

world

Afghan peace marchers arrive in Kabul as Taliban end ceasefire

AFP | Kabul

Dozens of peace protesters arrived in Kabul yesterday after walking hundreds of kilometres across war-battered Afghanistan, as the Taliban ended an unprecedented ceasefire and resumed attacks in parts of the country.

Exhausted after their 700-kilometre trek, most of it during the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan, the marchers walked double file through the Afghan capital shouting "We want peace!"

Former Israeli minister charged with spying for Iran: Shin Bet

AFP | Jerusalem

A former Israeli government minister who once admitted to trying to smuggle ecstasy tablets has been charged with spying for Iran, Israeli security officials said yesterday.

The Shin Bet domestic security agency said former energy minister Gonen Segev was charged on Friday with "offences of passing information to the enemy in time of war and espionage against the state of Israel."

Rouhani to visit Europe in July

AFP | Vienna

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani will visit Austria and Switzerland next month as part of a campaign by Tehran to secure continued European backing for the 2015 nuclear accord.

The future of the landmark deal was thrown into doubt when United States President Donald Trump announced last month that the United States would withdraw and reimpose sanctions.

One dead and dozens missing in Indonesia boat accident

AFP | Jakarta

At least one person has died and dozens are missing after a ferry carrying 80 people capsized yesterday in Indonesia, an official from the national disaster agency said.

"Eighteen passengers have been rescued, one is dead," said agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho.

Strong quake jolts Japan's Osaka

People pause to look at a collapsed house following an earthquake in Ibaraki City, north of Osaka prefecture yesterday

- 3 dead, 300 hurt
- No large-scale destruction and no tsunami warning issued

Tokyo | Japan

A powerful earthquake rocked Japan's second city of Osaka yesterday, killing three people including a nine-year-old girl and injuring more than 300, according to an official tally.

Television images showed buildings swaying and burst pipes spewing water after the quake, which struck at the height of rush hour in the city of around two million.

However, there was no large-scale destruction and no tsunami warning issued after the earthquake, although commuters were stranded and tens of thousands were left without power.

Among the casualties was a nine-year-old girl who died in the city of Takatsuki north of Osaka, reportedly trapped by a collapsed wall following the 5.3-magnitude quake.

Local officials said that the other two dead were an 80-year-old man -- killed by a collapsing wall -- and a 84-year-old man trapped under a bookcase in his home.

The Fire and Disaster Management Agency said more than 300 people were injured in total, but many of them suffered minor injuries.

US strike blamed for death of Iraqi fighters in Syria

Syrian authorities and Iraqi forces pointed the finger at the coalition for killing 20 of its fighters in northern Syria

Beirut | Lebanon

An Iraqi paramilitary force key to the battle against the Islamic State group yesterday accused the US-led coalition of killing more than 20 of its fighters in an air raid in eastern Syria.

The bombing raid hit Al-Hari, a town controlled by regional militias fighting in Syria's complex seven-year war alongside President Bashar al-Assad's forces.

Both Syrian authorities and Iraqi forces pointed the finger at the US-led coalition, which denied it was involved in Sunday night's attack.

The raid slammed into a regime-controlled position in the border town and left at least 52 fighters dead, according to a Britain-based monitor.

Among them were fighters from Iraq's powerful Hashed al-Shaabi military alliance, some of whom have crossed into Syria to fight against IS.

"US planes fired two guided missiles at a fixed position of Hashed al-Shaabi units on the



The raid killed at least 52 fighters at Al-Hari in eastern Syria

border with Syria, killing 22 fighters and wounding 12," the Iran-backed Hashed said.

The bodies of three Iraqi fighters killed in the raid were returned on Monday to their hometowns for burial, said AFP's correspondent in the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriyah.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said a total of 30 Iraqi forces were among the dead in Al-Hari, as well as 16 Syrian forces and six unidentified fighters.

'No strikes'

The attack was first reported overnight by Syrian state media, which cited a military source accusing the coalition of bombing one of its positions in Al-Hari. It said several people were killed and wounded but did not give a specific number or nationalities. Later yesterday, a military source in Syria's Deir Ezzor province where the targeted area lies said that coalition warplanes hit "joint Iraqi-Syrian positions in Al-Hari".

Mexico fans set off earthquake sensors

The Guardian | Moscow

Mexicans jumping in jubilation on Sunday shook the ground hard enough to set off earthquake detectors after their team scored a surprise victory over World Cup defending champions Germany.

The Institute of Geological and Atmospheric Investigations said highly sensitive earthquake sensors registered tremors at two sites in Mexico City, seven seconds after the game's 35th minute, when star player Hirving Lozano scored. It called the tremors an "artificial" quake.

Fans waving Mexican flags and wearing traditional "som-



Mexico fans celebrate during the match between Mexico Vs Germany

brero" hats, gathered at the iconic Angel of Independence monument in downtown Mexico City, to watch the match on a giant screen in front of a towering cathedral.

As Mexico beat Germany 1-0 in Moscow, they sang the country's unofficial soccer anthem, "Cielito Lindo," or "Pretty Little Sky," a popular folksong.

At the Angel of Independence monument after the match, Rodolfo Pulido, 47, led a chant of "Mexico! Mexico! Mexico!" perched on a concrete barrier that usually separates traffic on a busy thoroughfare.

"I am incredibly happy," said Pulido, with his girlfriend and son on a Father's Day outing. "It's a double gift: Mexico won

and I get to celebrate with my son." He also said he could now dream of Mexico reaching the next stage along with 15 other teams, getting a shot at reaching the quarter- and semi-finals before the final match.

Presidential front-runner Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador offered his congratulations at a campaign event in Mexico state.

Drought-hit Iraq suspends farming of key crops

Baghdad, Iraq

An unusually bad drought has forced Iraq to suspend the cultivation of rice, corn and other cereals that demand large amounts of water, the agriculture ministry said yesterday.

"The agricultural plan for the summer" was modified "because the quantities of water needed for these cereals are not available", spokesman Hamid al-Nayef said. "The ministry does not take this decision lightly," he said, adding that cereal crops would no longer be grown without authorisation from the ministry of water resources.

Rice is a staple of the Iraqi diet. Nicknamed the "land of the two rivers" due to the presence of the Tigris and Euphrates.

Beyond this year's dramatic lack of rain, experts say a central reason for Iraq's creeping drought is the regional sharing of its water resources.

Neighbouring Turkey and Iran in recent years have both rerouted cross-border water sources they share with Iraq.



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