

## Brief updates on tragedies domestic and abroad

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### Boston terrorized by violence

On April 15, the Boston Marathon 2013 was interrupted by two separate bombings at the finish line. The attacks, allegedly orchestrated by brothers Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, left three dead and more than 280 injured. On April 18, the brothers also engaged in a shooting at MIT, resulting in a carjacking, a shootout with the Watertown police and the death of MIT police officer Sean Collier.

On April 19, Tamerlan was fatally injured by his brother, who was arrested by authorities shortly thereafter. Dzhokhar has been charged with the use of a weapon of mass destruction and malicious destruction of property resulting in death.

### Iraq rocked by wave of violence

Over 75 people were killed and hundreds wounded in a string of bombings and shootings across Iraq on April 15, five days before the first elections since the U.S. withdrew military forces from the region.

In the country's capital of Baghdad, 30 people lost their lives, and 92 others were severely injured. Most of the victims were civilians, though police officers, soldiers and election candidates were murdered as well. Iraqi authorities arrested numerous suspects connected with Sunni extremist groups, but the bombings sparked a spree of protests and riots that have continued post-election, leaving an additional 111 dead and 233 wounded.

### Plant explosion levels West Texas

A fertilizer plant north of Waco, Texas exploded on April 18, leaving at least 15 dead and more than 200 wounded. The explosion occurred after a fire broke out in the plant and spread to tanks holding anhydrous ammonia — a cheap, highly combustible fertilizer.

The shock of the explosion was strong enough to register as a low-magnitude earthquake on local seismographs, and the blast was heard over 50 miles away. Firefighters and other emergency workers responding to the scene rank among the dead.

The cause of the fire remains unknown, but investigators have ruled out foul play and natural causes such as lightning.

### Syrian army slaughtered 250

On April 21, Syrian opposition forces reported that their government shot and killed at least 80 people in a town south of Damascus, and then proceeded to arrest the masses as residents tried to bury their loved ones. Residents in the town of Jdaidet al-Fadl described a three-day campaign in which soldiers and loyalist militias burned houses, arrested dozens, took control of field hospitals and killed the wounded. The death toll is nearly 250 victims.

Identifying and counting the bodies has been a challenge because many are too disfigured. The clash between civilians who support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and those who fight against him has been named as the cause of this violence, which has been ongoing for many years.

## Rape culture in India raises new outrage, old questions

BY RISHAB REVANKAR  
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After their 5-year-old daughter had been missing for two days, a couple living in New Delhi, India, heard her cries in a neighboring apartment. They broke down the locked doors and found their daughter sexually assaulted, tortured and left for dead.

Authorities rushed the girl to a local hospital where doctors removed candle fragments and a small bottle from her genitals. Her condition is currently listed as critical, but stable.

This assault took place four months after the infamous Dec. 2012 rape, also in New Delhi. In said case, six men beat and gang raped a 23-year-old woman on an evening bus ride.

The involuntary insertion of an iron rod inside of her genitals resulted in 95 percent of her intestines being ripped out and, 13 days later, death.

Although they received some media coverage worldwide, the brutal Delhi incidents are miniscule in a larger context.

According to the Indian Police Service, a woman is raped every 18 minutes in India. In a population of 1.2 billion, the cries of even more victims likely fall on deaf ears.

Commissioner of Delhi Police Neeraj Kumar said "I am completely satisfied with the

performance of Delhi Police," in an interview with The Guilfordian.

Contrarily, an assistant commissioner was caught on camera slapping a young woman across the face while she protested the five-year-old girl's rape.

Earlier, the 5-year-old's family reported that local officers offered them 2,000 rupees, or 40 dollars, to disappear without registering a report.

"It's no surprise," Vikrant Girwalkar, ICICI Bank employee near Mumbai, India, told The Guilfordian. "Police will do anything to get a case off their hands."

Further down the ranks of Delhi Police, officers do not seem to appreciate the magnitude of the situation.

"It is not as bad as it seems," Jitendra Mani, Delhi Police Officer of law and order, told The Guilfordian. "Issues like this just get blown out of proportion."

As authorities struggle to get their grip, increasing attention has fallen on Indian women, the victims of rape and the activists against sexual assault.

"The activism at the ground level of women working together is just fascinating," said Guilford Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology Julia Winterich, who is also chair of the Women's Gender

and Sexuality Department.

Female activists draw from their cultural heritage as a source of inspiration.

The history of Indian women reflects a tradition of significant political and social justice work.

While much of the Western world continues to struggle with the idea of women in politics, India had its first female prime minister in 1980.

While many women in 19th century Europe were forbidden to join revolutionary activities, Indian queens led armies into battle against British imperialists.

"When you think of the past, the oppression of women today is just shocking," said Shuddhamati Uppin, an advocate for gender equality in Latur, India.

Speaking out against rape is no easy task for Indian women, who are often restricted to the household. But, with increasing media coverage and support for feminist women's rights organizations like Swayam and Rising Voices, some argue that change is imminent.

"With social media now, we have ways of getting and sharing stories at the street level," said Winterich. "If the media attention on India continues, the government is going to feel quite pressured to do something concretely for women."

## Incarceration nation: analyzing the US

BY KEVIN ENGLE  
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"With liberty and justice for all."

Never has a phrase been so universally understood yet so often misinterpreted.

The U.S. was created on key morality-based concepts that have been lost to a system of bureaucracy and economic growth.

Case in point: the Department of Justice.

While the U.S. comprises only five percent of the global population, it contains 25 percent of the world's prison population.

About one in every 31 adults in the U.S. is under the control of the corrections system, whether they be in prison, in jail or on supervised release.

"Either we are home to the most evil people on earth, or we are doing something vastly counterproductive," wrote former Virginia senator Jim Webb in 2009.

The prison population has grown roughly 790 percent over the past 30 years, while violent crime has significantly decreased.

Howell W. Woltz, TEP, constitutional expert, author of "Justice Denied: The United States v. The People" and former inmate, told The Guilfordian this anomaly is caused primarily by three things.

"One, Congress has created over 14,000 laws with prison as a penalty, many of which are for behaviors never before considered criminal," said Woltz.

"Two, the power and discretion of sentencing has been taken away from courts and juries and given to public prosecutors through legislation that requires mandatory sentences.

"And three," Woltz continued, "an enormous industry has sprung up around this anomaly, which has

developed significant political clout."

The Constitution included nothing pertaining to the creation of a Justice Department nor did it include the concept of public prosecution.

In fact, it was established in 1870 by Ulysses S. Grant as an Executive Department, which is not authorized as a duty of the president under Article II of the Constitution.

Before the Justice Department was created, the accusing party was required to provide sufficient evidence prior to a prosecution under federal law to be initiated.

As a result, federal cases were rare. Now they are not.

"There are 94 offices of the U.S. Attorney scattered around the country today, creating cases against citizens faster than prisons can be built to hold them," said Woltz.

To prove it, the federal conviction rate is 98.6 percent.

Furthermore, according to civil-rights attorney and journalist Harvey A. Silverglate, the average American commits at least three federal felonies every day without even knowing it.

There are now about 2.5 million prisoners in the U.S. at federal and state levels, with over 7.3 million people still in the corrections system.

Last year, the Justice Department budgeted more than \$8.6 billion to the Bureau of Prisons.

This means the average cost per prisoner for 2012 was about \$35,000, all of which is funded by taxpayers.

"The goal of the system is no longer to do justice but to win convictions and fill prisons — unfortunately — at a far greater cost to the public good than over-policing a free people could possibly provide," said Woltz. "This will be seen as the human rights disaster of the 21st century."