

NEWS IN brief

EU announces €30m to help Italy refugees

AP, Lampedusa
The head of the European Commission has announced during a visit to the Sicilian island of Lampedusa that Italy will receive an additional €30 million in EU funds to help settle refugees, after the sinking of a migrant boat killed at least 275 people.

Jose Manuel Barroso also pledged to work "tirelessly" for an EU-wide asylum policy and to beef up the Frontex border patrol agency

Turkey coup sentences upheld

AFP, Ankara
Turkey's appeals court yesterday upheld the convictions of scores of top retired military officers over a 2003 coup plot but overturned jail sentences handed to dozens of lower-ranking defendants.

The court in Ankara confirmed an earlier judgement that found the former commanders of the army, navy and air force guilty of plotting to oust Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Islamic-rooted government and sentenced them to 20

China court to hear Bo Xilai appeal

AFP, Beijing
A Chinese court yesterday said it would hear an appeal by fallen Communist Party star Bo Xilai, who was convicted of bribery, embezzlement and abuse of power last month and jailed for life.

Appeals in such high-profile cases are rare in China's tightly controlled courts.

Myanmar reforms 'incomplete': US

AFP, Bandar Seri Begawan
US Secretary of State John Kerry yesterday said that Myanmar's dramatic political reforms were still "incomplete", a day after the former military-ruled country released dozens more political prisoners.

"I think what is happening in Myanmar is very exciting, but it is incomplete," Kerry said during a meeting with students in Brunei.

BUGTI MURDER Pak SC grants Musharraf bail

AFP, Islamabad
Pakistan's top court yesterday granted bail to former military ruler Pervez Musharraf over the death of a rebel leader, his lawyers said, bringing closer his possible release after nearly six months of house arrest.

Musharraf has now been granted bail in three major cases against him, including one relating to the assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto. His lawyer said the ruling meant he was a "free man". But he is likely to remain under heavy guard at his villa on the edge of Islamabad, where he has been under house arrest since April, because of serious threats to his life.

Musharraf was head of state in 2006 when the main rebel leader in the southwestern province of Baluchistan, Akbar Bugti, died during an army operation.

His lawyer Ibrahim Satti told AFP a three-member Supreme Court bench had granted bail in the Bugti case in return for surety bonds worth two million rupees (\$20,000).

Another counsel for Musharraf, Qamar Afzal, said bail was granted over lack of evidence. As well as the Bugti and Bhutto cases, Musharraf also faces cases over the suspension of judges during emergency rule, which he imposed in 2007.



A lonely supporter of US President Barack Obama displays a placard in front of the White House in Washington, DC, yesterday, urging for the end of federal government shutdown. Obama Tuesday warned world leaders were nervous that Republicans would "blow up" the US economy, and vowed not to budge on his demand for the debt ceiling to be lifted without conditions.

PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan Taliban 'open to talks'

BBC ONLINE

Pakistani Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud has told the BBC he is open to "serious talks" with the government but says he has not yet been approached.

In a rare interview, he denied carrying out recent deadly attacks in public places but said he would continue to target "America and its friends".

The chief loosely controls more than 30 militant groups in the tribal areas.

After being elected PM in May, Nawaz Sharif announced he would open unconditional talks with the Taliban.

The interview with Hakimullah Mehsud was conducted by the BBC's Ahmed Wali Mujeeb this month in an undisclosed location in the north-western tribal areas.

Asked about the possibility of peace talks with the government, Mehsud said: "We believe in serious talks but the government has taken no steps to approach us. The government needs to sit with us, then we will present our conditions."

He said that for any ceasefire to be credible "it is important that drone strikes are stopped".

Mehsud has a \$5m FBI bounty on his head and is thought to be responsible for the deaths of thousands of people. But in the interview he denied carrying out recent deadly attacks in public places.

Hakimullah Mehsud came to prominence in 2007 as a commander under then Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud, with the capture of 300 Pakistani soldiers adding to his prestige among the militants. After Baitullah Mehsud was killed in a US drone strike in August 2009, Hakimullah was appointed leader.

China extends hand to wary Asean countries

AGENCIES

China offered an olive branch yesterday to Southeast Asian nations wary of its territorial claims, displaying its growing influence at another summit notable for US President Barack Obama's absence.

Premier Li Keqiang called for peace in the South China Sea and expanded Chinese trade with the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) as he met the bloc's leaders in the oil-flush sultanate of Brunei.

"A peaceful South China Sea is a blessing for all. We need to work together to make the South China Sea a sea of peace, friendship and cooperation," Li said.

Li took the baton from President Xi Jinping, who underlined Chinese power by occupying centre-stage earlier this week at an Asia-Pacific summit in Bali while Obama was stuck at home due to the US government shutdown.

China asserts sovereignty over most of the South China Sea, including waters near

the coasts of its neighbours.

The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei -- all Asean members -- have competing claims to parts of the sea, and Manila and Hanoi have in recent years repeatedly accused China of becoming more aggressive in the dispute.

Obama had said earlier in the year he planned during the Brunei gathering to lend his weight to calls for a speedy agreement between China and Asean on a code of conduct at sea to avoid accidental conflict.

However, as he did in Bali, Obama's top diplomat John Kerry was once again in damage-control mode over Obama's no-show and the questions it has raised about the US commitment to the region.

Kerry pushed Southeast Asian leaders and China to discuss the South China Sea dispute at the summit, despite Beijing's reluctance to address the issue at such meetings.

China has sought to portray a friendlier face recently, dangling lucrative trade promises around the region -- while holding its ground on its claim to most of the South China Sea.

US set to cut aid to Egypt

Morsi trial over protester deaths set for Nov 4

AGENCIES

The Obama administration is poised to slash hundreds of millions of dollars in military and economic assistance to Egypt, US officials have said. An announcement is expected this week.

Meanwhile, an Egyptian court yesterday set November 4 as the opening date for the trial of ousted president Mohamed Morsi on charges of inciting the murder of protesters, state media reported.

Morsi will stand trial with 14 other defendants over the killings of protesters outside his palace in December 2012, almost seven months before his ouster in a military coup, the official MENA news agency reported.

Prosecutors have charged Morsi with "inciting his supporters to commit premeditated murder" during the December 5 clashes outside his presidential palace.

The US has been considering such a move since the Egyptian military removed the country's first democratically elected leader in June. It would be a dramatic shift for the Obama administration, which has declined to label President Mohamed Morsi's ousting a coup and has argued it is in US



national security interests to keep aid flowing.

The decision is likely to have profound implications for relations between the US and Egypt after decades of close ties that have served as a bulwark of security and stability in the Middle East.

The US officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to talk publicly before the administration's official announcement.

President Obama's top national security aides recommended the aid cutoff in late August -- a policy shift Obama had been expected to announce last month. But the announcement got sidetracked by the debate over whether to launch military strikes against Syria.

The US provides Egypt with \$1.5bn a year in aid, \$1.3bn of which is military assistance; the rest is economic. Some of the aid goes to the government and some to other groups but it is only the money that goes to the government that would be suspended.

Officials told the Associated Press in September that the recommendation calls for a significant amount of aid to be withheld but this payment could be restored once a democratically elected government is returned.

Chem watchdog seeks Syria truce

AFP, The Hague

The world's chemical weapons watchdog yesterday called for temporary truces to meet tight disarmament deadlines in Syria, where fresh bloodshed served as a deadly reminder of the mission's difficulties.

"I think if some temporary ceasefires can be established, I think those targets could be reached," Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons chief Ahmet Uzumcu told journalists in The Hague.

The OPCW has been charged with dismantling Syria's chemical arsenal and facilities by mid-2014 under the terms of a UN Security Council resolution drawn up after deadly nerve gas attacks in August.

Uzumcu said during a rare public briefing on the state of Syria's disarmament that the timeline "is extremely tight", with 20 sites to be visited in the coming weeks.

He denied however that the deadlines, including the destruction of all production facilities by November 1, were unrealistic.

The OPCW said on Tuesday it was sending a second wave of inspectors to bolster the disarmament mission in the war-ravaged nation. Uzumcu said that another 12 experts were being sent to Damascus.

Syria has won rare international praise for its cooperation with the chemical disarmament mission, deployed in Damascus since October 1.



Palestinian children, boys dressed in Ihram, special outfits worn during the Hajj pilgrimage, stand in line in the yard of their school as they learn how to perform the rituals carried out during the annual Hajj pilgrimage in southern Gaza Strip, yesterday. Saudi Arabia's interior minister yesterday warned Muslim pilgrims against exploiting next week's annual hajj for political purposes.

PHOTO: AFP



61 yrs in an cage!

STAR ONLINE

Martha Mason was an extraordinary human being who spent over 60 years of her life in immobilised in an Iron Lung after becoming paralyzed in her childhood years as a result of polio.

Despite her seemingly desperate situation, Martha lived a fulfilling life, graduating from high-school and college with the highest honors, hosting many dinner parties and even writing a book called "Breath: Life in the Rhythm of an Iron Lung", in which she portrayed the challenges and joys of her life.

Martha was born on May 31, 1937, in Lattimore, a small town about 50 miles from Charlotte. Her story took a tragic turn when she was only 11 years old. Soon she found herself immobilized in the iron lung, dependent on it to do the breathing for her. Mason has lived almost her entire life in such a tank with the pressure contracting and expanding her lungs when her weak muscles couldn't.

Telengana talks fail

Protests, power cuts to continue in Andhra

THE HINDU ONLINE

Talks between Andhra Pradesh government and striking Non-Gazetted Officers Association, to end the ongoing indefinite strike by government employees failed yesterday.

The APNGOs association vowed to continue agitation against proposed bifurcation of the state even as Chief Minister N Kiran Kumar Reddy sought to assure them that he would not let the state be divided as long as he remained the chief minister.

Reddy held talks for over three hours with the APNGOs association leaders at the state Secretariat here this afternoon to end the impasse, caused due to the indefinite strike by government employees in coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema regions, launched on August 12 in protest against the proposed bifurcation of the state.

"The Chief Minister requested us to call off the strike to avoid inconvenience to the people," NGOs Association leader U Murali Krishna told reporters after the meeting.

The NGOs association said it would discuss the government's proposal with its general body and

Don't deserve Nobel yet, says Malala

AFP, Mingora

Malala Yousafzai, the teenage activist nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, says she has not done enough to deserve the award, as her old school closed yesterday to mark the first anniversary of her shooting by the Taliban.

The 16-year-old was shot in the head by the Pakistani Taliban on October 9 last year for speaking out against them. She has gone on to become a global ambassador for the right of all children to go to school.

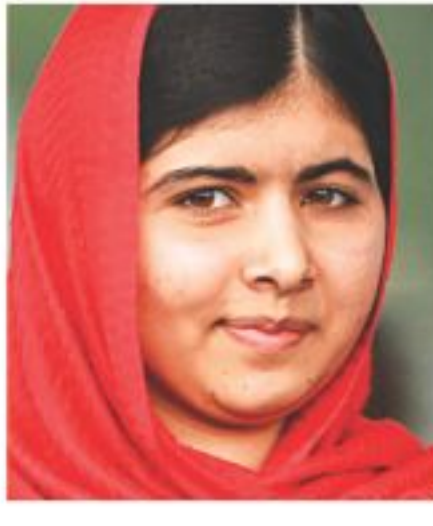
Feted by world leaders and celebrities for her courage, she has addressed the UN, this week published an autobiography, and tomorrow will learn if she has won the Nobel Peace prize.

But in an interview with Pakistani radio station City89 FM, Malala spoke of her desire to do more to promote education, saying she felt she had not yet earned the Nobel accolade.

"There are many people who deserve the Nobel Peace Prize and I think that I still need to work a lot. In my opinion I have not done that much to win the Nobel Peace Prize," she said.

Malala first rose to prominence with a blog for the BBC Urdu service chronicling the difficulties of life under the rule of the Taliban, who controlled Swat from 2007 until they were kicked out by the army in 2009.

While Malala has enjoyed acclamation around the world, in Pakistan the response to her rise to stardom has been more sceptical, with some accusing her of acting as a puppet of the West.



ODDLY enough

Passenger lands plane after pilot falls ill

AFP, London

A passenger with no flying experience made an emergency landing in a light aircraft in Britain after the pilot became ill, officials said yesterday.

He safely brought down the four-seater Cessna 172 on Tuesday evening with the help of two instructors on the ground, a spokesman for Humberside Airport in eastern England said.

The passenger was unhurt although police said the pilot later died, without giving details. The pair were the only



Clean your teeth in six seconds

THE TELEGRAPH ONLINE

The brush, which looks like a gum shield covered in bristles, is customised to fit an individual's mouth using scans of their mouth.

By clamping the brush in their mouth and grinding their teeth, it can clean the whole mouth at once and even includes a tongue cleaner.

The technology has been developed by Blizzident, who claim it can clean teeth in just six seconds. They say using their 3D printed brush could save up to 50 hours per year.

However, just one of the brushes costs £250 -- although they do say they can last up to a year.