

Quick Read

Turkey's Erdogan says to send troops to Libya

ANKARA: President Tayyip Erdogan said on Thursday that Turkey will send troops to Libya now that Tripoli has requested it, and he will present legislation to parliament in January for deployment to the north African country.



Ankara signed two separate accords a month ago with Libya's internationally recognised government of Fayez al-Serraj, one on security and military cooperation and another on maritime boundaries in the eastern Mediterranean.

Serraj's Government of National Accord (GNA) has been fending off a months-long offensive by Khalifa Haftar's forces in eastern Libya, which have received support from Russia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

"Since there is an invitation (from Libya) right now, we will accept it," Erdogan told members of his AK Party in a speech. "We will put the bill on sending troops to Libya on the agenda as soon as parliament opens."

The legislation would pass around Jan 8-9, he added. On Wednesday, Erdogan visited Tunisia to discuss cooperation for a possible ceasefire in neighbouring Libya. On Thursday, he said Turkey and Tunisia agreed to support the GNA.

Moscow has voiced concerns over a possible Turkish military deployment to Libya in support of the GNA, while Erdogan said last week Turkey will not stay silent over Russian-backed mercenaries supporting Haftar. —Reuters

Fire in Minneapolis leaves 250 homeless on Christmas Day



MINNEAPOLIS: Fire swept a hotel apartment building that provides transitional housing for the poor in downtown Minneapolis early on Thursday, leaving about 250 people homeless on Christmas morning, city officials said.

No deaths or serious injuries were reported in the four-alarm blaze. Three residents with minor injuries were taken to a hospital for evaluation, and several others were treated at the scene for smoke inhalation, officials said.

The fire erupted before dawn on the second floor of the three-story Francis Drake Hotel before spreading to the third floor and attic area of the brick building, city Fire Chief John Fruetel told reporters outside the complex.

The cause was unknown, Fruetel said, adding that he expected it would take fire crews until Thursday to fully extinguish the blaze. —AFP

Ring of fire eclipse hits Asia

SINGAPORE: Skywatchers from Saudi Arabia and Oman to India and Singapore were treated to a rare "ring of fire" solar eclipse Thursday.

Annular eclipses occur when the Moon is not close enough to the Earth to completely obscure the Sun, leaving a thin ring of the solar disc visible.

While these types of eclipses occur every year or two, they are only visible from a narrow band of Earth each time and it can be decades before the same pattern is repeated.

Crowds across Singapore witness rare 'ring of fire' solar eclipse on Boxing Day

The next annular solar eclipse that can be seen in Singapore will only occur in 2063.

Depending on weather conditions, this year's astronomical phenomenon was set to be visible from the Middle East across southern India and Southeast Asia before ending over the northern Pacific.

Hundreds of amateur astronomers and photographers set up by Singapore's harbour for what some described as a "once in a lifetime" event.

"The next one will happen in about 40

years I think," said Jason Teng, 37, who took the day off work to photograph the eclipse.

The amateur astronomer used a special solar filter on his telescope as there is no safe period to observe an annular solar eclipse following eclipses.

"It's only two minutes, but it's so intense that you talk about it with your friends, family for the next month," Alin said.

In southern India, people gathered on the beaches in Tamil Nadu to watch the event.

A girl watches a solar eclipse through a foot X-ray as the moon covers the sun in a rare "ring of fire" solar eclipse as seen from Islamabad.

Children watch a solar eclipse through a foot X-ray

Children watch a solar eclipse through a foot X-ray as the moon covers the sun in a rare "ring of fire" solar eclipse as seen from Islamabad.

The eclipse even affected cricket, with play delayed by two hours in a first-class match between Mumbai and Rajkot.

The eastern state of Odisha declared a public holiday, with all government offices,

courts, schools and colleges closed.

The moon begins to cover the sun in Lahore

The moon begins to cover the sun during a rare "ring of fire" solar eclipse, while a eagle flies past, at Badshahi mosque in Lahore on Dec 26, 2019. (Photo: Arif Ali)

People in the southern Indian city of Dindigul were treated to a spectacular view of the annular People in the southern Indian city of Dindigul were treated to a spectacular view of the annular solar eclipse.

But in New Delhi, cloud and pollution blocked the view and Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted his disappointment, although only a partial eclipse would have been visible that far north.

"Like many Indians I was enthusiastic about solareclipse2019," Modi said.

"Unfortunately, I could not see the Sun due to cloud cover but I did catch glimpses of the eclipse in Kozhikode and other parts on live stream." A man uses a telescope to watch the moon move in front of the sun in a rare "ring of fire" solar eclipse in Semarang.

In Indonesia, hundreds of people gathered

outside Jakarta Planetarium to watch the event using protective glasses supplied by the planetarium, hoping for clear skies at the time of maximum eclipse.

Super blue blood moon - Thousands turn out across Singapore to catch special lunar eclipse "I could see the eclipse this morning and now am very excited to see the peak though now it is cloudy," said Chandra Ayu Dewi, 39, who arrived at 7am with her children. Outside the narrow band where the "Ring of fire" effect can be observed, skywatchers would see a partial solar eclipse.

Composite of annular solar eclipse A composite of the rare annular solar eclipse that took place in Singapore on Dec 26, 2019. (Photos: Jeremy Long)

Eclipse 1.20pm View of the eclipse taken at 1.20pm at Marina Barrage. (Photo: Jeremy Long)

The next annual eclipse in June 2020 will be visible to a narrow band from Africa to northern Asia. The following one in June 2021 will only be seen in the Arctic and parts of Canada, Greenland and the remote Russian far east.



SINGAPORE: The moon totally covers the sun in a rare "ring of fire" solar eclipse as seen from the south Indian city of Dindigul in Tamil Nadu state.

Death toll in Indonesia bus plunge rises to 35 as more victims found

JAKARTA: At least 35 people were killed when a bus plunged into a ravine in Indonesia, officials said in a new toll on Thursday, making it one of the most deadly bus accidents in recent years.

A rescue team in Indonesia's island of Sumatra on Thursday continued the search for a third day to find more bodies after seven new victims were found in a river late on Wednesday.

According to a passenger manifest, the regional bus left Bengkulu province for Pagar Alam with 27 onboard but some survivors told police there were around 50 people inside when the accident happened on Monday just before midnight.

Spokesman for a local rescue team in South Sumatra Taufan, who only goes by one name like many Indonesians, said on Thursday that of the 35 people killed, 16 were male and 19 female.

"The rescue team is searching the river 6km towards the north using rafting," Taufan told AFP on

Thursday. The team has evacuated at least 13 survivors and the search is still ongoing to find more bodies over fears that some might have been carried away in the river.

At least eight of the passengers killed were children, local police chief Dolly Gumara said Wednesday.

Traffic accidents are common in the Southeast Asian archipelago, where vehicles are often old and poorly maintained and road rules regularly flouted.

In September, at least 21 people died when a bus plunged into a ravine in West Java's Sukabumi region.

Several months earlier, 12 people were killed and dozens more injured when a passenger tried to wrest control of a bus steering wheel following an argument with the driver on the same toll road in West Java as Thursday's accident. The bus smashed into two cars, causing a truck to roll.—AFP



CORRECTION OF FATHER NAME

I Rashid Faiz have passed the secondary School Annual Examination 2011 under Roll No. 700847 and Intermediate Annual Examination Year 2013 under Roll No. 525082 from B.I.S.E. Lahore My Father's Name is Faiz Ahmad whereas on certificate my Father's name has been mentioned as Muhammad Faiz which is incorrect.

I want to get changed my father's name from Muhammad Faiz to Faiz Ahmad. If any person / organization /agency has any objection, then the same may be intimated in writing to the Secretary, Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, 86-Mozang Road, Lahore within 15 days.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The allotment of plot N0 207, Bloc N0 Z, Three Marla situated in Area Development Scheme Nankana Sahib is stated to stand in the name of Ch Sultan Ahmed S/O Ch Yazdan Bux and Muhammad Rafiq S/O Muhammad Ramzan claim to be the General Attorney of said plot submitted affidavit, intending that the said plot may be transferred in the name of 1-Shahid Hussain 2-Sajjad Hussain S/O Muhammad Rafiq.

If anybody has any objection he should submit his objection in writing to the undersigned within 15 days from publication of this notice. The Attorney holder shall be allowed to perform duties as mentioned in Attorney deed this department shall not accept any responsibility what so ever in this behalf.

Deputy Director Punjab Housing & Town Planning Agency Region, Sheikhpura

'More churros, less cops!': New York food vendors feel the heat



NEW YORK: For two decades, Guadalupe Galicia has been waking up every day at 4am to make tamales and rice pudding to sell on the streets of New York.

She is one of thousands of vendors, many of whom are undocumented migrants, who hawk yummy treats in the Big Apple, but they are facing a litany of problems, from weather to assaults to arrests to even deportation.

"One of their biggest fears is the police, and that's why they are extra vulnerable," Julie Torres Moskowitz, from the Street Vendors Project (SVP) support group, told AFP.

A street vendor sells tamales in Queens -- many vendors are undocumented migrants, and can face

deportation if they are arrested and their papers are not in order.

New York is known for hot dogs, pizza, bagels and pretzels, but the food scene is way more diverse.

From Venezuelan arepas and Ecuadorian baked piglet to Middle Eastern falafel sandwiches and Tibetan momos, the city has it all.

Galicia, an undocumented migrant from Mexico and single mother of six children, sells tamales stuffed with all sorts of fillings for US\$2.25 each in the Bushwick area of Brooklyn.

"We are only making enough money to support our children," says the 40-year-old, who also sells champurrado - a hot, thick Mexican drink made with chocolate, corn flour and spices.

Inclement weather is a problem - temperatures regularly drop below freezing during the winter months - but so are assaults, robberies, fines, confiscations and

arrests, according to SVP. The women vendors are particularly vulnerable, they say. Arrests can result in deportation if a vendor's papers are not in order, which they often aren't, the group says.

Moskowitz, who sits on SVP's advisory board, says some attacks and thefts go unreported because of fear of dealing with the police.

Bad weather can be a problem for street food vendors -- but so can assaults, robberies and arrests, Bad weather can be a problem for street food vendors - but so can assaults, robberies and arrests, with women particularly at risk. To sell street food, vendors require a license that costs about US\$50 and a permit for the cart that costs another US\$200.

It's very hard to obtain a permit, though: although there are more than 10,000 vendors, the number of permits has been capped at 2,900 since 1983 -

meaning many operate at their own risk.

There are some 2,000 additional permits for temporary workers but that isn't enough for everyone.

The result is a black market in permits, with owners subletting theirs for US\$25,000, often through intermediaries, several vendors told AFP. Fake permit scams happen all the time, they say.

Outside Manhattan, in Brooklyn, Queens and The Bronx, street food is mostly sold by women.

SVP says they endure more harassment from aggressive customers than their male counterparts. They also are more likely to be fined by police, the group says. Most of the female food sellers, like Galicia, are the main breadwinners in their families. Mexican Guadalupe Galicia, 40, has been selling tamales and rice pudding for more than 20