NEWS

S. Sudan president says coup defeated AFP, Juba

The president of South Sudan said yesterday he had defeated a coup attempt following a night of fierce fighting in the capital of the newlyindependent nation.

The clashes broke out in a barracks close to the city centre shortly before midnight and spread across the city, diplomats and witnesses said, adding that heavy machine guns and mortars were used.

Tikrit council hostages freed

AFP, Baghdad

Iraqi security forces yesterday freed hostages at the Tikrit city council headquarters, which was occupied by militants, while three people died in the violence, officials said.

A police major and a doctor told AFP a city council member and two police were killed, though it was unclear whether they died during the initial attack north of Baghdad or the later assault by security forces.

Israel fire on Lebanon in retaliation for soldier killing

AFP, Jerusalem

The Israeli army said yesterday it fired across the Lebanese border in retaliation after accusing Lebanese troops of gunning down one of its soldiers as he drove near the frontier.

The shooting was the first time an Israeli soldier had been killed along the border with Lebanon in more than three years, although commentators said it was unlikely to spark a confrontation.

Jerusalem yet to recover from snowstorm havoc

AP, Jerusalem

Jerusalem was still partially paralysed yesterday following a rare snowstorm last week, with schools in the city shut down, thousands left without power and only some public

transportation working. The storm started Wednesday and battered the region intermittently for four days, dumping up to two feet of snow on Jerusalem, which often goes entire winters without snow, and forcing some 40,000 Gazans to flee

their flooded homes. N. Korean soldiers swear loyalty to young leader

AFP, Seoul

Thousands of North Korean soldiers vowed yesterday to protect leader Kim Jong-Un with their lives at a memorial rally for his late father, days after the stunning execution of the leader's uncle.

Kim Jong-Un apparently missed the event.

Musharraf travel ban: Court has last say

AFP, Karachi

A Pakistani court yesterday reserved judgement on a request by former military ruler Pervez Musharraf for permission to travel abroad

to see his sick mother.

Musharraf's lawyer petitioned the Sindh High Court last month to remove the retired general's name from an "exit control" list so

he could leave the country. The matter has been adjourned repeatedly over

the past month but a twomember bench reserved its decision yesterday.

The ruling is likely to be announced later in the day, a court official said.

Musharraf has faced a range of criminal cases dating back to his 1999-2008 rule since returning to Pakistan from selfimposed exile in March, including the murder of former prime minister

Benazir Bhutto.





Top and left: Pakistani supporters of banned Islamic group Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) shout slogans during a protest against the execution of Bangladeshi Islamist leader Abdul Quader Molla, in Karachi yesterday. Bottom: JuD chief Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, (C), leads funeral prayers Quader Molla, in Multan yesterday. Abdul Quader Molla became the first person to be hanged for his role in the country's bloody 1971 war of independence from Pakistan after being convicted of rape and mass murder -- including the killing of more than 350 unarmed civilians.

РНОТО:



Chile election victor pledges major reforms

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

reforms to help ease Chile's social divisions after sweeping back to power with a huge majority in presidential elections on Sunday. The centre-left candidate won with about 62% support,

Michelle Bachelet has promised major tax and education

the highest share of votes for any presidential candidate since the country returned to holding democratic elections in 1989. The landslide victory against Evelyn Matthei, the conser-

vative candidate of the Alianza coalition, puts Bachelet back in the Moneda presidential palace after a four-year gap and gives her a mandate to push for an education overhaul and the fiscal reforms to help pay for it. "Chile has looked at itself, has looked at its path, its recent

history, its wounds, its feats, its unfinished business and this

Chile has decided it is the time to start deep transformations," Bachelet told a jubilant crowd of supporters on Sunday night as confetti rained down. "There is no question about it: profits can't be the motor behind education because education isn't merchandise and because dreams aren't a consumer good." Good-quality schooling is generally

only available in Chile to those who can pay, and massive student protests demanding change hurt the popularity of the outgoing conservative president Sebastián Piñera. Bachelet ran on a platform of social policies to address a deep divide between rich and poor, and plans to raise the corporate tax rate. Chile, the world's top copper-exporting nation, is ranked the most unequal country in the 34member Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

"She will govern a country with profound demands for change," Senator Ricardo Lagos Weber of Bachelet's New Majority coalition told Reuters. "The country isn't flat on its back, it is healthy, organised, growing economically, creating jobs and improving salaries. But it is also deeply unequal."

Plans to change a constitution and electoral system that date back to Augusto Pinochet's 17-year dictatorship - which ended in 1990 - are also among Bachelet's campaign pledges.

UN launches \$6.5bn Syria appeal Ukraine ruling party

Refugees to nearly double by end 2014

AGENCIES

The United Nations has launched an appeal for \$6.5bn for Syria and its neighbours to help 16 million people in 2014, many of whom are hungry or homeless victims of a 33-month-old Syrian conflict that has no end in sight. The number of Syrian refugees in

the Middle East will nearly double over the next year to exceed four million, the United Nations said yesterday as it launched its appeal for funds.

Another 9.3 million people are expected to be in need of aid inside the war-ravaged nation by the end of next year, with millions displaced from their homes, the UN's humanitarian agency (OCHA) said.

The civil war between forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and rebels seeking his overthrow has raged

for 33 months and killed more than 126,000 people.

The crisis has put an enormous strain on neighbouring countries, where hundreds of thousands of refugees are sheltering in tents as the winter sets in.

Some 4.1 million Syrians will be living as refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt by the end of 2014, up from an estimated 2.4 million today, according to the latest estimate.

In all, 660,000 Syrians will be living in refugee camps by the end of 2014, while another 3.44 million will be living in private accommodation, the UN said.

The Syrian appeal accounted for half of an overall funding plan of \$12.9bn to help 52 million people in 17 countries. It was announced yesterday by the UN emergency relief coordinator Valerie Amos at a meeting of donor countries in Geneva.

"This is the largest amount we have ever had to request at the start of the year," she told a news conference, referring to the worldwide appeal. She said the money requested for Syria was the largest UN appeal ever for a single crisis.

"The increasing number of internally displaced people and refugees is generating greater needs across all sectors and straining the capacities of neighbouring countries, with profound regional consequences," the appeal said of Syria.

The UN sent its first delivery of humanitarian aid to Syria from Iraq on Sunday and said it planned to deliver more food and winter supplies to the mainly Kurdish north-east in the next 12 days.

It is seeking \$2.3bn to help 9.3 million people in Syria alone next year, compared with \$1.4bn from the 2013 appeal. Of the latter, only 62% has yet been received, UN figures show.

demands govt reshuffle "We have put forward a demand before

AFP, Kiev

Ukraine's ruling party yesterday demanded a sweeping cabinet reshuffle, as political leaders seek to defuse the country's biggest political crisis in a decade. President Viktor Yanukovych's decision

to scrap key agreements with the EU last

month and then use police force against

protesters sparked the largest demonstrations in the ex-Soviet country since the 2004 pro-democracy Orange Revolution. Yanukovych has offered a number of concessions, sacking senior officials over

police violence and announcing an amnesty for arrested protesters, in a bid to defuse the tension. But the pro-EU opposition has dismissed

these moves as half-measures. It is demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, and early presidential and parliamentary elections.

Azarov to reformat the government by 90 percent," Anna German, a lawmaker with Yanukovych's Regions Party, told reporters after talks with Azarov. "Azarov said that he will today let the

position of the faction be known to the president and conclusions will certainly be made," she told reporters after the closed-door meeting attended by the entire cabinet.

German, a former Yanukovych aide, said the resignation of Azarov was not discussed.

The president's parliamentary representative, Yuriy Miroshnychenko, told reporters "decisive steps" were needed. "An emotional conversation based on princi-

pals was held. We have to take the decisive steps necessary to solve the problems," he said.

Azarov proposed creating a working group, but the details and timing of any reshuffle had yet to be hammered out, Miroshnychenko added.

Kiss and yell!

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

An Italian student protester has been charged with sexual assault after she was pictured kissing a riot police officer's helmet during a demonstration last month.

The 20-year-old student was photographed kissing officer Salvatore Piccione during a protest against a planned rail link in Northern Italy.

Construction of the high-speed line is expected to reduce journey time from Milan to Paris from seven to four hours

The photograph of Nina De Chiffre subsequently went viral on social media and was hailed as a symbol of peaceful protest in the country. However, COISP, a union representing Italian police officers, later

revealed that they had lodged a complaint with Turin prosecutors. Franco Maccari, the union's general secretary told La Repubblica: "We have accused the protester of sexual violence and insulting a

public official. "If the policeman had kissed her, World War III would have broken out," he said. "Or what if I had patted her on the behind? She would have been outraged. So if she does that to a man on duty, should it be tolerated?", he added.

"A kiss is a positive thing," he said. "But in this context, between these two people, it was just disrespect."

AFP, Arusha

genocide

The UN tribunal for Rwanda yesterday handed a 25-year jail term to a former mayor found guilty of genocide for the 1994 bulldozing of a church with 2,000 people inside.

Rwandan ex-mayor

handed 25 years for

Gregoire Ndahimana, now in his early sixties and mayor of Kivumu district in western Rwanda at the time of the 1994 genocide, had initially been sentenced to 15 years in jail in 2011.

The UN court had found him guilty of failing to take measures against police involved in an April 1994 attack on Tutsis who had taken refuge in the church in Nyange, a parish in Kivumu, and of having "tacitly approved" the destruction of the church the following day.

enough Man's severed hand attached to

ankle to keep it

living MAIL ONLINE

Doctors successfully reattached a man's severed hand after it was attached to his ankle for a month.

On November 10,



was severed due to an

accident at work. He said, "I was just shocked and frozen at the spot, until coworkers unplugged the machine and retrieved my hand and took me to the hospi-

Doctors were hopeful they could reattach the hand, but not right away. So, in order to stop the severed hand from dying, they attached it

to his ankle. One of them explained, "His injury was severe. Besides ripping injuries, his arm was also flat-

tened. "We had to clear and treat his injuries before taking on the hand reattachment surgery."

Nearly a month after his hand was severed, Xiao had recovered enough to undergo reattachment surgery.

Rahul maybe Indian congress' PM candidate

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's ruling Congress will hold a meeting of its highest decisionmaking forum in New Delhi on January 17 to prepare strategy for coming general elections amidst speculation that Rahul Gandhi may be anointed the party's Prime Ministerial candidate there.

The announcement about the meeting of AICC was made by party General Secretary Janardan Dwivedi, which comes close on the heels of the party's debacle in legislature elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Delhi states.

While main opposition BJP had named Narendra Modi as PM candidate in September, there has been criticism that Congress has been reticent about naming its nominee.

There had been frequent demands from within Congress about Rahul as Prime Minister but the 42-year-old scion of Nehru-Gandhi family had refused to become even a cabinet minister, let

alone becoming the PM.

Dwivedi dismissed as "illogical" questions that the January 17 meet has been called to anoint Rahul Gandhi as the PM candidate.

He said the agenda for the AICC meet is decided by the Congress Working Committee, which also finalises the draft resolutions which come up before the meet.

Deliberations at AICC meetings are held on the prevailing political situation and on other important issues, he said. The meet has been called at a time

when Congress is facing an uphill task with the emergence of Modi as a force to reckon with and some allies of UPA sending warning signals, the latest being DMK which made it clear that it will not have any alliance with Congress in parliamentary polls.

Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi have already said there would be deep introspection on the electoral reverses. Rahul, Congress Vice President, had suggested that the party would effect changes.

Turkey signs EU migrant pact as relations thaw

AFP, Ankara

Turkey signed a long-awaited deal with the European Union yesterday to send back people who enter the bloc illegally from its territory in exchange for talks on visa-free travel for its citizens.

The move, hailed as a "milestone" in EU-Turkish relations, comes six weeks after Ankara resumed talks to join the bloc, ending a 40-month The EU has committed to ensuring

visa-free travel for Turkish citizens in 2017 at the earliest in return for Turkey signing the agreement. "The gateway to Europe without a visa

will now be open," Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said, pledging that Turkey would fulfil its obligations. Erdogan said he would be heading to Brussels next month while French

Turkey on January 27-28. "These visits represent an opportunity to give a new impetus, a new enthusiasm to our relations with the European Union," he said.

EDWARD SNOWDEN LEAKS NSA amnesty 'considered'

BBC ONLINE

The US National Security Agency is considering offering an amnesty to fugitive intelligence contractor Edward Snowden if he agrees to stop leaking secret documents, an NSA official says.

The man in charge of assessing the leaks' damage, Richard Ledgett, said he could be open to an amnesty deal. Disclosures by the former intelligence worker have revealed the extent of the NSA's spying activity. Ledgett spoke to US television chan-



nel CBS about the possibility of an amnesty deal: "So my personal view is, yes it's worth having a conversation about. "I would need assurances that the remainder of the data could be secured, and my bar for those assurances would

be very high, would be more than just an assertion on his part." But NSA Director Gen Alexander, who is retiring early

In an earlier interview with the Reuters news agency, Ledgett said he was deeply worried about highly classified documents not yet public that are among the 1.7 million files Snowden is believed to have accessed. President Francois Hollande is due to visit

next year, rejected the idea of any amnesty for Snowden.

agency, Ledgett told Reuters.

Earlier this month, a UK newspaper editor told UK MPs only 1% of files leaked by Snowden had been published by the newspaper.

Snowden's disclosures have been "cataclysmic" for the