

US bombing raid

MSF LEAVES KUNDUZ

Kabul

Medical charity, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said yesterday it has withdrawn staff from the embattled Afghan city of Kunduz, a day after an apparent US bombing raid on its hospital, which the UN said could amount to a war crime. Doctors Without

Borders also known as MSF said 19 people were killed, some of whom burned to death in their beds as the bombardment continued for more than an hour, even after US and Afghan authorities were informed the hospital had been hit.

It is the only medical facility in the whole northeastern region of Afghanistan that can deal with major war injuries. Its closure, even temporarily, could have a devastating impact on local civilians.

"The MSF hospital is not functional anymore. All critical patients have been referred to other health facilities and no MSF staff are working in our hospital," Kate Stegeman, a spokeswoman for the charity, said.

"I can't confirm at this stage whether our Kunduz trauma



Fires burn in part of the MSF hospital in the Afghan city of Kunduz after it was hit by an air strike

centre will reopen or not." The air raid came five days after Taliban fighters seized control of the strategic northern city of Kunduz, in their most spectacular victory since being toppled from power by a US-led coalition in 2001.

The medical charity

condemned the bombings as "abhorrent and a grave violation of international law", demanding answers from US-led NATO forces in Afghanistan.

It said Afghan and coalition troops were fully aware of the exact location of the hospital.

It added that despite frantic calls to military officials in Kabul and Washington, the main building housing the intensive care unit and emergency rooms was "repeatedly, very precisely" hit almost every 15 minutes for more than an hour.

MSF said some 105 patients and their caregivers, as well as more than 80 international and local MSF staff, were in the hospital at the time of the bombing.

"The bombs hit and then we heard the plane circle round," said Heman Nagarathnam, MSF's head of programmes in northern Afghanistan.

Twelve staff members and at least seven patients, among them three children, were killed, while 37 people were injured.

Two Egyptian policemen shot dead by IS in Sinai

Cairo

Two Egyptian policemen have been shot dead in the bastion of the Islamic State group in the Sinai Peninsula, the interior ministry said.

"A police captain and a policeman died of their wounds after unknown assailants shot them" late Saturday in the North Sinai provincial capital El Arish, the ministry said in a statement.

The area is a stronghold of the Egyptian affiliate of the Islamic State group that calls itself "Sinai Province".

The jihadist group claimed the killings on a *Twitter* account affiliated to it, according to the SITE Intelligence Group. Sinai Province said it killed the two policemen in separate attacks in El Arish, the monitoring group said.

President Barack Obama has promised a full investigation into the fatal air strike on Afghan hospital that killed 19 people



A firefighter walks on a flooded street in downtown Charleston, South Carolina. Relentless rain left large areas of the US southeast under water and forecasters warned that more heavy downpours could trigger historic flooding in the crucial next 24 hours

Iran honours dead as more Hajj victims return home

Tehran

Ceremonies took place across Iran yesterday to honour citizens killed in a stampede at the Hajj, as a second plane returned the bodies of 114 pilgrims from Saudi Arabia.

The latest repatriation of corpses from the giant September 24 crush came after 104 bodies were brought home on Saturday, leaving 246 of the country's 464 declared victims yet to be returned.

Iran has the highest death toll among the countries affected by the tragedy. Egypt was second worst hit with 138 dead and 96 still missing.

Thousands attended a procession for the dead in



Iranian military and mourners follow an ambulance carrying a coffin during a funeral procession for some of the Iranian pilgrims who were killed in a stampede at the annual Hajj

Iran has the highest death toll among the countries affected by the tragedy

central Tehran with similar events taking place in provincial capitals.

Iran's Hajj organisation chief Said Ohadi said late Saturday that 205 more bodies had been located, state television reported.

"Bodies that are clearly Iranian will be repatriated and identified in Iran," he said.

China biker clocked at 237kph in Beijing speed stunt

Beijing

Beijing police have detained a motorcyclist who touched a speed of 237 kilometres per hour (147 mph) on the city's ring road, state media reported, after the stunt went viral on the Internet. The man, identified

by China's official *Xinhua* news agency only as Peng, reached the speed during a lap around Beijing's 37.5 kilometre Second Ring Road in the early hours of August 22, according to the report.

His feat, which took just 13 minutes and 43 seconds,

became an Internet sensation and was seen more than

220,000 times on a Chinese video sharing site, *Xinhua*



Motorcyclist Peng completed a lap of Beijing's 37.5 kilometre Second Ring Road in 13 minutes 43 seconds

said. But police apprehended the 30-year-old Peng in the faraway southern province of Guangxi and he was sent back to Beijing on Saturday, the report said. Beijing Traffic Administration police said he was detained for dangerous driving.

High-speed hi-jinks are a nuisance on the capital's roads and highways.

Two unemployed men who crashed a Lamborghini and Ferrari as they reportedly staged a "real-life Fast and Furious" race through Beijing in April were sentenced to jail

terms of up to five months and fined for dangerous driving, a court said in May.

And a high-speed Ferrari crash in Beijing in March 2012 killed the son of Ling Jihua, a close ally of then-president Hu Jintao. Two women passengers, one of them naked, were both injured.

The incident added to public perceptions in China of corrupt and high-living officials, and Ling has since been investigated for alleged graft and dismissed from the Communist Party.

His feat, which took just 13 minutes and 43 seconds, became an Internet sensation and was seen more than 220,000 times on a Chinese video sharing site