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CLIMATE CHANGE CHIEF CHRISTIANA FIGUERES ENTERS RACE TO HEAD UN

July 7, 2016 ft.com reported: "Christiana Figueres, the UN official who helped steer the Paris climate change accord to success in December, has entered the race to succeed Ban Ki-moon as the organisation's next secretary-general. Ms Figueres, daughter of a three-time Costa Rican president, joins a large field of contenders for a post tipped to go to a woman for the first time in the UN's 71-year history.

A colourful diplomat known for speaking her mind, she vowed to deliver a new model of "collaborative diplomacy" and the organisational reform that has been a hallmark of her time running the UN's climate change secretariat in Bonn over the past six years.

"There is a prevalent feeling that the UN has stagnated, operates excessively in silos and is not fit for purpose," she said in a "vision statement" supporting her bid. Eleven people have already thrown their hat into the ring..."

CDC MONITORING 320 U.S. PREGNANT WOMEN WITH ZIKA

July 7, 2016 yahoo.com reported: "The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on Thursday that it is monitoring 320 U.S. pregnant women with laboratory evidence of Zika virus infection, up from 287 women a week earlier.

However, the number of babies born in the United States with birth defects linked to Zika infection in mothers during pregnancy, or lost pregnancies linked to the virus, remained unchanged from last week's report at 7 and 5, respectively, according to a CDC registry created last month.

The registry compiles poor outcomes of pregnancies with laboratory evidence of possible Zika virus infection in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The latest figures are as of June 30.



Zika has caused concern throughout the Americas due to an alarming rise in cases of the birth defect microcephaly and other severe fetal brain abnormalities linked to the mosquito-borne virus reported in Brazil, the country hardest hit by the outbreak. Infants with microcephaly are born with abnormally small heads and may experience potentially disabling developmental problems."..."

BOMBS HIT EID CELEBRATIONS IN BANGLADESH

July 7, 2016 voa.com reported: "Voice of America News reports: "At least one police officer was killed and five more injured when suspected Islamist militants hurled bombs near a mass prayer gathering to mark the end of Ramadan in Bangladesh Thursday.

Hundreds of thousands of people were celebrating Eid al-Fitr in the northern district of Kishoreganj when assailants threw homemade bombs at police officers standing guard.

One of the attackers was also killed in clashes that followed the explosion.

The attackers were reportedly carrying machetes – a favored weapon of Islamist militants in the South Asian country, who have attacked religious minorities, LGBT persons, liberal thinkers, and professors..."

GOVERNMENT CLAIMS POWER TO CONTROL CONTENT OF SERMONS

July 6, 2016 World Net Daily reported: "The Iowa Civil Rights Commission is being sued for claiming it has the right to control the content of church services that are 'open to the public.'

The lawsuit filed by the Alliance Defending Freedom on behalf of Fort Des Moines Church of Christ is part of a nationwide battle against the implementation of President Obama's declared foreign-policy priority in his final year in office: 'gay rights.'

At issue in the Iowa case are state mandates that protect 'transgender rights.' Among them are allowing men to enter women's shower rooms, dressing rooms and restrooms if they say they are women, and banning statements in meetings 'open to the public' that 'might cause individuals to believe that they are unwelcome because of their perceived gender identity'

The lawsuit charges the mandates violate the U.S. Constitution's protections for free speech, religion, expressive association, due process and the right to peaceably assemble..."

ISLAMIC STATE TIGHTENS GRIP ON CAPTIVES HELD AS SEX SLAVES

July 5, 2016 The Associated Press reported: "The advertisement on the Telegram app is as chilling as it is incongruous: A girl for sale is "Virgin. Beautiful. 12 years old.... Her price has reached \$12,500 and she will be sold soon."

The posting in Arabic appeared on an encrypted conversation along with ads for kittens, weapons and tactical gear. It was shared with The Associated Press by an activist with the minority Yazidi community, whose women and children are being held as sex slaves by the extremists.



While the Islamic State group is losing territory in its self-styled caliphate, it is tightening its grip on the estimated 3,000 women and girls held as sex slaves. In a fusion of ancient barbaric practices and modern technology, IS sells the women like chattel on smart phone apps and shares databases that contain their photographs and the names of their "owners" to prevent their escape through IS checkpoints. The fighters are assassinating smugglers who rescue the captives, just as funds to buy the women out of slavery are drying up.

POLAND MOVES TOWARDS MULTI-BILLION-EURO PATRIOT MISSILE DEAL

July 4, 2016 spacewar.com reported: "Polish Defence Minister Antoni Macierewicz on Monday said he would ink a letter of intent with US defence firm Raytheon to buy a Patriot missile system valued at an estimated 5 billion euros (\$5.6 billion). The EU member's previous government

had said in April it planned to buy the Patriot system, but soon after coming into power in November the current conservative administration placed a question mark over the purchase.

Macierewicz himself had said at the time: "The price is much higher, the delivery time much longer... in short, this contract is practically non-existent."

On Monday Macierewicz said Poland was able to move ahead with the plan because Raytheon had pledged that 50 percent of the missile system spending would be on works "done in Poland by Polish arms firms"..."

RAMADAN: A TIME TO KILL FOR ALLAH

July 4, 2016 Breitbart.com reported: "Last Friday's jihadist assault on a Bangladeshi bakery resulting in the brutal deaths of at least 20 hostages and two police officers is the latest in a spate of lethal attacks commemorating the month-long Islamic holy season of Ramadan.

In their faith-based attack, the Islamist terrorists freed all the people who identified as Muslim and could prove it by reciting the Qur'an, while hacking to death the infidels present with machetes. Among the dead from Friday's attack were nine Italians, seven Japanese, two Bangladeshis, one American and one Indian.

Just before Ramadan began, the Islamic State summoned Muslims to carry out terror attacks during what a group spokesman vowed would be 'the month of conquest and jihad.'..."

CHINA TO HOLD MILITARY EXERCISES IN SOUTH CHINA SEA, RAISING TENSIONS

July 3, 2016 wsj.com reported: "China's military plans exercises in the disputed South China Sea this week, adding to tensions ahead of an international tribunal's ruling that is expected to challenge Beijing's maritime claims in the area.

The drills, announced in a brief online statement Sunday, are scheduled to stretch over seven days starting Tuesday and ending July 11, the day before the United Nations-backed tribunal in The Hague is expected to issue its ruling. Beijing has repeatedly said it will ignore the verdict despite pressure from the U.S. and its allies to comply.



U.S. Navy ships have conducted exercises around the South China Sea in recent weeks and on Friday the Navy said an aircraft-carrier strike group was operating in the sea, without saying precisely where or how long it would stay. U.S. officials have warned that Beijing could respond to the ruling by expanding its recent island-building or declaring an air-defense zone in the area.

China's Maritime Safety Administration, in announcing the exercises, gave geographic coordinates for the drills in an area running east of China's Hainan Island down to and including the Paracel Islands.

"Entering prohibited," it said in English. The Paracels are controlled by China but also claimed by Vietnam, where government officials didn't respond to requests for comment.

Chinese defense ministry officials couldn't be reached for comment Sunday. In a speech on Friday to mark the 95th anniversary of the Communist Party's founding, President Xi Jinping said that China would never compromise on its sovereignty and was "not afraid of trouble."

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IRAQ VIOLENCE: IS BOMBING KILLS 125 RAMADAN SHOPPERS IN BAGHDAD

July 3, 2016 BBC News reported: "At least 125 people have been killed and about 150 injured in an explosion claimed by the so-called Islamic State group in Baghdad, Iraqi police say.

A car bomb exploded on a busy street in the Karrada district late on Saturday. The mainly Shia area was busy with shoppers late at night because it is the holy month of Ramadan.

Iraqi PM Haider al-Abadi was met by angry crowds while visiting the scene on Sunday. He later declared three days of national mourning.

A second bomb also exploded at about midnight in a predominantly Shia area north of the capital, killing another five people. The bombing in Karrada is the deadliest in Iraq this year and comes a week after Iraqi security forces recaptured the city of Falluja from Islamic State (IS) militants.

Police said the dead included at least 15 children and six policemen. At least 12 other people were missing, feared dead. One senior Iraqi official warned that the death toll could rise still further..."

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