

world

India cancels rare Pakistan meeting

New Delhi, India

India cancelled yesterday a rare meeting between its foreign minister and her Pakistani counterpart scheduled to have taken place on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, only a day after announcing it would take place.

The Indian foreign ministry blamed the "latest brutal killings of our security personnel by Pakistan-based entities and the recent release of a series of twenty postage stamps by Pakistan glorifying a terrorist and terrorism".

The statement did not specify which killings it was referring to, but earlier this week an Indian border guard in the disputed territory of Kashmir was killed and his body mutilated.

And on Friday three policemen were found dead after being abducted in Indian-administered Kashmir.

The meeting in New York between Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj and Pakistan's Shah Mehmood Qureshi was only confirmed on Thursday.

Qureshi told Pakistan's ARY TV channel that he was "surprised and disappointed".

"We had given a positive signal and India too had hinted about negotiations," he said.

"India has once again shown that it cares more about its own politics than regional peace and stability," he added.

Asked if Pakistan will approach India again for negotiations, he said: "No, we wanted negotiations in a dignified way."

At least 15 killed in Afghan bus crash

Herat, Afghanistan

At least 15 people were killed when a bus collided with a truck in western Afghanistan on Friday, officials said, in the second major traffic accident this month.

Another 30 were wounded in the early morning crash in Bakwa district of Farah province, provincial police spokesman Mohibullah Mohib said.

The bus had been travelling from Herat province to the southern province of Kandahar when the accident happened.

At least three women and two children were among the casualties, Nasir Mehri, spokesman for the Farah governor, told AFP.

The dead were all bus passengers, he added.

It was not clear how the crash happened but accidents involving long-distance passenger buses are fairly common in Afghanistan.

More than 126 die in Victoria ferry disaster

The MV Nyerere may have been carrying as many as 200 passengers -- double the ferry's capacity

- Passengers rushed to one side to disembark

- Rescue operations were suspended overnight

- The ageing ferry was also carrying cargo

- The cause of the accident was not immediately clear

AFP | Nairobi, Kenya

The death toll in a ferry capsized in Lake Victoria climbed to 126 on Friday, as Tanzanian rescue workers pressed on with the search to find scores more people feared drowned.

The MV Nyerere may have been carrying as many as 200 passengers -- double the ferry's capacity -- when it capsized close to the pier on Ukara Island on Thursday, according to re-



An image grab taken from a video by Tanzania's StarTV channel reportedly shows people removing bodies of victims

ports on state media.

Witnesses reached by AFP said the ferry sank when passengers rushed to one side to disembark as it approached the dock.

The death toll rose to 126 by mid-afternoon Friday, according to Tanzania's transport minister.

"We are sad to report there are 126 dead," Isack Kamwele told state television, adding that a further update would be provided at 6pm local time (1500 GMT).

Mwanza governor John Mwangi had earlier said the number of survivors was 40, but it

was unclear whether any new survivors had been found since rescue operations resumed with police and army divers on Friday morning.

"Operations are continuing," he said.

Rescue operations were sus-

pending overnight Thursday and hopes are fading that more survivors might still be found.

State television cited witnesses reporting that more than 200 people had boarded the ferry at Bugolora, a town on the larger Ukerewe Island, where it was market day when locals said the vessel was usually packed with people and goods.

"I have not heard from either my father or my younger brother who were on the ferry. They had gone to the market in Bugolora to buy a school uniform and other supplies for the new school term," said Domina Maua, who was among those seeking information about loved ones.

Davita Ngenda, an elderly woman in Ukara, had already received bad news.

"My son is among the bodies recovered," she said, weeping. "He had gone with his wife but she has not been found yet. My God, what did I do to deserve this?"

Sebastian John, a teacher, said such tragedies had become part of life for those living on the lake.

Russia, Turkey agree on demilitarised zone in Idlib

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Russia and Turkey have agreed on borders of the demilitarised zone around Syria's Idlib, Russia's top diplomat said yesterday, part of a deal aimed to prevent a military assault on the last rebel enclave.

"Just yesterday or the day before, the militaries of Russia and Turkey agreed the concrete

frontiers of the demilitarised zone," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said after talks with his Bosnian counterpart Igor Crnadak.

Moscow says the demilitarised zone would help stop attacks from Idlib on Syrian army positions and Russia's military bases in the region.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish counterpart

Recep Tayyip Erdogan agreed the establishment of the 15 to 20 kilometre (9.3-12 miles) zone on Monday after talks that lasted more than four hours.

Security in the zone will be overseen by Turkish contingents and Russian military police. The agreement will prevent military action against Idlib, Russia's defence minister said.

Three babies slashed at 'illegal' childcare center

Washington, United States

Three babies and two adults were slashed during an early-morning assault at a suspected illegal childcare center in New York City yesterday, police said.

A 52-year-old woman who works there as a "babysitter/worker" was arrested after assault which took place in the Queens neighborhood at around 3:30 am, a police

spokesman said.

The suspect attacked two baby girls and a baby boy, leaving one of the girls in serious condition, police said.

One of the adults hurt in the attack worked there, while the other was the father of one of the babies.

None of the victims' lives were in danger, police said.

Officers found the suspect in the basement of the center with self-inflicted cuts to her wrists.

Alcohol responsible for one in 20 deaths worldwide

Geneva, Switzerland

Alcohol kills three million people worldwide each year -- more than AIDS, violence and road accidents combined, the World Health Organization said Friday, adding that men are particularly at risk.

The UN health agency's latest report on alcohol and health pointed out that alcohol causes more than one in 20 deaths globally each year, including drink driving, alcohol-induced violence and abuse and a multitude of diseases and disorders.

Men account for more than three quarters of alcohol-related deaths, the nearly 500-page re-



A representative picture showing a motorist takes a breath alcohol test

port found. "Far too many people, their families and communities suffer the consequences of the harmful use of alcohol

through violence, injuries, mental health problems and diseases like cancer and stroke," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghe-

breyesus said in a statement.

"It's time to step up action to prevent this serious threat to the development of healthy societies," he added.

Drinking is linked to more than 200 health conditions, including liver cirrhosis and some cancers.

Alcohol abuse also makes people more susceptible to infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV and pneumonia, the report found.

The some three million alcohol-related deaths registered globally in 2016 -- the latest available statistics -- account for 5.3pc of all deaths that year. In comparison, HIV/AIDS was

responsible for 1.8 per cent of global deaths that year, road injuries for 2.5pc and violence for 0.8pc, the study showed.

The latest numbers are lower than those in WHO's last report on global alcohol consumption, published in 2014.

There are "some positive global trends", the agency said, pointing to shrinking prevalence of heavy episodic drinking and of alcohol-related deaths since 2010.

But it warned that "the overall burden of disease and injuries caused by the harmful use of alcohol is unacceptably high," especially in Europe and the Americas.