

world

Iraq condemns 'deputy of IS leader' to death

Baghdad, Iraq

An Iraqi court yesterday sentenced a prominent jihadist described as a deputy of Islamic State group leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi to death on terrorism charges.

"The Karkh criminal court in Baghdad sentenced to death by hanging one of the most prominent leaders of IS, who served as a deputy of Baghdadi," judicial spokesman Abdel Sattar Bayraqdar said.

Ismail Alwan Salman al-Ithawi was extradited from Turkey earlier this year having fled Syria as the group's self-proclaimed "caliphate" crumbled.

He was tracked and detained through cooperation between Turkish, Iraqi and US intelligence agencies, a senior Iraqi official told AFP in February.

Seven die in Brazil prison riot

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Seven inmates died Tuesday after a riot at an overcrowded prison in the northern Brazilian state of Para following a failed escape attempt, authorities said.

After 16 prisoners tried but failed to escape through an air duct during the early hours of the morning, after they were detected by security cameras, a riot broke out.

Some 120 prisoners took part in the violence, setting light to a room housing generators, leading to "a part of the cells, infirmary and prison secretariat being destroyed," the prison source said.

Six prisoners were killed by fellow inmates while a seventh died from burns.

Microplastics may enter foodchain, says study

AFP | Paris, France

Mosquito larvae have been observed ingesting microplastics that can be passed up the food chain, researchers said, potentially uncovering a new way that the polluting particles could damage the environment.

Microplastics -- tiny plastic shards broken down from man-made products such as synthetic clothing, car tyres and contact lenses -- litter much of the world's oceans.

Now researchers of the University of Reading believe they have proof for the first time that microplastics can enter our ecosystem by air via mosquitoes and other flying insects.

Court orders release of Nawaz Sharif on bail

- Sharif, now 68, has been prime minister three times

- He was expelled from office in 1993 on suspicion of corruption

- He won an election in 1997, only to be ousted and exiled after a military coup in 1999

AFP | Islamabad, Pakistan

A Pakistani court yesterday ordered the release of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his daughter, suspending their prison sentences for corruption pending an appeal hearing, his lawyer said.



Jailed former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (C) arrives to attend the funeral prayer of his late wife Kulsoom Nawaz in Lahore on September 14, 2018

"Today, the Islamabad High Court has suspended the verdict against Nawaz Sharif, his daughter Maryam Nawaz and his son-in-law Captain Safdar

and ordered to release them on bail until a final decision," lawyer Khawaja Haris said.

They will be released after the payment of sureties of 500,000

rupees (\$4,024), he said.

It was not clear when the appeal will be heard. The anti-graft watchdog has the right to go to the Supreme Court to contest

Wednesday's bail ruling.

Dozens of jubilant supporters chanted "Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif!" outside the court after the decision was announced.

The Supreme Court ousted Sharif from office last year for alleged corruption.

An anti-corruption court in July this year sentenced them in absentia to 10 and seven years respectively over properties they allegedly owned in Britain, following revelations in the Panama Papers.

Sharif and his daughter were arrested on their return to the country that month to campaign in elections.

Sharif claims he is being targeted by the country's powerful security establishment. His Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party lost the election on July 25 to the rival Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf led by former cricket hero Imran Khan.

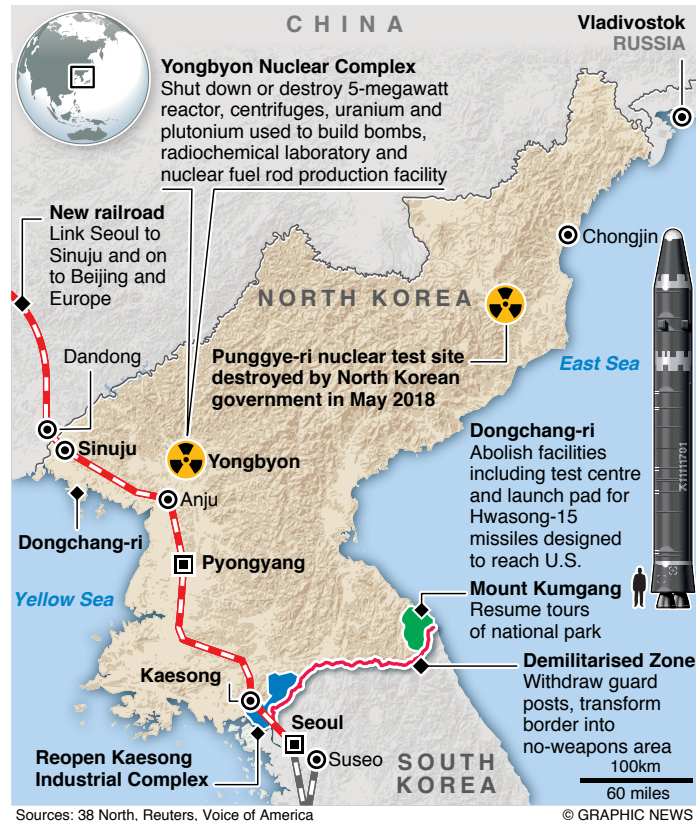
North Korea's pledge to scrap military sites

North Korea has agreed to abolish its missile engine testing facilities in the presence of international experts, and "expressed readiness" to close its main nuclear complex if the US takes "reciprocal action."

Speaking at a joint news conference in Pyongyang, South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said they agreed to turn the Korean peninsula into a "land of peace without nuclear weapons and nuclear threats."

Among the steps toward that goal, Kim pledged to shut down the Yongbyon Nuclear Complex which is home to a 5-megawatt reactor, centrifuges, uranium and plutonium used to build bombs, a radiochemical laboratory and nuclear fuel rod production facility.

Kim also said he would abolish facilities at the Dongchang-ri rocket motor test centre which is also the launch pad for Hwasong-15 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) which can



reach the United States.

Guard posts and minefields in the demilitarised zone (DMZ) would be removed to transform the world's most heavily fortified border into a no-weapons zone.

Other joint projects include plans to reopen the Kaesong Industrial Complex and the construction of an inter-Korean railway, which Moon has publicly backed, and resuming tours to Mount Kumgang, a landmark considered sacred by many Koreans.

However, former U.S. Treasury official, William Newcomb, who is on the United Nations Security Council's Panel of Experts on North Korea, has warned that joint economic projects with Pyongyang would need exemptions on sanctions from the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee on North Korea. If South Korea does not ask for exemptions, Seoul could violate sanctions and fracture the U.S.-South Korean alliance.

French court upholds fine over Kate topless photos

Paris, France

A French court yesterday dismissed an appeal by editors of gossip magazine Closer, and upheld two 45,000-euro (\$53,000) fines for publishing pictures of the Duchess of Cambridge sunbathing topless.

The court upheld the maximum fines imposed by a lower court for invading the privacy of Prince William's wife Kate with its 2012 publication.

Closer published the grainy snaps of Kate wearing only bikini bottoms while on holiday with the prince at a chateau in the Luberon region of southeastern France in September 2012.

The pictures caused outrage among the British royal family and public.

Anger at Singapore ads offering Indonesian maids

AFP | Singapore, Singapore

Online ads in Singapore offering Indonesian maids for sale were yesterday condemned as "unjust and demeaning", in a rare flare-up of tensions between the neighbours over domestic helpers.

Singapore is home to almost 250,000 maids, mostly from poor parts of Indonesia or the Philippines, who head to the wealthy city-state to earn higher salaries than they can back home.

While Indonesia regularly protests about abuse and exploitation of helpers in Malaysia and parts of the Middle East, complaints about treatment of maids in tightly-regulated Singapore are less common.

However reports that Indonesian helpers were being offered for sale in the city-state on online marketplace Carousell quickly drew condemnation from rights groups.

The adverts under the user name "maid.recruitment" reportedly offered the services of

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several helpers from Indonesia, while some ads indicated maids had been "sold".

The posts on the e-commerce site, which operates in several Asian countries and describes itself as "a simple way to sell the clutter in your life", have now been removed.

Wahyu Susilo, executive director of Indonesian NGO Migrant Care, said the group "strongly condemned" the adverts and called for those behind them to be brought to justice.

"This is very unjust and demeaning to the migrant workers' dignity," he told AFP.

Singapore's labour minis-

try said it was aware of cases where maids were being "marketed inappropriately" on Singapore-headquartered Carousell, and had got the adverts taken down and launched an investigation.

"Advertising (foreign domestic workers) like commodities is unacceptable and an offence" under local laws, a statement from the ministry said. Employment agencies found guilty of such practices will have their licences revoked or suspended, it said.