

Jimmy Carter Says He Has Cancer

ATLANTA (AP) — Former President Jimmy Carter revealed that recent liver surgery found cancer has spread in his body but gave few details about his prognosis in a brief statement released Wednesday.

“Recent liver surgery revealed that I have cancer that now is in other parts of my body,” Carter said in the statement released by the Carter Center. “I will be rearranging my schedule as necessary so I can undergo treatment by physicians at Emory Healthcare.”

The statement makes clear that Carter’s cancer is widely spread, but not where it originated, or even if that is known at this point. The liver is often a place where cancer spreads and less commonly is the primary source of it. It said further information will be provided when more facts are known, “possibly next week.”

Carter, 90, announced on Aug. 3 that he had surgery to remove a small mass from his liver.

Good wishes poured in on social media after Carter’s announcement, while President Barack Obama said he and first lady Michelle Obama wish Carter a fast and full recovery.

Islamic State Affiliate Releases Image

CAIRO (AP) — A Croatian hostage abducted in Egypt by Islamic State militants has been beheaded, according to a gruesome image circulated Wednesday online — a killing that, if confirmed, would be the first of its kind involving a foreign captive in the country, undermining government efforts to project stability and buttress an economic turnaround.

The killing of the 30-year-old oil and gas sector surveyor would deal a blow to President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi’s attempts to burnish the country’s reputation a week after he unveiled a new extension of the Suez canal in a much-hyped ceremony attended by international dignitaries.

It will also likely rattle companies with expatriate workers in Egypt and cast a cloud over hopes of boosting international investment and tourism following years of unrest in the wake of Egypt’s Arab Spring uprising.

The still photo, circulated by IS supporters on social media, appeared to show the body of Tomislav Salopek, a married father of two, wearing a beige jumpsuit like the one he wore in a previous video. A black flag used by the Islamic State group and a knife were planted in the sand next to his body.

A caption in Arabic said Salopek was killed “for his country’s participation in the war against the Islamic State,” and came after a deadline had passed for Egypt to meet his captors’ demands to free jailed Islamist women.

Nobody Wants To Believe A Slain By IS

VRPOLJE, Croatia (AP) — In Tomislav Salopek’s hometown Vrpolje in Croatia, residents refuse to believe Wednesday’s reports that the 30-year-old surveyor appears to have become the first Croat to be beheaded by the Islamic State group.

“No, no, no,” Goran Blazanovic kept repeating as he sat in the local cafe filled with pale and quiet guests who were switching from one news portal to another on their smartphone screens, looking for signs that would give them hope that the reports were mistaken.

“Nothing is proven,” Blazanovic insisted. “We hope that he will come back home to his wife and children.”

Salopek, who was working with France’s CGG Ardiseis, was abducted on July 22 in Egypt and appeared last week on an Islamic State group video as a hostage demanding Egyptian authorities to free “Muslim women,” a term referring to female Islamist prisoners detained in a sweeping government crackdown following the 2013 military ouster of the country’s Islamist president.

Then on Wednesday, IS sympathizers circulated an image on social media that appeared to show Salopek’s beheaded body lying on desert sand with a black IS flag and a knife planted next to it. The picture or the information about his execution could not be officially verified.

Clinton’s Email Troubles Persist

WASHINGTON (AP) — Try as she might to focus on the policies she wants to enact if elected president, Hillary Rodham Clinton just can’t dig out of her inbox.

Clinton’s email problems are getting worse. She agreed to turn over her private server to the Justice Department this week on the same day Congress got word that at least two emails that traversed the device while she was secretary of state contained information that warranted one of the government’s highest levels of classification.

The developments suggest the investigation into the security of Clinton’s email setup could run deep into 2016, as she is trying to win the Democratic nomination for president and, potentially, the general election.

Clinton campaign aides argue there’s nothing for investigators to find, and the State Department says it’s not yet clear if the material at issue ought to be considered classified at all.

What worries Clinton’s team is the lingering whiff of political scandal in a tightening primary race, and they pushed back hard on Wednesday, trying their best to dismiss the matter as nothing more than politics.

IOI Rules Out Viral Testing Of Waters

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — The International Olympic Committee ruled out conducting viral tests of Rio de Janeiro’s sewage-laden waterways ahead of the 2016 games, a top official said Wednesday, despite an Associated Press study showing dangerously high levels of disease-causing viruses at all aquatic venues, with experts saying athletes are almost certain to be exposed to pathogens.

Speaking at a news conference dominated by questions about Rio’s sewage pollution problem, Olympic Games Executive Director Christophe Dubi said the IOC will be sticking to World Health Organization guidelines recommending only bacterial testing.

The AP’s independent analysis of water quality showed high levels of viruses and, in some cases, bacteria from human sewage in all of Rio’s Olympic and Paralympic water venues, including the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon, where rowing will take place, the Guanabara Bay, where the sailing competition are to be held, and at Copacabana Beach where distance swimming events will take place.

In two separate emailed statements following the AP’s July 30 publication about its study, the World Health Organization said it was advising the International Olympic Committee “to widen the scientific base of indicators to include viruses.”

However, in an emailed statement Monday, the organization backpedaled and said that “WHO has not and will not issue an ‘official recommendation’ on viral testing.”

At Least 17 Dead As Huge Blasts Hit Chinese Port

BY CHRISTOPHER BODEEN
Associated Press

TIANJIN, China — Huge explosions in a warehouse district sent up massive fireballs that turned the night sky into day, killing at least 17 people and injuring hundreds in the Chinese port city of Tianjin, officials and witnesses said Thursday.

China’s state broadcaster, CCTV, said that at least 17 people were killed in the explosions late Wednesday and that 32 were in critical condition in hospital. Hundreds of others were taken to hospital.

The blasts, originating at a warehouse for hazardous material, knocked doors off buildings in the area and shattered windows up to several kilometers (miles) away.

“I thought it was an earthquake, so I rushed downstairs without my shoes on,” Tianjin resident Zhang Siyu, whose home is several kilometers from the blast site, said in a telephone interview. “Only once I was outside did I realize it was an explosion. There was the huge fireball in the sky with thick clouds. Everybody could see it.”

Zhang said she could see wounded people weeping. She said she did not see anyone who had been killed, but “I could feel death.”

There was no indication of what caused the blasts, and no immediate sign of any large release of toxic chemicals into the air. *The Beijing News* newspaper reported on its website that there was some unidentified yellow foam flowing at the site.

Police in Tianjin said an initial blast took place at shipping containers in a warehouse for hazardous materials owned by Ruihai Logistics, a company that says it is properly approved to handle such materials. State media said senior management of the company had been detained by authorities, and that President Xi Jinping has demanded severe punishment for anyone found responsible for the explosions.



YUE YUEWEI/XINHUA/ZUMA PRESS/TNS

Smoke and fire are seen after an explosion in the Binhai New Area in north China Tianjin Municipality on Aug. 13. An explosion rocked the Binhai New Area in north China Tianjin Municipality at around 11:30 p.m. Wednesday. The cause and casualties are not immediately known.

The official Xinhua News agency said an initial explosion triggered other blasts at nearby businesses. The National Earthquake Bureau reported two major blasts before midnight, the first with an equivalent of 3 tons of TNT, and the second with the equivalent of 21 tons.

The explosions took place in a mostly industrial zone, with some apartment buildings in the vicinity. Buildings of a half-dozen other logistics companies were destroyed in the blasts, and more than 1,000 new Renault cars were left charred in a nearby parking lot, the Beijing News said.

Photos taken by bystanders and circulating on microblogs show a gigantic fireball high in the sky, with a mushroom-cloud. Other photos on state media outlets showed a sea of fire that painted the night sky bright orange, with tall plumes of smoke.

About 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) from the explosion site is the luxury Fifth Avenue apartment complex on a road

strewn with broken glass and pieces of charred metal thrown from explosion. Like surrounding buildings, the Mediterranean style complex had all its windows blown out, and some of its surfaces were scorched.

“It’s lucky no one had moved in,” said a worker on the site, Liu Junwei, 29. “But for us it’s a total loss. Two years of hard work down the drain.”

“It had been all quiet, then the sky just lit up brighter than day and it looked like a fireworks show,” said another worker on the site who gave just his surname, Li.

In one neighborhood about 10 to 20 kilometers (6 to 12 miles) from the blast site, some residents were sleeping on the street wearing gas masks, although there was no perceptible problem with the air apart from massive clouds of smoke seen in the distance.

“It was like what we were told a nuclear bomb would be like,” said truck driver Zhao Zhencheng, who spent the

Ban Fires UN Peacekeeping Chief In Central Africa

BY CARA ANNA
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. chief has fired the head of the peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic over the force’s handling of dozens of misconduct allegations, including rape and killing.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Wednesday he has accepted the resignation of Babacar Gaye of Senegal.

“Enough is enough,” he said. He has called a special session of the U.N. Security Council for Thursday over the issue of sexual abuse allegations.

“I cannot put into words how anguished and angered and ashamed I am by recurrent reports over the years of sex abuse and exploitation by U.N. forces,” said Ban, who first heard about the latest allegations Tuesday, a week after the first U.N. officials were informed.

He said he also will hold a special meeting Thursday with the heads of all peacekeeping missions around the world to stress their responsibilities.

Ban’s spokesman, Stephane Dujarric, called the firing of such a high-level official “unprecedented.” He said the peacekeeping force in Central African Republic has faced 57 allegations of possible misconduct, including 11 cases of possible sexual abuse, since the mission was established in April 2014 to calm deadly violence between Muslims and Christians. Ban appointed Gaye in July.

Dujarric said he did not know how many peacekeepers are involved in the 57 allegations.

Gaye did not respond to requests for comment. His resignation letter, seen by The Associated Press, says the issue “could be a systemic problem warranting consideration at the highest level of the organization.”

Gaye’s letter also said he had taken a “very robust stand” against misconduct and that his mission had repatriated “many” peacekeep-

ers for misconduct. The spokesperson for the mission, Hamadou Toure, told the AP that at least six were sent home last month alone.

The firing comes a day after Amnesty International accused U.N. peacekeepers in Central African Republic’s capital of indiscriminately killing a 16-year-old boy and his father and raping a 12-year-old girl in separate incidents this month.

That follows allegations that U.N. peacekeepers had sexually abused street children in Bangui and a separate allegation of child sexual abuse against a peacekeeper in the eastern part of the country.

In an email Wednesday, the legal director of Medecins Sans Frontieres, Francoise Bouchet-Saulnier, said that “since September 2014, MSF has treated a total of four minors who reported sexual abuse by U.N. peacekeeping forces in three separate cases” in Central African Republic. Bouchet-Saulnier said the case included the 12-year-old girl.

The U.N. mission in Central African Republic is also being investigated over how it handled child sexual abuse allegations against French troops last year, in which children as young as 9 said they had traded sex for food.

In a statement, the U.S.-based advocacy group AIDS-Free World blasted what it called the “monumental failure of leadership and appalling mismanagement” at U.N. headquarters.

Ban in the past has expressed his interest in starting to “name and shame” the countries whose peacekeepers are accused of misconduct, though calling out countries has its risks. The U.N. has no standing army and relies on member states to contribute troops and police for its missions.

“I want member states to know that I cannot do this alone,” Ban said Wednesday. “They have the ultimate responsibility to hold individual uniformed personnel to account.”

The U.N. has no powers of criminal investigation or prosecution, leaving it up to peacekeepers’ home countries — which U.N. officials often don’t name publicly.

US Won’t Invite Cuba To Event

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cuban dissidents, so long the center of U.S. policy toward the island, won’t be invited to Secretary of State John Kerry’s historic flag-raising at the U.S. Embassy in Havana on Friday, vividly illustrating how U.S. policy is shifting focus to its single-party government. Kerry intends to meet more quietly with prominent activists later in the day, officials said.

The Cuban government labels its domestic opponents as traitorous U.S. mercenaries. As the two countries have moved to restore relations, Cuba has almost entirely stopped meeting with American politicians who visit dissidents during trips to Havana.

That presented a quandary for U.S. officials organizing the ceremony on Friday to mark the reopening of the embassy on Havana’s historic waterfront. Inviting dissidents would risk a boycott by Cuban officials including those who negotiated with the U.S. after Presidents Barack Obama and Raul Castro declared detente on Dec. 17. Excluding dissidents would certainly provoke fierce criticism from opponents of Obama’s new policy.

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