

NEWSLINE

Obama pays tribute to MJ

WASHINGTON: US President Barack Obama has finally paid tribute to King of Pop Michael Jackson more than a week after his death. Obama was expected to issue a statement following Jackson's sudden death last week, but he instead chose to send the superstar's family a private letter of condolence. A week after, Obama acknowledged the magnitude of the loss to the generation that grew up as followers of the icon, Contactmusic reports. He paid tribute saying: "He will go down in history as one of our greatest entertainers".

Myanmar rejects UN plea

NAYPYITAW: U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Friday that Myanmar's junta chief rejected his initial request to meet jailed opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, a rocky start to what he has called "a very tough mission" to win her freedom. Ban emerged from a two-hour meeting with Myanmar's reclusive Senior Gen. Than Shwe, saying he still hoped to meet the 64-year-old Nobel Peace laureate before he leaves the country on Saturday.

US strike claims 17

ISLAMABAD: U.S. missiles struck a training facility operated by Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud and a militant communication center Friday, killing 17 people and wounding 27 others, intelligence officials said. The two attacks by drone aircraft took place in South Waziristan, a Mehsud stronghold close to the Afghan border where Pakistani troops are gearing up for a military offensive, two officials said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Thai royal slur under probe

BANGKOK: Police in Thailand said Friday they were investigating an alleged insult to the revered monarchy by the board of the kingdom's foreign correspondents' club, a crime punishable by 15 years in jail. A woman had filed a complaint against the entire 13-member board of the club over the distribution of a DVD that included a controversial speech made at the club in 2007, police and the board said.

(Agencies)



Belarusian sportspeople perform during a parade marking Independence Day in Minsk on Friday. The celebrations marks the liberation of Minsk by the Red Army from the Nazi invaders in 1944.

Veg diet recipe for frail bones: Study

AFP SYDNEY, JULY 3

People who live on vegetarian diets have slightly weaker bones than their meat-eating counterparts, Australian researchers said Thursday.

A joint Australian-Vietnamese study of links between the bones and diet of more than 2,700 people found that vegetarians had bones five percent less dense than meat-eaters, said lead researcher Tuan Nguyen.

The issue was most pronounced in vegans, who excluded all animal products from their diet and whose bones were six percent weaker, Nguyen said.

There was "practically no difference" between the bones of meat-eaters and ovo-lacto vegetarians, who excluded meat and seafood but ate eggs and dairy products, he said.

"The results suggest that vegetarian diets, particularly vegan diets, are associated with lower bone mineral density," Nguyen wrote in the study, which was published Thursday in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

"But the magnitude of the association is clinically insignificant," he added.



Nguyen, who is from Sydney's Garvan Institute for Medical Research and collaborated on the project with the Pham Ngoc Thach University of Medicine in Ho Chi Minh City, said the question of whether the lower density bones translated to increased fracture risk was yet to be answered.

"Given the rising number of vegetarians, roughly five percent (of people) in western countries, and the widespread incidence of osteoporosis, the issue is worth resolving," he said.

Trial for UK Embassy staff

AP EDITOR'S NOTE, JULY 3

Iranian authorities have barred journalists for international news organizations from reporting on the streets and ordered them to stay in their offices. This report is based on the accounts of witnesses reached in Iran and official statements carried on Iranian media.

--- A top Iranian cleric said Friday that some of the detained Iranian staffers of the British Embassy in Tehran will be put on trial, and he accused Britain of a role in instigating widespread protests that erupted over the country's disputed presidential election.

The announcement by Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati

came a day after the European Union demanded Iran release the staffers, who were detained on June 27. Britain is pressing EU countries to pull their ambassadors out of Tehran in protest.

Jannati, a hard-liner who is close to Iran's supreme leader, told worshippers during a Friday prayer sermon in Tehran that the detained staffers "made confessions." "In these events, their embassy had a presence," he said, referring to the post-election turmoil. "Some people were arrested."

Well, inevitably, they will be put on trial." He did not say how many staffers will be tried or on what charges. Earlier Iranian

officials said all but one of the eight embassy personnel arrested on June 27 had been released, but European Union officials said they believed more than one was still being held.

In London, a Foreign Office spokeswoman said of Jannati's comments that British officials are "very concerned about these reports and are investigating." Jannati does not hold a position in the government or judiciary, but is the head of the Guardian Council, a powerful body in Iran's ruling clerical hierarchy that stands above the elected government.

He is also close to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Jannati told the thousands of worshippers that the British "had designed a velvet revolution ... In March, they said (in their Foreign Ministry) that street riots were possible during June elections. These are signs ... revealed by themselves." He also said those involved in protests "need to repent and ask God to forgive them." Protests erupted in Tehran and other cities after official results showed a landslide victory for incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the June 12 presidential election over his pro-reform rival Mir Hossein Mousavi. The pro-reform camp said the results were fraudulent, but the protests were quashed in a tough crackdown.

Media hail gay union ruling

AFP NEW DELHI, JULY 3

The Indian media hailed Friday a court ruling to decriminalise gay sex and urged the government to respond by striking a colonial-era ban on homosexuality from the statute books.

"Gay and finally legal" ran the headline of the Mail Today paper which like other dailies was awash with articles and pictures of India's largely ostracised gay and transgender communities celebrating Thursday's Delhi High Court ruling. "Its ok to be gay" read the banner headline of the Hindustan Times while the Asian Age welcomed what it called a "Sexual Revolution in India".

Homosexuality had been illegal in India since 1860 under a statute introduced by British colonial rulers that banned "carnal intercourse against the order of nature." Conviction carried a fine and maximum 10-year jail sentence.

The High Court ruled that the statute violated basic individual rights guaranteed by the constitution.

The Times of India, which titled its main piece "India's Gay Day", declared in its editorial that by legalising same-sex relations, the court had "restored the personal freedom and rights of homosexuals."

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Marriage protects against dementia

AFP PARIS, JULY 3

People who live alone in middle age face nearly double the risk of developing cognitive problems in later life compared with married or cohabiting counterparts, according to a study published Friday.

Researchers interviewed 2,000 people selected randomly in the Kuopio and Joensuu regions of eastern Finland in the 1970s and 80s, when their average age was 50.4 years.

A total of 1,409 of the volunteers were then re-

examined in 1998 for cognitive impairment, when their ages ranged from 65-79.

Of these, 57 were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia; 82 had mild cognitive impairment; the remaining 1,270 were otherwise healthy.

"People living without a partner at mid-life had around twice the risk of developing cognitive impairment in later life compared with people living with a partner," the study found.

Burglar falls asleep on job

BANGKOK: A Thai thief broke into a house but promptly fell asleep inside before stealing anything and was eventually discovered by a housemaid on Friday morning, police said.

Prachak Jarkngooloem, 24, was found at a house in the coastal resort of Pattaya, 150 kilometres south of Bangkok, where he admitted planning to steal goods from the property. "He told police that he entered the house yesterday evening hoping to steal something but he was tired and sleepy because he argued with his girlfriend the previous night and went for a drink with friends, so he slept," Lieutenant Colonel Ruengwit Rakchart of Pattaya police said. (AFP)

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The complete academic guide for SLC grads. THE KATHMANDU POST

The supplement will be published on Monday (6th July, 2009) edition of The Kathmandu Post

