatives reported that he appeared to have been tortured.

Relations between the neighbours frequently boil over. They have fought three wars since independence in 1947 and staged air battles on their border in February.

termed it a victory for Pakistan and said it cleared up any confusion regarding the convicted spy's custody saying that he shall "remain in Pakistan" and be "treated in accordance with the laws" of the country, according to Dawn Newspaper. "This is a victory for Pakistan," he said.

The Minister for Science and



Technology Fawad Chaudhry also said, "Apparently news reports from Hague suggests that not only Indian case for acquittal, release, return stands rejected but apparently [International] Court also upheld Jurisdiction of [Military] Court in #Kalbhushan case. Indeed a great outcome. Congratulations to Pakistan legal team for putting up [a]

Hunger, despair for
India flood victims

AFP, Muzaffarpur

Chest-deep in brown, flowing monsoon water and holding bags of clothes and utensils above their heads, residents in the Indian state of Bihar are hungry and despairing.

"When many of us poor people drown, then the politicians suddenly take notice... But otherwise, nobody cares about us," shopkeeper Raj Majhi told AFP.

Majhi's home -- like many others -- is submerged, with only rooftops remaining above floodwaters. His family have found their way to a small patch of land beside a highway, where they cook on a small stove.

Bihar is no stranger to floods, and is usually one of the worst-affected regions during the monsoons, but as one of the poorest regions in South Asia, residents feel helpless faced with the annual deluge.

Some 67 people have been killed in the state and 4.5 million residents affected by the floods so far, and water levels are still rising.

In areas where floodwaters have eased slightly, villagers cram into small, wooden boats or swim home to retrieve belongings.

Some have received khichdi -- an Indian porridge made with rice and lentils -- from the government.

"My children keep asking me for food and say they are hungry, but what can we do?," said Nima Devi, who only eats once a day with her children when the khichdi is distributed.



One-horned rhinos rest on a highland in the flood affected area of Kaziranga National Park in Nagaon district, in the northeastern state of Assam, India yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

SECOND MOON MISSION

India to make new
launch bid July 22

AFP, New Delhi

India will make a new bid to launch a landmark mission to the Moon on Monday, a week after aborting lift-off at the last minute because of a fuel leak, officials said.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said it had rescheduled the launch of Chandrayaan-2, or Moon Chariot-2, for 2:43 pm (0913 GMT) on Monday.

India is aiming to become just the fourth nation after Russia, the United States and China to land a spacecraft on the Moon.

Indian space chiefs called off the planned launch of the rocket 56 minutes before blast-off on Monday morning because of what ISRO called a "technical snag".

Media reports quoted ISRO scientists saying a helium fuel leak had been detected.

India has spent about \$140 million on preparations for the project, which is one of the cheapest among international space powers.

By comparison, the United States spent about \$25 billion -- the equivalent of more than \$100 billion in current prices -- on 15 Apollo missions in the 1960s and 70s.

The rocket will launch from a space centre in Sriharikota, an island off the coast of the southern state of Andhra Pradesh.

It will carry an orbiter, lander and a rover which has been almost entirely designed and made in India.

FB POSTS ON MILITARY

Myanmar
judge charges
film director

REUTERS, Yangon

A Myanmar judge yesterday charged filmmaker Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi for Facebook posts he made about the powerful military, meaning he will stand trial despite concern over his health and an outcry from human rights groups.

The director, who runs a human rights film festival, was detained three months ago after a complaint from an army officer that listed 10 of his Facebook posts.

In the posts he criticised the military's political role and Myanmar's 2008 constitution, which was drawn up by the former ruling junta and which civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi is attempting to amend.

'This is a first step'

Says Rohingya activist during state dept meeting after
US bans Myanmar generals for rights abuses

AFP, Washington

A formerly imprisoned Rohingya activist said Wednesday that a US ban on Myanmar's top generals was a welcome first step but urged more action to support the long-targeted minority.

The State Department on Tuesday said that army chief Min Aung Hlaing, three other top officers and their families would not be allowed to visit the United States due to their roles in "ethnic cleansing" of the mostly Muslim Rohingya.

Participating in a high-level State Department meeting on religious freedom, peace activist Wai Wai Nu said it was critical to address the "decades-old impunity" enjoyed by the military in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma.

"Many of us in Burma welcome this decision of the State Department. However, we think this is a first

step and we are hoping to see more concrete and efficient steps in the future," she told reporters.

This, she said, should include an end to impunity in the country.

"The only way to move forward, I believe, is holding the perpetrators accountable and abolishing



institutionalized religious and ethnic discrimination against ethnic minorities," she added.

Wai Wai Nu founded two groups promoting inter-ethnic harmony and women's rights. Along with other survivors and witnesses to abuses who

are taking part in the ministerial, she met Wednesday at the White House with President Donald Trump.

Wai Wai Nu, whose father was also an activist, was arrested with her family in 2005 when she was a law student.

The family was freed in 2012 amid a political opening in Myanmar as the military junta reconciled with the West and eventually allowed civilian, elected leaders.

In 2017, Myanmar's military launched a campaign against the Rohingya that led about 740,000 to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh amid accounts of brutal attacks on whole villages.

The army denies wrongdoing and says it was responding to militant attacks.

United Nations Special Rapporteur to Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, said yesterday the US move "does not go far enough, it should go further".