



International Centre for Prison Studies

ICPS NEWS DIGEST

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Welcome to the eighth edition of the ICPS News Digest, a selection of news items from around the world on prison and the use of imprisonment. We aim in the Digest to cover all regions and include new developments in policy and practice, as well as information from official and intergovernmental bodies. The Digest is produced bi-monthly and this issue covers the period from 1 March to 30 April 2012. Please click on the blue highlighted words to access the news reports.

Prison populations

ICPS has published the second edition of the [World Female Imprisonment List](#), showing that more than 625,000 women and girls are held in prisons around the world, an increase of 16 percent since the first edition was published in 2006. It shows that almost a third of women and girls in prison are in the USA (201,200) and the next three countries in terms of numbers are China (84,600), the Russian Federation (59,200), Brazil (35,596) and Thailand (29,175). The next highest is India (15,400).

Official statistics from [Nepal](#) show that all 74 prisons in the country are overcrowded. According to the Department of Prison Management, the prisons with a total capacity of 6,700 are holding around 14,000. The Government announced that new buildings are being constructed at seven of the prisons to increase capacity.

Prisons in the [Czech Republic](#) are also overcrowded, with the number in prison rising from around 19,000 in 2005 to more than 23,000 in 2012. One of the reasons suggested for the overcrowding is the cancellation of a tender for electronic monitoring in 2010. The Government has said that it does not plan to declare a new tender as only 150 people in the country are currently held under house arrest. However judges have said that they would sentence more people to house arrest if electronic monitoring were available.

The Annual Report of the [Costa Rican](#) National Preventive Mechanism, which visits places of detention and monitors the treatment of and conditions for detainees, has shown that in some prisons the overcrowding level exceeds 50 percent, and some cell blocks are overcrowded by 100 percent. The prison population rose from 10,541 in 2010 to 12,154 in 2011, which is 2,672 over the official capacity.

The Minister of Justice in [Turkey](#) has stated that the number of prisoners and detainees in the country's prisons has increased fourfold since 2000. On 31 December 2000 there were 49,512 people in prison, while on 2 April 2012 there were 132,060. The Minister said the increase was due to more arrests, and a change in the law in 2005 which meant that the amount of time a prisoner had to serve before being eligible for release increased from a third to two thirds of their sentence. Turkish prisons have capacity for 125,117 prisoners, meaning they are over capacity by nearly 7,000 prisoners.

[Greek](#) prison guards have launched 24 hour rolling strikes to press authorities to recruit more front line staff to help ease chronic overcrowding in the country's prisons. Greek prisons have a capacity of 9,300 but are holding over 12,700 people.

The prison population in [Ireland](#) has shown the first signs that it may be close to peaking after a decade of rapid growth. Official figures show the increase in the number of people sent to prison in 2011 slowed very significantly compared with recent years, with an increase of less than four percent in 2011 compared to 31 percent in 2009 and 16 percent in 2010. The [Irish](#) Prison Service has announced plans to release 1,200 prisoners over the next three years onto community service programmes as part of a Government-approved plan to manage prisons. The Minister of Justice said the scheme will reduce overcrowding and benefit the taxpayer by reducing the cost of keeping people in jail.

Alternative ways of dealing with non violent offenders in Colorado, [US](#), have helped cut the number of prisoners so much that a \$184 million prison is being closed after just 18 months. The prison is the fourth correctional facility to be closed in Colorado in the last three years because of the decreasing prison population. At its peak in July 2009 the state had 23,220 prisoners. As of February 2012 it had dropped to 21,562. A decrease of 900 more prisoners is expected by June 2013.

The Minister for Corrective Services in [Western Australia](#) has said that an increasing number of violent and repeat offenders is to blame for a big rise in the number of people on remand in the state's prisons. Figures from the Australian Bureau of Justice Statistics show that the number of unsentenced prisoners in the state increased by 20 percent in 2011, at least double the rate of any other state. In Northern Territory, [Australia](#), the Prison Officers Association has described conditions in the state's prisons as 'third world', saying overcrowding has reached crisis point. Room in prisons at Berrimah and Alice Springs is scarce, with dormitories measuring ten metres by five metres holding 12 to 14 prisoners with one toilet and one hand basin, and some prisoners sleeping on the floor.

The [South African](#) government has said it could release more than 35,000 prisoners from their sentences over the coming months to reduce chronic overcrowding in the country's prisons. The Police minister confirmed that about 20,855 probationers and parolees, and 14,651 sentenced prisoners would be released "conditionally or unconditionally" following assessment on a special remission of sentence programme. No prisoners imprisoned for aggressive, sexual, firearm and drug-related offences would be eligible.

Health

Health officials in [Pakistan](#) have said that tuberculosis (TB) is spreading up to 29 percent faster in prisons because overcrowding means the disease spreads faster due to prisoners living in such close proximity to each other. The Punjab TB Control Program Director said "Health is a human right and those who are in jail do not forfeit this right. If inmates are not treated in jail for TB, they can put the general population at risk of disease when they come out of jail."

In [Uganda](#) the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has handed over a pilot health project at Luzira Upper Prison to the Ugandan authorities. Over the last four years prisoners have received treatment for TB, malaria and HIV/AIDS and it was the resulting improvement in prisoner health that meant the ICRC could transfer the project to the Uganda Prisons Service. Around 4,000 prisoners at year have benefited from the programme.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is expanding its work in three prisons in Phnom Penh, [Cambodia](#), to include basic primary health care in addition to providing ongoing TB and HIV/AIDS screening and treatment support. TB prevalence among Cambodian prisoners is four to six times higher than in the general population, while HIV levels are up to nine times higher.

In the [US](#), medical care is so poor at an Idaho state prison that it amounts to neglect and cruel and unusual punishment, according to a report. Correctional health care expert Dr Marc Stern, who was appointed to study the care delivered at the Idaho State Correctional Institution as part of a long running lawsuit brought by prisoners, said that terminal prisoners and those with long term illnesses sometimes went unfed, nursing mistakes or failure likely resulted in some deaths, and one prisoner wasn't told for seven months that it was likely he had cancer.

A report from the Ombudsman in [New Zealand](#) into prison health services highlighted a number of areas of concern, including unused medication wasting taxpayer money, a lack of resources to provide adequate dental services, poor management of mentally unwell prisoners, prisoners being denied prescribed medication, and paracetamol being "dished out like lollies."

The Ministry of Health in [Samoa](#) is investigating the cause of a typhoid fever outbreak at the main Tafaigata prison after ten confirmed cases among prisoners. A health consultant at the ministry told local television that an investigation has found that fresh water at the main prison is not safe, and that hygiene and sanitation are also being looked at.

In Chennai, [India](#), the city's main drinking water source, the Puzhal lake, is on the brink of contamination due to the untreated human waste and sewerage let out by the central prison, according to a public interest writ. The prison is touted as the biggest and more modern in India, but it does not have any sewerage treatment or waste disposal system in place. The court has issued notices to the government, pollution control board and jail authorities instructing them to respond to the complaints within four weeks.

In [Ireland](#), the Inspector of Prisons has expressed concerns about the support given to elderly prisoners in Arbour Hill Prison, where 29 of the 148 prisoners are over 60 and eight of those are over 70. The Inspector said the health issues of these prisoners, including trouble walking and cognitive problems, prevent prisoners from getting on with their daily routine, and for many, managing daily tasks is only achieved with the help of other prisoners.

Treatment of prisoners

Ten videos smuggled out of [Cuba](#)'s biggest prison, Combinado del Este, show grotesquely dirty toilets, grimy walls, leaking sewage and food described as worse than animal feed. The prison was built by prisoners in 1975 and holds an estimated 5,000 prisoners.

The Human Rights Foundation report on prisons in Eastern and South Eastern Anatolia, [Turkey](#), revealed a total of 1,453 rights violations registered for prisons in the region in 2011. According to the report, 147 people applied to the Foundation on the grounds of torture, 38 on the grounds that disciplinary penalties had prevented them from seeing their families and lawyers and a further 96 people were deprived of their right to information and communication for certain periods of time.

Officials from [Afghanistan](#)'s largest prison, Pul-e-Charki, reported that some 100 prisoners went on hunger strike over their alleged mistreatment. Prisoners sewed their mouths together protesting that they are suffering from overcrowding and malnutrition, and had their Korans confiscated.

A report by the [Zimbabwean](#) Senate Thematic Committee on Human Rights says Khami prison is using "plastic and cardboard box material" as cell doors and handcuffs as locks; that the cells are frequently flooded during the rainy season due to dilapidated roofing, and prisoners sleep on the floor because there are no beds or mattresses.

A coroner in [New Zealand](#) has strongly condemned prison systems that mean cells cannot be opened at night time to save prisoners facing life threatening medical crises. The criticism came in the coroner's report on the death of Anna Selina Kingi in Auckland Regional Women's Correction Facility, which found that it took guards 13 minutes to get keys to open her cell after she collapsed from a heart condition. The coroner said 13 minutes was too long for there to have been any realistic prospect of Kingi being resuscitated.

Five remand prisoners in Barasat, [India](#), tried to kill themselves on their way to court in a prison van in protest at the delay in their hearing. This is not the first such incident in the region, as prisoners have tried to kill themselves in vans on at least three other occasions in the past few months. In Indore, [India](#), between February 2011 and February 2012 some 2,800 prisoners from the Central Jail failed to appear before the relevant courts because no policemen were available to escort them. Around 2,100 prisoners also missed hospital appointments for the same reason. A senior police official said the police department are overburdened and face a shortage of manpower.

In the [US](#) the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) has filed a lawsuit accusing Nassau County of poor oversight of a local jail where five prisoners have committed suicide since 2010. The lawsuit said several of the suicides were preventable, but that there is no procedure to deal with prisoners at risk of suicide. The NYCLU also reported that more than 200 complaints had been received from prisoners about conditions at the jail, including prisoners who said they were not being given their prescription medications and disabled prisoners who said their wheelchairs were taken away.

A report by the [South African](#) portfolio committee on correctional services has expressed concern about the number of non-natural deaths in prison. Unnatural deaths decreased from 55 in 2009 to 48 in 2010, but the committee expressed concern that officials were implicated in eight of the deaths. The transfer of prisoners from one prison to another was also an issue that raised concern, with many prisoners alleging they were being transferred as a punishment for bad behaviour or in order to prevent their participation in investigations in which officials might be implicated.

The Prisons Department in the [Pakistani](#) province of Punjab will install 50 water filtration plants in the provinces 32 jails to provide clean water to prisoners. There jails have a total capacity of 24,000 but are holding 52,000 prisoners, with the overcrowding resulting in serious sanitation and health issues and the threat of the spread of waterborne diseases such as hepatitis particularly high.

Prisoners in Jhapa District Jail, [Nepal](#), have nothing to eat due to lack of budget. Prisoners are entitled to receive Rs. 45 per day but the government allocated budget has already been spent in the current fiscal year. The prison management has distributed rice to the prisoners by buying it on credit. The prison's telephone line has also been cut off due to lack of funds, and the 547 prisoners have to share nine toilets.

The Ministry of the Minor in the state of Espírito Santo, [Brazil](#), has released pictures of teenagers handcuffed to their jail cells while they sleep. While waiting to be processed in the juvenile courts they sleep 86 to a cell, which is only designed to hold 30. The state governor has ordered an investigation.

The [Irish](#) government has confirmed €50 million of funding to end the longstanding practice of housing juvenile prisoners in an adult prison. The funding will ensure the end of the detention of 16 and 17 year olds in St Patrick's Institution, which currently houses prisoners between the ages of 16 and 21. From 1 May, all newly remanded 16 year olds will be detained in the children's prison at Oberstown.

A report by the Jakarta Legal Aid Foundation found that in a study of two prisons in Greater Jakarta, [Indonesia](#), only nine percent of juvenile offenders had access to lawyers, 74 percent shared their cells with adult prisoners and 98 percent had reported torture. Although Indonesia ratified a law on juvenile courts in 1997, the country lacks a justice system specifically designed for juveniles, and law enforcers often use a punitive approach to young offenders.

Prison violence

Thirteen prisoners died following a riot at the San Pedro Sula prison in [Honduras](#), with one prisoner being decapitated and his head thrown in front of the prison entrance. The prisoners also started a fire in the prison. Prisons in the country are massively overcrowded, holding 13,000 prisoners in a system designed for 8,000. Other problems facing the system include the housing of members of opposing gangs side-by-side, rampant corruption and crumbling infrastructure in the prison buildings.

Seven prisoners died and eight more were wounded in a prison riot in [Venezuela](#). The riot broke out as a result of clashes between groups of prisoners fighting for control of the prison. A prison protest in [Ecuador](#) left six prisoners and ten guards injured. Prisoners issued a number of demands including calling for an end to overcrowding, and presented proposals for the Criminal Code reform being debated by the National Assembly. Some 400 prisoners in Aracaju, [Brazil](#), took hostages during a riot. They accused guards of mistreating them and demanded better conditions, as well as greater respect for female prisoners. Officials said the hostages were freed unharmed after the authorities pledged to investigate the prisoners' complaints.

A riot in the women's prison in Montevideo, [Uruguay](#) was controlled after the intervention of anti-riot police forces. This was the fourth major conflict in the country's prisons in just over a week, and was carried out in solidarity with 500 prisoners who are sleeping outside at COMCAR jail after they destroyed two modules of the prison. The riots began on 20 April with the murder of a guard at Libertad penitentiary, after which police suspended visits to the prisons leading to the uprising of prisoners in other facilities.

A riot broke out in a prison in Lucknow, [India](#), leaving at least 122 prisoners and 34 prison and police officials injured, more than 20 seriously. The trouble began when jail staff prevented a prisoner carrying a cigarette lighter inside the prison. The following morning when the barracks were opened the prisoners attacked jail staff and set fire to four liquefied petroleum gas cylinders and the office of the deputy jailer. Local police and the Rapid Action Force were deployed to restore order.

Four prisoners at a [Swedish](#) prison are suspected of using a television set, a broken plate and a potato peeler to torture a fellow prisoner as part of an attempted extortion scheme. The victim of the attack suffered repeated kicks to the head and torso as part of an attempt by fellow prisoners to get him to hand over 95,000 kronor. The head of the prison said "It's very unusual for such serious violence to take place here."

A lawyer in [South Africa](#) is suing the Minister of Correctional Services on behalf of prisoner Bradley McCallum and 230 other prisoners who allege they were raped, beaten and tortured by about 50 prison warders in retribution for the murder of a fellow warder. McCallum claims the warders beat him and the other prisoners with batons, electric shock shields, broomsticks, pool cues and pick axe handles, and that he was raped with a baton. Following the beatings he claims the prisoners were denied medical care for a month and attempted to treat themselves by burning toilet paper and covering their wounds with sand and ash. The Correctional Services department says the claims are being investigated.

In [New Zealand](#), Department of Corrections figures show that along with a significant drop in the number of violent assaults over the past five years, fewer prisoners were requesting isolation for their own safety. A revised policy for voluntary segregation was implemented in October last year with a new screening process to allow staff to consider individual prisoners' needs. A snapshot of the data from the same day in February in 2011 and 2012 showed a 6.3 percentage point drop in requests for segregation.

Developments in rehabilitation

Prisoners at a medium security prison in Victoria, [Australia](#) are taking custody of their children for hours every week under a landmark programme that could be rolled out across the state's prison system. The programme is managed by qualified staff, who coach prisoners to learn effective parenting skills such as problem solving, effective communication, connecting with children, parenting from a distance, non-violent discipline, preparing for the transition home and family reintegration.

In Tihar Prison, [India](#), 2,500 prisoners who had been identified as illiterate were enrolled in the Padho Ya Padharo (Teach or be Taught) programme which carries out three month long teaching sessions. At the end of the session they took a test conducted and evaluated by officials from the National Institute of Open Schooling and all 2,500 prisoners passed. In Tamil Nadu, [India](#), music classes have been inaugurated in Madurai Central Prison. A spokesman said "Music is a great instrument to ease depression and increase concentration... music can provide inner peace, which will help inmates to concentrate on more constructive work in prison."

A handicraft workshop in a women's prison in Dubai, [UAE](#), teaches crochet, embroidery, stitching and beadwork to about 40 of the prison's long term prisoners. Most in the workshop are serving sentences of 15 years or more. The women make bags, baby clothes, shawls and key chains which are sold online. The women earn a monthly salary of Dh200 as well as sharing five percent of the annual profits, and learn skills they can use when released.

Staff at Westgate prison in [Bermuda](#) are running a programme to help life sentence prisoners develop a sense of purpose. The prisoners have identified a list of charities they would like to help and will make the ribbons to be sold to help fund work on that condition. They have already volunteered to help the Bermuda Autism Society.

Guthrie House Therapeutic Community, based at the Nanaimo Correctional Centre in [Canada](#) has won an award for innovation for its work in reducing the rate at which prisoners reoffend on release. The programme uses group work and accountability to rehabilitate prisoners and steer them clear of their addictions. The man in charge of the programme is helping other jails in the country to develop similar initiatives.

Negotiations are underway in [South Africa](#) between the Department of Corrections and local NGO the Prison Broadcasting Network to roll out a national TV station in prisons. The Department wants to explore running a TV channel partnership with the network to provide educational and entertaining programmes, emphasising rehabilitation, for example through career-orientated programmes, or programmes that would encourage prisoners to do positive things while working in the prison environment.

The [Malaysian](#) Prisons Department has announced plans to expand its community rehabilitation programme through the 'release on licence' programme, which will allow prisoners to visit their families and rekindle ties with them prior to release. The Director General of Prisons said of 3,000 prisoners who had undergone the programme, only 1.8 percent were found to have committed subsequent offences.

In [Singapore](#) a new Mandatory Aftercare Scheme to help released prisoners stay crime-free will come into effect in 2013 following a review of the remission system. The review intends to implement a compulsory post-release aftercare and supervision system similar to parole system in countries such as Canada and the UK in which conditions are imposed on prisoners who are released early during their remission period. Currently more prisoners are granted one-third remission of their sentences without any conditions imposed on them after release, subject to good conduct in prison.

Sentencing and the law

A [South African](#) Institute of Race Relations survey showed that there was a 2,400 percent increase between 1995 and 2011 in the number of prisoners serving sentences longer than ten years, while the number of prisoners serving sentences shorter than six months decreased by 90 percent. The report stated that "while the reintroduction of minimum sentence legislation in 1997 had a significant effect on the duration of sentences, it is not clear whether the rise in the prison population is due primarily to more criminals being sentenced or the increase in the average length of sentences being served."

A report by Harm Reduction International has shown that over 31,000 women across [Europe and Central Asia](#) are imprisoned for drug offences, representing 28 percent of all women in prison in these regions. In some countries, such as Latvia and Tajikistan more than half of women are imprisoned for non-violent drug offences, while in Russia almost 20,000 women are imprisoned for drugs, more than double the number of women in prison in the countries of the European Union combined.

In [Turkey](#) an amendment to the Law on Conditional Release has been finalised, meaning that prisoners who have served the last six months of their sentence without interruption in an open prison and who are slated for conditional release within a year are to be released

on probation if they so request. This also applies to female prisoners who have children up to the age of six and are due to be conditionally released within two years. The legislation will allow nearly 15,000 prisoners to be released on probation.

The Senate in [Pakistan](#) has unanimously passed a bill approving the formation of a Human Rights Commission. According to the bill no intelligence agencies would be able to detain any citizen illegally, and the country's armed forces and intelligence agencies would be answerable to the Commission and the parliament.

[China](#)'s legislature has underlined the principle of "respecting and safeguarding human rights" by explicitly writing it into a draft amendment to the nation's Criminal Procedure Law. The draft amendment makes clear that confessions extorted through illegal means, such as torture, and testimony of witnesses and depositions of victims obtained illegally, such as by threats or violence, should be excluded during trials. The amendment also defines the measure of house surveillance and the conditions for its application, and clarifies that after a person is detained or arrested their family should be notified within 24 hours.

[Bahrain](#)'s lower house has approved the life sentence as a punishment for using physical and psychological torture to extract confessions from a suspect. It also approved the same punishment for torturing a suspect to death. The amendments come after some police personnel were referred to the courts in connection with the death of detainees.

The [Swiss](#) cabinet has called for the scrapping of suspended fines in favour of short prison terms as part of a reform of the criminal code. The Justice Minister said the aim was to re-establish confidence in the penal system and to take into account widespread demands for fair justice and punishment. The bill, to be discussed by parliament, also foresees the use of electronic monitoring or community work for offenders.

The governor of Ondo State, [Nigeria](#), has commissioned the first court to be built on a prison premises under the state's Rapid Justice System programme. The court will be built at Olokuta Prison which has capacity for 160 prisoners but is holding 688. The aim of the court is to speed up the dispensation of justice, and was a step towards decongesting the prison.

A new law that would allow prisons in [New Zealand](#) to punish prisoners for drinking too much water has been criticised as 'absolutely ludicrous.' The Corrections Amendment Bill aims to reform prison management systems, and includes a provision to stop prisoners from deliberately watering down urine samples for drug tests. Under current rules prisoners who fail to provide a sample are automatically charged with misconduct, leading critics to argue that the new legislation will mean prisoners are facing a kind of double jeopardy where they can be charged if they don't produce a sample, and if they drink water to help them produce a sample they can also be charged.

The [Lebanese](#) Parliament has passed a long-awaited draft law which reduces the prison year from 12 to nine months. For those prisoners sentenced to less than a year each month will be counted as 20 days. Prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment or to death will not benefit from the change in the law.

An article from the [US](#) details calls from the Chief Justices in a number of states to reform sentencing laws in order to tackle the problem of mass incarceration. The Chief Justice of Georgia calls on lawmakers to create drug courts to deal with non-violent offenders addicted to drugs, while the Chief Justice of Missouri voiced his support for alternatives to prison. Alaska's Chief Justice called for "evidence based practices" to guide sentencing, and New York's Chief Justice focused on youth sentencing, particularly with regard to 16 and 17 year olds accused of non-violent crimes.

Also in the [US](#), a study has found that black males are grossly overrepresented among juveniles who are sentenced to life without parole. The study surveyed more than 1,500 prisoners who were sentenced to life without parole when they were between the ages of 13 and 17. Of those juveniles, 97 percent are male and 60 percent are black. In addition, the proportion of black people serving life for killing a white person far exceeds the proportion of white people sentenced to life for killing a black person.

A study from New South Wales, [Australia](#) has found that longer prison sentences do not deter criminals from breaking the law. The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics examined trends in property and violent crime across the state between 1996 and 2008 and found that increasing jail sentences had no effect on crime rates as offenders do not take the length of a possible sentence into account when committing crime. The report found that a booming economy is the surest way to reduce crime, with a ten percent increase in household income producing an estimated 19 percent reduction in property crime over the long term, and a 15 percent cut in violent crime.

A judge in [Zimbabwe](#) says that corruption is now so out of hand in the country's Magistrates' Courts that only poor people are being sent to prison as the rich buy their freedom by bribing poorly paid magistrates and prosecutors. The Magistrates' Courts handle more than 85 percent of all criminal cases in Zimbabwe.

Prison policy

The [Philippine](#) Senate has ratified the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture which obliges the country to establish a national system of inspections of all places of detention. Senator Loren Legarda said it will protect all persons in detention from torture and abuse, as well as institute reforms in the prisons, adding that it would provide the impetus for the allocation of bigger resources to improve the country's detention facilities and hasten the adoption of more transparent processes with regard to the government's treatment of detained persons.

All deaths in custody in [Ireland](#) will for the first time be independently investigated and reports into the fatalities will be published. The Inspector of Prisons has been asked to carry out these investigations, which will be carried out whether a prisoner has died of natural causes, been murdered in prison or died from a drug overdose or other cause.

Prisoners in [New Zealand](#) who have little chance of getting out of jail will have their parole hearings postponed, under new moves by the government. The Justice Minister said the

Cabinet had agreed to introduce screening of prisoners so victims of crime will no longer need to face the prospect of parole hearings year after year when the prisoner won't be being released. The maximum gap between parole hearings will be extended from one to two years.

The National Security Minister in [Antigua](#) has welcomed the injection of funds from the US to improve the operations at prisons and correctional facilities in the region under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. The funds are to be used to expand the capacity of nations in the region to help make prisons and correctional centres safe, secure, humane and in accordance with international standards. This includes funding to train prison officers, as many prison officers go into prisons in the region without having received any training. The [Antiguan](#) National Security Minister has also reported that the country's prison is well on the way to becoming self-sufficient as it has begun reaping crops planted at a small farm at the Botanical Gardens. Additionally, the authorities are awaiting the installation of water at Duers Estate where a larger prison farm is to be developed.

Prison officers at Golden Grove Prison in [Trinidad and Tobago](#) launched protest action relating to health, safety and security issues. The President of the Prison Officers Association said the prison held 1,200 prisoners but the number of staff was not nearly enough to oversee the activities of the prisoners. Some other concerns facing the officers were a proposed cut in overtime and the non-installation of cellphone jammers within the prison.

In what is being billed as a pioneering initiative, all 52 jails in Kerala, [India](#), will go green with the state government undertaking a Rs 25.50 crore solar power project. All the jails will now use solar power extensively, rather than grid power. The jail department will save Rs 40 lakh by using solar powered cooking facilities instead of liquefied petroleum gas cylinders.

In Bangalore, [India](#), the Social Welfare Minister has announced plans for a separate prison for women to be built in Tumkur and for four existing prisons in the region to be upgraded to supermax status. This would be achieved by installing high-tech equipment and sufficient staff would be provided to man them. In Uttar Pradesh, [India](#), married couples serving terms in separate prisons will soon be able to live in the same prison.

The Northern Territory Government in [Australia](#) is planning to build a low security facility specifically to deal with people who commit driving offences. The head of Correctional Services explained that the jail would house 20 prisoners in a facility designed to help them address the behaviour that caused them to be sent to the jail.

Also in [Australia](#), a drop in the high rate of reoffending in New South Wales will be one of the key goals of a 'social bonds' programme to be trialled in the state. Under the trial private backers will invest in non-government community service programmes. If the services meet agreed targets and deliver savings – making a measurable social difference – the buyers of social bonds will be repaid their investment plus interest by the government. The state Treasurer said the programme would help keep people out of jail and reduce the cost of running prisons.

The [US](#) Supreme Court has ruled that jails do not violate privacy rights by routinely strip-searching everyone, even those arrested for minor traffic offences. The Court ruled that privacy rights involving the searches were outweighed by security concerns by jails about a suspect hiding drugs, weapons or other contraband. Meanwhile the [Kentucky](#) Department of Juvenile Justice has changed its entry screening policy after a federal judge questioned a juvenile detention facility's practice of screening juveniles while naked. Search of all young people in Juvenile Justice Department custody will now be conducted through a pat down frisk search and use of a hand wand metal detector.

A Danish prison inspector has spoken out about the practice of sending [Greenlandic](#) prisoners to Danish prisons, claiming it contravenes their human rights to maintain close ties with their families. As Greenland currently has no permanent jails, around 20 prisoners have been sent to Herstedvester prison in Denmark, nearly 2,000 miles away from their families.

[Saudi Arabia and Iraq](#) have signed a landmark agreement for the exchange of their citizens in jail in each other's countries. Under the agreement the country that sentenced a prisoner will meet all expenses for the transfer. The remaining term of the jail sentence will be completed in the country the prisoner is from without any change in period or nature.

While [Pakistan and the UAE](#) have signed an extradition treaty that seeks to ensure 1,400 Pakistani prisoners serve their remaining sentence at home, senior jailers have voiced concern regarding the feasibility of such an arrangement, questioning why similar treaties were not being pursued with Afghanistan and India given the fact that the majority of foreign prisoners in Pakistani jails are Indians and Afghans. The officials argue that the treaty with the UAE brings no benefit to Pakistan, and instead will add increasing pressure on an already overcrowded and under-resourced prison system.

The largest private prison company in the [US](#), Corrections Corporation of America, sent letters to prison authorities in 48 states offering to buy prison facilities if the state in return promises to keep the facilities full and pay the company for running them. Prison departments in California, Texas and Georgia all dismissed the idea while Florida's prison system said it does not have the authority to make that kind of decision and officials in Tennessee said they aren't reviewing the proposal.

A [New Zealand](#) Corrections Department report on the first eight months of private prison operator Serco's management of Mt Eden Corrections Facility showed that as well as two prisoners being wrongfully released, the firm had failed to meet 40 percent of its performance targets and was fined \$150,000 after a prisoner escaped. Targets for random drug testing and prisoner management plans were also not reached. The Corrections Department has served Serco with 12 notices to lift performance. It has four months to do so or face further financial penalties.

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