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DAMASCUS - A TALE OF TWO CITIES

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► NEWS BRIEFS

PAKISTAN MINISTER IN INDIA FOR VISA DEAL

New Delhi, India - Pakistan's Interior Minister Rehman Malik arrived in India on Friday to introduce a new visa system that will make cross-border travel easier.

The new visa system will allow members of divided families, businesspeople, tourists and pilgrims to obtain visas quickly. Malik said that the journey toward peace 'is progressing very well because of growing interaction between the two governments'.

Details on page 12



US TO SEND MISSILES, TROOPS TO PROTECT TURKEY

Incirlik Air Base, Turkey - The US will send two batteries of Patriot missiles and 400 troops to Turkey as part of a NATO force meant to protect Turkish territory from potential Syrian missile attack, the Pentagon said on Friday.

US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta signed a deployment order en route to Turkey from Afghanistan calling for 400 US soldiers to operate two batteries of Patriots at undisclosed locations in Turkey, an official said.

MAN STABS 22 CHILDREN IN CHINA

Beijing, China - A man stabbed 22 primary school students in a knife attack in China on Friday.

The attacker 'has been detained', said an official in Guangshan in the central province of Henan, where the stabbing happened. "None of the victims died," said the official. Police are investigating the motive behind the stabbing spree.



## 18 children among 27 killed in US school shooting



The sister of a teacher at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut reacts after hearing about the shooting on Friday (AP)

Connecticut, US - A shooting at a Connecticut elementary school on Friday left 27 people dead, including 18 children, an official said. The gunman was among the dead in one of the worst such

shootings in the country's history.

The killings happened at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, about 97km north-east of New York City. State police said Newtown police called

them around 9.40am local time. A SWAT team was among the throngs of police to respond, and an investigation is underway.

A dispatcher at the Newtown Volunteer Ambulance Corps

said a teacher was shot in the foot and taken to Danbury Hospital. Andrea Rynn, a spokeswoman at the hospital, said it had three patients from the school but she didn't have information on the extent or nature of their injuries.

The White House said President Barack Obama was notified of the shooting and was receiving updates.

Stephen Delgiadice, a parent, said his eight year old daughter heard two big bangs and teachers told her to get into a corner. His daughter was not harmed. "It's stunning, especially in Newtown, which we always thought was the safest place in America," he said.

Lisa Terifay, who was holding her two children outside the school, said she was shocked. "I still can't believe it's happened in my town," she said. AP

## Clashes in Egypt before crucial vote



Opponents of Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi hold pamphlets urging a 'no vote' on a constitutional referendum as cars burn during clashes in Alexandria, Egypt on Friday (AP)

Cairo, Egypt - Stone-throwing clashes broke out on Friday in the Egyptian city of Alexandria between Islamists and opposition protesters, on the eve of a highly charged referendum on a new constitution, state media said.

Police in riot gear quickly moved to restore order in the city, Egypt's second-biggest. There were no immediate reports of injuries or arrests, but witnesses said that the car of a cleric who had urged support of the referendum was set on fire.

Tensions are high over the staggered referendum, which is being held on this Saturday and the next, after weeks of protests and violence between rival camps in Cairo last week that killed eight people and injured hundreds.

Further mass rallies were taking place on Friday in Cairo by both sides. A pro-constitution rally by the Muslim Brotherhood backing President Mohammed

Morsi gathered more than 2,000 people. Egypt's mainly secular opposition has slammed the draft charter as divisive and a possible attempt by Islamists to introduce sharia-style law.

Mohamed ElBaradei, who heads the opposition National Salvation Front, said on his Twitter feed: 'Insistence on referendum in an explosive, polarised, chaotic and lawless environment is leading country to the brink'.

The Front on Friday was holding last-ditch rallies against the new constitution. It has said it could yet call a boycott if its 'deep concern' over the referendum's fairness turns out to be founded.

Morsi has ordered Egypt's military to help police maintain security until the results of the referendum are known. A total of 130,000 police and 120,000 soldiers will be deployed for the referendum. AP

## UN telecom treaty exposes rifts in Dubai meet

Dubai, UAE - A controversial new global treaty on telecom regulations was signed on Friday by 89 International Telecommunication Union (ITU) member states despite US objections to potential regulation of the Internet.

"I say to the 89 states that signed today the treaty, thank you," said Mohamed al Ghanim, chairman of the World Conference on International Telecommunication (WICT-12),

organised by the ITU in Dubai.

Fifty-five countries did not sign the treaty, he said. 'I hope that the 55 states that said they do not want to sign the treaty, or need to hold consultations, to think again', about the treaty that enters effect in January 2015, said Ghanim, who is the chief of UAE's Telecommunications Regulatory Authority.

The treaty that is the first update to the International

Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs) agreed in 1988, stirred controversy as Internet operators, activists and countries led by the US objected to references to the Internet deemed to be paving the way for government control. But ITU chief Hamadoun Toure insisted on Friday that the treaty had nothing to do with the Internet, despite a non-binding resolution calling for action to promote Internet growth.

Overshadowed by the Internet showdowns were other details in the pact. They include agreements that could lower mobile phone roaming charges, pledges to invest more communications infrastructure in poorer countries, efforts for greater communication technology for the disabled and a move to create a common emergency number for mobile phones and other devices. AP

## Salvaged from junk, classic cars get a new life

M Najmuz Zafar Muscat

Some of the rarest classic cars are gathering dust in garages around the country as people are unaware of their value, according to the head of the newly formed Oman Classic Car Club.

The club's chairman Ahmed al Saqri said there is an acute lack of awareness when it comes to classic cars. "If we go around garages in Wadi Kabir or Ghala, we could find real beauties lying forgotten under a heap of dirt. Their owners might not even remember that they have cars of real value lying around as junk."

Saqri cited the case of several classic cars displayed at the Motor Show Oman, which con-

cluded on Friday, including a 1949-make Dodge Fargo - the oldest model at the venue. "The owner had bought the car from Canada in 2009. We are currently discussing a complete restoration of this pickup, which is extremely rare, as not many were built. Once restored, it could command a price of more than RO10,000."

Another classic car at the show - a Cadillac Eldorado 1963 - was brought by its owner Kasim al Zadjali from UAE as junk. Zadjali, who also attended the show, said he had rebuilt it completely. "From engine and AC to upholstery and exterior, everything has been overhauled. The car can easily go to Salalah or UAE and be back without a



Ahmed al Saqri

hitch," he said.

Other rare cars at the show, which attracted several visitors, were a 1958-make Fiat 500, a 1965 Ford Mustang and a 1954 Buick Riviera. According to Saqri, the latest one to be restored was a 1974 Rover 3500. "It was lying forgotten in a bad condition. It is a unique car which boasts of a 3.5l V8 engine

that lends an exceptional ride. The engine used in these cars was later used in Land Rovers."

He said the need for a club was felt for long as there was no official entity to look into the demands and needs of classic car enthusiasts. "OCCC was officially registered under the Oman Automobile Association in March. Since then it has tried to bring together classic car owners on a single platform.

"We do everything from providing technical help to spare parts and organising get-togethers to liaising with ROP for permissions." OCCC does not have any registered members yet, but it has a database of over 70 classic cars which will be used to invite members from January 2013.



A 1954 Buick Riviera (above) and a 1949 Dodge Fargo on display at the Oman International Exhibition Centre in Muscat (Muscat Daily)



02 ESO, Dar al Atta'a win top civil society award

They shared the 'Best Civil Society Institution' award at the Riyadh 4 Civil Society Leaders Dialogue and Awards ceremony recently



07 Bahrain opposition seeks UK support as tension simmers

The leader of Bahrain's main opposition party has called on the UK government to act as a mediator with the ruling Al Khalifa family



16 Lionel Messi, the biggest star of 2012

The sportsmen we remember most are those who make us feel good. That's what Lionel Messi has done best this year



17 Haya Water plans to award five contracts next year

Contracts are likely to be signed for the Amerat waste-water system and one project in Al Ansab



28 East Java: Making use of nature's allure

Ban on discos, pubs and malls in East Java's Banyuwangi is an attempt to encourage investors to focus on eco-tourism