

NEWSIN
brief

Germany hands
Kunduz camp to
Afghans

AFP, Kunduz

Germany yesterday handed over command of its northern Kunduz camp to Afghan security forces, a milestone in the drawdown from a more than decade-long military deployment.

About 100,000 German troops have served in Afghanistan since 2002, and 54 have died there -- 35 of them in combat -- in Germany's deadliest post-World War II deployment.

International forces are due to end major combat operations in Afghanistan at the end of 2014, although Germany and others have pledged to continue a training and support mission beyond then.

Head trauma puts
Kirchner on rest

AFP, Buenos Aires

Argentina's President Cristina Kirchner, 60, has been ordered to rest for a month after doctors found a brain hemorrhage linked to an August incident, her spokesman said Saturday.

The official said that Argentina's first democratically-elected female leader was not ordered to be on total rest. He did not indicate whether Vice President Amado Boudou would take over any of her duties during her recover.

Ireland rejects PM's
plan to scrap senate

AFP, Dublin

Ireland's Prime Minister Enda Kenny vowed to push forward with reform of the upper house of parliament after voters rejected his plan to abolish the senate to save the bailed-out eurozone nation money.

In a surprise blow for Kenny after he personally led the campaign to ditch the senate, voters in a referendum on Friday narrowly opted to keep the 60-member house, according to results announced late Saturday.

Egypt frees two
detained Canadians

AFP, Ottawa

Egyptian authorities have released two Canadians who had been held without charge in a crowded, cockroach-infested prison cell in Cairo since mid-August, Canadian officials said yesterday.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper welcomed the release of John Greyson, a Toronto filmmaker and university professor, and Tarek Loubani, an emergency room doctor from London, Ontario.



Is Prince Harry
marrying next year?

MAIL ONLINE

Prince Harry's girlfriend has overcome her concerns about marrying into the Royal family, it was claimed yesterday.

Cressida Bonas, 24, has 'got used to the idea' of marriage and children with the 30-year-old Prince - and a wedding is expected to take place next year, according to friends of the couple.

'Cressie is going to marry Harry,' one of the dance student's friends told The Sunday Telegraph.

Harry has been dating Miss Bonas since July 2012 and sparked rumours in August when he whisked her off on an African safari, just like his brother William did with Kate in 2010 when he proposed.

US raids terror bases
in Somalia, Libya

Captures key al-Qaeda leader Abu Anas al-Libi

AFP, Washington

US forces struck two militant targets in Africa on Saturday, snatching a top al-Qaeda suspect from the streets of Tripoli and launching a pre-dawn raid against a Shebab leader's home in Somalia.

In Libya, US forces seized a militant known as Abu Anas al-Libi, a long-sought al-Qaeda operative indicted in the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

A separate raid in the southern Somali port of Barawe failed to capture the senior militant and it was unclear whether he had been killed, but a US official said several al-Qaeda-linked Shebab members had been slain.

It was reportedly "prompted" by the deadly militant siege on a Nairobi shopping mall last month that killed 67 people.

The operation in Libya however appeared to be a success.

"As the result of a US counterterrorism operation, Abu Anas al-Libi is currently lawfully detained by the US military in a secure location outside of Libya," Pentagon spokesman George Little said in a statement.



● Abu Anas al-Libi was on the FBI's most wanted list

Age: 49

● He was sought for his role in the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania

AFP

A source close to Libi told AFP he was snatched by armed men in Tripoli.

Libi, who was on the FBI's most wanted list with a \$5 million reward, was indicted in US federal court in New York for allegedly playing a key role in the east Africa bombings.

The attacks left more than 200 people dead.

His capture ended a 15-year man-hunt for a key al-Qaeda operative, who was born under the name Nazih Abdul Hamed Al-Raghie.

It also paved the way for Libi, 49, to be brought to the US to face trial.

"We hope that this makes clear that

the United States of America will never stop in its effort to hold those accountable who conduct acts of terror," said Secretary of State John Kerry on Sunday, speaking from the Indonesian island of Bali.

The action should also make clear that "those members of al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations literally can run, but they can't hide," said Kerry, speaking during a break from meetings of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum.

The US raid took place in broad daylight with the knowledge of the Libyan government, a US official told CNN. Libyan security services denied the claim, saying they were unaware of any kidnapping or arrest of the man.

According to the indictment, Libi and other al-Qaeda members discussed attacking the US Embassy in Nairobi as early as 1993, and even took pictures of the mission.

In 1994 Libi allegedly drew up plans to attack the mission as well as a building that housed the United States Agency for International Development, as well as British, French and Israeli targets.

Syria chem arms
removal begins

AFP, Damascus

Experts yesterday began the process of destroying Syria's chemical weapons arsenal under the terms of a UN resolution that will see Damascus relinquish its banned weapons, an official told AFP.

The source in the international mission said the experts would verify details of the arsenal turned over by the Syrian government and start the process of destroying the weapons and production facilities.

An official in the joint mission said Sunday that members of the team "have left for a site where they are beginning verification and destruction."

"Today is the first day of destruction, in which heavy vehicles are going to run over and thus destroy missile warheads, aerial chemical bombs and mobile and static mixing and filling units," he said.

An OPCW official said earlier this week that all "expedient methods" would be used to render Syria's production facilities unusable, including explosives, sledgehammers, or pouring in concrete.

The team faces the massive task of destroying an estimated 1,000 tonnes of the nerve agent sarin, mustard gas and other banned arms at dozens of sites in Syria by mid-2014 in line with the UN resolution.

As the operation got underway, President Bashar al-Assad admitted in an interview with Germany's Spiegel news magazine that his government made "mistakes" in the country's brutal civil conflict.

But he denied again his forces used chemical weapons in an August 21 attack that eventually led to the UN resolution requiring Syria turn over its arsenal of the banned weapons.

Syria agreed to relinquish its chemical arsenal for destruction under a UN resolution that enshrined a US-Russian agreement.

28 killed in
Egypt clashes

AFP, Cairo

At least 28 people were killed in clashes between Islamists and police in Egypt yesterday, as thousands of supporters of the military marked the anniversary of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

Supporters of deposed Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, overthrown in a July military coup, tried to converge on a central Cairo square for the anniversary celebrations, when police confronted them.

At least 28 people were killed in Cairo and elsewhere and 83 were wounded, sources said.

Supporters of Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood had marched in several cities to denounce the military's July 3 overthrow of the Islamist leader as several thousand people, some carrying pictures of army chief, waved Egyptian flags to mark the occasion.

In central Cairo, policemen fired shots and tear gas to disperse stone-throwing protesters. AFP correspondents saw them arrest and beat several suspected demonstrators.



Huge waves hit the dike as Typhoon Fitow moves to make its landfall in Wenling, east China's Zhejiang province, yesterday. China was on its highest alert for Typhoon Fitow, with tens of thousands evacuated as the storm was set to slam into the east coast.

PHOTO: AFP

US worries rule
APEC summit

Pentagon recalls furloughed staff

AFP, Nusa Dua

The US government yesterday warned that business in America was suffering from the federal shutdown as concern about Washington's policy paralysis was voiced at an Asia-Pacific summit marred by the enforced absence of President Barack Obama.

The first government closure in 17 years has directly affected hundreds of thousands of federal employees, but Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker said companies were also starting to hurt, not least from her department's inability to collate vital economic data.

The Pentagon said Saturday it will recall most of its furloughed employees. US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced that most of the estimated 400,000 furloughed Pentagon employees will be called back to work next week.

Apart from APEC, Obama is also missing a separate East Asian summit this week and scheduled trips to Malaysia and the Philippines. His failure to come coincides with a diplomatic push by China in Southeast Asia featuring high-profile visits by President Xi Jinping, who is at APEC.

Speaking at a Bali meeting of APEC business leaders which Obama had also been scheduled to address, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said the president's no-show was "a very big disappointment to us".

While expressing sympathy for Obama's domestic travails, Lee said "no other country can replace" US engagement in Asia.

"Not China, not Japan, not any other power. That is something which we continue and encourage at every opportunity."

At APEC, Obama had been set personally to push for the "Trans-Pacific Partnership", a US-led free-trade pact that involves 12 countries but excludes China, which is a key player in a proposed 16-nation accord centred instead on Southeast Asia.

Analysts say the bitter bipartisan divide in Washington is distracting the White House from key foreign policy goals such as the TPP, which forms part of a broader strategic "pivot" towards the Asia-Pacific region as China flexes its muscles.

Lives of Albania's
children of doom

AFP, Mazrek

Since they were born, nine-year-old Nikolin and his older brother Amarildo, 12, have never left their house in Albania. They do not play outside, nor do they go to school.

The boys are imprisoned because of a blood feud, or vendetta, with neighbours that has made them fear for their lives. Their uncle killed a neighbour in a 1993 dispute and, although he was jailed for 25 years, the victim's family -- living only a dozen metres away -- has vowed to avenge the death.

Albanians still respect the tradition of vendetta, which dates back to the 15th century and spares no male in a family, including babies.

The brutal custom is widely followed in the poor mountainous regions in the north of the country, but also in some villages and towns in other regions.

Nikolin and Amarildo spend most of their lives in a cold, sombre room at their home in Mazrek, a village about 150 km north of the Tirana. They are surrounded by photographs of dead relatives on the walls, their small window covered with iron bars.

The bitter feud has already led to some casualties and the two youngsters, entangled through no fault of their own, could be next. The boys' mother, Vjollca, recently committed suicide, unable to stand her family's captive life any more. She was 29.

The rival family gave them three days to mourn and bury her, promising not to kill them during that time. The boys' only link with the outside world is their teacher, Liljana Luani, who comes twice a month.

"The children of vendetta are condemned to death," says Luani, who has asked the Albanian authorities to bring an end to what she calls an "unacceptable crime for a country that wants to integrate into Europe".

Almost 600 Albanian children were unable to start the new school year in September from vendetta threats. Police say there have been 225 victims of blood feuds in Albania in the last 14 years, but activist groups estimate the real number could be much higher.



Malala invited
to Buckingham
Palace

AFP, London

Pakistani schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai, shot last year by the Taliban for campaigning for girls' schooling, has been invited to a Buckingham Palace reception to meet Queen Elizabeth II, officials said yesterday.

The queen and her husband Prince Philip will host the event promoting education in Commonwealth countries on October 18.

Academics and teachers will be among the guests at the October 18 event.

The announcement is the latest in a series of impressive accolades for Malala's campaign for girls' schooling. The 16-year-old is also among the favourites to win the Nobel Peace Prize, which will be revealed on October 11.

The Nobel Prizes in numbers

AFP, Stockholm

Who is the oldest Nobel laureate, and who is the youngest? How many women have won a Nobel? How many married couples? Here are some of the answers, based on the Nobel Foundation's figures.

● The oldest laureate to win a Nobel was Russian-born American Leonid Hurwicz, who was 90 years of age when he won the economics prize in 2007. He lived only a few months longer, passing away in June 2008.

● In 2007 British author Doris Lessing became the oldest winner of the literature prize, aged 87 when her name was announced. British author Rudyard Kipling remains the youngest Nobel literature laureate ever honoured, aged 42 when he took home the prize in 1907.

● British laureate Lawrence Bragg, who won the physics prize in 1915, was 25 years old when he won and remains the youngest laureate in the history of the prizes.

● The average age of all Nobel laureates in all prize categories between 1901 and 2012 is 59 years.

● Since 1901 when the first Nobel prizes were awarded, 44 women have been honoured -- including Marie Curie twice -- and 795 men.



Medicine	Monday 7 Oct
Physics	Tuesday 8 Oct
Chemistry	Wednesday 9 Oct
Literature	Thurs 10 or 17 Oct
Peace	Friday 11 Oct
Economics	Monday 14 Oct

AFP

Prize: German pacifist and journalist Carl von Ossietzky (1935), Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi (1991) and Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo (2010).

● A record 259 nominations have been received for the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize. The names of the nominees and the committee's deliberations are kept secret for 50 years.