City

Court rejects Bo Xilai's appeal

CNN ONLINE



A court in eastern China yesterday upheld the guilty ver-

dict and life sentence against former high-flying politician Bo Xilai, effectively ending one of the messiest political scandals to hit the ruling Chinese Communist Party in decades.

Bo received the life sentence for bribe-taking, 15 years for embezzlement and seven years for abuse of power following a trial that revealed tantalizing details of the lavish lifestyles of China's elite.

Over 100 rhinos poached in S Africa in past month

AFP, Johannesburg

Poachers have killed more than 100 rhinos in South Africa over the past four weeks, pushing the death toll so far this year towards 800, official figures showed yesterday. Killings have surged in

recent years to feed black market demand in Asia for their horns. In 2007 there were only 13 reported incidents. South Africa is home to around 80 percent of the world's rhino population, estimated at more

Pakistan arrests 40 Indian fishermen

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's maritime security agency has arrested at least 40 Indian fishermen after they strayed into its territorial waters, an official said yesterday.

The fishermen were held on Thursday after sailing deep into Pakistani waters, though 30 have since been released, an official from Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency told AFP. The detentions came a month after Pakistan held 58 Indian fishermen in similar circumstances, and two months after more than 300 were released from Pakistani jails as a

goodwill gesture. Kenya's Ruto must attend ICC trial

AFP, The Hague

Kenyan Vice President William Ruto must attend his crimes against humanity trial before the International Criminal Court and can only be excused under "exceptional circumstances," the

ICC ruled yesterday. Ruto said earlier this month that he wanted his trial to be suspended or for him to be excused so that he could deal with the fallout from last month's militant attack on Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall which left at least 67 people dead.



PHOTO: AFP

French President Francois Hollande, left, talks to British Prime minister David Cameron, right, while German Chancellor Angela Merkel talks with Sweden Prime minister Frederik Reinfeldt during EU summit in Brussels, yesterday.

EU eyes intel deal revamp

Says spying may harm fight on terror; Spain summons US envoy

AFP, Brussels

European leaders yesterday said they want a new deal with Washington to end a damaging spy row so as to keep an essential alliance and the fight against terrorism on track. The aim should be to agree rules for intelligence gather-

ing rather than seek a pointless confrontation, Belgian Prime Minister Elio di Rupo said. "The objective must remain the same -- to fight against terrorism but also respect privacy," Di Rupo said as he arrived for

the second day of an EU leaders summit which has been dominated by revelations of US spying operations across Europe. "Everyone can understand the need for exceptional mea sures given the danger of terrorism ... but we are not in the

position where we should spy on each other," he said. France and Germany are to try to reach

an understanding with Washington by year's end on intelligence gathering. A statement approved by all 28 EU

leaders -- including Britain which has tight intelligence links with the United States -- noted "the close relationship between Europe and the USA and the value of that partnership."

This must "be based on respect and trust," a lack of which "could prejudice the necessary cooperation in the field of intelligence gathering".

EU leaders "stressed that intelligence gathering is a vital element in the fight against terrorism," the statement added. Revelations of US covert surveillance, topped by reports German Chancellor Angela Merkel's mobile phone had been tapped, have sparked outrage in Europe.

"Spying between friends, that's just not done," Merkel said. "We need trust between partners and such trust needs to be re-established," she said.

The growing scandal has embroiled US President Barack

Obama in embarrassing exchanges with key allies -- from · France and Germany to Brazil and Mexico.

Meanwhile, Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy yesterday said he would call in the US ambassador to Madrid to explain reports of American spying on the country, a close ally of Washington.

Spanish media reports said the US National Security Agency had spied on several members of the government : over the past 20 years, turnand politicians, including former Socialist prime minister Rodriguez Zapatero.

More could follow after a fresh slew of damaging revelations in a report in Britain's Guardian daily saying Washington had listened in on the phone conversations of 35 world leaders.

French President Francois Hollande called for a new code of conduct, recalling that the EU had set up a special unit to review

the issue after leaks by fugitive former US intelligence contractor Edward Snowden earlier this year. In another twist, the Washington Post

reported that the United States was warning some foreign intelligence services that documents obtained by Snowden contain details of how they cooperate secretly with Washington. Citing unnamed US administration officials, it said some

of the tens of thousands of documents harvested by the fugitive former intelligence contractor contain sensitive material about programmes against countries such as Iran, Russia and China.

The scandal has sparked widespread anger in Europe, with some senior EU officials suggesting talks on a massive EU-US free-trade agreement could be suspended.

The European Parliament has already asked for a key EU-US bank data-sharing deal aimed at fighting terrorism to be suspended.

: MIGRANT CRISIS EU vows to stop more tragedies

AFP, Brussels

· European Union leaders · yesterday pledged to act to stop even more boatpeople drowning in the · Mediterranean, weeks after . 400 refugees fleeing conflict in Africa and Syria · perished in dramas that shocked the continent.

"The EU cannot accept that thousands of people · die at our borders," EU chief Jose Manuel Barroso said at the close of a twoday summit. Expressing "deep sadness"

over the recent deaths just as Italy reported 700 more · boat-people were plucked to : safety overnight off Sicily, EU leaders agreed on three principles -- prevention, protection and solidarity. A proposed EU action

plan as well as a rethink on broad migration and refugee issues were pushed · back however to EU summit meetings in 2014.

The summit also pledged tougher action against · human trafficking and aid and cooperation with countries of origin and transit to stem the flows.

Immigration charities estimate between 17,000 and 20,000 migrants have died at · sea trying to reach Europe ing the Mediterranean into "a graveyard."

Europe falls out of love with Obama

CNN ONLINE

On July 24, 2008, then-presidential candidate Barack Obama addressed tens of thousands of Germans on the avenue that leads from the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. In a pointed reference to the outgoing administration of President George W Bush, he promised a new era of "allies who will listen to each other, who will learn from each other, who will, above all, trust each other."

One German present among the hugely enthusiastic crowd said the occasion reminded him of Berlin's famous "Love Parade." No US politician since John F Kennedy had so captured Europeans' imagination.



Five years on, in the words of the song, it's a case of "After the Love Has Gone."

The European parliament has always been prickly about data-sharing with the US, and for years held up the US Treasury's efforts to use the SWIFT interbank apparatus to keep tabs on terrorists' financial flows. The parliament this week passed a non-binding resolution calling for the agreement that was eventually reached to be suspended. And a parliamentary committee has agreed tough measures that would forbid US companies providing data services in Europe to transfer the information to the US without obtaining permission.

The 9/11 attacks changed espionage beyond recognition, leading to massive investment in the US in "technical means" -the flagship of which is the enormous NSA data center being completed in Bluffdale, Utah. But 9/11 also shifted the balance between intelligence-gathering and civil liberties, with the US federal government acquiring new powers in the fight against terrorism -- some sanctioned by Congress but others ill-defined.

Spying: India has no worries

New Delhi says Manmohan has no mobile, personal email account to hack

AFP, New Delhi

India's 81-year-old prime minister does not own a mobile phone or use personal email, giving New Delhi "no cause for concern" about new US hacking revelations, his office said yesterday.

Asked if Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was concerned on the on going crisis, his spokesman replied: "The prime minister doesn't use a mobile phone and he doesn't have an email account.

"His office uses email, but he has

no personal email... We have no information and no cause for concern," he added.

India initially played down the impact of spying by the US National Security Agency, saying that information gleaned from its activities had helped prevent terror attacks and loss of life.

But following allegations that computers and phones in the Indian embassy and its UN mission in New York had been compromised, it took a slightly tougher line, saying it would seek answers from Washington.

Women gain as gender gap 'narrows' India PM ready to be grilled

BBC ONLINE

The gap between men and women has narrowed slightly in the past year in most countries, according to a World Economic Forum (WEF) report.

Iceland, Finland and Norway top the list of 136 nations, based on political participation,

economic equality and rights like education and health. The Middle East and North

Africa were the only regions not to improve in the past year, with Yemen at the bottom. The WEF has produced the report annually for the past eight years. Iceland's position at the top of

the WEF rankings was the fifth year in a row the country has been named the world's most equal. Report founder and co-author

Saadia Zahidi told the BBC that since the WEF began compiling the index in 2006, 80% of countries had made progress.

She singled out the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia as countries that had invested in education and

health, but had not integrated women into the economy. Saadia Zahidi of the WEF said that by contrast many subSaharan countries had not invested in women, but through necessity they played a major role in the economy.

Nordic countries continued to lead the way because they had a long history of investing in people, she said. Iceland, Finland (second), Norway (third) and Sweden (fourth) had all closed over 80% of the gender gap, where

> 100% would represent full equal-The highest-ranked Asian nation was the Philippines (fifth), praised

for its success in health, education and economic participation. Asia's major economies performed poorly, with China in 69th

place and Japan 105th. Among major world economies Germany ranked 14th (down one), the UK held its position at 18, with Canada at 20 and the

United States 23rd. On matters of health and survival, the report finds that 96% of the gap has now closed.

In terms of education, the global gender gap is 93% closed, with 25 countries now judged to deliver equal treatment to boys and girls at school

It is a different picture on the core issue of economic equality, where the gender gap has closed by 60%.

Speaking to the media on Thursday night on his way back from visits to Russia and China, Singh was quite confident that these charges and cases will not adversely impact the electoral prospects of Congress next year.

there is anything that the CBI, or for that matter, anybody wants to ask, I have nothing to hide," Singh said about the CBI reaching his doorstep in connection with the controversial coal blocks allotted to leading private sector firm Aditya Birla group firm Hindalco.

reports that the controversy and court cases relating to allocation of coal blocks to private companies is the latest to hit the

STAR DESK

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said he had nothing to hide in the coal blocks allotments case and is willing to be questioned by the Central Bureau of Investigation as he is not above the law of the

"I am not above the law of the land. If

government of Singh. The coal blocks allocation took place when Singh was in charge of Coal Ministry when he had headed the first edition of the UPA government before 2000

parliamentary polls. On the other hand, The Hindu reported, Singh's questioning by CBI will be "meaningless" as the agency comes

under the PMO's purview, BJP said yesterday as it once again raised the call for the prime minister to resign over the alleged

"...we would like him to be questioned by the agency not in his capacity as the PM, but as the Coal Minister Manmohan Singh who approved coal blocks allotment," BJP national spokesperson Syed Shahanwaz Hussain told reporters in

"It will demean sanctity of the high constitutional post of the Prime Minister Our correspondent in New Delhi if the CBI questions him the coal scam and so he must tender his resignation on moral ground before submitting himself to probe in the said scam," he said.

No Kolkata funeral for Manna Dey

PTI, Bangalore

Upset that they had not been helped in bad times, the family of legendary playback singer Manna Dey on Thursday did not accept the request of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata

Banerjee to bring his mortal remains to Kolkata for the last rites. "I pleaded with Mamata Banerjee to help solve a case involving my cousin who siphoned off cash and jewellery from my father's bank locker. This

would have helped me foot large bills of Narayana Hrudalaya hospital. I pleaded with (Mamata) government and it did not recognise our pleas. In that case, how shall I honour her words (to bring the body to Kolkata)," Dey's daughter Shumita Deb said.

Shumita was speaking to reporters at Hebbal crematorium here where the last rites of Dey, who died in the early hours of Thursday

after being in and out of the hospital for more than five months, were performed. The 94-year-old Dey had recently moved the Calcutta

High Court for a direction to police to take steps against his nephew for allegedly siphoning off cash and jewellery from his bank locker.

She criticised the Kolkata Police Commissioner for not taking steps to solve the case involving her cousin in spite of her writing a letter to him.

Iran closing in on nuke bomb Claims nuclear group

CNN ONLINE

Iran may only need a month to produce enough weapons-grade uranium for a nuclear bomb, a US-based anti-proliferation group says in a new assessment of Tehran's enrichment

program. But that is only if Iran were able to take the most extreme and direct enrichment path, says the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington. Under other scenarios, it would take significantly longer for

Tehran to produce the

months in one case.

material -- more than 11

The warning Thursday from ISIS was released as US lawmakers consider legislation that could tighten sanctions on Iran until a deal is reached.

Sri Lanka warns India over C'Wealth boycott

PTI, New Delhi

With Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh yet to take a decision on whether to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Colombo next month, Sri Lanka has made it clear that India would be isolated if it does not participate in the summit.

"Human rights violation takes place in every country in the world. We have our share of it and we are making effort to correct them. "All the governments in the Commonwealth had decided unanimously

that the Commonwealth Summit will be held in Sri Lanka, so there is no boycott. Isolation will happen to those who do not participate not the other way round," Sri Lankan High Commissioner to India Prasad Kariyawasam said in New Delhi. He also told that the "prime minister of India is not only leader in this

region but leader in Asia, leader in Commonwealth and even in fact the world, so bearing that in mind....it is a decision that India will have to take bearing in mind the national responsibilities and their profile." Last week, Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh said the prime minister has

been invited by the government of Sri Lanka for CHOGM but the govern-

ment has not taken any decision. "The decision will be taken closer to the date (of CHOGM) keeping in view the foreign policy, international obligations and national interest," she told reporters when asked whether the prime minister will travel to Colombo to attend the meet.

Parties in Tamil Nadu are strongly opposed to Singh's participation in the Summit in Colombo, alleging that Sri Lanka has indulged in atrocities against ethnic Tamils.

Nasheed alleges assassination plot

AFP, Colombo

Police in the Maldives yesterday said they had begun investigating a claim by political opposition chief Mohamed Nasheed that he was in danger of being assassinated.

Nasheed's office said in a statement that they had information about an assassination plan involving two al-



Qaeda operatives who had already arrived in the capital Male. The country faces political tension over twice scuttled presi-

dential elections and doubts over fresh polls scheduled for November 9.

Nasheed, a former president who was toppled 20 months ago, had won the first round of elections on September 7. However, the country's highest court

annulled those results and called fresh elections which were due to open on October 19, but police stopped that vote going ahead citing disputed procedural flaws. If no candidate gets 50 percent at the rescheduled polls on November 9, a runoff is due on November 16.

ODDLY enough

Prevented from FB, girl ends life

A teenaged college girl

PTI, Maharashtra

committed suicide after her parents restricted her use of her mobile phone and social networking sites like Facebook, police said on Thursday. "Is Facebook so bad?

I cannot stay in a home with such restrictions as I can't live without Facebook," her suicide note said. The incident

occurred late on Wednesday night after 17-year-old Aishwarya S Dahiwal had an argument with her parents over using Facebook on her computer.