block Nato supplies

forcibly searched trucks for

Nato supplies in northwest

at deadly US drone strikes.

They stopped trucks and

hauled drivers from their

cabs to check their paper-

work, following a call by

to block Nato supplies.

PTI, New Delhi

Khan at a rally on Saturday

from Tehelka office

The Goa police team prob-

assault case against Tehelka

Editor Tarun Tejpal returned

yesterday after questioning

three employees of the

magazine who had been

contacted by the victim to

corroborate her version as it

seized a hard disc and docu-

which had flown into Delhi

from Panaji on Saturday, left

without questioning Tejpal.

quizzed in graft case

Indonesian Vice President

Boediono has said he was

questioned as a witness by

anti-graft investigators over a

controversial bank bailout,

in a case that could prove

problematic for the govern-

ment ahead of polls next

financial crisis in 2008.

AFP, Beijing

media said.

China blast toll hits 52

The death toll from an oil

Chinese coastal city rose to

dangerous gases hampered

the rescue operation, state

'Scotland to split

March 24, 2016'

Mark the date: March 24,

That's the day Scotland

United Kingdom, should its

people back independence

in next year's referendum,

the Deputy First Minister

has said, in what the anti-

independence lobby has

ating tactic possible."

Nicola Sturgeon

the "landmark" white

paper on independence

ment, a 670-page docu-

ment will set out the

Nationalists' case.

from the Scottish govern-

The vote will take place

Those against the breakaway

by which all formalities must

be complete would put the

Nationalists in an awkward

position if they win the vote.

on September 18 next year.

have said stipulating a date

branded "the worst negoti-

announced the date ahead

of tomorrow's launch for

will break away from the

from UK on

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

pipeline explosion in a

52 yesterday, as rain and

the close proximity of

Indonesia VP

AFP, Jakarta

ments. Contrary to reports,

the three-member team,

ing the alleged sexual

AFP, Peshawar

First step to crisis solution

Reactions to Iran nuke deal

"Today, the United States -- together with our close allies and partners took an important first step toward a comprehensive solution that addresses our concerns with the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear programme."



- US President Barack Obama



Back channel

US-Iran talks

preceded deal

US and Iranian envoys held

secret bilateral meetings

ahead of yesterday's land-

mark nuclear deal between

Tehran and world powers, a

Speaking on condition

of anonymity, the official

Rohani was elected Iran's

president in June contacts

were established and series

The eventual deal was

signed by Iran and the

Britain, China, France,

cussions in Geneva.

P5+1 group of powers --

Germany, Russia and the

United States -- after dis-

But the official, confirm-

ing a detailed report on the

specialist Middle East news

website Al-Monitor, said

that UN envoys had met

Iranian negotiators.

privately beforehand with

"Any discussions we

have with the Iranians on a

bilateral basis, were meant

to reinforce and ultimately

President Barack Obama and

Secretary of State John Kerry

spoke briefly to their Iranian

counterparts at the time of

the UN General Assembly.

bilateral discussions with

Rouhani's election, with

the aim of discussing ideas

that could then be merged

"So over the course of

the last few months of very

November this year, we had

Iranians in addition to the

the contacts date to June

William Burns, a senior

State Department official

and former chief US nego-

tiator on the Iran dossier.

and were led by diplomat

According to Al-Monitor

intensive diplomacy, in

September, October and

some limited bilateral

discussions with the

P5+1 discussions."

into the P5+1 negotia-

tions," he said.

"In addition to that, we

also had a small number of

the Iranians since President

to being part of the P5+1

negotiations," he said.

He noted that US

said that after Hassan

of meetings held.

senior US official told

AFP, Washington

reporters.

Deal Iran's achievement

"God's grace and the support of the Iranian nation were the reasons behind this success." -- Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali

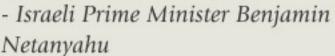
Right to enrichment secured

"Iran's right to uranium enrichment on its soil was accepted in this nuclear deal by world powers"

- Iranian President Hassan Rouhani



Historic mistake



rather a historic mistake."

"What was achieved yesterday in

Geneva is not a historic agreement but

Nobody lost "Nobody lost, everyone ends up winning... We are convinced that Iran will cooperate with the (Interna-

tional Atomic Energy Agency) agency in good faith."

- Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov

Deal to boost peace in ME "This agreement will help to uphold the international nuclear nonproliferation system, (and) safeguard peace and stability in the Middle East."

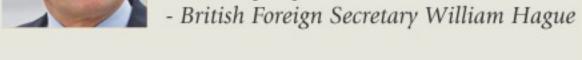
- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi



Deal good for the world The deal is "good for the whole world,

including Middle Eastern countries

and the people of Iran themselves."



A step towards right direction

"The interim accord reached overnight is an important step in the right direction... towards stopping Iran's military nuclear programme and therefore normalising our ties."

- French President François Hollande



Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (2nd L) shakes hands with US Secretary of State John Kerry next to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi (far L) and French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius (far R) after a statement in Geneva, early yesterday. World powers yesterday clinched a landmark nuclear deal with Iran. PHOTO: AFP

regional ambitions

City

Fears Gulf states

AFP, Dubai

Sunni-ruled Gulf monarchies feel let down by their US ally and want good relations with their Shia neighbour Iran but also fear the Geneva nuclear deal will boost its regional ambitions, analysts say.

Saudi Arabia and the oil- and gas-rich nations of the Gulf yesterday were weighing their reactions hours after the agreement was signed between Iran and Western powers.

Tehran agreed to curb its nuclear programme in the breakthrough interim deal that world powers claimed was the biggest step in decade-

long efforts to deny Iran an atomic bomb. But Gulf states have never made a secret of their concerns about Iranian

year. The case centres on a regional ambitions. \$584 million government Saudi analyst Jamal Khashoggi told AFP that Gulf states bailout of small lender Bank "fear Iran will see this accord as encouragement to act with a

Century at the onset of the free hand in the region". Tehran is a key backer of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, of the Shia Alawite sect, in his fight against a nearly three-year insurrection. The Islamic republic is also seen as feeding instability in Bahrain and Yemen through the Shia

communities there. Distrust of Iran among Gulf states is fed by the fear that their traditional protector and ally the United States has abandoned them.

But President Barack Obama moved quickly to reassure US allies yesterday, saying Washington "will remain firm, as will our commitment to our friends and allies -- particularly Israel and our Gulf partners, who have good reason to be sceptical about Iran's intentions."

Deal to boost Iran's Next steps tougher Analysts praised Washington's ground-breaking interim

deal with Iran to rein in its nuclear program in return for sanctions relief, but warned negotiations for a full agreement will prove even tougher. "The interim deal is a strong one, which achieves a broader array of constraints and verification on Iran's nuclear program

than ever previously contemplated," said Suzanne Maloney,

an Iran expert with the Brookings Institution. She stressed that the six-month accord tied Tehran "to an ongoing diplomatic process whose primary rewards remain deferred until a far more ambitious agreement can be achieved."

But there was also a note of caution that the next round of negotiations towards a fully comprehensive deal could prove even tougher.

NEWS ANALYSIS the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, said it was "plausible" to think that Iran and the international community could now work out a full deal over the next six

Kenneth Pollack, senior fellow for

"The complexities (of a future deal) are far greater. The concessions that both sides will be required to make will be far more painful," he cautioned.

One potential stumbling block remains Iran's insistence on its right to enrich uranium, which can be used to arm a nuclear warhead. The has already snubbed Iran's claim that world powers have accepted Iran's right to enrich uranium.

"If Tehran insists on standing on principle--especially on its 'right' to enrich and the lifting of 'all' sanctions--such a resolution may well prove impossible," Pollack said.

Anger from Israel, an arch-foe of Iran, as well as from skeptical US lawmakers eager to press ahead with more sanctions on the Islamic republic, may also signal trouble for the negotiators going forward.

AFP, Paris Camus will always be the outsider, says his daughter

THE OBSERVER ONLINE

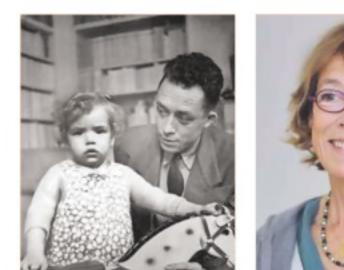
It is a century since French Nobel prizewinning author Albert Camus was born -and more than 50 years since he died in an accident -- yet the polemics over his legacy and "mysterious" death rumble on.

What his only daughter Catherine Camus recalls, however, is not the man shunned by Algeria -- the country of his birth -- as an Arab-despising colonialist, nor the slowness of the French establishment to recognise him, nor even the anticommunist who may -- or may not -- have been murdered by the Russians.

Catherine's book, Le Monde en Partage (The World to Share) was published to mark the centenary of Camus's birth.

Camus has long been afforded greater recognition and respect abroad than in France. Centenary events have taken place in the US, India, Israel, Chile and Jordan among others, but there have been no national celebrations in France, or in Algeria, where Camus still provokes hostility for his sympathy with the French pied noir colonialists and opposition to Algerian independence.

A major French exhibition was cancelled amid rows and recriminations over what



Camus with her only daughter Catherine (Right)

part Algeria should play in it. Instead, a smaller event -- Albert Camus, Citizen of the World -- is being held in Aix-en-Provence as part of the Marseille 2013 European culture capital programme.

Catherine, 68, says her father would have approved. "That there is no national celebration of his birth is natural; those in power in France have never liked Camus, and he detested those in power. He always said he was in the service of those who suffered history, not those who made it. In many ways Camus is still l'étranger [the outsider] in France. I find it astonishing that ministers don't realise what Camus represents for the country. I am proud of him and the image he gives of France," she told the Observer.

A opposition protester holds a framed portrait of Thai royals during a rally at Democracy Monument in Bangkok, yesterday. Inset, demonstrating Thai pro-government "Red Shirts" protesters. Tens of thousands of pro- and anti-government demonstrators massed in rival rallies in Bangkok, yesterday, as Thailand grappled with its most potent revival of street politics since bloody protests in 2010.

Syria rebels battle to break 'Loya Jirga' backs Damascus siege; 160 killed

Fierce fighting to the east of Damascus has killed more than 160 people in the past two days as Syrian rebels struggle to break a monthslong blockade by forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad, activists said yesterday.

Reuters reports that it began on Friday when rebel units attacked a string of military checkpoints encircling the opposition-held suburbs in an area known as Eastern Ghouta, which has been under siege

for more than six months. Local and international aid workers say Assad's forces appeared to be trying to starve out residents - indiscriminately affecting civilians as

much as rebel fighters. The blockade has cut off rebels' weapons supplies and helped turn

the tide of fighting around the capi-

tal in Assad's favour.

The battle has also drawn in hundreds of foreign fighters on both sides, underlining how Syria's civil war has stirred Sunni-Shi'ite

sectarian tensions across the region.

The conflict in Syria has killed more than 100,000 people, according to the United Nations, and is also destabilising Syria's neigh-

Meanwhile, Assad's forces, emboldened by gains in central Syria in recent months, have been seizing back towns in the rebels' northern stronghold.

In a new report published by BBC it says that more than 11,000 children have died in Syria's civil war, including hundreds targeted by snipers.

Summary executions and torture have also been used against children as young as one, the London-based Oxford Research Group think tank says.

US troops pact

AFP, Kabul

An Afghan grand assembly yesterday endorsed a crucial security agreement allowing some US troops to stay on after 2014, although President Hamid Karzai set conditions for signing the deal.

The "Loya Jirga" gathering of about 2,500 chieftains, tribal elders and politicians overwhelming backed the pact setting the terms for any US military presence beyond 2014, and urged Karzai to sign it by the end of this year.

Karzai did not explicitly address when the deal would be signed, but said it would only go ahead under certain conditions.

Taliban insurgents, who before the assembly had threatened to target delegates if they backed the agreement, condemned the pact. Opening the assembly on Thursday, Karzai said he

wanted to delay signing the Bilateral Security Agreement until after the successful completion of April's presidential quickly.

election -- exasperating Washington, which wants it sealed Supporters say the BSA is vital for the period after 2014, when the bulk of Nato's 75,000 remaining troops will pull out, as the Afghan government remains fragile despite 12

years of war against Taliban insurgents.

EXTENSION OF AIR DEFENCE PERIMETER US joins Japan in slamming China's 'destabilizing' move

REUTERS, Tokyo/washington

Japan and ally the United States sharply criticized China's move to impose new rules on airspace over islands at the heart of a territorial dispute with Tokyo, warning of an escalation into the "unexpected" if Beijing enforces the rules.

China's government-run Xinhua news agency published coordinates for a newly established "East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone," which covers most of that sea and includes the skies over the disputed islands.

Beijing warned that it would take "defensive emergency measures"

against aircraft that failed to identify themselves properly in the airspace. Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said the move was unacceptable. "It could well lead to an

unforeseen situation," he told

reporters yesterday.

Ties between the Asian powers, the world's second and third biggest economies, have been strained for months by the dispute over the islands in the East China Sea, called the Diaoyu by China and the Senkaku by Japan. The islands are currently under Japanese administrative control. US Secretary of State John Kerry

urged China to exercise caution and restraint, saying freedom of overflight was essential to stability and security in the Pacific. "We urge China not to imple-

ment its threat to take action against aircraft that do not identify them-

selves or obey orders from Beijing," he said in a statement. A US-Japan security treaty commits Washington to intervene in Defence of Japan if there is an attack

on Japanese-administered territory.

Congress leads, Maoists distant 3rd in Nepal

PTI, Kathmandu

The Nepali Congress yesterday emerged as the leading party in polls to elect an assembly that will draft Nepal's new Constitution, maintaining a narrow lead over CPN-UML while Prachanda-led Maoists were a distant third.

The Nepali Congress bagged 104 seats out of the total 240 constituencies under the direct election followed by CPN-UML (91 seats) and UCPN-Maoist (25 seats).

The counting of votes will lead to the formation of a 601-member Constituent Assembly, including 240 elected through direct voting.