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## SERVICES FOR SANTA MARIA NIGHTCLUB FIRE VICTIMS

Special services are being held in Brazil in memory of the 237 people who died in a nightclub fire in the city of Santa Maria a week ago. More than 4,000 people attended a service in Santa Maria itself on Saturday night, and a silent vigil was held in front of the nightclub, Kiss. Santa Maria's mayor says he plans to turn the building into a memorial site. The death toll rose to 237 on Sunday after a 22-year-old man died of injuries sustained in the fire. More than 100 people remain in hospital. Medical kits have been flown in from the US to treat survivors who were exposed to the dangerous fumes. Two owners of the nightclub and two band members have been arrested. Special services were held in cities across Brazil's southern-most state, Rio Grande do Sul, where Santa Maria is located.



In Santa Maria itself, people dressed in white and placed flowers and posters in memory of those who had lost their lives. A service in their honour was also held at the foot of the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro, the AFP news agency reports.

The fire is believed to have broken out after the band playing in the nightclub last Sunday set off cheap fireworks meant for outdoor use. The flames spread quickly over the ceiling which was covered with foam for soundproofing, the BBC's Julia Carneiro reports from Rio de Janeiro. The venue had only one exit and is believed to have been filled way over capacity, so panic ensued as people failed to find a way out, she adds. Investigators say many lives could have been saved if regulations had been properly observed. A safety inspection of nightclubs, restaurants and bars across Brazil has led to more than 150 temporary closures in the past week. Brazil's Congress is set to revise legislation in an attempt to strengthen safety regulations and allay concerns ahead of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics.

### Deadly nightclub fires

2009: Santika Club, Bangkok, Thailand - sparked by fireworks; 66 killed  
 2009: Lame Horse Club, Perm, Russia - sparked by fireworks; 150 killed  
 2004: Cromagnon Republic Club, Buenos Aires, Argentina - flare starts fire which kills 194  
 2003: The Station, Rhode Island, US - sparked by fireworks; 100 killed  
 2000: Luoyang dance hall fire, China - fire blamed on welders kills 309  
 1996: Ozone Disco Club, Quezon City, Philippines - 160 killed  
 1990: Happy Land, New York, US - arson kills 89 at unlicensed club  
 1977: Beverly Hills Supper Club, Southgate, Kentucky - 165 killed  
 1970: Club 5-7, Saint-Laurent-du-Pont, France - 146 killed;  
 1942: Cocanut Grove, Boston, US - 492 killed.

## 2014 G8 Summit to Be Held in Sochi - Putin

Russia will hold the 2014 Group of Eight (G8) summit in its southern Black Sea resort of Sochi, the city that will also host the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, the Kremlin said on Monday. "In connection with Russia's G8 presidency in 2014, I have resolved to make the city of Sochi the venue for the 2014 G8 meeting of the heads of state and government," the relevant decree signed by President Vladimir Putin said.



By the same decree, Putin appointed Presidential Executive Office Chief of Staff Sergei Ivanov as chairman of the organizational committee on preparation for Russia's G8 presidency, dismissing Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin from this post. The G8 consists of the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Canada, Russia, the United States, France and Japan. The next G8 summit will be held in June 2013 in the UK. In December 2012, Russia also took over the presidency of the Group of Twenty (G20) of the world's largest economies. The government allocated \$1 million from the federal budget for G20 summit-related events. The summit is to take place in the fall of 2013 in Moscow.

## Lino Oviedo dies in helicopter crash

Paraguayan presidential candidate Lino Oviedo was killed in a helicopter crash on Saturday night. The 69-year-old retired general who helped overthrow long-time dictator Alfredo Stroessner in 1989, was due to stand in elections in April. The helicopter pilot and Mr Oviedo's bodyguard were also killed in the crash, which took place as they were flying south from Concepcion to the capital Asuncion as part of the candidate's campaign trail rallies.

There were no survivors. The cause of the accident has been given as bad weather conditions. Mr Oviedo was the leader of the National Union of Ethical Citizens (Partido Unace).

Sunday, when his death was confirmed, is the 24th anniversary of the overthrow in which he participated that ended the 35-year rule of military dictator Alfredo Stroessner.

The conservative Colorado Party continued to dominate the polls until 2008, when the election of Fernando Lugo, a former bishop, marked the first time in modern history that Paraguay underwent a peaceful transfer of power to an opposition party.

Mr Lugo was impeached in June 2012 on charges including failure to deliver on a central campaign promise to redistribute ownership of land - a key issue in South American countries - and not taking sufficient action against a guerrilla group.

He was succeeded by his vice-president, Federico Franco, the current president, who sees out the term until August this year.

Some of Latin America's more leftist governments—those of Venezuela, Argentina, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Cuba and Bolivia—announced they would not recognise Mr Franco's government, and Venezuela threatened to cut off its exports of hydrocarbons to Paraguay.

However, Brazil, which is Paraguay's biggest trading partner and vital to its economy, merely condemned the manner of the impeachment.

Mr Oviedo was sentenced to ten years in prison for his part in an attempted coup in 1996, but was subsequently absolved and returned to Paraguay after trial in Brazil to set up the Unace party and devote himself to politics.



## Top women's ODI run-scorers

Captain Charlotte Edwards struck a brilliant century as England kick-started their World Cup campaign with a 32-run win over hosts India. Edwards' 109 took the defending champions to 272-8 in Mumbai and also saw her become the highest run-scorer in women's one-day internationals.

India were then reduced to 29-3 by the pace of Katherine Brunt and Anya Shrubsole and, despite an unbeaten hundred from Harmanpreet Kaur, the hosts could only close on 240-9. With West Indies thrashing Sri Lanka in Sunday's other Group A game, England know victory over the Windies on Tuesday will guarantee them a place in the Super Six stage.

And an India win over Sri Lanka in the final round of group matches could create the right set of circumstances for England to carry the maximum four points through to the next round - rendering the shock opening defeat by minnows Sri Lanka meaningless.

In that game on Friday, England were far below their best, but here, led by Edwards, they outplayed the hosts despite the significant disadvantage of losing the toss.

As tall pace bowler Jhulan Goswami took advantage of the chance to bowl in the dewy, humid conditions to have Danielle Wyatt caught at slip, Edwards was watchful to negate the India attack's biggest threat.

Sarah Taylor, back in the side after a hamstring injury, was driving fluently as soon as she came to the crease but, when Edwards eventually found some rhythm with cuts to the boundary, she outscored her partner.

The Kent batter overtook Belinda Clark's previous world record of 4,484 runs when she moved from 53 to 57 by slapping the leg-spin of Reema Malhotra through the covers.

And, despite seeing Taylor run out by Amita Sharma's direct hit from mid-on to end a stand of 100, Edwards moved towards a century with sweeps and drives on both sides of the wicket. Now in the company of the strong leg-side hitting of Lydia Greenway, Edwards reached her seventh ODI century by late-cutting Goswami for four.

After Greenway was held at mid-on off Goswami and the promoted pinch-hitting of Brunt added impetus in the powerplay, Edwards' stylish knock was ended through no fault of her own as she was left short by Arran Brindle's call for a single on the off side.

Brindle was also involved in the run out of Heather Knight but, with the help of Laura Marsh's innovation, she scampered England to a total far in excess of India's previous highest successful chase of 230.

It seemed as though the hosts would need a telling contribution from in-form opening pair Poonam Raut and Thirush Kamini or captain Mithali Raj, but all three fell cheaply.

First Brunt found swing back into Kamini to trap the left-hander lbw, then she tempted Raj to upper-cut to Shrubsole at third man. When Raut was leg before playing across Shrubsole, India were up against it.

Kaur and Karuna Jain managed to rebuild with a fourth-wicket partnership of 106 but, as the hosts fell further behind the pace, Jain was caught at point off Brindle for 56 when looking to accelerate.

Though England saw Shrubsole limp off the pitch, their improvement from the defeat by Sri Lanka was demonstrated by Knight's catch to dismiss Goswami. On Friday, England dropped three costly chances but now Knight spectacularly leapt high and right at mid-off to hold the chance off Marsh.

Kaur remained, the wicketkeeper launching the only two sixes of the match as she completed a maiden ODI century.

However, by this point, the task was already beyond India and three wickets in three balls - two to Brunt and one to Wyatt - emphasised that England's World Cup defence was back on track.

In the other Group A game, Stafanie Taylor smashed 171 from 137 balls as the Windies posted 368-8 against Sri Lanka before bowling out their opponents for 159.

In Group B, Australia edged to a three-wicket victory over South Africa while New Zealand beat Pakistan by seven wickets - meaning both victors progress to the Super Six stage, while Pakistan and South Africa meet on Tuesday to decide that group's final qualifier.

### Top women's ODI run-scorers

- 1) Charlotte Edwards (England) 4,901 runs
- 2) Belinda Clark (Australia) 4,844
- 3) Karen Rolton (Australia) 4,814
- 4) Mithali Raj (India) 4,499
- 5) Claire Taylor (England) 4,101

## AHMADINEJAD WANTS TO BE FIRST IRAN ASTRONAUT

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has said he is ready to take the risk of becoming the first human being sent into space by Iran, national media reports. "I'm ready to be the first Iranian to sacrifice myself for our country's scientists," the official IRNA news agency quoted him as saying on the sidelines of an exhibition of space achievements in Tehran on Monday. Iran said it sent a monkey into space one week ago, describing the launch as a successful step towards Tehran's plan to send an astronaut into space within the next five to six years. The monkey named "Pishgam", which means pioneer in Farsi, reportedly travelled 120km and safely returned to Earth. The launch added to Western concerns about Iran's space programme because the same rocket technology could potentially be used to deliver a nuclear warhead on a ballistic missile.

In 2010, Iran said it launched an Explorer rocket into space carrying a mouse, a turtle and worms. Iran's space officials say Iran will launch a bigger rocket carrying a larger animal to obtain greater safety assurances before sending a man into space. Space tourist Anousheh Ansari was the first Iranian to make a journey into space aboard a Soyuz TMA-9 capsule from Baikonur, Kazakhstan, in 2006. The 40-year-old telecommunications entrepreneur paid a reported \$20m for a space station visit.

Reacting to Ahmadinejad's space ambitions, Republican US Senator John McCain posted on his Twitter account: "So Ahmadinejad wants to be first Iranian in space - wasn't he just there last week?" The tweet caused a stir online, with some of his nearly 1.8 million followers positing angry responses. "Wow, way to elevate political discourse," tweeted. Another user, @manolo\_loop, wrote: "@SenJohnMcCain is racism funny?" Less than an hour after his first post, McCain sent another tweet, saying: "Re: Iran space tweet - lighten up folks, can't everyone take a joke?" Questions were raised about last week's monkey mission after it turned out one of two official sets of photos of the famed simian space traveller depicted the wrong monkey.

The two different monkeys shown caused some international observers to wonder whether the monkey had died in space or that the launch did not go well.

One set of pictures showed a relatively dark-haired monkey. Another showed a different monkey - strapped in a pod - that had light grey hair and a distinctive red mole over its right eye. A senior Iranian space official said one set of pictures had been released by mistake, showing an archive photo an alternate monkey not selected for the mission.





## Iran open to 'fair' nuclear talks with US

Iran is ready for direct talks with the United States on its nuclear programme as long as Washington has "fair and real intentions," said Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi. His comment came on Sunday, a day after US Vice President Joe Biden made the same offer to Tehran, with similar caveats, raising a glimmer of hope of progress in resolving the long-running standoff.



The United States, other Western powers and Israel believe Iran is working on a nuclear weapons programme, a charge the Islamic republic denies, claiming its programme is for civilian use.

Iran, which has been punished for its nuclear programme with tough US and EU sanctions, in January told the UN nuclear watchdog it will expand its uranium enrichment capacity. Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said his country and its allies were "determined to prevent Iran from turning nuclear" and all agreed that "no option should be removed off the table." "When we say we mean it, we expect others to mean it as well," the outgoing defence minister told the Munich Security Conference, warning of the threat of "nuclear terror" from Iran and its allies.

### Mutual intention

Biden on Saturday said at the Munich meeting: "We would be prepared to meet bilaterally with the Iranian leadership ... That offer stands, but it must be real."

Salehi told the same forum: "Yes we are ready for negotiations, but we have to make sure this time, and this is I think very fair of us, to make sure that the other side this time comes with authentic intentions, with a fair and real intention to resolve the issue."

"If there is an honest intention on the other side then we will take that into serious consideration," he said, after blaming the United States for the failure of earlier talks.

Salehi said Iran believes it is "wise to turn your enemies into friends," but added also that "we attach a lot of importance to our own independence."

The proposed talks are scheduled to take place in the week of February 25 in Kazakhstan, a spokesman for EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said.

However, Ashton's team, which co-ordinates diplomatic contacts with Iran on its nuclear programme on behalf of the

United States, Russia, China, France, Germany and Britain, was hoping for confirmation of the date and venue from Iran's negotiating team, the spokesman said.

Earlier on Sunday, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi confirmed the proposal for the new round of talks in Kazakhstan on February 25, but stopped short of pledging Iran's attendance. "I have good news, I've heard yesterday that 5+1 or EU3+3 will be meeting in Kazakhstan 25th of February," Salehi said during a panel discussion at the Munich Security Conference.

Iran and the 5+1 world powers - the United States, Britain, China, France, Russia plus Germany - held three rounds of talks last year aimed at resolving the standoff over Iran's nuclear activities.

## Messi scores in 12th league game running as Barcelona draw in Valencia

Lionel Messi scored in his 12th consecutive La Liga game to help leaders Barcelona to a 1-1 draw at Valencia that puts them 12 points clear at the top.



The World Player of the Year bagged his 34th league goal from the penalty spot just before half-time after Ever Banega had given the livelier hosts a 33rd-minute lead.

Barça improved in the second half but Victor Valdes had to make a superb point-blank save late on from Roberto Soldado to preserve a point.

Barça moved on to 59 points from 22 games, nine ahead of second-placed Atlético Madrid, who beat Real Betis in the late game. The champions, Real Madrid, are 16 points behind Barça in third after losing 1-0 at lowly Granada on Saturday, when Cristiano Ronaldo headed the game's only goal into his own net. Valencia's intense pressuring seemed to unsettle Barça, who looked sluggish after Wednesday's Copa del Rey semi-final first leg at the Bernabéu. Their aggression paid dividends when Gerard Piqué's weak headed clearance fell to Banega in the area and the Argentinian midfielder fired a low shot under Valdes.

Barça levelled before the break when João Pereira needlessly fouled Pedro in the area and Messi arrowed a penalty high into the top corner.

Cesc Fàbregas then fired into the side-netting after a wonderful through-ball from Messi and, though Andres Guardado forced a flying save from Valdes, Barça remained in the ascendancy.

The substitute David Villa fired narrowly wide of the post as the visitors dominated the latter stages until Piqué was caught in possession in the last minute. Ali Cissokho crossed and Valdes made a sharp double-save to keep the scores level.

## 5 survive plane crash off Venezuela; 1 killed after pilot reported engine trouble

A small plane crashed into the sea off Venezuela's coast on Saturday, leaving one person dead and five survivors who were rescued and brought to shore.

The twin-engine Beechcraft BE-58 went down east of the coastal city of Cumana in the Gulf of Cariaco, Interior Minister Nestor Reverol said. He said the pilot had declared an emergency due to the failure of both engines and put the plane down in the water.

After the crash, rescue workers and fishermen helped the survivors to shore, Reverol said on state television.

A 62-year-old woman died in the accident, the country's civil aviation agency said in a statement. The five survivors, including a boy and the pilot, were brought ashore in boats and treated at a hospital, said Gen. Francisco Paz Fleitas, president of the National Civil Aviation Institute. The plane had been flying from Puerto Ordaz to Venezuela's Margarita Island when it went down.

## Cambodia cremates former King Sihanouk

The body of Cambodia's former King Norodom Sihanouk has been cremated in the capital, Phnom Penh. Huge crowds gathered for the ceremony, which marked the final farewell for the man who was a prominent presence during decades of turmoil. King Sihanouk died in Beijing in October at the age of 89. His embalmed body has been lying in state since then to allow people to pay their respects.

Foreign dignitaries from several nations were attending the ceremony. Among them were French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault and Prince Akishino of Japan, the brother of the crown prince.



Chanting monks led Buddhist prayers for the former king, before an artillery salute sounded out and fireworks were set off. His widow, Queen Monique, and the son in whose favour he abdicated, King Norodom Sihamoni, then lit the funeral pyre at the 15-storey-high purpose-built crematorium.

Some of the former king's ashes will be scattered at the confluence of three rivers and the remainder stored in an urn in the royal palace.

The huge crowds who had been filing past the cremation site all day were kept away as the pyre was lit, and TV cameras were covered so the moment was private, the Associated Press reports.

Monday's cremation marks the end of several days of commemorations for the former monarch, who died of a heart attack.

On Friday, tens of thousands of people turned out to watch as his golden sarcophagus was paraded through the streets of Phnom Penh to the crematorium.

Since then people from across Cambodia, dressed in mourning colours of white and black, have been lining up to file past his coffin, some holding lotus flowers.

"It's the last day for us all to pay homage to the great hero king and to send him to heaven," King Sihanouk's long-time personal assistant Prince Sisowath Thomico was quoted as saying by AFP news agency.

King Sihanouk remained an influential figure in Cambodia until his death, despite abdicating in 2004.

He became king in 1941 while still a teenager, and led Cambodia to independence from France in 1953.

He was a presence through decades of political and social turmoil in Cambodia, despite long periods of exile overseas.

In later life he emerged as a peacemaker who helped bring stability back to his country, after an ill-fated choice to back the Khmer Rouge in its early years.

His record, says the BBC's Jonathan Head, who is in Phnom Penh, is complex and showed many personal flaws.

But none of that was talked about among the crowds paying their last respects - they were simply mourning the loss of a giant personality, who has been one of the few constants in their tragic history.

"I don't have any words to express the sorrow and suffering I feel when knowing his body will soon disappear," Hin Mal, 79, told the Associated Press news agency.

"I love and respect King Sihanouk like my own father."

## France protects Niger uranium mine

Niger has confirmed that French special forces are protecting one of the country's biggest uranium mines. President Mahamadou Issoufou told French media that security was being tightened at the Arlit mine after the recent hostage crisis in Algeria.

French company Areva plays a major part in mining in Niger - the world's fifth-largest producer of uranium.



Islamist militants kidnapped five French workers from the mine in Arlit three years ago. Four of them are still being held - along with three other French hostages - and it is believed they could be in the north of Mali close to where French troops are battling al-Qaeda-linked militants.

Asked if he could confirm that French special forces were guarding the uranium mine, President Issoufou told channel TV5: "Absolutely I can confirm."

"We decided, especially in light of what happened in Algeria... not to take risks and strengthen the protection of mining sites," he added.

France's Agence France-Presse news agency said a dozen French special forces reservists were strengthening security at the site.

Areva gets much of its uranium from the two mines it operates in the country, at Arlit and Imouraren.

Last month, at least 37 foreign workers were killed when Islamist militants seized a gas plant at In Amenas, eastern Algeria.

## Dell in \$24 Billion Deal to Go Private

For Dell, a \$24.4 billion deal to take itself private is a bold move out of Wall Street's harsh spotlight as it tries to remake itself in a world where personal computers are no longer the big business in technology.



Yet the buyout — which was announced on Tuesday and would be the biggest by far since the days of the recession — is a huge gamble. It will saddle Dell with \$15 billion of new debt, and it does nothing to divert the forces reshaping the technology industry and undercutting the company's business.

Fifteen years ago, Dell made enormous profits from selling customized PCs directly to customers. Six years ago, it was the world's leading maker of personal computers. Today, it is in third place, behind Hewlett-Packard and Lenovo, and falling.

Dell's share of an already contracting market for PCs slipped to just 10.7 percent last year, from 16.6 percent six years earlier.

No-name rivals from Taiwan and China grind earnings to razor-thin margins. Android smartphones and iPads, not Windows laptops and desktops, are the best-selling and most moneymaking devices.

And while a shift to cloud computing has increased demand for data centers — an opportunity for Dell to sell servers — big customers like Google and Facebook build their own equipment cheaply. The rise of cloud services has also prompted many companies to forgo buying additional machines, instead relying on rented time and applications running on far-away computer networks.

Dell's share of the market for servers, slipped about one percentage point, to 22.2 percent of 9.5 million servers sold in 2011. The greater problem in this segment is the pressure on profit margins. Shaw Wu, an analyst with Sterne Agee, estimates operating margins on servers, once about 15 percent, are now "in the high single digits, compared with the mid-single digits for PCs." It is likely that servers will soon have PC-like margins, he said.

Michael S. Dell is betting his stake in the company and some \$700 million of his fortune that he can meet those challenges and turn around a business he started in 1984 in his dormitory room at the University of Texas.

"Dell's transformation is well under way, but we recognize it will still take more time, investment and patience," Mr. Dell wrote in a memo to employees on Tuesday. "I believe that we are better served with partners who will provide long-term support to help Dell innovate and accelerate the company's transformation strategy."

Mr. Dell's investment means he will maintain control of the company if its shareholders approve the deal. The private equity firm Silver Lake, one of the most prominent investors in technology companies, is contributing about \$1 billion in cash.

And Microsoft, seeking to shore up one of its most important business partners, has agreed to lend Dell \$2 billion. Microsoft itself is under pressure, with longtime suppliers flirting with rivals to its Windows operating system.

"Microsoft is committed to the long term success of the entire PC ecosystem and invests heavily in a variety of ways to build that ecosystem for the future," the software giant said in a statement.

Despite taking on an additional \$15 billion in debt, Mr. Dell and Silver Lake argue that the company will survive, thanks to the cash that the PC business still generates.

A. M. Sacconaghi, an analyst with Bernstein Research, estimated that the amount of debt Dell will pay is less than what it has spent in stock dividends and share repurchases. "This debt load is manageable," he said, "as long as the cash flow from PCs holds up."

People involved in the transaction said that the buyers had prepared for potential further declines in the PC business, but intend on at least maintaining the company's position. Dell's cash from operations has held steady for four of the last five years, coming in at \$5.5 billion for the most recent fiscal year.

The size of the transaction evoked the frothy deal-making days before the financial crisis. Dell would be the biggest buyout since the Blackstone Group's \$26 billion takeover of Hilton Hotels in the summer of 2007. Yet few expect a resurgence in giant leveraged buyouts.

While the continued availability of cheap financing makes such deals possible, financiers caution that Dell represents a special case because of the founder's big equity stake.

The deal is the biggest test yet for Mr. Dell, 47, who has a fortune estimated at \$16 billion. After a three-year absence, he returned as chief executive of the company in 2007, vowing to restore his creation. His strategy has focused on moving into the business of data centers and corporate software services, marked by numerous acquisitions that have cost billions of dollars.

So far, that has yielded little. Dell's shares have fallen 31 percent over the last five years, closing on Tuesday at \$13.42 — below the buyout's offer price of \$13.65.

But that strategy will largely remain in place if the management buyout is completed. The company will cut its PC offerings further and buy more companies involved in corporate computing for small and medium-size businesses, said Brian T. Gladden, Dell's chief financial officer.

Though Mr. Dell has bemoaned his company's dismal stock performance for years, his plan to take it private began in earnest only last year. The billionaire maintains a home in Hawaii near the residences of two prominent private equity executives, Egon Durban of Silver Lake and George R. Roberts of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, and began floating the idea of a deal with them, people briefed on the matter said.

By August, Mr. Dell formally approached the board with a proposal to take the company private, prompting directors to form a special committee to study alternatives to a deal, these people said. One priority was keeping the process devoid of conflicts of interest to head off potential legal challenges, including the hiring of JPMorgan Chase to provide advice and Evercore Partners to solicit other suitors.



The committee considered ways to keep the company public, including borrowing money to buy back shares, but concluded that the management buyout was the most attractive option.

Mr. Dell had aligned himself with Silver Lake, which he let handle virtually all of the board negotiations, these people said. Mr. Durban used his close ties with Steven Ballmer, the chief executive of Microsoft and to whom he had sold the video chatting service Skype for \$8.5 billion, to bring in Microsoft as a partner.

Microsoft was wary of getting involved, fearing fracturing relationships with other partners, according to a person briefed on its deliberations. The software company insisted on providing a loan instead of taking equity in the newly private Dell. Silver Lake also hired four banks to arrange the \$15 billion in financing.

By the time word of the deal talks leaked last month, the two sides had the outline of a final proposal. But Dell's special board committee, led by Alex J. Mandl, battled with the buyers on price until Monday night, pressing for the highest possible bid.

Hamstringing them was a lack of other potential buyers. The committee's advisers had unsuccessfully approached both K.K.R. and TPG Capital, another big investment firm, hoping to flush out another offer. And despite the talk last month, no strategic buyer emerged as a rival.

## Ahmadinejad becomes first Iranian head of state to visit Egypt since 1979

The Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is greeted by his Egyptian counterpart, Mohamed Morsi, as he arrives in Cairo on Tuesday.



Ahmadinejad is the first Iranian head of state to visit Egypt since the 1979 revolution. His visit signals an improvement in relations between the two countries.

## angladesh politician sentenced to life for war crimes

A Bangladeshi court sentenced a senior Islamist opposition official to life in prison Tuesday for mass murder and crimes against humanity during the 1971 liberation war against Pakistan. Abdul Quader Molla, 64, the fourth highest ranked leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami party, is the first politician to be found guilty by the International Crimes Tribunal, a much-criticised domestic court based in Dhaka.



Molla cried "Allahu Akbar" (God is greater) and said all the charges were false after the presiding judge Obaidul Hassan delivered the verdict in a crowded court, blanketed with heavy security.

The judgement sparked protests by Jamaat, the country's largest Islamic party which enforced a nationwide strike Tuesday in anticipation of the conviction. It warned it would resist "at any cost a government blueprint" to execute its leaders.

"He deserved death sentence because of the gravity of the crimes. But the judge gave him life imprisonment," Attorney General Mahbubey Alam said, adding Molla "had directly participated" in the killing of more than 350 people near Dhaka.

The verdict is the second to have been handed down by the tribunal. On January 21 a top TV preacher, an ex-Jamaat official, was sentenced to death in absentia for murder and genocide.

The judge in Molla's case refused a prosecution bid to try him for genocide.

Molla's lawyer Nazim Momen said they would appeal the verdict as it was "politically motivated".

Ten other opposition figures — including the entire leadership of Jamaat and two from the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) — stand accused of war crimes.

Both Jamaat and BNP have labelled the cases "show trials" aimed at barring the leaders from upcoming polls. International rights groups have questioned the proceedings.

## MPs vote in favour of gay marriage: Politics live blog

One of the abiding themes of British politics over the last 200 years or more has been the battle between the Tory party and the modern world. Today we are going to witness another instalment. The modern world is going to win - but not without a fight.

MPs are debating the marriage (same sex couples) bill, the government legislation that will allow gay marriage (or equal marriage, as some campaigners prefer to call it, although I think gay marriage is clearer). The bill will get approved by a large majority because Labour and Lib Dem MPs are overwhelmingly in favour, but David Cameron's party is virtually split down the middle. There are two key questions to be resolved.

1. How large will the "rebellion" be? I've put rebellion in inverted commas because MPs have been given a free vote, and so technically MPs who vote against are not actually rebelling. But they will be dissenting from Cameron modernisation, and so I think the "rebels" label is a fair one. As Nicholas Watt explains in the Guardian today, after the vote on the second reading at 7pm, there will be a second vote on the bill's timetable motion. This second vote is whipped, and so we could see a real rebellion then. It will also be worth

counting the Labour "rebels". Ed Miliband and his shadow cabinet are all voting in favour of gay marriage, but party sources say around 25 Labour MPs will vote against.

2. How much damage will this do to Tory unity? Sometimes a party can split on an issue and then swiftly move on. (Apart from Jesse Norman, can you remember who the Tories were who rebelled over Lords reform? If it had not been for the link with the boundary changes, that vote would have already been relegated to ancient history in the folk memory of the party.) And then sometimes a party can split and the repercussions can last for a decade or more, with loyal voters walking away, activists leaving and internal party selections being swayed by the outcome. Look at the Iraq war vote and its effect on Labour. Today's vote could be just as damaging to the Conservative party. It's hard for anyone with a youngish, liberal, urban background to understand what all the fuss is about - as Polly Toynbee says in a great column today, "we can understand why a minority of people are profoundly upset by abortion, but this arcane marriage dispute is beyond the ordinary comprehension of anyone not guided by the Bible" - but the opponents of gay marriage feel extraordinarily strongly about this, as was revealed when Maria Miller, the culture secretary, first unveiled the plans in the Commons. It's worth trying to understand why, because the consequences of this could be considerable.

## Malone will avoid UK rights war with Murdoch's BSkyB

John Malone's Liberty Global will avoid a battle with Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB over expensive content like English Premier League soccer, the U.S. company said after agreeing to buy BSkyB's biggest rival.

Liberty is buying Virgin Media for about \$15.75 billion in stock and cash, pitting Malone against his old rival Murdoch in British pay-television and broadband.

Both Virgin Media and Liberty Global said the deal, worth more than \$23 billion including debt, was more about expanding the U.S. group's presence in Europe than shaking up British pay-TV.

Virgin Media had a strong commitment to share content with Sky, Liberty Global Chief Executive Mike Fries said on Wednesday, and he wanted to make sure Virgin Media had access to premium programming.

"We do not see any reason why that would change or any reason why Virgin Media needs to compete with Sky for that premium content," he told reporters.

Liberty will serve 25 million customers in 14 countries after the deal, overtaking ComCast as the world's number-one cable TV operator by subscriptions, Fries said.

Virgin Media, which has 4.9 million customers compared to BSkyB's 10.7 million, was formed when cable groups Telewest and NTL and mobile telecom operator Virgin Mobile merged in 2006.

That deal was led by Virgin Group's Richard Branson, who still owns around 3 percent, and who will make about \$316 million from the Liberty takeover.

Virgin Media's first few years were marked by lengthy and costly legal fights with BSkyB over access to channels and content.

More recently, however, Virgin Media boss Neil Berkett has stabilized the group, taking it into the black two years ago after years of losses racked up in a costly network expansion. In a peace deal in 2010, it sold BSkyB a package of channels and offered some Sky high-definition channels to its own customers.

Since then, Virgin Media has focused increasingly on selling high-speed broadband and technological innovations such as digital TV service Tivo.

Fries, who turned 50 on Wednesday, said he would not risk the stability of the market by engaging in new bidding wars.

"Neil's done a great job with building a strong relationship with Sky that is not based on personalities or drama," he said.

Last year, BSkyB and telecoms operator BT signed a three-year deal worth 3 billion pounds to show English Premier League matches, cementing the league's position as the most valuable domestic soccer competition in the world.

Virgin Media said it added 42,700 new cable households and 62,700 cable broadband connections in the fourth quarter, its best customer additions in four years according to analysts.

Citi said the results proved that the "rude health" of Britain's broadband market was still in evidence.

Fries said the critical players in Britain - BT, BSkyB and others - had reached stability in pricing and products.

"We get the sense it is a rational, competitive market, where there is reasonable pricing stability and reasonable customer growth, at least for Virgin (Media)," he said.

Fries said Liberty had admired Virgin Media for some time and decided to strike now because of availability of financing and the groups' relative stock prices. Shares in Liberty Global have soared more than 80 percent in the last 12 months.

Virgin Media's New York-traded shares jumped 18 percent to \$45.61 after the deal was confirmed on Tuesday. Liberty will pay about \$47.02 for each Virgin Media share based on Tuesday's closing prices, using cash and shares of its class A and C stock.

Liberty Global would not launch a major expansion of Virgin Media's cable network, which covers around half of Britain's households, choosing instead to invest in product innovation and increasing broadband speed, Fries said.

Analysts said there was little chance of a rival bidder and that was reflected in Liberty's offer.



"It is difficult to see where a counter-bid could come from at this time," said brokers at Espirito Santos.

Berkett said he would step down once the deal was complete. "My preference is to step down at closure," he said. "I'm not a very good number two."

## A diplomatic dispute between Romania and Hungary erupts

Ponta deems disrespectful the declarations made by Nemeth Zsolt regarding the 'symbolic aggression' of Magyars. MAE calls Zsolt's position 'unacceptable' and summons the Hungarian ambassador.

## EW 17-MILLION-DIGIT MONSTER IS LARGEST KNOWN PRIME

The largest known prime number has just shot up to 257,885,161 - 1, breaking a four-year dry spell in the search for new, ever-larger primes.

Curtis Cooper at the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg made the find as part of the Great Internet Mersenne Prime Search (GIMPS), a distributed computing project designed to hunt for a particular kind of prime number first identified in the 17th century. All prime numbers can only be divided by themselves and 1. The rare Mersenne primes all have the form  $2^p - 1$ , where  $p$  is itself a prime number.

The new prime, which has over 17 million digits, is only the 48th Mersenne prime ever found and the 14th discovered by GIMPS. The previous record holder, 243,112,609 - 1, which was also found by GIMPS in 2008, has just under 13 million digits. All of the top 10 largest known primes are Mersenne primes discovered by GIMPS. Until today, the most recent addition to the list was found in 2009, but it was smaller than the 2008 discovery.

### Volunteer sifters

Though there are an infinite number of primes, there is no formula for generating these numbers, so discovering them requires intensive computation. GIMPS uses volunteers' computers to sift through each prime-number candidate in turn, until eventually one lucky user discovers a new prime.

Cooper runs GIMPS software on around a thousand university computers, one of which spent 39 days straight proving that the number was prime. This was then independently verified by other researchers.

Though there is little mathematical value to finding a single new prime, these rare numbers are prized in their own right by some. "It's sort of like finding a diamond," says Chris Caldwell at the University of Tennessee, Martin, who keeps a record of the largest known primes. "For some reason people decide they like diamonds and so they have a value. People like these large primes and so they also have a value."

Prime-hunting isn't a completely esoteric pastime though, as these numbers underpin the cryptographic techniques used to make online transactions secure.

### Prizes for primes

The Electronic Frontier Foundation, an internet civil liberties group, is offering prizes of \$150,000 and \$250,000 to the discovery of the first prime with at least 100 million and a billion digits, respectively. Previous prizes for primes 1 million and 10 million digits long have already been awarded.

Cooper will receive a \$3000 prize from GIMPS for making the discovery.

Don't expect to see the next largest prime any time soon though. The problem becomes harder over time, as larger primes are both more rare and harder to check. "Those two things work together to spread them out as time goes on," says Caldwell.

The scandal broke off on Tuesday, when a Secretary of State from the Hungarian Foreign Affairs Ministry, Nemeth Zsolt, said Hungarian ethnics in Transylvania were subject to symbolic aggression and, therefore, Hungary ought to answer that by hoisting the Szekely flag. The flag of the Szekely Land was raised in one of the Budapest districts on Tuesday. Nemeth Zsolt said the flag had been hoisted to show solidarity with the cause of autonomy local authorities in Harghita and Covasna militate for. Referring to the refusal of Romanian authorities to allow the raising of the unofficial flag of the Szekely Land, Nemeth Zsolt said, in his opinion, that was a 'symbolic aggression' committed by the Romanian authorities on Hungarian ethnics.

The Hungarian official added that a true 'war of the flags' had been started in the Hungarian-inhabited regions of Romania and that he expected the Romanian Government to intervene and stop the dispute. 'The Hungarian Government expects the Romanian Government to step in and stop this symbolic aggression on the Hungarian minority in Transylvania', Zsolt said. The Hungarian official further noted that municipalities in Hungary should raise the flag of the Szekely Land in sign of solidarity.

UDMR President Kelemen Hunor says the position of the official of the Hungarian Government will not resolve Romania's problems, just as the display of the Szekely flag won't either, and added that the use of community symbols does not hurt the interests of the Romanian state.

The President of the Civic Hungarian Party (PCM) in Covasna, Kulcsar Terza Jozsef, hailed the statement of the Hungarian Government official, saying that, if the Szekely were respected in Romania, their flag would be displayed also in Parliament. 'I hail the solidarity expressed by Nemeth Zsolt and I am of the opinion that the governments in Hungary — not only the current one — ought to show solidarity with the Hungarians living abroad, for there is a single Hungarian nation', said the leader of PCM Covasna. In Kulcsar Terza's opinion, Romanian politicians have no reasons to be outraged by Nemeth Zsolt's position as long as Romania always shows solidarity with Romanians in R. Moldova on matters concerning the community.

The UDMR leader in Sfantu Gheorghe, Antal Arpad, said it was 'natural' that Hungary would adopt a 'position' when Hungarians felt they are not respected, 'when people compare the Szekely flag with a cloth' and that he expected of Bucharest and Budapest officials 'statements to calm down the spirits'.

The leader of PNL Covasna, Marius Obreja, said the statement made by Hungarian Secretary of State Nemeth Zsolt on the Szekely flag was just 'inflaming spirits'. The President of the PSD county organisation, Horia Grama, said the Hungarian official's action was 'provocative'.

Nemeth Zsolt's statements occur only days after the flag of the Szekely Land had been removed from the hall where the in-coming Covasna prefect was appointed to office.

The Hungarian official, alongside the Deputy Prime Minister of the Hungarian Government, Semjen Zsolt, are among of the ardent supporters of the autonomy of the Szekely Land. In August 2012, Nemeth Zsolt said Hungary supported the goal of the Hungarian community to achieve autonomy for the Szekely Land.

Ponta: We are not taking any 'cheekiness' from anyone

Following Nemeth Zsolt's statements, PM Victor Ponta asked the foreign minister to take a firm position. 'I'm asking you, Mr. Foreign Minister, to provide an answer - not you, personally, but the ministry- a very firm and clear answer that we are not going to take any — well, I wouldn't like to use an undiplomatic term,—although I would have been tempted to say 'cheekiness' — lessons from anyone on how Romania should enforce its laws, including those on the operation of local authorities. I believe we do have the highest standards in Europe when it comes to the representation of minorities and local autonomy. I say if someone wants to do election campaign in Romania on that, you should take a very decisive position and refuse to fall into any traps in the matter. I really don't think anyone can tell us what flags we may display and how we can display them around here. I am also going to ask the minister of interior, prefects and all other state authorities to do their duty under the law. I wouldn't like to fall into the trap of provocation, but, on the other hand, I don't want anyone to think they may lecture us from across the border', Ponta said during the Cabinet meeting.

Further to Nemeth Zsolt's statements, the Hungarian Ambassador to Bucharest, Oszkar Fuzes, has been invited to MAE's. 'Zsolt Nemeth's statements are unacceptable and against the spirit of good neighbourhood and strategic Partnership between Romania and Hungary', said MAE Secretary of State Bogdan Aurescu. The Romanian official added Romania and Hungary were both part of an international and European system of values, to which the protection of human rights in general and of national minorities in particular is fundamen-



tal. The ambassador yesterday replied there was no ‘war of the flags’ between Romania and Hungary and noted that the raising of the flag of the Szekely Land was the right of the Szekely, according to realitatea.net. ‘There is no provocation’, said Oszkar Fuzes. ‘It’s just a natural right of the minority of the Szekely in Romania, who enjoys historic national and identity symbols. I emphasise that this is about identity. It is no provocation or trap, it is just about the national identity of the Szekely community and the free and democratic use of the flag’, said the diplomat.

## Doping probe rocks Australian sport

An Australian Crime Commission investigation has found widespread drug use in Australian professional sport, with some athletes being given substances not yet approved for human use. The year-long investigation says organised criminal networks have been involved in distributing the drugs to athletes and support staff, including doctors and coaches. In at least one case an entire team is believed to have been doped.

A former head of the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority says today is the "blackest day in Australian sport" while Justice Minister Jason Clare says "the findings are shocking and they'll disgust Australian sports fans".

### The report's key points:

The use of prohibited substances, including peptides, hormones, and illicit drugs, is widespread amongst professional athletes.

The Australian Crime Commission says no code is immune from the scandal.

Players are being administered with drugs not yet approved for human use.

The doping is being run by sports scientists, coaches, support staff, doctors and pharmacists. Organised crime is involved in distributing the drugs and, in one possible case, match-fixing. The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) will get new powers to conduct a "full and unhindered investigation".

Authorities are refusing to name the athletes and teams involved But Victoria Police say a confidential version of the report contains names.

## Nigerian Sharia conflict

Nine women are shot to death in the Nigerian city of Kano. According to reports, all of them were involved in a polio vaccination policy and were most probably killed by the Islamist movement Boko Haram, which has previously threatened to target those involved in vaccinations. The Nigerian Sharia conflict is an armed conflict of militant groups, different representatives of religious groupings and the government of Nigeria.



According to a Nigerian study on demographics and Religion, Muslims make up 50.5% of the population. They mainly live in the North of the country. The majority of the Nigerian Muslims are Sunnis. Christians are the second-largest religious groups and make up 48.2% of the population. They predominate in the centre and in the South of the country, whereas adherents of other religions make up 1.4%.

As Muslims narrowly form the majority of the population, many of them demand to introduce the Sharia - the Islamic law - as main source of legislation. 12 Northern states have introduced sharia as base of the executive and the judiciary in the years 1999 and 2000.

## War in North-West Pakistan

The War in North-West Pakistan is an armed conflict between the Pakistan Armed Forces and armed religious groups such as the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Lashkar-e-Islam, TNSM, regional armed movements, and elements of organized crime.

The armed conflict began in 2004 when tensions, rooted in the Pakistan Army's search for Al-Qaeda fighters in Pakistan's mountainous Waziristan area (in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas), escalated into armed resistance. Pakistan's actions were presented as its contribution to the international War on Terror. Clashes erupted between Pakistani army troops and Arab and Central Asian militia forces. The foreign militants were joined by Pakistani non-military veterans of the War in Afghanistan (2001–present) which subsequently established the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and other militia organizations such as Lashkar-e-Islam. The Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TSNM) established in 1992 allied with the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Islam.

### Background

In the aftermath of Battle of Tora Bora, formal deployment was begun by the Pakistan Army, at the request of the Pakistan Government, in 2002. The XI Corps, under its commander Lieutenant-General Ali Jan Aurakzai. The XI Corps entered the Tirah Valley in the Khyber Agency for the first time since Pakistans independence in 1947. The troops later moved into the Shawal Valley of North Waziristan, and eventually South Waziristan. The Naval Special Service Group established a reconnaissance base and began to monitor suspicious activities in the area. The troubles mounted as the Tribes began to see Army's deployment and repeated Air Force's flights in the region as an act of subjugation.[citation needed] In December 2003, two assassination attempts against President Pervez Musharraf were traced to Waziristan. The government responded by intensifying military pressure on the area, however the fighting was costly and government forces sustained heavy casualties throughout 2004 and into early 2005 when the government switched to a tactic of negotiation instead of direct conflict.

## 7.0 earthquake rocks Colombia

A powerful but deep earthquake shook a broad swath of Colombia and Ecuador on Saturday, sending frightened people fleeing into the streets, but there were no immediate reports of significant damage or deaths.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the 9:16 a.m. (14:16 GMT) quake had a magnitude of 7.0. It was centered about 7 miles (11 kilometers) from the Colombian town of Pasto and 77 miles (129 kilometers) below the surface.

The quake was felt in the Colombian capital of Bogota, some 340 miles (545 kilometers) to the northeast, and across much of neighboring Ecuador.

Colombia's national disaster chief, Carlos Ivan Marquez, said officials had made a damage survey across the country "and fortunately up to this moment we have no reports of human losses."

## AZERBAIJANI PRESIDENT AND HIS SPOUSE WATCH AZERSPACE-1 SATELLITE ORBIT LAUNCH

February 8 marked one of the most remarkable events in Azerbaijan's independence history as the country successfully launched its first communications satellite, Azerspace-1, into orbit.



Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and the First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva watched the launch live from the new headquarters of Azercosmos that the Head of State inaugurated earlier the same day.

Prior to the launch of the satellite President Ilham Aliyev viewed the new headquarters of Azercosmos, a first satellite operator in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus.

Minister of Information and Communication Technologies Ali Abbasov told the Head of State that Azercosmos provided highly reliable and satellite-delivered communication services and platforms to broadcasting, broadband and government customers.

In 2008, a presidential decree set up a national space program. In the meantime, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies came to an agreement with Measat Satellite Systems, the leading satellite operator in Malaysia, to lease the GEO position at 46°E orbital slot and jointly operate the Azerspace/Africasat-1A.

2009 saw several tenders and as a result the US-based Orbital Sciences Corporation was opted to construct the satellite along with the French Arianespace to launch it.

The minister told President Ilham Aliyev that Azercosmos planned to launch a low-Earth orbit satellite in 2015, and Azerspace-2 satellite in 2016.

The spacecraft was put into orbit from Guiana Space Center near Kourou in French Guiana at 01.36 Baku time.

Azerspace-1 blasted off aboard Ariane 5 rocket made by French Arianespace company. Arianespace was founded in 1980 as the world's first commercial satellite launch company. Its shareholders include the French space agency CNES, Astrium and all European space companies, representing 10 European countries.

As of October 1, 2012, the company had 315 employees, at its corporate headquarters in Evry, at the Guiana Space Center (CSG) - launch site for Ariane 5, Soyuz and Vega - and at local offices in Washington, D.C., Singapore and Tokyo.

Since its creation, Arianespace has signed contracts with 80 customers worldwide carrying out 211 Ariane launches, 29 Soyuz launches (four at CSG and 25 at Baikonur via its subsidiary, Starsem) and the first launch of Vega. More than half of the commercial satellites in service today were launched by Arianespace.

Based on impressive launch performance and a large backlog of orders, Arianespace is the world's leading launch company, capturing much more than 50 percent of the commercial satellite launch market year after year.

With an anticipated service life of 15 years, Azerspace/Africasat-1a is based on Orbital's flight-proven GEOStar-2 platform.

The hybrid C- and Ku-band satellite will generate approximately five kilowatts of payload power and carry 36 active transponders, providing communications services to Azerbaijan, Europe, Africa, Middle East and Central Asia.

Azerspace/Africasat-1a will operate from an orbital location at 46 degrees East longitude through an arrangement between Azercosmos and MEASAT Satellite Systems of Malaysia, which owns the rights to the orbital slot.

Azerspace-1 satellite will offer telecommunication services to Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and North Africa, providing digital broadcasting, Internet access, data transmission, creation of VSAT multiservice networks and communications. Some 20 percent of the satellite's resources will be used for Azerbaijan's needs, and the remaining 80 percent will be available for commercial purposes.

The launch of the spacecraft means that all of the territory of Azerbaijan will be covered with quality TV and radio broadcasting, high-speed IP services, enabling a stable and quality platform for programs such as distance education and e-health, eliminating communication problems.

The satellite separated from the carrier rocket 33 minutes after the launch. It placed itself into a geostationary orbit at 46 degrees East longitude 34.56 minutes after blasting off. President Ilham Aliyev congratulated the people of Azerbaijan on the launch of the country's first communications satellite.

In the province of Narino, where the quake hit, secretary of government Jaime Rodriguez said officials had reports of three people hurt when roof tiles fell in the town of El Charco along the Pacific Coast. Officials in Ecuador also reported no significant damage. Colombian television showed people fleeing into the streets in southwestern cities such as Cali, and small cracks in the walls of some buildings.

## Horsemeat scandal: 'Tougher testing' by retailers ordered

Retailers have agreed to carry out "more and tougher testing" of beef products in the wake of widespread horsemeat contamination, the environment secretary says.

Test results will be published every three months by the Food Standards Agency, Owen Paterson said.

He said the presence of horsemeat was due to "incompetence" or an international criminal "conspiracy".

And he added "more bad news" could come from test results due on Friday.

Aldi and Findus withdrew products days ago, while Tesco, Iceland and Lidl acted last month. Mr Paterson met retailers, food producer groups and the Food Standards Agency on Saturday to ask how "beef" products containing up to 100% horsemeat were sold.

He said he hoped for "meaningful results" on Friday from tests ordered on all processed beef products.

And he said it was "totally unacceptable" that horsemeat had been found in "beef". "There has either been gross incompetence in some of these cases or a criminal international conspiracy.



"We are completely determined, all of us, to get to the bottom of this."

The environment secretary said he wants to see more testing within the existing regime. "People should have absolute confidence in what they are buying. The responsibility for that lies with the retailers, who need to be absolutely sure that what they're selling is what they think it is."

The FSA has said it was "highly likely" criminal activity was to blame for the contamination, while the Met Police has said it will not launch an investigation "unless it becomes clear there has been any criminality".

Morrisons boss Dalton Philips, speaking outside the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs before the meeting, said the supply chain had become "far too complex".

"There is a role for testing and we're very supportive of the testing regime but it's a moment in time," he said.

"The truth is you've got to know your farmer, you've got to know where your meat's being processed."

Labour leader Ed Miliband said that, "after the immediate issues, we need to understand how it happened and what needs doing to ensure it doesn't happen again".

Meanwhile, it has emerged that Findus knew about horsemeat in its products for a week before it told the FSA.

The company has admitted that test results from 29 January showed traces of horsemeat in its beef products.

At that point, it stopped taking the products from French supplier Comigel and stopped sending them to retailers.

More thorough testing was carried out - including the DNA testing of raw material at Comigel's factory - and the results were confirmed on Wednesday. The FSA was informed that same day.

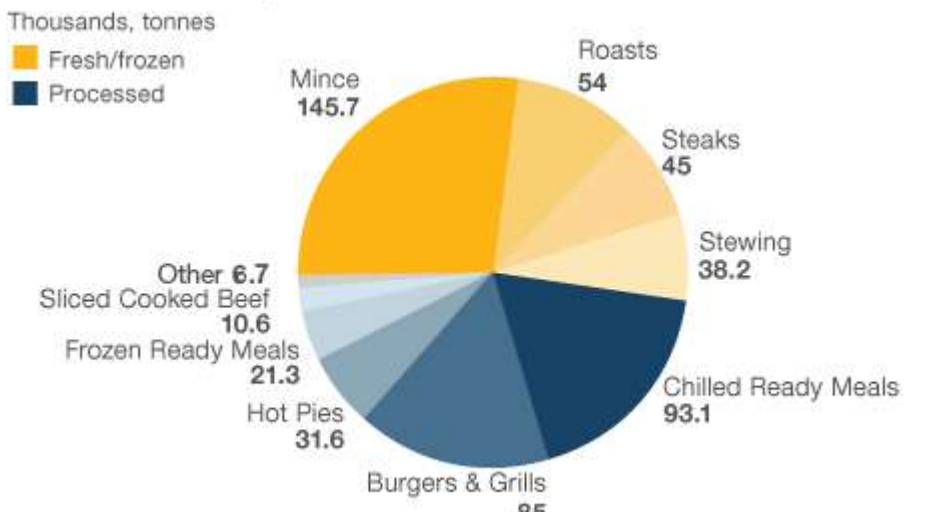
The head of Findus France has said the company believes it was defrauded and will bring legal proceedings in the French courts on Monday.

The French anti-fraud office has begun investigating the complex Europe-wide chain of instructions for ordering ready-meals from Comigel, which links France, Luxembourg, Cyprus, the Netherlands and Romania.

Findus UK issued a statement: "The early results from Findus UK's internal investigation strongly suggests that the horsemeat contamination in beef lasagne was not accidental." Meanwhile, the French company Spanghero, which sold horsemeat to the company that made the ready meals, alleged it in turn had been defrauded by its supplier.

"The meat was labelled beef," said Barthelemy Aguerre, company president, adding that Spanghero would sue.

### UK beef consumption



The FSA said Findus had tested the meat in 18 of its beef lasagne products and found 11 meals in which it contained between 60% and 100% horsemeat.

Findus has taken out space in a number of national newspapers, in which it updates customers and says it is "sorry that we have let people down".

Responding to newspaper reports that the company was aware of problems last year, Findus said in a statement: "Findus want to be absolutely explicit that they were not aware of any issue of contamination with horsemeat last year."

The controversy surrounding contamination of meat products has also affected firms in the UK, Irish Republic, Poland and France.

Last month, Irish food inspectors announced they had found horsemeat in some burgers stocked by a number of UK supermarket chains, including Tesco, Iceland and Lidl.

## Tunisia PM Jebali pledges new government 'by next week'

Tunisian Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali has pledged to form a technocratic government by the middle of next week. Mr Jebali told reporters in Tunis that he would quit if his efforts failed. He first made the proposal on Wednesday after the killing of opposition leader Chokri Belaid triggered protests. But his Islamist Ennahda party has opposed the plan for a non-partisan cabinet. Meanwhile Ennahda supporters attended a rally in the capital, Tunis, a day after Mr Belaid's funeral. Opposition supporters have blamed the governing party for his assassination - an accusation it denies.

### Tunisia in the Arab Spring

Dec 2010: Trader Mohammad Bouazizi sets himself on fire in Sidi Bouzid, sparking anti-government protests, and later dies

Jan 2011: Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali stands down as president after escalating protests and clashes

March 2011: New technocratic government announced by interim president

Oct 2011: Tunisians vote in first elections of Arab Spring

Dec 2011: Ex-dissident Moncef Marzouki chosen as president, with Ennahada's Hamadi Jebali as PM

May 2012: Salafi Islamists clash with police amid a row over alcohol sales

June 2012: Mr Ben Ali is sentenced to life in prison over the killing of protesters in the 2011 revolution. Saudi Arabia refuses extradition

Feb 2013: Opposition politician Chokri Belaid shot dead; PM announces plans for technocratic government, a move rejected by Ennahada.



## OPINION - EDITORIALS

# HOW A BILL BECOMES AN ACT

C.S. Rajput

A Bill is the draft of a legislative proposal. It has to pass through various stages before it becomes an Act of Parliament.

### FIRST READING

The legislative process starts with the introduction of a Bill in either House of Parliament-Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha. A Bill can be introduced either by a Minister or by a private member. In the former case it is known as a Government Bill and in the latter case it is known as a Private Member's Bill. It is necessary for a member-in-charge of the Bill to ask for leave to introduce the Bill. If leave is granted by the House, the Bill is introduced. This stage is known as the First Reading of the Bill. If the motion for leave to introduce a Bill is opposed, the Speaker may, in his discretion, allow brief explanatory statement to be made by the member who opposes the motion and the member-in-charge who moved the motion. Where a motion for leave to introduce a Bill is opposed on the ground that the Bill initiates legislation outside the legislative competence of the House, the Speaker may permit a full discussion thereon. Thereafter, the question is put to the vote of the House. However, the motion for leave to introduce a Finance Bill or an Appropriation Bill is forthwith put to the vote of the House. Publication in Gazette

After a Bill has been introduced, it is published in the Official Gazette. Even before introduction, a Bill might, with the permission of the Speaker, be published in the Gazette.

In such cases, leave to introduce the Bill in the House is not asked for and the Bill is straightaway introduced.

Reference of Bill to Standing Committee

After a Bill has been introduced, Presiding Officer of the concerned House can refer the Bill to the concerned Standing Committee for examination and make report thereon.

If a Bill is referred to Standing Committee, the Committee shall consider the general principles and clauses of the Bill referred to them and make report thereon. The Committee can also take expert opinion or the public opinion who are interested in the measure. After the Bill has thus been considered, the Committee submits its report to the House. The report of the Committee, being of persuasive value shall be treated as considered advice given by the Committees.

### SECOND READING

The Second Reading consists of consideration of the Bill which is in two stages.

First Stage: The first stage consists of general discussion on the Bill as a whole when the principle underlying the Bill is discussed. At this stage it is open to the House to refer the Bill to a Select Committee of the House or a Joint Committee of the two Houses or to circulate it for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon or to straightaway take it into consideration.

If a Bill is referred to a Select/Joint Committee, the Committee considers the Bill clause-by-clause just as the House does. Amendments can be moved to the various clauses by members of the Committee. The Committee can also take evidence of associations, public bodies or experts who are interested in the measure. After the Bill has thus been considered, the Committee submits its report to the House which considers the Bill again as reported by the Committee. If a Bill is circulated for the purpose of eliciting pub-

lic opinion thereon, such opinions are obtained through the Governments of the States and Union Territories. Opinions so received are laid on the Table of the House and the next motion in regard to the Bill must be for its reference to a Select/Joint Committee. It is not ordinarily permissible at this stage to move the motion for consideration of the Bill.

Second Stage: The second stage of the Second Reading consists of clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill as introduced or as reported by Select/Joint Committee.

Discussion takes place on each clause of the Bill and amendments to clauses can be moved at this stage. Amendments to a clause have been moved but not withdrawn are put to the vote of the House before the relevant clause is disposed of by the House. The amendments become part of the Bill if they are accepted by a majority of members present and voting. After the clauses, the Schedules if any, clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Long Title of the Bill have been adopted by the House, the Second Reading is deemed to be over.

### THIRD READING

Thereafter, the member-in-charge can move that the Bill be passed. This stage is known as the Third Reading of the Bill. At this stage the debate is confined to arguments either in support or rejection of the Bill without referring to the details thereof further than that are absolutely necessary. Only formal, verbal or consequential amendments are allowed to be moved at this stage. In passing an ordinary Bill, a simple majority of members present and voting is necessary. But in the case of a Bill to amend the Constitution, a majority of the total membership of the

House and a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting is required in each House of Parliament.

### BILL IN THE OTHER HOUSE

After the Bill is passed by one House, it is sent to the other House for concurrence with a message to that effect, and there also it goes through the stages described above except the introduction stage.

### MONEY BILLS

Bills which exclusively contain provisions for imposition and abolition of taxes, for appropriation of moneys out of the Consolidated Fund, etc., are certified as Money Bills. Money Bills can be introduced only in Lok Sabha. Rajya Sabha cannot make amendments in a Money Bill passed by Lok Sabha and transmitted to it. It can, however, recommend amendments in a Money Bill, but must return all Money Bills to Lok Sabha within fourteen days from the date of their receipt. It is open to Lok Sabha to accept or reject any or all of the recommendations of Rajya Sabha with regard to a Money Bill. If Lok Sabha accepts any of the recommendations of Rajya Sabha, the Money Bill is deemed to have been passed by both Houses with amendments recommended by Rajya Sabha and accepted by Lok Sabha and if Lok Sabha does not accept any of the recommendations of Rajya Sabha, Money Bill is deemed to have been passed by both Houses in the form in which it was passed by Lok Sabha without any of the amendments recommended by Rajya Sabha. If a Money Bill passed by Lok Sabha and transmitted to Rajya Sabha for its recommendations is not returned to Lok Sabha within the said period of fourteen days, it is deemed to have been passed by both Houses at the expiration of the said period in the form in which it was passed by Lok Sabha.

# EDITORIAL

## DEVELOP INDIA

English Weekly Newspaper  
Year 5, Vol. 1, Issue 235, 3 - 10 February, 2013

## SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The sixty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly, opened on 18 September 2012. The President of the United Nations General Assembly was chosen from the EEG (the smallest regional grouping) with Serbia's then foreign minister Vuk Jeremić beating out Lithuania's Dalius Grybaitis in an election. Notably, the session led to United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/19 which granted Palestine non-member observer state status.

The general debate of the sixty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly speaking schedule in the General Assembly Chamber from 25 September, 2012 were as follows:

### Organisation and subjects

The order of speakers is given first to member states, then observer states and supranational bodies. Any other observers entities will have a change to speak at the end of the debate, if they so choose. Speakers will be put on the list in the order of their request, with special consideration for ministers and other government officials of similar or higher rank. According to the rules in place for the General Debate, the statements should be on of the United Nations official languages of Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian or Spanish, and will be translated by the United Nations translators. Each speaker is requested to provide 20 advance copies of their statements to the conference officers to facilitate translation and to be presented at the podium. Though there is no time limit for speeches, a voluntary guideline of 15 minutes is requested.

In addition to commenting on issues of individual national and wider international relevance, the President of the General Assembly Vuk Jeremić chose the theme: "Adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means." Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also said: "This year's General Debate will be among [st] our busiest ever. This reflects the tumultuous time in which we live -- a time of turmoil and transition." The General Debate will commence with the opening of the session on 25 September and continue until 1 October.

### Agenda

A multitude of issues, including administrative affairs for the UN, are on the broader preliminary agenda for the session. There is also a day-by-day schedule.

A high level meeting on the rule of law took place on 24 September. President Vuk Jeremić also constituted a three-person panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda in regards to the encroaching deadline to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

The three-members are: Indonesia's Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Liberia's Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the United Kingdom's David Cameron.

### Issues

It has been speculated by the Middle Eastern media that the Iranian nuclear programme, along with the Syrian civil war, would constitute the main focus of the session. A few days before the session began, international leaders arrived for the General Debate amongst worry that these two issues would lead to a wider international conflict. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that the United States, United Kingdom and France "violate the basic rights and freedoms of other nations" and called Israelis "uncultured Zionists." In addition, U.N. and Arab League envoy for Syria Lakhdar Brahimi warned the Security Council that the Syrian civil war was worsening, but Russia and China still used their veto power to in opposition to international intervention in Syria.

Similar to the previous year, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas vowed to take up the issue of Palestinian membership in some form on 27 September at the General Debate, as part of a campaign the Western media viewed as an attempt to gain the international community's attention. However, Abbas did not call for formally putting the issue to a vote. The move followed days of Palestinian protests directed against the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank cities of Bethlehem, Nablus and Hebron. However, unlike the previous year, where Abbas sought full-member status, he will symbolically seek non-member status. At the same time, the Palestinian delegation will be half the size of that of the previous year. Following Operation Pillar of Defense, the Palestinians promised to seek a vote on an upgrade in status to non-member observer state in the UN General Assembly on 29 November, the symbolic date the UN chose voted on the Partition Plan in 1947, leading to the founding of Israel, and the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. On 29 November, the UNGA voted on the issue.

## INDIA'S PARTICIPATION AT XVI NAM SUMMIT AT TEHRAN

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh will be participating in the XVI Summit Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement which is being held at Tehran, Iran on 30-31 August, 2012. Prime Minister Dr. Singh had also participated in the last two NAM Summits held at Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt in July 2009 and at Havana, Cuba in September 2006.

The Summit level meeting will be preceded by a customary Ministerial meeting on 28-29 August and a Senior Officials Meeting on 26-27 August. External Affairs Minister Shri S. M. Krishna will lead the Indian delegation to the Ministerial Meeting. EAM will also represent India at the Ministerial meeting of the NAM Committee on Palestine that will be held on 28 August. Foreign Secretary Shri Ranjan Mathai will head the Indian delegation for the Senior Officials meeting.

The Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government is the highest decision-making authority of the Non-Aligned Movement. At the Tehran Summit, the Chairmanship of NAM will pass on from Egypt to Iran in accordance with the NAM's practice of regional rotation. The theme of the Tehran Summit is "Lasting Peace through Joint Global Governance". In accordance with NAM practice, the Summit would focus in a comprehensive manner on global regional and sub-regional issues as well as issues relating to development and human rights and social issues. Usually the NAM Summit meetings adopt a Final Document listing the Movement's position on all important international issues as well as Special Declarations proposed by the host or other members.

NAM does not have formal structures such as a Secretariat or a Constitution. The Chair is delegated the responsibility of promoting the principles and activities of the Movement as well as providing the administrative structure and coordinating its work. The NAM Coordinating Bureau (NAM-CoB) in New York serves as the focal point for coordination of the Movement's work. All decisions by the Movement are made by consensus in accordance with the Cartagena Document on Methodology adopted at the 11th NAM Summit in Cartagena (Colombia) in October 1995. The Document notes that consensus, while signifying substantial agreement, does not require or imply unanimity. The Document also notes that on sensitive issues, particular attention should be paid to openness and the holding of extensive consultations with the broadest possible participation.

### NAM and India

The Non-Aligned Movement stands for principles which India has always espoused and pursued in international affairs: sovereign equality of states; respect for territorial integrity, a peaceful, equitable and just world order; and the progress of developing countries through socio-economic development.

As a founding-member of the Non-Aligned Movement, India has consistently striven to ensure that the Movement moves forward on the basis of cooperation and constructive engagement rather than confrontation, and straddles the differences of the traditional North-South divide. India's broad approach to the NAM Summit in Tehran would be oriented towards channelling the Movement's energies to focus on issues that unite rather than divide its diverse membership so that the Movement can continue to serve as an effective voice for the genuine concerns of developing countries.



## SENKAKU ISLANDS DISPUTE



The Senkaku Islands dispute concerns a territorial dispute over a group of uninhabited islands known as the Senkaku Islands in Japan, the Diaoyu in China, and Tiaoyutai Islands in Taiwan. Aside from a 1945 to 1972 period of administration by the United States, the archipelago has been controlled by Japan since 1895. The People's Republic of China (PRC) disputed the proposed US handover of authority to Japan in 1971 and has asserted its claims to the islands since that time. Taiwan (Republic of China) also claims the islands. The territory is close to key shipping lanes and rich fishing grounds, and there may be oil reserves in the area. Japan argues that it surveyed the islands in the late 19th century and found them to be Terra nullius (Latin: land belonging to no one); subsequently, China acquiesced to Japanese sovereignty until the 1970s. The PRC and the ROC argue that documentary evidence prior to the First Sino-Japanese War indicates Chinese possession and that the territory is accordingly a Japanese seizure that should be returned as the rest of Imperial Japan's conquests were returned in 1945.

Although the United States does not have an official position on the merits of the competing sovereignty claims, the islands are included within the U.S. Japan Security Treaty, meaning that a defense of the islands by Japan may compel support from the United States military.

In September 2012, the Japanese government purchased the remaining three of the disputed islands that it did not already own from their private owner, prompting large-scale protests in China. As of early February 2013 the situation has been regarded as "certainly the most serious for Sino-Japanese relations in the post-war period in terms of the risk of militarised conflict."

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# INDIA HANGS KASHMIRI MAN

# AFZAL GURU

## CONVICTED OF DEADLY 2001

## ATTACK ON PARLIAMENT

Indian news channels are reporting that a Kashmiri man convicted in the 2001 attack on India's Parliament has been hanged. State-run Doordarshan News said that Afzal Guru was executed early Saturday morning in New Delhi's Tihar prison. Phone calls to the prison and several Home Ministry officials went unanswered.



Afzal Guru has been on death row since being convicted by India's top court in 2002. A mercy petition sent to India's president, the last step in the judicial process, was rejected earlier this week.

Several rights groups including political groups in Indian Kashmir have said that Guru did not get a fair trial.

Six security troops and a gardener were killed in the December 2001 attack. All five men who launched the attack were killed.

**Mohammad Afzal Guru** (died 9 February 2013) was a convict in the December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament, who was sentenced to death by a special Prevention of Terrorism Act Court in 2002. The Delhi High Court confirmed the judgment in 2003 and his appeal was rejected by the Supreme Court of India in 2005. The sentence was scheduled to be carried out on 20 October 2006, but Afzal was given a stay of execution and remained on death row. On 3 February 2013, his mercy petition was rejected by the President of India Pranab Mukherjee. He was hanged at Delhi's Tihar Jail around 08:00 A.M. on February 9, 2013.

Guru was born in Aabgah village near Sopore town in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir in 1969 to the family of Habibullah. He completed his schooling from Government School, Sopore. He passed the Matriculation exam in 1986 and completed his higher secondary education in Sopore. He subsequently got enrolled in medical college. He had completed the first year of his MBBS course and was preparing for competitive exams. His native place is Sopore and he was doing a commission agency business. It was during this business venture that he came into contact with Tariq of Anantnag, who motivated him to join Jihad for liberation of Kashmir and assured him of financial assistance. He crossed the Line of Control and proceeded to Muzaffarabad in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. He became a member of Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front where he received terrorist training in Pakistan. After learning how to handle arms and ammunition, he returned to Sopore and led a group of nearly 300 militant terrorists. On a visit to Kashmir in 1998, he married a Baramulla native Tabassum. Unhappy with the situation in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, he moved back to Kashmir. He did odd jobs and completed his graduation from Delhi University in the year 1993-94. While studying he met Abdul Rehman Gilani, who was pursuing his post graduation course. In the summer of 1993-94 on the advice of his family, he surrendered to the Border Security Force and returned to Delhi where he worked till 1996. He took up a job with a pharmaceuticals firm and served as its area manager. Simultaneously, he worked as a commission agent for medical and surgical goods in the year 1996. During this period, he used to shuttle between Srinagar and Delhi. It was his business that led to a meeting with one Tariq, who claimed to be a doctor. This resident of Anantnag convinced Afzal to aid some Pakistan-trained terrorists in their deadly mission. Tariq introduced him to Ghazi Baba, who was equipped with wireless set and satellite phone. Even Ghazi Baba motivated him and gave him literature containing speeches of Maulana Masood Azhar. He agreed to work for them and was assigned the task of providing a safe hideout for the Fidayeens in Delhi. He was apprised of the mission to carry out attacks on important institutions in India, like the Parliament and embassies, and asked to find a safe hideout for the terrorists in Delhi. He has himself confirmed these in his own interviews with various newspapers.

### The case

The attack was conducted jointly by the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LET) and the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JEM). Seven members of the security forces were killed, as were the five still incompletely identified men who carried out the attack.



Following were the charges against Afzal Guru:

Waging, or attempting to wage war, or abetting waging of war, against the Government of India and Conspiracy to commit the same - Section 121 and 121A of the Indian Penal Code  
Collecting arms, etc., with intention of waging war against the Government of India - Section 122 of the Indian Penal Code.

Criminal conspiracy to commit murder and attempt to commit murder - Section 120B read with Sections 302 & 307 of the Indian Penal Code

Conspiring to commit and knowingly facilitating the commission of a terrorist act or acts preparatory to terrorist act and also voluntarily harbouring and concealing the deceased terrorists knowing that such persons were terrorists and were the members of the Jaish-e-Mohammad, a banned terrorist organisation, which is involved in acts of terrorism; and hence committing an offence punishable under Section 3(3) (4) and (5) of Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002.

Possession of 10 Lakhs given to him by the terrorists who were killed by the police when they attacked the Parliament of India.

On 15 December 2001, Afzal was arrested by Delhi Police from Jammu and Kashmir. SAR Geelani was picked up for questioning and was later arrested from Delhi. Two others - Afsan Guru and her husband Shaukat Hussain Guru—were picked up later. On 29 December 2001, Afzal was sent to 10-day police remand. In June 2002, charges were framed against all four of them. Eighty witnesses were examined for the prosecution and ten were examined for defense.

Conviction

On 18 December 2002, a death sentence was given to Afzal Guru, S A R Geelani and Shaukat Hussain Guru, while Afsan Guru was let off. In August 2003, Jaish-e-Mohammed leader Ghazi Baba, who was a prime accused in the attack was killed in an encounter with the Border Security Force (BSF) in Srinagar. Three other militants, along with him were also killed in the 10-hour encounter. In October 2003, on an appeal, Delhi High Court upheld the order.

**The judgment mentions:**

"The gravity of the crime conceived by the conspirators with the potential of causing enormous casualties and dislocating the functioning of the Government as well as disrupting normal life of the people of India is something which cannot be described in words. The incident, which resulted in heavy casualties, has shaken the entire nation and the collective conscience of the society will be satisfied if the capital punishment is awarded to the offender."

On December 19, 2001 he made a confession of the offenses, which was recorded and signed by him. He also confirmed having made the confessional statement without any threat or pressure.

He was convicted for the offenses under Sections 121, 121A, 122, Section 120B read with Sections 302 & 307 read with Section 120B IPC, sub-Sections (2), (3) & (5) of Section 1, 3(4), 4(b) of POTA and Sections 3 & 4 of Explosive Substances Act. He was also sentenced to life imprisonment on as many as eight counts under the provisions of IPC, POTA and Explosive Substances Act in addition to varying amounts of fine.

An appeal was made to the Delhi High Court, but after going through the case and taking into consideration various authorities and precedents, the Court found that the conviction of Afzal Guru was correct and hence his appeal was dismissed. The co-accused in the case, S.A.R Geelani, was acquitted by the high court. Hence, although initially, the death penalty was meted out to S.A.R Geelani (who was presented as the mastermind behind the attack), Afzal Guru and Shaukat Hussain Guru, only Afzal Guru's death penalty was upheld by the Supreme Court.

In August 2005, Supreme Court, while confirming the death sentence of Afzal Guru, commuted Shaukat Hussain Guru's death sentence to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment.

In October 2006, Afzal Guru's wife Tabasum Guru filed a mercy petition with then President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam. In June 2007, Supreme Court dismissed Afzal's plea seeking review of his death sentence, saying "there is no merit" in it. In December 2010, Shaukat Hussain Guru was released from Delhi's Tihar Jail due to her good conduct.

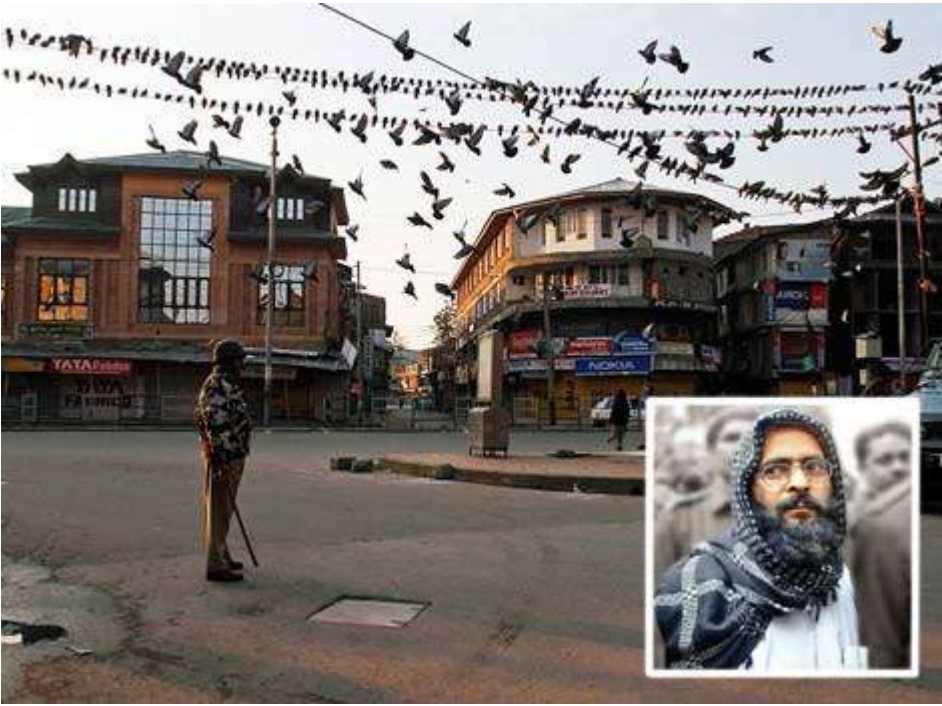
### Confession

The evidence against Afzal also included his confessional statement, which was recorded by the DCP, Special Cell. It was recorded in the preamble of the confession that DCP had asked the policemen present there to leave the room. After that he had warned and explained to Afzal that he was not bound to make the confessional statement and that if he did so, it could be used against him as evidence. Thereupon, it was recorded that Afzal was not under any duress and he was ready to give the confessional statement. The signature of Afzal was found beneath that endorsement. The Supreme Court was angered by the act of police officials, who, in their over-zealousness, had arranged for a media interview.[16] However, after seven months, Afzal disowned this confession and the Supreme Court did not accept the earlier confession as an evidence against him.

In the interview given to several media houses, he openly confessed that he was the person who brought the other four people involved in Parliament attack. He also said that he was asked to motivate Mohammad to achieve the target as soon as possible. But later it was revealed that these confessions were made under duress. This was the opinion of the senior Lawyer of the Supreme Court Ms Kamini Jaiswal who was representing him in the Supreme Court of India.

### Clemency pleas

There was an appeal to issue clemency to Afzal from various human rights groups including political groups in Kashmir, who believe that Afzal Guru did not receive a fair trial and was subjected to a frame up of corrupt and inefficient police work. Human rights activists in various parts of India and the world have demanded reprieve as they believe that the trial was flawed. Arundhati Roy and Praful Bidwai castigated the trial and argued that Afzal has been denied natural justice. Accusations of human rights violations have been made by many.



Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed and local political groups voiced their support of clemency for Afzal. It was alleged many have done so to appease Muslim voters in India. However there were protests (with instances of stone pelting at Indian security forces) in Kashmir against the planned execution of Afzal Guru in 2006. Communist Party of India (Marxist) was critical of both the Congress as well as of the BJP, and claimed it was delaying the legal procedure in the case accusing it of trying to whip up enmity between communities in the name of a crime done by a group of criminals. The party wants the law of the land to take its course without any interference.

Ram Jethmalani held that it is completely within the President's power to commute the Death sentence and is not a mercy plea. He said, "It's a misnomer to call it a mercy petition. It leads to total misunderstanding of the constitutional power. The constitutional power is that the President has the power to disagree with the Supreme Court both with its findings of fact and law." The case became political and it was not carried out because of fear of revenge attacks. The Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party president and MP, Mehbooba Mufti commented that the Centre should pardon Afzal if Pakistan accepted the clemency appeal for Sarabjit Singh. Mehbooba said that if clemency appeals were made for Sarabjit citing his Indian nationality, voices should also be raised for Afzal for "he too is an Indian citizen". "Two citizens of India cannot be treated with different yardsticks" she had said. However, the All-India Anti-Terrorist Front Chairman Maninderjeet Singh Bitta urged the President of India not to accept any clemency pleas on Afzal's behalf. He warned that his organisation would launch agitations if Afzal was pardoned. He also criticised statements of various political leaders and blamed them for "encouraging activities of terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir".

An India Today poll in late October showed that 78% of Indians supported the death penalty

for Afzal.

On 12 November 2006, the former Deputy Prime Minister of India, Lal Krishna Advani criticized the delay in carrying out the death sentence on Guru for the Parliament terror attack, saying, "I fail to understand the delay. They have increased my security. But what needs to be done immediately is to carry out the court's orders".

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) severely criticized Arundhati Roy. BJP spokesperson Prakash Javadekar said:

"Those who are supporting Afzal by demanding that he should not be hanged are not only acting against public sentiment in the country but are giving a fillip to terrorist morale"

On 23 June 2010, the Ministry of Home Affairs recommended the President's office to reject the mercy petition. On 7 January 2011, a whistle-blowing site indianleaks.in leaked a document which stated that the mercy petition file was not with President of India. This was rubbished by Kapil Sibal in an interview with NDTV. This was confirmed by Home Minister P. Chidambaram in New Delhi on 23 Feb 2011. With the death penalty handed to Ajmal Kasab, the speculation was that Afzal Guru was next in line.

On 10 August 2011, the home ministry of India rejected the mercy petition, and sent a letter to the President of India recommending the death penalty .

On 7 September 2011, a high intensity bomb blast outside Delhi high court killed 11 people and left 76 others injured. In an e-mail sent to a media house Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami, an Islamic fundamentalist organization, owned responsibility for the attack and claimed the blast was carried out in retaliation to Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru's death sentence. "We own the responsibility for today's blasts at Delhi high court. Our demand is that Mohammed Afzal Guru's death sentence should be repealed immediately else we would target major high courts and the Supreme Court of India."

### Execution

On 16 November 2012, the President had sent back to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) seven cases, including the one on Afzal Guru. The President wanted home minister Sushil Kumar Shinde to take a relook at the MHA opinion given during his predecessor P. Chidambaram's tenure. On 10 December, Shinde said he will look at the file after the winter session of the Parliament concludes on December 20. On 3 February 2013, his mercy petition was rejected by the President Of India. Afzal Guru was hanged till death on 9 February 2013.

Afzal Guru's family was informed of his execution by a Speedpost letter which was delivered to their home in Sopore, two days after the execution. Postal officials in Srinagar stated that the letter was received on the evening of February 9 (Saturday), but could be delivered only on February 11 (Monday), because February 10 (Sunday) was a public holiday.

Jail officials have said that when he was told about his execution, he was calm. He expressed his wish to write to his wife. The jail superintendent gave him a pen and paper. He wrote the letter in Urdu, which was posted to his family in Kashmir the same day. Very few officers were told about the decision. Three doctors and a maulvi, who performed his last rites, were informed secretly a night before. They were asked to come early Saturday morning. Afzal Guru performed his morning prayers and read a few pages of the Holy Quran. His letter got delivered to his family on 12th February.

### Tihar Prisons

Tihar Prisons, also called Tihar Jail and Tihar Ashram, is the largest complex of prisons in South Asia. It is located in Tihar village, approximately 7 km from Chanakya Puri, to the west of New Delhi, India. The surrounding area is called Hari Nagar.



The prison is styled a correctional institution. Its main objective is to convert its inmates into ordinary members of society by providing them with useful skills, education, and respect for the law. It aims to improve the inmates' self-esteem and strengthen their desire to improve. To engage, rehabilitate, and reform its inmates, Tihar uses music therapy, which involves music training sessions and concerts. There is also a prison industry within the walls, manned wholly by inmates, which bears the brand Tihar. As of November 2006, Tihar jail has almost 12,000 inmates against the sanctioned capacity of 5,200.

**Notable inmates**

Satwant Singh and Kehar Singh, hanged for the assassination of Indira Gandhi.  
International serial killer Charles Sobraj escaped from Tihar on 16 March 1986, but was recaptured shortly thereafter, returned to the prison and sentenced to an additional ten years for the escape. He was released on completion of his term on 17 February 1997.  
Ripun Bora, education minister of Assam's Tarun Gogoi-led Congressional government, the main suspect in the Daniel Topno murder case, was arrested by CBI officials on 3 June 2008 and sent to Tihar on 7 June 2008.

The 2G spectrum scamsters, including A. Raja, M. K. Kanimozhi, Vinod Goenka, Shahid Balwa, and Sanjay Chandra.

Suresh Kalmadi, former president of the Indian Olympic Association, who was arrested for alleged corruption regarding the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

Amar Singh, former member of the Samajwadi Party, arrested in a Cash-for-votes scandal.  
Anna Hazare and Arvind Kejriwal, Indian social activists fighting against corruption, were imprisoned in Tihar for protesting conflicts between differing Civil Society and UPA Government anti-corruption bills, known as the Jan Lokpal Bill and the Lokpal Bill, respectively.

### Capital punishment in India

Capital punishment is a legal but rarely carried out sentence in India. Imposition of the penalty is not always followed by execution (even when it is upheld on appeal), because of the possibility of commutation to life imprisonment. Since 1995 it has been used only four times, on Auto Shankar in 1995, Dhyanjoy Chatterjee in 2004, Ajmal Kasab in 2012 and Afzal Guru in 2013.



As of 11 February 2013, there are 476 convicts on death row in India. States with the maximum number of prisoners on death row are Uttar Pradesh (174), Karnataka (61), Maharashtra (50) and Bihar (37).

The Supreme Court of India ruled in 1983 that the death penalty should be imposed only in "the rarest of rare cases." Crimes which are punishable by death sentence are murder, gang robbery with murder, abetting the suicide of a child or insane person, waging war against



the nation, and abetting mutiny by a member of the armed forces. In 1989, the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act was passed which applied mandatory death penalty for a second offence of "large scale narcotics trafficking". On 16 June 2011, the Bombay High Court ruled that Section 31A of the NDPS Act, which imposed mandatory sentence, violated Article 21 (Right to Life) of the Constitution and that a second conviction need not be a death penalty, giving judges discretion to decide about awarding capital punishment. In recent years, the death penalty has been imposed under new anti-terrorism legislation for people convicted of terrorist activities.

India's apex court has recommended the death penalty be extended to those found guilty of committing "honour killings" with the Supreme Court stating that honour killings fall within the "rarest of the rare" category and deserves to be a capital crime. The Supreme Court also recommended death sentences to be awarded to those police officials who commit police brutality in the form of encounter killings.

On 3 February 2013, in response to public outcry over a brutal gang rape in Delhi, the Indian Government passed an ordinance which applied the death penalty in cases of rape that leads to death or leaves the victim in a "persistent vegetative state".

In December 2007, India voted against a United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for a moratorium on the death penalty. In November 2012, India again upheld its stance on capital punishment by voting against the UN General Assembly draft resolution seeking to ban death penalty.



History

Between 1975 and 1991, about 40 people were executed. The number of people executed in India since independence in 1947 is a matter of dispute; official government statistics claim that only 52 people had been executed since independence, but the People's Union for Civil Liberties cited information from Appendix 34 of the 1967 Law Commission of India report showing that 1,422 executions took place in 16 Indian states from 1953 to 1963, and has suggested that the total number of executions since independence may be as high as 3,000 to 4,300. At least 100 people in 2007, 40 in 2006, 77 in 2005, 23 in 2002, and 33 in 2001 were sentenced to death (but not executed), according to Amnesty International figures. No official statistics of those sentenced to death have been released.

On 27 April 1995, Auto Shankar was hanged in Salem, Tamil Nadu.

About 26 mercy petitions are pending before the president, some of them from 1992. These include those of Khalistan Liberation Force Bhai Davinder Singh Bhullar who was not convicted of any crime, the cases of slain forest brigand Veerappan's four associates—Simon, Gnanprakasham, Meesekar Madaiah and Bilvendran—for killing 21 policemen in 1993; and one Praveen Kumar for killing four members of his family in Mangalore in 1994.

It appears that judges in the lower courts are also getting increasingly averse to use capital punishment. For example in 2007 several high profile cases involving premeditated cold blooded murders, rape and murder of minors during rioting, terrorist bombings, etc. have not attracted the death penalty. But activists reveal a flaw, that due to the absence of sentencing guidelines in what constitutes "rarest of the rare", in some less gruesome murders, the lower courts have awarded death sentences possibly due to poor defense presented by the lawyers of the economically backward.

Afzal Guru was convicted of conspiracy in connection with the 2001 Indian Parliament attack and was sentenced to death. The Supreme Court of India upheld the sentence, ruling that the attack "shocked the conscience of the society at large." Afzal was scheduled to be executed on 20 October 2006, but the sentence was stayed. Afzal Guru was hanged to death on February 9, 2013 at Delhi's Tihar Jail.

On 3 May 2010, a Mumbai Special Court convicted Mohammad Ajmal Kasab of murder, waging war on India, possessing explosives, and other charges. On 6 May 2010, the same trial court sentenced him to death on four counts and to a life sentence on five other counts. Kasab has been sentenced to death for attacking Mumbai and killing 166 people on 26 November 2008 along with nine Pakistani terrorists. He was found guilty of 80 offences, including waging war against the nation, which is punishable by the death penalty. Kasab's death sentence was upheld by the Bombay High Court on 21 February 2011 and by the Supreme Court on 29 August 2012. On 21 November 2012, Kasab was hanged in the Yerwada Central Jail in Pune. His mercy plea was rejected by the president on 5 November and the same was communicated to him on 12 November. The events of his hanging were shrouded in secrecy.

On 5 March 2012, a sessions court in Chandigarh ordered the execution of Balwant Singh Rajoana, a singh from Babbar Khalsa, convicted for his involvement in the assassination Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh. The sentence was to be carried out on 31 March 2012 in Patiala Central Jail, but the Centre stayed the execution on 28 March due to worldwide protests by Sikhs that the execution was unfair and amounted to a human rights violation. On 13 March 2012, a court in Sirsa, Haryana, condemned to death the 22-year-old Nikka Singh for raping a 75-year-old woman and later murdering her by gagging her mouth with a shawl and strangling her neck with her salwar on 11 February 2011. "The imposition of the death sentence was most appropriate in this case. The court has held that it was a cold-blooded murder and where rape was committed on an innocent and hapless old woman," said Neelima Shangla, the Sirsa additional district and sessions judge. "The rape and cold-blooded murder of a woman, who was of grandmother's age of the accused, falls in the rarest of the rare case." The court held that Nikka Singh was a "savage" whose "existence on earth was a grave danger to society" as he had also attempted to rape two other village women.



In June 2012, it became known that Indian president Pratibha Patil near the end of her five-year term as president commuted the death sentence of as many as 35 convicts to life, including four on the same day (2 June), which created a storm of protest. This caused further embarrassment to the government when it came to light that one of these convicts, Bandu Baburao Tidke—convicted for the rape and murder of a 16-year-old girl—had already died five years ago from HIV.

2001 Indian Parliament attack

The 2001 Indian Parliament attack was a high-profile attack by Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists against the building housing the Parliament of India in New Delhi.

The attack led to the death of a dozen people, including one civilian and to increased tensions between India and Pakistan and the 2001-2002 India-Pakistan standoff.



On 13 December 2001, five gunmen infiltrated the Parliament House in a car with Home Ministry and Parliament labels. While both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha had been adjourned 40 minutes prior to the incident, many Members of Parliament (MPs) and government officials such as Home Minister LK Advani and Minister of State for Defence Harin Pathak were believed to have still been in the building at the time of the attack. (Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Opposition Leader Sonia Gandhi had already left). The gunmen drove their vehicle into the car of the Indian Vice President Krishan Kant (who was in the building at the time), got out, and began firing their weapons. The Vice President's guards and security personnel shot back at the terrorists and then started closing the gates of the compound. Constable Kamlesh Kumari was first to spot the terrorist squad. One gunman, wearing a suicide vest, was shot dead; the vest exploded. The other four gunmen were also killed. Five policemen, a Parliament security guard, and a gardener were killed, and 18 others were injured. The ministers and MPs escaped unhurt.

The attack triggered extensive and effective investigations which revealed possible involvement of four accused namely Afzal Guru, Shaukat Hussain and S.A.R. Gilani and Navjot Sandhu a.k.a. Afsan . Some other proclaimed offenders said to be the leaders of the banned militant organisation known as Jaish-e-Mohammed. After the conclusion of investigation, investigating agency filed the report under Section 173 of Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 (India) against four accused persons on 14 May 2002. Charges were framed under various sections of Indian Penal Code, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002, and the Explosive Substances Act by the designated sessions Court.

The designated Special Court was presided over by S.N. Dhingra and accused were tried on charges and the trial concluded within a record period of about six months. 80 witnesses were examined for the prosecution and 10 witnesses were examined on behalf of the accused S.A.R. Gilani. About 300 documents were exhibited. Afzal Guru, Shaukat Hussain and S.A.R. Gilani were convicted for the offences under Sections 121, 121A, 122, Section 120B read with Sections 302 & 307 read with Section 120B IPC, sub-Sections (2), (3) & (5) of Section 3 and Section 4(b) of POTA and Sections 3 & 4 of Explosive Substances Act. The accused 1 & 2 were also convicted under Section 3(4) of POTA. Accused No.4 namely Navjot Sandhu a.k.a. Afsan was acquitted of all the charges except the one under Section 123 IPC for which she was convicted and sentenced to undergo Rigorous Imprisonment for five years and to pay a fine. Death sentences were imposed on the other three accused for the offences under Section 302 read with Section 120B IPC and Section 3(2) of POTA. They were also sentenced to life imprisonment on as many as eight counts under the provisions of IPC, POTA and Explosive Substances Act in addition to varying amounts of fine. The amount of Rs.10 lakhs, which was recovered from the possession of two of the accused, namely, Afzal Guru and Shaukat Hussain, was forfeited to the State under Section 6 of the POTA.

On appeal, the high court subsequently acquitted S.A.R. Geelani and Afsan, but upheld Shaukat's and Afzal's death sentence. Geelani's acquittal blew a gaping hole in the prosecution's version of the parliament attack. Geelani was presented as the mastermind of the entire attack. Geelani, a young lecturer at Delhi University received support from his outraged colleagues and friends, who were certain that he had been framed. They contacted the well-known lawyer Nandita Haksar and asked her to take on his case. This marked the beginning of a campaign for the fair trial of Geelani. The media continued to target Geelani throughout the trial as a terrorist. Eventually, the supreme court upheld the acquittals and reduced Shaukat's punishment to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment. However, it not just confirmed, but enhanced Mohammad Afzal's sentence. He was given three life sentences and a double death sentence.

Indian Government initially accused LeT and JeM to be involved in this attack. However, Lashkar-e-Taiba denied any involvement in the incident. In December 2002, four JeM members were caught by Indian authorities and put on trial. All four were found guilty of playing various roles in the incident, although the fourth, Afsan /Navjot Sandhu, wife of Shaukat Hussain (one of the accused) was found guilty of a minor charge of concealing knowledge of conspiracy. One of the accused, Afzal Guru, was sentenced to the death penalty for the incident.

World leaders and leaders in India's immediate neighbourhood condemned the attack on the Parliament. On 14 December, the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) blamed Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed for the attack. Home Minister LK Advani claimed, "[w]e have received some clues about yesterday's incident, which shows that a neighbouring country, and some terrorist organisations active there behind it", in an indirect reference to Pakistan and Pakistan-based terrorist groups. The same day, in a demarche to Pakistani High Commissioner to India Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, India demanded that Pakistan stop the activities of LeT and JeM, that Pakistan apprehend the organisations' leaders and that Pakistan curb the financial assets and the groups access to these assets. In response to the Indian government's statements, Pakistani forces were put on high alert the same day. On 20 December, India mobilised and deployed its troops to Kashmir and Punjab in what was India's largest military mobilisation since the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War. Following the attack, many suspects were arrested, and in December 2002 four Jaish-e-Mohammed members were convicted for roles in the attack. In 2003, India said its forces had killed the mastermind of the attack in Kashmir.



Afzal Guru, sentenced to death by Indian court and due to be hanged on 20 October, had his execution stayed. His family had camped in New Delhi to meet the President Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam to accept the mercy petition. Also the family of Kamlesh Kumari, a CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) Jawan who died in the attack has said that they would return the Ashok Chakra, if the president accepts the petition, but it is unclear if it had been done so. On 13 December 2006, the families of the deceased returned the medals to the government. As of April 2007, the then President of India, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, refused to interfere in the judicial process. The sentence was scheduled to be carried out on 20 October 2006, but Afzal was given a stay of execution and remained on death row. On 3 February 2013, his mercy petition was rejected by the current President of India Pranab Mukherjee. He was hanged at Delhi's Tihar Jail around 08:00 A.M. on February 9, 2013 , and buried in tihar jail with full religious rites.

Deadly stampede as millions flock to Ganges festival

At least 36 people have been killed in a railway station stampede during the world's largest religious festival, India's Kumbh Mela. An estimated 30 million Hindu pilgrims are bathing at the Sangam, the place near Allahabad where three rivers - the Ganges, the Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati - come together.

The stampede was triggered after an overcrowded railway station footbridge buckled and a railing collapsed, sending some people slipping down the stairs, a top state government official told Reuters, not wishing to be quoted by name.

The chief medical officer of Allahabad district said the toll rose to 36 after 14 more people died during treatment, Press Trust of India and NDTV news channel said.

Ash-smearing naked sadhu holy men led the ritual bathing before dawn, which is said to cleanse pilgrims of their sins, with millions following them into the swirling river waters at the festival site in Allahabad.

The population of the city swelled from 1.2 million to about 40 million on Sunday morning, with about 20 million packed inside the vast sealed off bathing area on the banks of the river. Amid the crush police and thousands of volunteers on duty urged pilgrims to take one short dip and then leave the freezing waters to make space for the flow of humanity behind them. In the two months from the start of the festival in January, officials believe as many as 100 million people will have passed through a temporary city that covers an area larger than Athens on a wide sandy river bank.

Hindu holy men and pilgrims bathe in the sacred Ganges to wash away lifetimes of sins. Sunday was believed to be the most auspicious day of the festival.

'Out of the world experience'

The Maha Kumbh Mela, which began last month and ends in March, takes place every 12 years in Allahabad.

Smaller, similar events are held every three years in other locations around India. Devotees believe entering the mighty rivers cleanse them of sin and free them from the cycle of rebirth.

Assorted dreadlocked holy men, seers and self-proclaimed saints from all over the country have assembled for the spectacle that offers a rare glimpse of the dizzying range of Indian spirituality.

Despite the hardships of waking early, plunging into the freezing and heavily polluted water and the crush of the crowds, pilgrims described being spiritually uplifted and amazed by the scale of the event.

The festival had its origins in Hindu mythology, which described how a few drops of the nectar of immortality fell on the four places that host the festival - Allahabad, Nasik, Ujjain and Haridwar.

Most devotees dunk their heads under the water, while some drink it and others bottle it and take it home as gifts.

Swapna Bhatia, an interior designer from New Delhi, called it "simply an out of the world experience".

"I feel so light now," Mr Bhatia said.

London man Malti Devi, 65, who was taking part in the festivities for the first time said "one dip in the river has the power to change life forever".

Grammy Awards were less about winners, more about moments

The 55th Annual Grammy Awards were held on February 10, 2013, at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. The show was broadcast on CBS at 8 p.m. ET/PT and was hosted for the second time by LL Cool J. The "Pre-Telecast Ceremony" was streamed live from LA's Nokia Theater at the official Grammy website.



Nominations were announced on December 5, 2012 on prime-time television as part of "The GRAMMY Nominations Concert Live! – Countdown to Music's Biggest Night", a one-hour special co-hosted by LL Cool J & Taylor Swift and broadcast live on CBS from the Bridgestone Arena in Nashville, Tennessee. Fun, Frank Ocean, Mumford & Sons, Jay-Z, Kanye West and Dan Auerbach received the most nominations with six each, all of whom were male artists.

Gotye and Kimbra won the Record of the Year for "Somebody That I Used to Know", becoming the second Australian and first New Zealand act to win the award. Mumford & Sons won the Album of the Year for Babel, and Fun won the Song of the Year (with Jeff Bhasker) for "We Are Young" as well as the Best New Artist. Kelly Clarkson won the Best Pop Vocal Album for Stronger, becoming the first and only artist to win the award twice. Dan Auerbach won the most number of awards during the ceremony, with four (including three as part of The Black Keys); followed by The Black Keys, Gotye, Jay-Z, Skrillex, Kanye West, with three each. Other multiple winners include: Chick Corea, Fun, Kimbra, Mumford & Sons, Frank Ocean, Matt Redman and Esperanza Spalding with two awards each.

The Recording Academy introduced three new categories to the 78 awards previously presented at the 54th ceremony—Best Classical Compendium, Best Latin Jazz Album, and Best Urban Contemporary Album, bringing it to a total of 81 awards. 70 of them were presented at the pre-telecast at the Nokia Theatre, with the remaining 11 were presented at the main ceremony. Bruce Springsteen received the MusiCares Person of the Year award on February 8, 2013 at the 23rd Grammy Benefit Gala at the Los Angeles Convention Center, two nights prior to the main ceremony. The official poster was designed by Artist Erika Iris Simmons. The program producer is AEG Ehrlich Ventures, with Ken Ehrlich serving as executive producer, Louis J. Horvitz as director and David Wild and Ken Ehrlich as writers.



2013 Grammy Awards Winners

The 55th Annual Grammy Awards are being handed out this afternoon, and many of them before this evening's telecast from the Staples Center in Los Angeles. We're updating all the winners here as they're announced:



- Rihanna will premiere "Stay" on E! News
- Record of the Year "Somebody That I Used to Know," Gotye featuring Kimbra
- Album of the Year: Babel, Mumford & Sons
- Song of the Year: "We Are Young," fun. featuring Janelle Monáe
- Best New Artist: fun.
- Best Pop Solo Performance: "Set Fire to the Rain," Adele
- Faith Hill and Tim McGraw talk their Vegas show
- Best Pop Duo/Group Performance: "Somebody That I Used to Know," Gotye featuring Kimbra
- Best Pop Instrumental Album: Impressions, Chris Botti
- Best Pop Vocal Album: Stronger, Kelly Clarkson
- Best Dance Recording: Bangarang, Skrillex featuring Sirah
- Best Dance/Electronica Album: Bangarang, Skrillex
- Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album: Kisses on the Bottom, Paul McCartney
- Best Rock Performance: Lonely Boy, The Black Keys



- Grammys 2013: Arrivals**
- Best Hard Rock/Metal Performance: "Love Bites (So Do I)," Halestrom
  - Best Rock Song: "Lonely Boy," The Black Keys
  - Best Rock Album: El Camino, The Black Keys
  - Best Alternative Music Album: Making Mirrors, Gotye
  - Best R&B Performance: "Climax," Usher
  - Best Traditional R&B Performance: "Love on Top," Beyoncé
  - Best R&B Song: "Adorn," Miguel
  - Best Urban Contemporary Album: Channel Orange, Frank Ocean
- Taylor Swift talks opening the Grammys**
- Best R&B Album: Black Radio, Robert Glasper Experiment
  - Best Rap Performance: "N\*\*\*\*s in Paris," Jay-Z and Kanye West
  - Best Rap/Sung Collaboration: "No Church In The Wild," Jay-Z and Kanye West featuring Frank Ocean and The Dream
  - Best Rap Song: "N\*\*\*\*s in Paris," Jay-Z and Kanye West
  - Best Rap Album: Take Care, Drake
  - Best Country Solo Performance: "Blown Away," Carrie Underwood
  - Best Country Duo/Group Performance: Pontoon, Little Big Town
  - Best Country Song: "Blown Away," Carrie Underwood
  - Best Country Album: Uncaged, Zac Brown Band



- Grammy Parties!**
- Best New Age Album: Echoes of Love, Omar Akram
  - Best Improvised Jazz Solo: "Hot House," Gary Burton and Chick Corea
  - Best Jazz Vocal Album: Radio Music Society, Esperanza Spalding
  - Best Jazz Instrumental Album: Unity Band, Pat Metheny Unity Band

- Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album: Dear Diz (Every Day I Think Of You), Arturo Sandoval
- Best Latin Jazz Album: ¡Ritmo!, The Clare Fischer Latin Jazz Big Band
- Best Gospel/Contemporary Christian Music Performance: "10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord)," Matt Redman
- Best Gospel Song: "Go Get It," Erica Campbell, Tina Campbell & Warrryn Campbell
- Best Contemporary Christian Music Song: "10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord)," Jonas Myrin & Matt Redman
- Best Gospel Album: Gravity, Lecrae
- Best Contemporary Christian Music Album: Eye on It, TobyMac
- Chris Brown hits the Grammys red carpet, talks recent car crash
- Best Latin Pop Album: MTV Unplugged Deluxe Edition, Juanes
- Best Latin Rock, Urban or Alternative Album: Imaginaries, Quetzal
- Best Regional Mexican Music Album (Including Tejano): Pecados Y Milagros, Lila Downs
- Best Tropical Latin Album: Retro, Marlow Rosado Y La Riqueña
- Best Americana Album: Slipstream, Bonnie Raitt
- Best Bluegrass Album: Nobody Knows You, Steep Canyon Rangers
- Best Blues Album: Locked Down, Dr. John
- Best Folk Album: "The Goat Rodeo Sessions," Yo-Yo Ma, Stuart Duncan, Edgar Meyer and Chris Thile
- Best Regional Roots Music Album: The Band Courtbouillon, Wayne Toups, Steve Riley and Wilson Savoy
- Best Reggae Album: Rebirth, Jimmy Cliff

- Best Quotes From the Red Carpet**
- Best World Music Album: The Living Room Sessions Part 1, Ravi Shankar
  - Best Children's Album: Can You Canoe?, The Okee Dokee Brothers
  - Best Spoken Word Album: Society's Child: My Autobiography, Janis Ian
  - Best Comedy Album: Blow Your Pants Off, Jimmy Fallon
  - Best Musical Theater Album: Once: A New Musical, Steve Kazee and Cristin Milioti
  - Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media: Midnight in Paris
  - Best Score Soundtrack For Visual Media: The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo, Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross
  - Best Song Written For Visual Media: "Safe & Sound" (from The Hunger Games), T Bone Burnett, Taylor Swift, The Civil Wars
  - Best Instrumental Composition: "Mozart Goes Dancing," Chick Corea
  - Jennifer Lopez shows some leg on the Grammys red carpet
  - Best Instrumental Arrangement: "How About You," Gil Evans
  - Best Instrumental Arrangement Accompanying Vocalist(s): "City Of Roses," Thara Memory & Esperanza Spalding
  - Best Recording Package: Biophilia, Michael Amzalag and Mathias Augustyniak
  - Best Boxed or Special Limited Edition Package: Woody At 100: The Woody Guthrie Centennial Collection, Fritz Klaetke
  - Best Album Notes: Singular Genius: The Complete ABC Singles, Billy Vera, album notes writer (Ray Charles)
  - Best Historical Album: The Smile Sessions (Deluxe Box Set), Alan Boyd, Mark Linnett, Brian Wilson and Dennis Wolfe
  - Best Engineered Album, Non-Classical: The Goat Rodeo Sessions, Richard King
  - Producer Of The Year, Non-Classical: Dan Auerbach
  - Best Remixed Recording, Non-Classical: "Promises (Skrillex & Nero remix)," Skrillex
  - Best Surround Sound Album: Modern Cool, Jim Anderson
  - Best Engineered Album, Classical: Life & Breath, Tom Caulfield & John Newton
  - Elton John, Whitney Houston and Billy Joel Recordings among Grammy Hall of Fame inductees
  - Producer of the Year, Classical: Blanton Alspaugh
  - Best Orchestral Performance: Adams: "Harmonielehre & Short Ride In A Fast Machine," Michael Tilson Thomas
  - Best Opera Recording: "Wagner: Der Ring Des Nibelungen," James Levine & Fabio Luisi
  - Best Choral Performance: "Life & Breath - Choral Works By René Clausen," Charles Bruffy
  - Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance: "Meanwhile," Eighth Blackbird
  - Best Classical Instrumental Solo: "Kurtág & Ligeti: Music For Viola," Kim Kashkashian
  - Best Classical Vocal Solo: "Poèmes," Renée Fleming
  - Best Classical Compendium: "Penderecki: Fonogrammi; Horn Concerto; Partita; The Awakening Of Jacob; Anaklasis," Antoni Wit
  - Best Contemporary Classical Composition: "Hartke, Stephen: Meanwhile - Incidental Music To Imaginary Puppet Plays," Stephen Hartke
  - Best Short Form Music Video: "We Found Love," Rihanna featuring Calvin Harris
  - Best Long Form Music Video: "Big Easy Express," Mumford & Sons

66TH BRITISH ACADEMY FILM AWARDS

It's that time of year again when the stars don their tuxes and ball gowns in preparation for a night of fake smiles and emotional speeches. Sunday saw the turn of the BAFTAs (The British Academy of Film and Television Arts) in which Stephen Fry hosted a night of fun where British films were supposedly recognised just as much as their Hollywood counterparts. Leading up to the awards show Lincoln and Les Misérables were tipped for the top with ten and nine nominations respectively.



The 66th British Academy Film Awards, more commonly known as the BAFTAs, were held on 10 February 2013 at the Royal Opera House in London, honouring the best national and foreign films of 2012. Stephen Fry hosted the ceremony, where Argo was named Best Film. Daniel Day-Lewis and Emmanuelle Riva received the awards for Best Actor and Best Actress respectively, while Anne Hathaway and Christoph Waltz won the Best Supporting awards. Ben Affleck received the Best Director accolade. Skyfall was named Best British Film. Sir Alan Parker received the Academy Fellowship and Tessa Ross gathered the Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema Award. It came as no surprise after his wins at the Golden Globes that the two most prestigious awards, Best Picture and Best Director, were nabbed by Ben Affleck for Argo. Lincoln's lot proved disappointing as they were only able to obtain one award for Daniel Day-Lewis' performance as the eponymous president. James Bond once again proved as popular as ever as Skyfall came away with the award for Outstanding British Film as well as that of Best Original Music. Unfortunately for Judi Dench her fabulous performance in the latest Bond extravaganza was overlooked as the award for Best Supporting Actress went to Anne Hathaway for her role as Fantine in Les Misérables.

Les Misérables came away with four awards yet Ang Lee's Life of Pi only managed two, even being beaten by Silver Linings Playbook for Best Adapted Screenplay. Quentin Tarantino gained Best Original Screenplay for Django Unchained, an accolade he was clearly very proud of. Anna Karenina won Best Costume Design, a huge honour as it contended with the likes of Les Misérables and Lincoln. Sadly for The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey there was no such luck as it received no awards, its visual effects being trumped by Life of Pi. The EE Rising Star Award went to Juno Temple, who has appeared in Atonement and The Dark Knight Rises, and the award for Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema went to Tessa Ross, who has produced such greats as This Is England, Billy Elliot and In Bruges. Aptly, Danny Boyle, who she worked with on 127 Hours and Slumdog Millionaire, gave out the award. The BAFTA Fellowship has been awarded to many talented people over the years; in most recent ceremonies the likes of Martin Scorsese and Christopher Lee have attained this honour. The 2013 award went to director Alan Parker, famous for Midnight Express, The Commitments and Evita – and a man who has accumulated 19 BAFTA nominations for his films over the years. He accepted the award humorously by saying, "When it was first mooted that I might get this award, I thought of what I'd like to say, and then 10 years went by." As a prelude to the Academy Awards, it still seems undecided who will win. Argo would seem to be the favourite to triumph, but with no nomination for Best Director, Lincoln may finally triumph. As awards ceremonies go, 2013 is simply proving that nothing is ever certain.



- BAFTA's 2013: Winner's list**
- Best Picture Argo
  - Outstanding British Film Skyfall
  - Best Director Ben Affleck, Argo
  - Best Actor Daniel Day-Lewis, Lincoln
  - Best Actress Emmanuelle Riva, Amour
  - Supporting Actor Christoph Waltz, Django Unchained
  - Supporting Actress Anne Hathaway, Les Misérables
  - Best Original Screenplay Quentin Tarantino, Django Unchained
  - Best Adapted Screenplay David O. Russell, Silver Linings Playbook
  - Best Foreign Film - Amour

Boeing gives Dreamliner a test flight

Boeing has taken its first test flight of its 787 Dreamliner since problems with lithium-ion batteries aboard two planes grounded the worldwide fleet of the new planes nearly a month ago. But no results were announced. Boeing said the plane flew for two hours and 19 minutes on Saturday afternoon. A crew of 13 people monitored the main and auxiliary batteries on the plane. "The crew reports that the flight was uneventful," said spokesman Marc Birtel. The Federal Aviation Administration and other regulators worldwide grounded the fleet of 50 planes on Jan. 16 after battery problems aboard two planes. The first was a battery fire in a Japan Airlines plane parked in Boston on Jan. 7 and a smoldering battery that forced an emergency landing of an All Nippon Airways plane in Japan on Jan. 16. Since then, the FAA allowed Boeing a one-time "ferry flight," which happened Thursday, to move a 787 from a painting facility in Texas to Washington. Later Thursday, the FAA allowed Boeing to conduct test flights.



Meanwhile, the National Transportation Safety Board continues to investigate the Boston fire. On Thursday, investigators pinpointed the origin of the fire in one of eight cells of the auxiliary battery. But they continue to search for a cause in possible flaws in how the battery was designed, manufactured or charged. FAA Administrator Michael Huerta said test flights are common in research and development, and that the goal of these flights would be to collect information about the battery and electrical system while the aircraft is airborne. Conditions set on the flights included crew members closely monitoring the batteries and flying over unpopulated areas. Boeing said data gathered during the test flight are considered part of the federal investigation into the battery problems, so the company "cannot share any additional details," Birtel said. More test flights are planned this week, but not on Sunday. The company doesn't provide test-flight schedules in advance of flights.

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