



## Dont cut ties with Putin

### Says Merkel as aid convoy reaches Ukraine border

German Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday warned against severing ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin over the Ukraine crisis but said he must also do his part.

Merkel told the Saechsische Zeitung newspaper she was "working very hard to keep the lines of communication open" with Putin despite the EU's decision last month to level sanctions against Russia over its actions in the ex-Soviet state.

"But for constructive relations it takes more than one," she added.

"I have always called for constructive cooperation with Russia and will continue to do so in future."

However, Merkel said she would never accept the annexation of the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine in March this year.

Merkel, a fluent Russian speaker, has held regular talks by telephone with Putin, who served as a KGB agent in Dresden during the Cold War, since the Ukraine crisis erupted, urging respect for Ukrainian sovereignty.

Germany, whose trade ties with Russia amounted to nearly 90 billion euros last year, had long resisted imposing broad economic sanctions against Moscow.

But the shooting down last month of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, allegedly by pro-Moscow rebels with a Russian-made missile, led the EU's top economic power to adopt a firmer line.

Meanwhile, a convoy of nearly 300 trucks carrying what Russia says is humanitarian aid for victims of fighting in eastern Ukraine moved slowly towards the border yesterday despite concerns by Kiev and the West over the shipment, Russian officials said.

But Kiev again insisted it would not allow the convoy on its territory.

President Vladimir Putin has justified sending the aid due to the "catastrophic" situation in the besieged rebel strongholds of Lugansk and Donetsk, where officials have warned of a looming humanitarian disaster because of shortages of food, water and power. But there are concerns by Kiev and the West that Moscow could use the operation as a cover for sending in troops.

Kiev has said the trucks would be stopped at the border for any aid to be unloaded and transported into conflict-torn eastern Ukraine with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

# West gears up to join fight against IS

## Maliki defies pressure to quit; UN warns over possible genocide in Iraq

AGENCIES

Britain and France edged closer to military action to help the tens of thousands trapped on Mount Sinjar in Iraq yesterday, as horrific reports continued to emerge of a people in a "scramble for survival".

European Union foreign ministers are to meet tomorrow to discuss the crisis in Iraq, the office of EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said.

In a statement on Wednesday, a spokesperson for Ashton said the extraordinary meeting would "focus on the EU's response to major ongoing crises, focusing on Iraq and Ukraine."

Pressure is mounting on countries around the world to join the US in a military intervention which Barack Obama has said is necessary to prevent "an act of genocide".

David Cameron has now returned from his holiday a day early to chair a meeting of the Government's emergency committee, Cobra, on the crisis in Iraq.

France announced yesterday that it would start supplying arms to the Kurdish forces who are on the front line against the Islamist militants Isis.

On Tuesday around 130 US soldiers arrived in the Kurdish capital of Irbil, in what the Pentagon described as a temporary mission to help coordinate the rescue of Yazidi people trapped up the mountain.

The United States has carried out air strikes against members of the Islamic



Displaced Iraqi Yazidis gather to collect water at the Bajid Kandala camp in Kurdistan's western Dohuk province, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

State (IS) jihadist group in the area of Mount Sinjar, where the UN refugee agency says 20,000-30,000 people, many of them members of the Yazidi minority, are besieged.

Thousands more poured across a bridge into camps in Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region yesterday after trekking into Syria to escape, most with nothing but the clothes they wore.

Some women carried exhausted children, weeping as they arrived to the rela-

tive safety of Iraqi Kurdistan.

But there are still large numbers on the mountain, said 45-year-old Mahmud Bakr.

"My father Khalaf is 70 years old -- he cannot make this journey," he told AFP when he crossed back into Iraq.

UN minority rights expert Rita Izsak has warned they face "a mass atrocity and potential genocide within days or hours".

Yazidi survivors reaching Dohuk in northern Iraq said their nightmare in

Sinjar began when the town was shelled by Islamists last week.

Khalaf Hajji, who used to work at a school, said: "When we went up the mountain, snipers were firing at us. The girls were throwing themselves off the top of the mountain. We have lost all our faith in Iraq. They have hundreds of our women."

Washington has urged Iraqi premier designate Haider al-Abadi, who was appointed by President Fuad Masum on Monday, to rapidly form a broad-based government able to unite Iraqis in the fight against jihadist-led insurgents who have overrun swathes of the country.

However, Prime Minister Maliki yesterday continued to defy international pressure to step aside, declaring that it would take a federal court ruling for him to quit.

The two-term premier has accused Masum of violating the constitution by approving Abadi's nomination, and vowed he would sue.

But the prospects of Maliki succeeding in his quest to cling to power appear dim. Whatever ruling the court might deliver, analysts say Maliki has lost too much backing to stay in power.

International support has poured in for Abadi, including from both Washington and Tehran, the two main foreign power-brokers in Iraq.



## Brazil mourns as presidential candidate dies in plane crash

AFP, Santos

Brazilian presidential candidate Eduardo Campos, contender to unseat President Dilma Rousseff in October elections, died yesterday when his campaign jet crashed in the city of Santos, killing all seven people aboard.

Campos, a 49-year-old socialist who had been running third in the polls, was flying to Sao Paulo to record a TV segment when his Cessna 560XL slammed into a gymnasium and several houses, breaking into pieces and igniting a large fire.

He had served as science and technology minister from 2004 to 2005 under Rousseff's mentor and predecessor Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Rousseff declared a state of national mourning and suspended her campaign for three days.

"All of Brazil is in mourning. We lost a great Brazilian today, Eduardo Campos. We lost a great comrade," the president said in a statement.

Campos's plane was en route from Rio de Janeiro's Santos Dumont airport to Guarujá airport outside Sao Paulo when it hit bad weather, according to air force spokesman Pedro Luis Faric.

The other passengers were advisers, a photographer and a videographer.

The air force said it had launched an investigation into what caused the medium-sized jet to crash.

The presidential campaign officially opens on August 19.

## Girl, 4, survives 11-day in Siberia forest

AFP, Moscow

A four-year-old girl was recovering in hospital yesterday after being lost for nearly two weeks in a bear-infested forest in the Russian north with only her puppy to defend her.

Karina Chikitova was found emaciated but alive at the weekend, having survived 11 days in the Siberian wilderness, where temperatures plunge below freezing at night, with only berries to sustain her in what rescuers said was nothing short of a miracle.

The little girl had left her tiny village in Russia's Sakha region with her dog on July 29 to go and stay with her father who lived in a neighbouring hamlet.

But her father had gone to fight a wildfire and the girl apparently set off by herself into the forest to find him.

Her mother only realised after four days that her daughter had set off on her own into the Siberian taiga.

Despite a massive search, the breakthrough only came when Karina's puppy traipsed back to the hamlet -- in which only eight people live -- allowing rescuers to send search dogs on the puppy's trail.



"We were sure that the puppy was next to the little girl all this time, warning her at night and scaring away wild animals," rescuer Afanasiy Nikolayev told the Zvezda TV channel.

The search team came across Karina's footprints two days later and found her lying in tall grass about six kilometres north of her village, shaken but alive.

"It's simply incredible that she was found safe with so much wildlife in the forest," spokesman of the regional rescue service told the paper.

## Hillary denies attack on Obama's foreign policy

AFP, Martha's Vineyard

Hillary Clinton on Tuesday denied attacking President Barack Obama over his foreign policy in Syria and Iraq, insisting she was looking forward to "hugging it out" with the US leader when they meet at a party later this week.

The former secretary of state was widely interpreted to be distancing herself from Obama ahead of a possible 2016 election run on Sunday, when she blamed the rise of Islamist militants in Iraq and Syria on failures of his administration.

However a spokesman for Hillary said Tuesday the former top US diplomat had called Obama to clear the air over the remarks, insisting she was not assailing his leadership. The spokesman Nick Merrill said Hillary and Obama had "honest differences" on some issues, including Syria.

"Some are now choosing to hype those differences but they do not eclipse their broad agreement on most issues," he said.

Hillary and Obama were due to attend yesterday in Martha's Vineyard, where the US President is on vacation.



## Japanese ate Indian PoWs

TNN, New Delhi

On April 2, 1946, the Reuters correspondent in Melbourne, Australia, cabled a short message, which was carried by all newspapers a day later, including The Times of India. It read: "The Japanese Lieutenant Hisata Tomiyasu found guilty of the murder of 14 Indian soldiers and of cannibalism at Wewak (New Guinea) in 1944 has been sentenced to death by hanging, it is learned from Rabaul."

After the fall of Singapore on February 15, 1942, 40,000 men of the Indian Army became prisoners of war (PoWs). Some 30,000 of them joined the Indian National Army (INA), supported by the Japanese Empire. But those who refused were destined for torture in the Japanese concentration camps. They were first sent to transit camps in Batavia (now Djakarta) and Surabaya from where they were packed off to New Guinea, New Britain, and Bougainville.

At the camps, they faced inhuman brutalities. Apart from innovative savage tortures, they were used as live targets for new Japanese infantry recruits to improve their marksmanship. Soldiers who were not killed in the firing but wounded were bayoneted to death.

But the most spine-chilling of all Japanese atrocities was their practice of cannibalism. One of the first to level charges of cannibalism against the Japanese was Jemadar Abdul Latif of 4/9 Jat Regiment of the Indian Army, a VCO who was rescued by the Australians at Sepik Bay in 1945. He alleged that not just Indian PoWs but even locals in New Guinea were killed and eaten by the Japanese. "At the village of Suaid, a Japanese medical officer periodically visited the Indian compound and selected each time the healthiest men. These men were taken away ostensibly for carrying out duties, but they never reappeared," the Melbourne correspondent of The Times, London, cabled this version of Jemadar Latif on November 5, 1946.

Latif's charges were buttressed by Captain RU Pirzai and Subedar Dr Gurcharan Singh. "Of 300 men who went to Wewak with me, only 50 got out. Nineteen were eaten. A Jap doctor -- Lieutenant Tumisa, formed a party of three men and would send an Indian outside the camp for something. The Japs immediately would kill him and eat the flesh from his body. The liver, muscles from the buttocks, thighs, legs, and arms would be cut off and cooked," Captain Pirzai told Australian daily The Courier-Mail in a report dated August 25, 1945.

Then there were more similar testimonies by PoWs interned in other camps, such as Havildar Changdi Ram and Lance Naik Hatam Ali, who also gave details of cannibalism practised in their camps.

All these soldiers gave sworn testimonies to the war crimes investigation commissions set up by the Allies, based on which several Japanese officers and men were tried. The senior-most Japanese officer found guilty of cannibalism and hanged was Lieutenant General Yoshio Tachibana. The Japanese, though, were always dismissive of these charges.



Family and friends mourn over the body of a Palestinian translator, Ali Abu Afash, that was killed in Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza strip yesterday. An Italian cameraman working for international news agency Associated Press was among at least five people killed in northern Gaza as explosives experts were dismantling an Israeli missile. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: AFP

## For some fans of Modi, so far, so disappointing

REUTERS, New Delhi

As an election campaigner, Narendra Modi promised sweeping market reforms to revive India's economy and put the country to work. As Prime Minister, he has dismayed admirers, apparently reverting to the script of the hapless government he defeated.

To some of the economists and business leaders who as his campaign cheerleaders dared to dream of a Thatcherite revolution, he seems not to be listening. Three months after his win, it is dawning on them that their views count for little.

"As of now, the momentum is lost. They might still recover it, but we have lost the moment," said Bibek Debroy, a prominent economist who co-wrote a book laying out a reform agenda that the new Prime Minister himself launched in June.

Debroy told Reuters that so far there had been no signs of the promised change at institutions sapped by graft and over-regulation that many Indians have grown to resent.

There is a sense that the 63-year-old BJP strongman, who made his reputation putt-

ing Gujarat on a high growth path, has somehow stumbled in New Delhi.

To be fair, the government has a five-year term to achieve Modi's goal of transforming India into an economic and military power able to withstand the rise of China on its doorstep.

Modi will make his first Independence Day speech tomorrow from the ramparts of the Red Fort in Old Delhi, and the expectation within his party is that he may use the occasion to announce bold changes that have so far been absent.

According to economists at HSBC, the government has already moved with "unaccustomed alacrity" on a number of fronts, such as opening up the state railways to foreign investment and providing new guidelines for a more streamlined bureaucracy.

"But the stuff that will lift economic growth over time ... requires deft and delicate handling," they said this week, noting resistance to reform from the country's states and the challenges of pushing legislation through the upper house of parliament, where the BJP does not have a majority.



## Dog elected as mayor in US

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The residents of Cormorant, Minnesota have welcomed Duke, a seven-year-old dog, as their new honorary Mayor after he won the village's recent election "by a landslide".

Twelve people in the village each paid a dollar to cast a vote and Duke emerged as the overall winner from a five-week election.

They said Duke guards the town and makes the community safer, even ensuring cars do not break the speed limit.

Despite not being human or even running a campaign, Duke, who belongs to a resident in the village, has proved a popular choice.

Resident Tricia Maloney told WDAY6: "He won by a landslide. He doesn't know how to handle this publicity."

After winning, Duke was treated to five hours of grooming and a new outfit. Duke will be officially sworn in as mayor in a ceremony due to take place on Saturday.



## NEWSIN brief

### Mubarak's verdict due on Sept 27

AFP, Cairo

An Egyptian court said it will deliver its verdict in the murder trial of Hosni Mubarak on September 27, in a session yesterday. Mubarak and seven security aides are accused of involvement in the deaths of hundreds of protesters during the 18-day uprising that toppled him in 2011. A previous sentence of life in prison was overturned on technical grounds.

### Swiss train carriage plunges into ravine

AFP, Geneva

A landslide derailed a passenger train in the Swiss mountains yesterday sending one carriage plunging into a ravine, but it appeared that miraculously there had been no deaths. Police said five people were seriously injured and six slightly hurt in the accident on the line between the upscale mountain resort of St. Moritz and the eastern city of Chur.

### Obama congratulates Erdogan on polls win

AFP, Martha's Vineyard

US President Barack Obama congratulated Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan Tuesday on his election as president, saying he had a "historic opportunity" to move his country forward, the White House said. Obama, in a telephone call to Erdogan, also discussed the ceasefire efforts in Gaza, the White House said, without elaborating.

### 6 climbers die on France's Mont Blanc

AFP, Lyon

Five French climbers were found dead yesterday on Mont Blanc, Europe's highest mountain, with a sixth member of the group still missing, local authorities said. The six climbers had been reported missing since Tuesday evening amid bad weather.