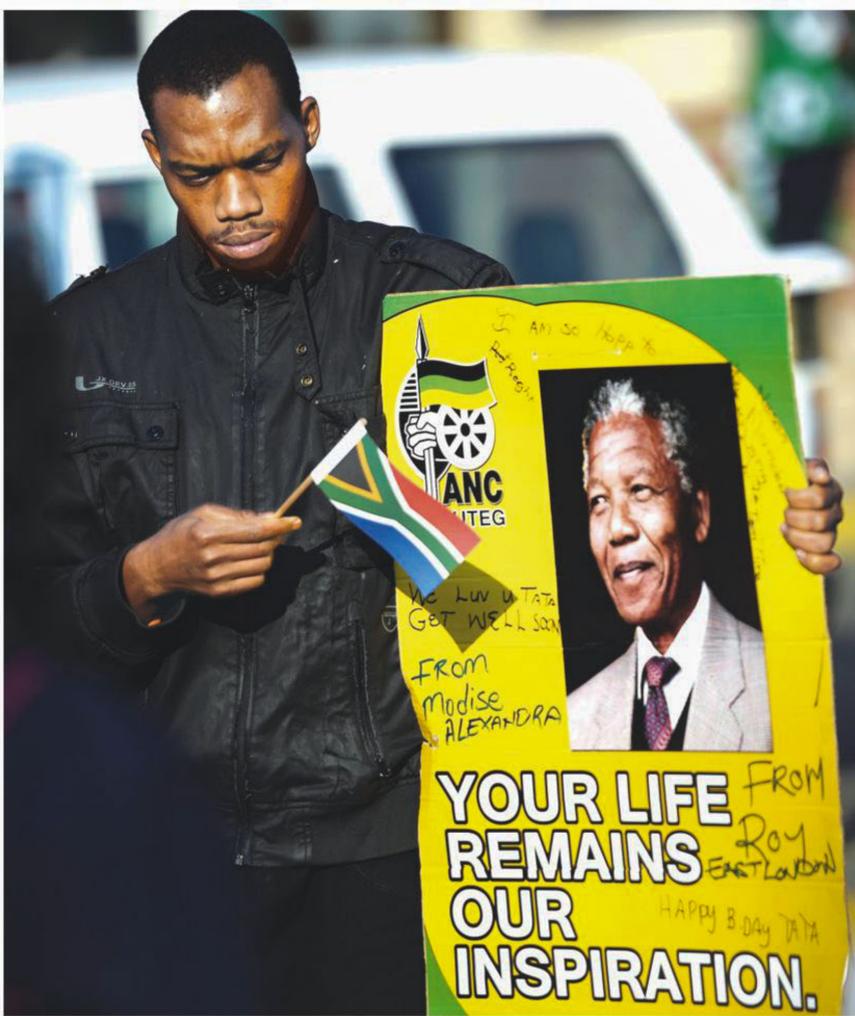


Koreas fail to agree on key industrial zone

North and South Korea failed to reach agreement on reopening their jointly-run industrial estate as they wrangled over who was to blame for its shutdown. A fourth round of talks about the complex again ended without agreement on Wednesday, but the two sides will meet again next Monday, said Seoul's chief delegate Kim Ki-Woong. The Kaesong estate in North Korea, the last remaining symbol of cross-border cooperation, shut down in April as military tensions mounted after the North's February nuclear test and South Korean-US war games. Dialogue resumed in recent weeks but little progress has been made amid squabbles over which side should take responsibility for the suspension of business there. Wednesday's discussions appeared to be a repeat of previous rounds, with each side refusing to budge on conditions for resuming operations at the estate, built after a landmark inter-Korean summit in 2000.



Mandela turns 95

CNN ONLINE

As an ailing Nelson Mandela recuperates in a South African hospital, the world celebrates his 95th birthday Thursday, honoring his legacy in various ways, including performing 67 minutes of community service. School children sang "Happy Birthday" to the former president while crowds left flowers and candles outside his Pretoria hospital. The day also marks 15 years since he married his wife, Graca Machel. President Jacob Zuma said that Mandela, who has been hospitalized since June, is steadily improving following his lung ailment. "We are proud to call this international icon our own as South Africans and wish him good health," Zuma said in a statement. The United Nations declared July 18 as Mandela Day four years ago to honor his role in reconciling a country torn apart by apartheid. It started as a call to promote global peace and encourage community service. His foundation is asking people to take part in at least 67 minutes of public service on his birthday, a reference to the number of years he devoted to public service. Birthday greetings and messages of support poured in from around the world -- and even from astronauts on the International Space Station -- to mark the anniversary, which many had feared Mandela would not live to see. US President Barack Obama, who visited with Mandela's family in South Africa last month, also sent birthday wishes. "People everywhere have the opportunity

to honor Madiba through individual and collective acts of service," he said in a statement. "Through our own lives, by heeding his example, we can honor the man who showed his own people -- and the world -- the path to justice, equality and freedom." Other well-wishers included the Dalai Lama, former US president Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary, US actor Morgan Freeman and Mandela's former jailer FW de Klerk, who went on to share the Nobel Peace Prize with him. The frail icon has not appeared in public for years, but retains his popularity as the father of democracy. His defiance of white minority rule focused the world's attention on apartheid, the legalized racial segregation enforced by the South African government until 1994. The festivities are not limited to South Africa. In the United States, the embassy said 18 cities, including the nation's capital, will hold various events to celebrate his birthday. Mandela, a Nobel peace laureate, spent 27 years in prison for fighting against oppression of minorities in South Africa. He became the nation's first black president in 1994, four years after he was freed from prison. He then led reconciliation in the deeply divided country. "Never before in history was one human being so universally acknowledged in his lifetime as the embodiment of magnanimity and reconciliation as Nelson Mandela," said retired archbishop Desmond Tutu, himself a Nobel Peace laureate.

EU urges Morsi release as loyalists rally

Kerry says 'too early' to judge Egypt path after fall of Morsi

Visiting EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton on Wednesday urged Egypt's interim leaders to free Mohamed Morsi, as supporters of the ousted Islamist president rallied against the new government. While speaking in Amman, US Secretary of State John Kerry said it was "much too early" to judge the future course of the Arab world's most populous nation and key Washington ally. But he said the 34-member caretaker cabinet, sworn in a day earlier and headed by former finance minister Hazem al-Beblawi, was comprised of "extremely competent people". Ashton held talks with Egypt's new leaders, members of the grass-roots anti-Morsi movement Tamarod and officials from the Freedom and Justice Party, the political wing of Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood. But the EU's top diplomat was not able to meet Morsi himself. He has been held in custody since the military overthrew him on July 3 after massive nationwide protests against his rule. In Jordan, Kerry made much the same point. "Very clearly, order needs to be restored, stability

needs to be restored, rights need to be protected... and the country needs to be able to return to normal business," he said. Washington has pointedly refrained from saying Morsi was the victim of a coup, which would legally require a freeze on some \$1.5 billion (1.14 billion euros) in US military and economic aid to Cairo. Morsi's removal had arisen out of an "extremely complex and difficult situation", Kerry said. The Brotherhood, the influential movement from which Morsi hails, along with the ultra-conservative Al-Nur party, refused to take part in the new administration. A Brotherhood spokesman has also rejected the new cabinet as illegitimate. There was fresh violence in the Sinai peninsula overnight, when gunmen killed three police officers in three separate incidents. The peninsula has suffered a wave of attacks in recent weeks. Tuesday's swearing-in of the caretaker cabinet came just hours after overnight clashes between the security forces and Morsi supporters in Cairo in which seven people were killed and more than 260 wounded.

Russia jails Putin foe for theft

REUTERS, Kirov

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was sentenced to five years in jail for theft yesterday, an unexpectedly tough punishment which supporters said proved President Vladimir Putin was a dictator ruling by repression. Navalny, an anti-corruption campaigner who led the biggest protests against Putin since he took power in 2000, hugged his wife Yulia and his mother, shook his father's hand and then passed them his watch before being led away in handcuffs. "Shame! Disgrace!" protesters chanted outside the court in Kirov, about 900 km northeast of Moscow. Some of his supporters burst into tears and other opposition activists could barely hide their shock and anger. The United States and European Union expressed concern over the conviction, saying it raised questions about the rule of law in Russia and Putin's treatment of opponents. Russian shares fell on concerns the ruling could provoke social unrest. In a last message from court, Navalny, 37, referred to Putin as a toad who abuses Russia's vast oil revenues to stay in power and made clear he expected his supporters to press his campaign. "Okay, don't miss me. More important - don't

be idle," he wrote on Twitter. The opposition said they planned a series of protests, starting later yesterday in Moscow where police were out in force. State prosecutors had asked the court to jail Navalny for six years on charges of organising a scheme to steal at least 16 million roubles (\$494,400) from a local timber firm when he was advising the Kirov region governor in 2009. But even a five-year sentence means he will not be able to run in the next presidential election in 2018 or for Moscow mayor in September as he had planned. Navalny says the charge against him was politically motivated and that the verdict would be dictated by Putin. The Kremlin denies that Putin uses the courts for political ends. His spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, did not immediately answer calls after the sentence was pronounced. The US ambassador to Russia, Michael McFaul, said on Twitter: "We are deeply disappointed in the conviction of @Navalny and the apparent political motivations in this trial." Navalny is the most prominent opposition leader to be prosecuted in Russia since Soviet times and his trial has led to comparisons with the political "show trials" under Josef Stalin.



ODDLY enough

Bounty for shooting down drones!

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE The farming and ranching town of Deer Trail, Colorado, is considering paying bounties to anyone who shoots down a drone. Under the proposal, hunters could legally shoot down a drone flying under 1,000 feet with a 12-gauge or smaller shotgun. The measure was crafted by resident Phillip Steel, a 48-year-old army veteran, who acknowledges the whimsical nature of his proposal. "We don't want to become a surveillance society," he told Reuters in a telephone interview. Steel acknowledges his idea is symbolic, but he hopes it will curtail the use of

Protect us Reporters in conflict zones appeal for justice at UN

AFP, United Nations

Journalists seized a rare chance Wednesday to plead for greater UN Security Council protection as the world media death toll mounts amid increased coverage of Syria and other conflicts. AFP's prize-winning Somalia correspondent Mustafa Haji Abdinur told the 15 council ambassadors he was a "dead man walking" because of the dangers he faces covering his own country. Abdinur was one of four reporters to address the Security Council on Wednesday as the bullet-ridden body of crime reporter Alberto Lopez Bello was found in a Mexican town. "When a journalist is killed, the news dies too," Abdinur said as he called for justice for the almost 1,000 journalists killed around the world since 1992. The vast majority of the deaths have gone unpunished. Lopez Bello adds to a toll of more than 100 Mexican journalists killed or missing since 2000. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) estimates that nearly 30 journalists have been murdered around the world so far this year from Russia to Brazil.



Supporters of Islami Jamiat-e-Taliba, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami of Pakistan, demonstrate in Lahore yesterday, chanting slogans against verdicts by the war crimes tribunals of Bangladesh.

PHOTO: REUTERS

From zero to \$92 quadrillion

BBC Online Online payments broker PayPal has admitted it erroneously credited a man with \$92 quadrillion (£60 quadrillion). Chris Reynolds, 56, of Pennsylvania, found the amount when he opened his monthly statement. But the error was quickly recognised and his account had returned to zero by the time he

US lawmakers slam NSA surveillance

AFP, Washington

Lawmakers on Wednesday blasted US intelligence agencies for trampling on privacy rights and vowed to impose limits on the government's authority to scoop up Americans' phone records. At a House Judiciary Committee hearing, members from both parties berated senior officials over the collection of bulk phone data as beyond the limits of the US Constitution as well as legislation adopted by Congress. "I think that very clearly, this program has gone off the tracks legally," said Representative Zoe Lofgren of California. The hearing focused on the government's far-reaching surveillance activities that have come under intense scrutiny after leaks from a former intelligence contractor, Edward Snowden, who revealed the National Security Agency (NSA) was collecting phone

"meta-data" and trawling through Internet traffic to look for terror suspects. But senior justice and intelligence officials insisted the data mining of phone records was reviewed by a secret court, in line with laws adopted by Congress and only conducted to track down al-Qaeda-linked militants. "With these programs and other intelligence activities, we are constantly seeking to achieve the right balance between the protection of national security and the protection of privacy and civil liberties," Deputy Attorney General James Cole told the committee. "We amended the Patriot Act to avoid this very same problem," said John Conyers, the senior-ranking Democrat on the committee, who called the data collection a "serious violation" of the law. "This is unsustainable, it's outrageous and must be stopped immediately," Conyers said.

BANGLADESH WAR CRIMES Pakistan Jamaat protests verdicts

STAR REPORT

Islami Jamaat-e-Taliba, the student wing of Pakistan's political party Jamaat-e-Islami, yesterday held rallies in Lahore and Karachi to protest against verdicts by the Bangladesh war crimes tribunals. In Dhaka, a tribunal on Monday sentenced Ghulam Azam, former ameer and spiritual head of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, to 90 years in prison for masterminding atrocities during the war. A day later, another tribunal sentenced Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, secretary general of the party, to death. A Reuter photo showed one supporter of Islami Jamaat-e-Taliba standing on a poster with a picture of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the protest in Lahore. Besides the two, other high-ups of Jamaat, which opposed the liberation of Bangladesh and collaborated with the Pakistan occupation army in 1971, are being tried on war crimes charges. The Bangladeshi government maintains the trials are needed to heal the wounds of the 1971 war in which it says three million died.

China seen surpassing US in superpower shift

CNN ONLINE

The world increasingly believes China will become the top superpower but the United States enjoys a better image in most regions, according to a poll released yesterday. Will China supplant the United States as the world's leading superpower and top player in the world economy? A new Pew Research Center survey of 38,000 people in 39 countries found the widespread belief that China is well on its way. Overall, a majority or plurality of respondents in only six of the countries surveyed believe the US will remain on top. "Publics around the world believe the global balance of power is shifting," Pew wrote. "China's economic power is on the rise, and many think it will eventually sup-

plant the United States as the world's dominant superpower." In both the United States and China, an increasing number of respondents agree with this thesis. Two out of three Chinese now predict their country will overtake the US, an eight percentage point increase since 2008. The number of Americans who agree has jumped 11 percentage points to 47%. When it comes to pure economics, the survey suggests that some people even think that China is already ahead of the US. The survey also indicates that countries around the world have divergent views of the US and China. The US retains a higher overall approval rating, with 63% of people around the world having a favorable view of America. China's rating is marginally lower at 50%.