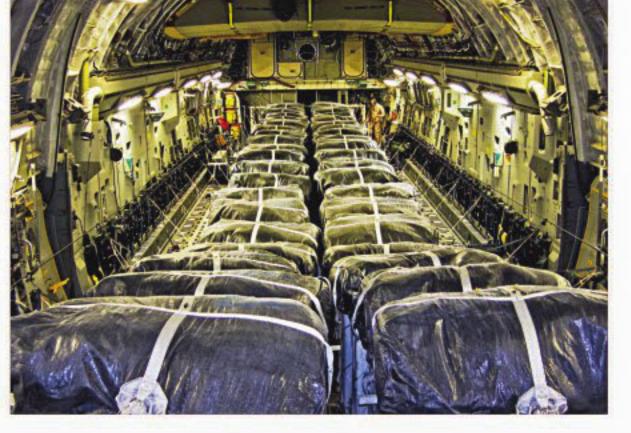


City

Top, Sailors directing aircraft, as an F/A-18E Super Hornet takes off from the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS George HW Bush on August 1, 2014 in the Gulf. Bottom, from left, US President Barack Obama speaks on the phone with King Abdullah II of Jordan from his Oval office; straps secure water bundles aboard a C-17 Globemaster III before a humanitarian airdrop over Iraq; and Kurdish Peshmerga fighters take position to fight against Islamic State militants. US jets struck jihadist positions in northern Iraq on Friday and yesterday, making it a potential turning point in the two-month crisis Washington said was threatening to result in genocide.

PHOTO: AFP, AP







'Hours left to save Yazidis'

Displaced Iraqis, many from the Yazidi minority, who have been stranded in a jihadist-hemmed mountain for a week will die en masse if not rescued urgently, a Yazidi MP said yesterday.

"We have one or two days left to help these people. After that they will start dying en masse," Vian Dakhil told AFP.

Thousands of Yazidis, a Kurdish-speaking minority following an ancient faith rooted in Zoroastrianism, fled their homes a week ago when Islamic State militants, who dubbed them as "devil worshippers", attacked the town of Sinjar.

Many of them have since been stranded in the nearby mountain range, with no food and water in searing temperatures.

Meanwhile, an Iraqi official said that hundreds of Yazidi women have been taken captive by the Sunni militants, further underscoring the plight of Iraq's minorities at the hands of the Islamic State group.

The women captured are under 35-years-old, and are being held in schools in Iraq's second city, Mosul, said the spokesman for Iraq's Human Rights Ministry, Kamil Amin.

The US also confirmed that the Islamic State had kidnapped and imprisoned the women, but the exact number victimised is unknown. The captives will be sold or married off to extremist fighters, said the US official who spoke on condition of anonymity.



A displaced Yazidi family.

Britain to send medics to Gaza BBC ONLINE

Britain yesterday announced the UK is sending a team of NHS medical experts to the region. NHS staff including doctors, nurses and anaesthetists will fly out to the region in the next 48 hours. Prime Minister David Cameron said: "The conflict in Gaza has taken a terrible toll. The UK has been at the forefront of humanitarian efforts to help those affected and it is right that we see what more we can do."

Qadri supporter, Pak cops clash; 4 killed

REUTERS, Lahore

Violence erupted in several places in Pakistan yesterday between police and supporters of an antigovernment cleric and at least four people were killed and scores injured, police and witnesses said. The violence, which broke out on Friday, is exacerbating tension ahead of a big protest rally by the activist cleric, Tahir ul-Qadri, in the city of Lahore today.

Nagasaki day marked

AFP, Tokyo Tens of thousands marked the 69th anniversary of the

US atomic bombing of Nagasaki yesterday. Crowds gathered to remember the more than 70,000 people who died in the initial blast or from after-effects in the months and years following the bombing, which hit Nagasaki at 11:02 am local time. The bombing of Nagasaki came three days after the first-ever atomic blast at Hiroshima, which claimed 140,000 lives.

Modi cleared in poll code violation case

THE HINDU ONLINE

The Ahmedabad Crime Branch has given a clean chit to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a case related to violation of the model code of conduct during the last Lok Sabha elections. Modi, the then prime ministerial candidate of the BJP, had held a press conference at a garden outside a polling booth in Ranip and also took a selfie on his phone holding up a lotus symbol.

NEWSIN SEAN SUMMIT Sea row overshadows talks

AFP, Naypyidaw

China yesterday vowed "clear and firm reactions" to defend its interests in the South China Sea but rejected suggestions of aggression, as America's top diplomat urged restraint from all claimants to the bitterly contested waters.

A series of incidents between Beijing and several other nations with territorial claims to the sea has sent tensions soaring across Southeast Asia and spurred Washington to call for a halt to any activities that could worsen regional maritime relations.

Animosity over the South China Sea, a crucial maritime route that is also believed to hold huge oil and gas deposits, is dominating Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) talks in Myanmar, which began Friday and are broadening to include key world powers

ahead of security discussions today "The position of China to safeguard

its own sovereignty, maritime rights and interests is firm and unshakeable," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told reporters following a meeting with Asean counterparts in the Myanmar capital Naypyidaw.

Beijing claims sovereignty over almost the entire sea including waters, islands, reefs, shoals and rocky outcrops nearer to other countries.

The reach of its claims has stirred years of diplomatic protest from Asean states Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam, which also claim parts of the sea, while Taiwan is a sixth claimant.

US Secretary of State John Kerry, who is in Naypyidaw for the regional meet, called on all parties to refrain

from actions that could deepen maritime hostilities.

Speaking ahead of bilateral talks with the 10-member Asean, Kerry said the US shared a "common responsibility" with the bloc to "ensure the maritime security of critical global seas lanes and ports".

Kerry's trip is seen as part of a wider US foreign policy pivot to reinvigorate alliances in the Asia-Pacific.

A draft statement from Asean foreign ministers, who met Friday, said the bloc had "serious concern" over recent developments in the disputed sea.

It also called for an end to "destabilising actions" in wording that is likely to have proved contentious for China's supporters within Asean -- no final statement had been released by yesterday afternoon.

Brotherhood's political wing banned in Egypt

AFP, Cairo

An Egyptian court yesterday ordered the dissolution of the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the political wing of the already banned Muslim Brotherhood movement.

The decision comes after the authorities designated the Brotherhood a "terrorist organisation" in December following the ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi by the military.

The FJP had come out on top in every election in Egypt between its creation in the wake of the country's Arab Spring uprising in 2011 and Morsi's removal in July 2013.

In its ruling, the Supreme Administrative Court ordered "the dissolution of the Freedom and Justice Party because it broke the law regarding political parties".

According to media reports, the decision is final and not open to appeal.

The military toppled Morsi, Egypt's first democratically elected president, after massive protests calling for his removal following a single year of turbulent rule.

installed authorities on his supporters has killed 1,400 people in street clashes, and some 16,000 Islamists and protesters have been jailed.

Since then, a crackdown by the military-

At least 200 people have also been sentenced to death in speedy mass trials, including Brotherhood leader Mohamed Badie, although none of the sentences has been carried out so far.

Morsi himself is on trial on various charges, and the army chief who overthrew him, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, replaced him after winning a presidential election in May.

An Israeli protester holds a placard during a march organised in support of the Global Day of Rage against Israel's actions in Gaza in Melbourne, yesterday. Protest leaders called for an end to Israel's bombardment and blockade of Gaza, the Australian government to cut all economic, political and military ties with Israel. Similar protests also held in major cities of England, France, South Africa and many other nations.

PHOTO:

TO BE

Arabs and Egypt, not Israel

: Palestinians vent anger at Arab leaders for their misery

AGENCIES

· Tank tracks tear up the roads around Rafah, : machine-gun fire pocks the walls, sewage : flows out of blown-up pipes and the nauseatingly sweet rotten-garbage smell of · human corpses still seeps from under the rubble. As Gazans try to make sense of the devastation wrought by Israel, there is an · overwhelming sense of abandonment by leaders in the Arab world. But it's not just abandonment.

This Gaza war has been in some respects part of a wider fight among Arabs. Since last year, when Egypt president Abdel · Fattah al Sisi overthrew Mohamad

. Morsi and his colleagues from the Muslim Brotherhood, it's been apparent that a major · counteroffensive is underway throughout the : Arab world, backed by Saudi Arabia and the : United Arab Emirates, to crush the Brotherhood and its affiliated organizations.

Two years ago, the Brothers had seemed to be the big winners of the Arab Spring

revolts, now they are under pressure or literally on the run throughout the region. Both Egypt and Saudi Arabia have declared the Brotherhood itself a terrorist organization. And Hamas, a part of the brother-

hood, epitomizes that label in their view. None of this is the fault of the 1.8 million civilians who live in Gaza. But they are the

ones who pay the price. "The Egyptian government doesn't care

about the humanitarian needs of Palestinians and just closes the border," says Naser, a Gaza resident. "We find more support ODSHED from Europe, Turkey, and Latin America than we do with our own people in the Arab world".

And in this present war, Egyptian government appears to have been happy to watch Israel attempt to obliterate Hamas and much of Gaza along with it. Israel may not want to eliminate Hamas at the end of the day for fear whatever replaces it could be worse. Sisi appears to have no such qualms.



Sharif regrets Pak's bad ties with India

PTI, Islamabad

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif yesterday regretted that Pakistan was having bad relations with key neighbour India and said it was time the two had good relations.

Addressing the National Security Conference in Islamabad, which was attended by ministers, chief ministers, political leaders of all major parties, army chief Gen Raheel Sharif and other senior civil and military officials, Sharif noted with dissatisfaction that his country was not having good ties with neighbours.

The PM mentioned India by saying that it is time for having good relations with it.

He hoped that the planned meeting of the foreign secretaries will help move the ties for-

ward. Sharif also said Pakistan wants to improve ties with Afghanistan and hoped

that the new leadership in that country will cooperate with him.

Later, the military leadership briefed the political leaders about the operation in restive North Waziristan tribal region which was launched on June 15 to eliminate mili-

Gaza blockade must end: UN

AFP, Gaza City

A seven-year blockade on the Gaza Strip must end to enable reconstruction and a political solution must be found to resolve the conflict, a UN official said yesterday.

"Huge swathes of Gaza have been levelled. We cannot rebuild it with our hands tied behind our backs," said Chris Gunness, spokesman for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA).

"The blockade must end. We are beyond the realm of humanitarian action alone. All those directly and indirectly responsible for the carnage and destruction must engage," he said. The lifting of Israel's land and sea

blockade, imposed in 2006 after Hamas captured an Israeli soldier, has been a key demand of Hamas and the Palestinian Authority at stalled truce talks in Cairo.

At least 65,000 people have seen their homes destroyed in a month of fighting between Israel and Hamas and a "manmade homelessness crisis on an epic scale is unfolding", Gunness warned.

Step up as the regional power US urges India ahead of Narendra Modi's Washington visit

REUTERS, New Delhi

The United States yesterday urged India to bolster its role as a global power and force for regional stability, ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first visit to Washington since his election in May.

In a speech wrapping up two days of talks, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel also played up deepening defence industry cooperation but did not have any major new arms export deals to announce.

"The United States strongly supports India's growing global influence and military capabilities including its potential as a security provider from the Indian Ocean to the greater Pacific," Hagel told an invited audience.

Both Washington and New

increasing geopolitical assertiveness of China, which from economic parity with India in 1980 now has an economy that is four times as large.

Delhi share concerns about the

non-alignment since independence in

1947, long relied on the Soviet Union to equip its armed forces. But, in recent years, it has become the largest buyer of US weaponry. Before Hagel's visit,

Indian officials played

up chances that orders for US Apache and Chinook helicopters, both made by Boeing, might advance. No announcement was made on those deals but officials have said the two sides would deepen coopera-

tion on missile systems.

Observer Research Foundation, a privately funded think-tank, noted that India had spent \$9 billion on US defence equipment India, which has embraced since 2008 - compared to half a

Hagel, in a speech at the

"But we can do

then.

more to forge a defence industrial partnership," he said, calling to "transform our nations' defence cooperation from simply buying and selling to co-production, co-

development and freer exchange of technology."

Hagel's visit, which followed Secretary of State John Kerry's a week earlier, seeks to lay the ground for Modi's first trip to

at the end of September. Modi has, in less than three months in power, practised a

the United States, where he will

meet President Barack Obama

'neighbourhood first' foreign policy, inviting regional leaders billion dollars before to his inauguration and making brief trips to Bhutan and Nepal. In the weeks ahead, he will

engage with India's most important counterparts - first travelling to Japan, receiving Chinese President Xi Jinping and then heading to Washington. "Just as America need not

choose between its Asian alliances and its constructive relationship with China, India need not choose between closer partnership with America and improved ties with China," said Hagel, who was due next to visit Australia.