

US urges Egypt to free Morsi

Islamist stages mass rallies as PM edges closer to forming cabinet

AFP, Cairo

The United States called on Egypt's military to free deposed president Mohamed Morsi, as tens of thousands of his supporters vowed to keep fighting for his reinstatement.

State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki on Friday said the United States agreed with Germany's earlier appeal for Morsi to be released and was "publicly" making the same request.

The deposed Islamist president has been held in a "safe place," according to Egypt's interim leaders, and has not been seen in public since his ouster on July 3.

Psaki said Washington wanted "an end to restrictions on Mr Morsi's whereabouts", while Germany suggested a trusted institution such as the International Committee of the Red Cross should be granted access to him.

Rival demonstrators rallied in the capital on Friday, but while there had been fears of fresh violence, the evening passed off peacefully.

Meanwhile, Egypt's new prime minister edged closer to forming a cabinet yesterday.

Hazem al-Beblawi, who was appointed on Tuesday, said he would hold talks with the candidates for ministerial posts, in comments carried by the state-owned Akhbar al-Youm



newspaper.

The new cabinet's top priorities will be to restore security, ensure the flow of goods and services and prepare for parliamentary and presidential elections, Beblawi said.

Beblawi is working according to a roadmap drafted by the military which overthrew Morsi on July 3 after millions took to the streets calling on him to step down.

Morsi, the country's first freely elected president, was accused of concentrating power in the hands of the

Muslim Brotherhood, sending the economy into freefall and failing to protect minorities.

But his supporters argue that his removal from power was a flagrant violation of democratic principles and tens of thousands have taken to the streets to demand his reinstatement.

"There will be another mass protest on Monday," a Muslim Brotherhood spokesman said yesterday, a day after tens of thousands of Morsi's supporters rallied in Cairo.

Protesters are also expected to march tomorrow to the Cairo headquarters of the elite Republican Guard, scene of deadly clashes last week, the spokesman, Tareq al-Morsi, said.

On Friday, rival demonstrators rallied in the capital, but while there had been fears of fresh violence, the evening passed off peacefully.

US President Barack Obama discussed the crisis in a phone call with King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia on Friday, a White House statement said.

Obama expressed "serious concern" about the violence since Morsi's overthrow and underscored the need to return to a democratically elected civilian government.

Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab governments have also pledged \$12 billion in assistance to shore up the faltering economy.



AFP, Thimphu

Bhutan's opposition People's Democratic Party stormed to an upset victory yesterday in elections as voters gave their verdict on five years of democracy, a local news website reported.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) had won 30 seats in the vote for parliament while the incumbent Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) party had snared just 12 seats according to the website of Bhutan's national newspaper Kuensel, as of 8:00pm.

The winning party needed 24 out of 47 seats up for grabs to form the next government in the "land of the thunder dragon", according to the Kuensel website, after two other groups were knocked out in a primary voting round in May.

The polling marked only the second time in history that voters in the isolated kingdom have elected a government,

It was not immediately possible the

Election Commission of Bhutan to confirm the results.

Remote Bhutan's line of "dragon kings" ceded absolute power five years ago, introducing democracy to an electorate of fewer than 400,000 people.

The royalist DPT won the first election by a landslide in 2008 and bagged this year's primary round with 45 percent of votes.

Bhutan is the only country in the world to pursue "Gross National Happiness", a development model that balances spiritual and mental wellbeing with financial growth.

It was the last country in the world to allow television in 1999, and high visitor fees aim to keep out mass tourism to shield the country's natural beauty and Buddhist culture.

Another policy that sets the country apart is its goal to make its farming 100 percent organic.

Six killed as French train derailed

Track fault blamed

REUTERS, Bretigny-sur-orge

At least six people died and 22 were seriously injured when a train derailed and hit the platform at a station in central France on Friday, leaving several carriages torn open and one lying on its side, officials said.

Local officials said dozens of other passengers were being treated in nearby hospitals for minor injuries, and Interior Minister Manuel Valls said the death toll could rise.

Meanwhile, France's state rail company yesterday said the accident was caused by a fault in the tracks, as the transport minister urged upgrades to aging regional lines.

The SNCF said the derailment was caused by a connecting bar that had come loose at a rail switch at the station at Bretigny-sur-Orge, about 25 kilometres (15 miles) south of Paris.

NEWS IN brief

Typhoon hits China, Taiwan

AFP, Beijing

China evacuated more than 300,000 people and drafted in thousands of soldiers as a typhoon which brought torrential rain and powerful winds to Taiwan began to batter the mainland yesterday.

The typhoon had slowed since it ripped roofs from homes and uprooted trees in Taiwan, killing one person and injuring at least 30 after it struck the island at 03:00am yesterday.

Riots flare in Northern Ireland

REUTERS, Belfast

Protestant marchers in Belfast threw bricks and bottles at police, who responded with water cannon and rubber bullets as Northern Ireland's annual parade season descended into violence on Friday. Pro-British Protestants march every summer in the British-ruled province, a regular flashpoint for sectarian violence as Catholics, many of whom favour unification with Ireland, see the parades as provocative.

Pamplona bull stampede injures 21

AFP, Pamplona

Daredevil bull-runners were crushed in a pile-up in the Spanish city of Pamplona yesterday during its famed San Fermin festival, with at least 21 people hospitalised, officials said. Spanish media said it was the worst stampede in decades at the festival.

New case filed against Musharraf

PTI, Islamabad

The Islamabad HC on Friday ordered the registration of a case against the former military ruler Pervez Musharraf for his alleged involvement in the Lal Masjid operation. On July 3, 2007, Musharraf had ordered a military crackdown against the mosque for challenging the writ of the state, in which hundreds of students were killed.

Third person dies in Asiana crash

REUTERS, San Francisco

A Chinese girl died in hospital on Friday, becoming the third fatality in the crash of an Asiana Airlines jet at San Francisco airport last Saturday, doctors and Chinese officials said.

The crash landing of the Boeing 777 also killed two Chinese teenage girls and injured more than 180 other people.

Pak Taliban sets up base in Syria

PTI, London

The Pakistani Taliban have set up a base in Syria to assess "the needs of the jihad" and at least 12 of its "experts" in warfare and information technology have visited the strife-torn country, a media report said.

Quoting a "senior Pakistani Taliban operative", BBC Urdu reported that the base was set up with the assistance of ex-Afghan fighters of Middle Eastern origin who have moved to Syria in recent years.

At least 12 "experts" in warfare and information technology had gone to Syria in the last two months, he said.

Their presence in the country is likely to have a sectarian motive, BBC report said adding Taliban factions feel that Sunni Muslims, who constitute a majority in Syria, are being oppressed by Syria's predominantly Shia rulers.

Thousands of people have died in the year-long armed conflict in Syria between loyalists of President Bashar al-Assad's government and those who want to overthrow it.

Muhammad Amin, a senior Taliban operative and "coordinator of the Syrian base", told the BBC that the cell to monitor "the jihad" in Syria was set up six months ago.

He said that the cell has the approval of militant factions both within and outside of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an umbrella organization of militant groups fighting the Pakistani forces.

Don't divide this great nation on religion

Digvijaya urges Modi after divisive comment

PTI, New Delhi

Congress leader Digvijaya Singh yesterday attacked Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi's remarks describing himself as a 'Hindu nationalist' and asked him not to "divide the nation" on the basis of religion.

A day after Modi's remarks sparked a political furore, Singh said on Twitter, "Shouldn't we all be nationalist Indians rather than Hindu nationalist or Muslim nationalist or Sikh nationalist or Christian nationalist?"

In another tweet, he also took a jibe at Sangh Parivar saying, "Don't divide this great nation on basis of religion which Savarkar and Jinnah did. They were the original authors of Two Nation theory."

Hitting out at fundamentalism in all forms, he said in another tweet that he heard Pakistani teen activist Malala Yousafzai, who survived after being shot by the Taliban for supporting girl's education, addressing



the United Nations.

"What a powerful condemnation of Taliban and all forms of fundamentalism. She has now become an icon for world literacy."

The tweets by Singh, a known detractor of the controversial Gujarat chief minister, came close on the heels of Modi's attempts to defend himself against allegations of inaction during the 2002 riots in Gujarat.

"Even if I am in the back seat of a car and a puppy comes under the wheels, isn't it painful? It is. Whether I am a chief minister or not, I am a human being. I will be sad if something bad happens anywhere," Modi was quoted as saying in an interview.

The Gujarat chief minister said he had done "absolutely the right thing" during the 2002 riots. "I am nationalist. I'm patriotic. Nothing is wrong. I am born Hindu. Nothing is wrong. So I'm a Hindu nationalist. So yes, you can say I'm a Hindu nationalist because I'm a born Hindu," he had said.



Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro, right, showing the hammer -- symbol of the Mercosur pro-tempore presidency -- after receiving it from Uruguay's President Jose Mujica (behind him) at the end of the XLV Mercosur Summit in Montevideo on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Refugee boat sinks off Australia coast

1 killed; 88 rescued

AFP, Sydney

Australian authorities were scouring remote seas for survivors yesterday after a people-smuggling boat carrying 97 went down, with 88 people rescued so far and the body of a baby found.

Home affairs minister Jason Clare said the boat first issued a distress call in rough seas north of Christmas Island, between Australia and Indonesia, on Friday morning.

Rescuers were unable to reach the scene until 10:00pm, and a short time later Clare said a huge wave broke over the boat and it began to sink.

The ill-fated ship was believed to have originated in Indonesia with passengers from Iran, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, Clare said.

Mugabe plotted Zuma assassination: Report

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Zimbabwe's political rivals had clashed over an apparently secret document said to be from intelligence sources that alleges an outlandish plot by President Robert Mugabe to hire a Lebanese murder squad to assassinate his South African counterpart, Jacob Zuma, and a top diplomat.

The typed two-page report - persuasively detailed but at times written in excitable language strewn with grammatical and spelling errors - has been dismissed by Mugabe's Zanu-PF party as "hogwash" and a "typical setup". The rival Movement for Democratic Change said the assassination threats should be taken seriously.

They come amid souring relations between neighbours Zimbabwe and South Africa. Last week Mugabe branded Zuma's chief mediator,

Lindiwe Zulu, "some stupid, idiotic woman" and a "little street woman" after her failed attempt to force a postponement of elections.

The purportedly leaked document, dated 2 July and of unknown authorship, contains a paragraph headed: "Lebanese assassins" (sic). It states: "On Monday this week Mugabe hired six Lebanese nationals to try and assassinate Lindiwe Zulu, who is Zuma's advisor. The six met clandestinely with Mugabe yesterday to be briefed by him on the details of their mission ... The six were told they must not concentrate on Zulu only, but should also pay attention to Zuma himself, and if they get a chance to do so they must assassinate him as well - but everything must appear as an accident."

The Guardian has seen a copy of the two-page document but has not been able to verify it as being genuine.

7 UN peacekeepers killed in Darfur

AFP, Khartoum

Seven peacekeepers were killed yesterday during an ambush in Sudan's Darfur region, the African Union-UN Mission said, marking the worst-ever losses in the five-year history of the operation.

The attack adds to worsening violence in Sudan's far-west region and happened near the peacekeepers' base at Manawashi, north of the South Darfur state capital Nyala.

"Seven peacekeepers were killed and 17 were injured," UNAMID's acting spokesman Christopher Cymannick told AFP.

The incident occurred about 25 kilometres west of another UNAMID base at Khar Abeche, Cymannick told AFP.

"The UNAMID team came under heavy fire from a large unidentified group. Following an extended firefight, the patrol was extracted by UNAMID reinforcements", a statement said.

UNAMID did not immediately give the nationalities of the victims, but Tanzanian troops are in charge of that area.

Earlier this month three Nigerian peacekeepers were wounded in an attack. More than 40 UNAMID members have died in hostile action since the mission's establishment in 2007.

A desperate bid to save a family home

MAIL ONLINE

A family of five set themselves on fire in an act of desperation against a threat to demolish their home.

Four of the Nepalese victims - a mother, her two sons and their wives - died after the shocking protest inside the grounds of government offices in Rajkot, in Gujarat, western India.

The family has been battling the government's attempt to demolish their house - their shelter for 35 years - after residents complained its construction was unsafe.

Witnesses tried to extinguish the fires with pieces of curtain material, but were too late.

Both sons and their wives died of their injuries at Rajkot Civil Hospital.

However, the mayor of Rajkot city, Janak Kotak, said the municipality had no plans to demolish the house and their grievances were with the residents.

Police arrested four other people who assisted the family in their suicides. The Rajkot Municipality has confirmed a compensation figure of £27,700 to the family.

ODDLY enough

Indonesia bans female secretaries!

AFP, Gorontalo

The governor of an Indonesian province yesterday said he had ordered his top staff to replace their female secretaries with men following a string of extra-marital affairs.

"I received inputs that many government office heads here are involved in extra-marital affairs with their female secretaries," Rusli Habibie, the governor of Gorontalo province told AFP.

"They treat them much better than their own wives. They bring them presents from official trips like perfumes or branded bags while their poor wives get nothing," he said.

"For these reasons, I ordered them to replace their female secretaries with male assistants or with old women," he added.

French fries aren't French!



MAIL ONLINE

You might think with names like French fries and Worcestershire sauce, it would be pretty self-explanatory where certain foods came from.

But a survey has revealed that on average, most people were unaware where some of the most common foods consumed every day first originated.

Only 11 per cent of the respondents know the correct birthplace of French fries (Belgium). The survey also found that less than 5 per cent are aware that pasta actually originates from China.

Afruj Miah, senior national account manager at GLORIOUS! Foods, which carried out the survey, said: "The results of this survey show that we're certainly not as knowledgeable as we think we are when it comes to foods from other cultures."