

News of the day From Across the Globe, April 2

Chronicle News Services



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1 Al Qaeda attack: Al Qaeda's local chapter took responsibility for an attack on Timbuktu over the weekend, as French and Malian forces Monday continued to hunt down the jihadists who infiltrated the ancient, northern Malian town. The boldness of the attack renews fears that al Qaeda's local fighters are regrouping and have not been uprooted by a 3-month-old French-led offensive. Fighters from al Qaeda in Islamic North Africa infiltrated the city, taking positions at a centrally located hotel. A total of 11 insurgents were killed in the attack, Malian officials said. One French soldier was injured.

2 North Korean premier: Pak Pong-ju, an economic technocrat, was made a full member of the Politburo on Sunday and was given more power Monday when the rubber-stamp parliament made him premier, a sign that he could again play a key role in economic policymaking. Pak reportedly was sacked as premier in 2007 after proposing a wage system seen as too similar to U.S.-style capitalism.

3 Editor suspended: A well-known editor of an influential Chinese Communist Party journal said Monday that he had been suspended after writing an article for a British newspaper saying China should abandon its ally North Korea. Deng Yuwen told the South Korean paper Chosun Ilbo that the foreign ministry complained about his article in the Financial Times, which argued that the wayward ally was no longer useful as a buffer against U.S. influence.

4 Patent battle: India's Supreme Court rejected a patent application by Novartis for a major cancer drug Monday, in a landmark ruling that will permit poor patients continued access to many of the world's best

medicines. The ruling allows Indian makers of generic drugs to continue making copycat versions of the drug Gleevec and maintain its role as the world's most important provider of cheap medicines, which is critical in the global fight against HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Gleevec can cost up to \$70,000 per year, while Indian generic versions cost about \$2,500 a year.

5 Gender segregation: Gaza's Hamas-controlled parliament has passed a law requiring separate classes for boys and girls in public and private schools from the fourth grade. The new law constitutes the most far-reaching attempt yet by Gaza's Hamas rulers to impose their ultra-conservative social agenda on Gaza's 1.7 million people. In nearly six years in power, Hamas has moved gradually, imposing some changes, such as banning women from smoking water pipes in public.

6 Gun control: A new study suggests the number of homicides in Brazil has fallen since the passage of a law restricting gun ownership. The study by the government's Institute of Applied Economic Research says the homicide rate fell to 20 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2010 from 22 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2003, when the Disarmament Statute was passed. Widespread fears that the police weren't properly protecting the public helped push the country's gun ownership rate up to 17.5 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2003.

7 Building collapse: The death toll from a collapsed building in Tanzania's largest city rose to 30 on Monday, according to a government statement. Rescue workers have given up hope of finding more survivors after the 16-story building in Dar es Salaam collapsed Friday. Only 17 people were pulled out of the rubble alive.