

NEWS IN  
briefPistorius community  
service call angers  
prosecutor

BBC ONLINE

South African athlete Oscar Pistorius should not go to jail over the killing of his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, his sentencing hearing has been told.

A probation officer appearing for the defence said Pistorius should serve house arrest and community service.

Prosecutor Gerrie Nel described the suggestion as "shockingly inappropriate".

Taliban kills 22 police  
in Afghanistan

AFP, Mazar-i-Sharif

Taliban militants killed 22 police officers and wounded eight after ambushing a police convoy in northern Afghanistan yesterday, officials said.

The early morning attack in Sari Pul province highlights Afghanistan's fragile security situation, with local forces facing a persistent Taliban insurgency as Nato winds down its military presence.

Madagascar's former  
president returns  
from exile

AFP, Antananarivo

Former Madagascar president Marc Ravalomanana, who has been living in exile in South Africa since his ouster in 2009, returned home yesterday.

"I am here to support peace and democracy, but more urgent is the fight against poverty," he told supporters at his home in the capital Antananarivo.

Madagascar has on several occasions blocked Ravalomanana's return to the Indian Ocean island since his rival Andry Rajoelina seized power.



Smoke from a strike by the US-led coalition rises in the Syrian town of Ain al-Arab, known as Kobane by the Kurds, as it seen from the Turkish - Syrian border in the southeastern village of Mursitpinar, Sanliurfa province, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## MH17 SHOOTING

Tony Abbott to 'confront'  
Vladimir Putin

BBC ONLINE

Australian PM Tony Abbott has said he plans to confront Russian President Vladimir Putin over the shooting down of a Malaysian passenger plane in July.

MH17 was flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur when it was shot down over eastern Ukraine. All 298 passengers, including 38 Australians, died.

Abbott said they were "murdered with Russian support". Pro-Russian rebels denied being behind the attack.

He is set to meet Mr Putin at the G20 meeting in Brisbane in November.

The prime minister told reporters yesterday: "Look, I'm going to shirtfront Mr Putin... you bet I am."

Shirtfronting is an Australian football term which means aggressively charging and knocking down one's opponent.

"I am going to be saying to Mr Putin [that] Australians were murdered. They were murdered by Russian-backed rebels using

Russian-supplied equipment," he said in remarks quoted by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Putin has denied Russia had any involvement in the incident. Abbott has faced criticism at home for allowing Putin to attend the summit.

Opposition leader Bill Shorten said Mr Putin's presence amounted to "rubbing our faces" in the aftermath of MH17, reported Fairfax Media.

But on Sunday Abbott said it was not in Australia's power to ban Putin as it would go against the consensus of G20 members.

Fairfax reported Mr Abbott as saying he would be seeking assurance from Putin that "justice is done".

Abbott's latest comments come as the English version of Russian newspaper Pravda published an opinion piece attacking him for recent strongly-worded remarks about Russia.

The piece said Abbott was "insolent" and Australia had a "colonial chip on its shoulder".

30 killed as  
minibuses  
collide in Egypt

AFP, Cairo

Thirty people died in a collision between three minibuses yesterday in Egypt's southern Aswan province, medical and security sources said.

Another 15 people were injured in the crash near Edfu, some 930 kilometres (575 miles) south of Cairo.

The accident is thought to have been caused by speeding. Traffic accidents are common in Egypt where roads are often poorly maintained and traffic regulations little enforced.

In August, at least 31 people were killed and 41 injured in a collision near the Sinai Peninsula resort of Sharm el-Sheikh on the Red Sea.

According to the World Health Organisation, Egypt has an annual roads fatality rate of nearly 12,000 people.

Turkey denies use of  
bases to battle ISIS

AFP, Mursitpinar

Kurdish fighters engaged in fierce clashes with jihadists on the Turkish border near Kobane yesterday, as Ankara denied allowing Washington to use its bases against the Islamic State group.

US officials had earlier said Turkey would also host training for "moderate" Syrian rebels, in the hopes of finally creating a force capable of tackling IS on the ground.

"There is no new agreement with the United States about Incirlik," a Turkish government official told AFP of an air base in southern Turkey that the US wants to use to launch air strikes.

"Negotiations are continuing" based on Turkish conditions previously laid out, the official added.

Near Kobane, fighting spread early yesterday to the border area just north of the flashpoint town, threatening to cut it off from the outside world.

ISIS fighters were also putting strong pressure on pro-government forces in Iraq, with concern over Anbar province and the key oil refinery of Baiji.

With the jihadists advancing on its doorstep, Nato member Turkey has come under intense pressure to take action as part of a US-led coalition that has been carrying out air strikes in Syria and Iraq.

US officials said Turkey had agreed to let Washington use its bases including Incirlik for the air campaign.

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu on Sunday called for military backing for Syria's "moderate opposition" to create a "third force" in the war-torn country to take on the Damascus regime as well as IS militants.

Near Kobane, clashes with automatic gunfire and mortar fire were taking place less than a kilometre (half a mile) from the barbed wire fence that marks the border between Syria and Turkey, an AFP reporter on the Turkish side said.

Turkey had moved reinforcements to the border including more tanks and self-propelled artillery, the reporter said.

The US-led international coalition launched at least two new air strikes against ISIS positions in the area, with one striking the heart of the town and sending a huge plume of smoke skywards.

Congress drops Tharoor  
as spokesperson

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's opposition Congress yesterday removed Shashi Tharoor as party spokesperson for praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Congress President Sonia Gandhi has accepted the recommendation of the party's disciplinary committee to remove Shashi Tharoor from the list of spokespersons with immediate effect," said party general secretary organisation Janardan Dwivedi in a press release.

The Kerala state unit of Congress Committee had submitted a complaint against Tharoor for his praise of Modi. Tharoor belongs to Kerala.

The report of the Kerala unit of Congress had held that Tharoor's statements praising Modi had "hurt" Congress workers in the state, who had worked sincerely and tirelessly for his victory from Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha seat.

Tharoor, a former UN Under Secretary General, had earlier reacted sarcastically to the move by the Kerala unit of Congress saying this would mean the state leadership would finally read what he actually wrote instead of oral summaries.

The complaint by the Kerala Congress Committee had come at a time when Tharoor had accepted the invite by the Prime Minister to be a brand ambassador of "Clean India" mission of Modi government.



Shashi Tharoor

Nationalists  
win Bosnia's  
elections

AFP, Sarajevo

Nationalist candidates from Bosnia's Croat, Muslim and Serb communities won the country's three-man presidency, election results showed yesterday, underlining continued ethnic strains 20 years after the Balkan state's civil war.

With more than 90 percent of votes counted, Bakir Izetbegovic of the main Muslim SDA party and Dragan Covic of the Croat HDZ BiH party had won seats in the collective presidency.

The Serb seat remained undecided, with two nationalist candidates -- opposition figure Miladin Ivanic and Zeljka Cvijanovic of the Bosnian Serb ruling SNSD party -- neck and neck.

About 3.3 million Bosnians were eligible to vote on Sunday.

Palestinians, police clash  
at Jerusalem flashpoint

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli police clashed with young Palestinian protesters yesterday demonstrating against Jews visiting the flashpoint Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, Islam's third holiest site, a spokeswoman said.

The clash after morning prayers came as demonstrators protested over Orthodox Jews going to the esplanade, which is holy to both Islam and Judaism.

On Wednesday there were similar clashes as youths threw stones and fired flares at police after Jewish visitors ascended to the compound on the eve of the week-long holiday of Sukkot, or the Feast of Tabernacles.

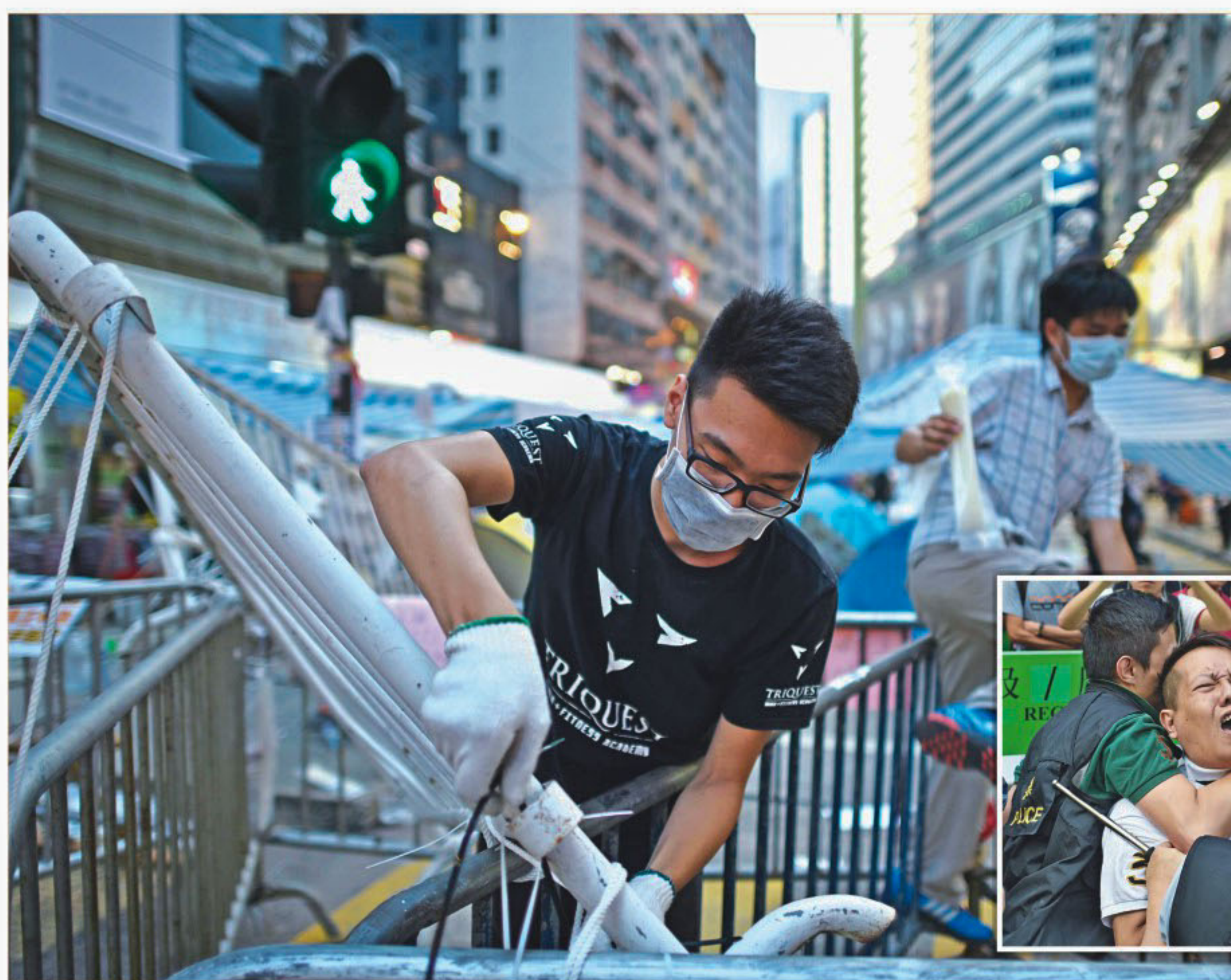
Police spokeswoman Luba Samri said that youths again threw stones and incendiary objects at security forces and set up makeshift barricades.

When police began to disperse them, the protesters took refuge inside Al-Aqsa mosque, which the Israeli police are not authorised to enter, she said.

The site is the scene of frequent clashes between police and Palestinian youths, who object to what they see as an attempted Jewish and Israeli takeover of the site that is administered by Jordanian and Palestinian Muslim authorities.

Yesterday's visit to the area by the Orthodox Jews eventually went ahead without further incident, police said.

The West-Bank based Palestinian Authority denounced the visit as a "new act of ongoing provocation... while Palestinians are being barred from entering the compound".



A pro-democracy demonstrator secures a barricade in the Causeway Bay district of Hong Kong yesterday. Inset, Police officers arrest an anti-occupy protester (C) in the Admiralty district of Hong Kong yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## HONG KONG PROTEST

Anti-protest  
groups charge  
barricades

REUTERS, Hong Kong

Hundreds of people, some wearing surgical masks and armed with crowbars and cutting tools, tore down protest barriers in the heart of Hong Kong's business district yesterday, scuffling with protesters who have occupied the streets for two weeks.

Angry taxi drivers opposed to the protests, which have seriously affected their business, also rallied at one barricaded road with a row of 12 taxis, demanding an end to the protest.

"Open the roads," chanted a crowd, which included taxi and truck drivers. Taxi drivers have given protesters a deadline of Wednesday evening for all barricades to be lifted.

A truck with a crane on top attempted to remove barricades from one area until police eventually stopped it, but protesters complained that police did not act quickly enough.

Hundreds of police had earlier dismantled some barricades to relieve traffic congestion in the Asian financial hub, but said protesters could remain.

But within hours, anti-Occupy Central groups descended on the protest sites to try and disperse demonstrators, taking advantage of the earlier police action to remove barricades.

Scuffles quickly broke out, the first between demonstrators and anti-protest groups, with protesters believing the attacks were co-ordinated and may have involved triad Asian crime gangs.

"People from New Territories, blue ribbon (Beijing) supporters, triads and taxi drivers must be coordinated by some sort of people...the work is so well distributed. They went to different places in order to keep protesters busy," said 49-year-old Mr Chan, who declined to give his full name.

Yemen names new PM in  
fresh bid to end crisis

AFP, Sanaa

Yemeni President Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi named a top diplomat his new premier yesterday in his second bid this month to solve a political crisis with Shiite rebels that sparked deadly unrest.

Hadi's nomination of UN envoy Khalid Bahah appeared to have the consent of Huthi rebels, who seized control of much of the capital Sanaa in a lightning offensive last month.

The naming of a neutral prime minister is seen as a key step in convincing the rebels to withdraw from Sanaa, where their supporters were targeted in a devastating suicide bombing last Thursday that left 47 people dead.

State news agency Saba said a team of advisors to Hadi, which includes rebel representatives, had approved the nomination.

"After consultations over several nominees, all advisors nominated Khalid Mahfoudh Bahah," it said.

A member of the rebels' political arm, known as Ansarullah, confirmed the nomination had their consent.

"We approved the naming of candidate Khalid Bahah as prime minister," Ali al-Imad told AFP.

Yemen has been wracked by political turmoil and sporadic violence since the 2012 toppling of strongman Ali Abdullah Saleh, with rebels and militants battling to exploit a power vacuum and seize control of territory.

Since sweeping into the capital from their northern base on September 21, the Huthi rebels have established a strong presence, carrying out patrols and manning checkpoints.

Under a UN-sponsored ceasefire deal, they are to withdraw from Sanaa and disarm once a neutral prime minister is named.

A previous attempt to name a new premier collapsed last week under opposition from the rebels, with the candidate, Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, withdrawing within 24 hours of being nominated.

A source close to the presidency said that with Bahah's nomination the rebels have promised to end their military presence in the capital and dismantle camps they have built around it.



Khalid Bahah

Typhoon  
Vongfong  
hits Japan

AFP, Tokyo

Powerful typhoon Vongfong barreled into Japan's main islands yesterday, with at least one person missing and scores injured while more than 550 flights were grounded, officials and local media said.

Winds of up to 180 kilometres (112 miles) per hour whipped ashore as the typhoon made landfall at Makurazaki on Kyushu island yesterday morning, the meteorological agency said.

The season's 19th typhoon, which had already struck Japan's southwestern island chain of Okinawa over the weekend, was located in central Kochi as of 5:00 pm (0800 GMT) and still packing strong winds and heavy rain, the agency said.

Ruling party set to win  
Mozambique polls

REUTERS, Maputo

Mozambique's ruling Frelimo party and its presidential candidate look likely to win elections this week despite voters' dissatisfaction with graft and inequality in one of Africa's fastest growing economies that boasts abundant energy reserves.

On Wednesday, former liberation movement Frelimo, which has dominated voting in the ex-Portuguese colony since its 1975 independence, is widely expected to win the fifth presidential ballot held since the end of a devastating 1975-1992 civil war.

More than 10 million voters will also select on Wednesday a new 250-seat parliament and members of 10 provincial assemblies.

The advantages of incumbency and his party's historic dominance have allowed Frelimo's presidential hopeful, Filipe Nyusi, 55, to run a better-resourced campaign than his main challengers, veteran Renamo opposition leader Afonso Dhlakama, and Daviz Simango, who heads the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM), an emergent third political force.

The winner will be well-placed to reap

the early rewards of multi-billion-dollar gas and oil developments in the north of the Indian Ocean nation, which though poor is forecast by the IMF to see economic growth of more than 8 percent this year.

In lively but generally peaceful campaigning, the candidates have faced insistent demands from voters that Mozambique's plentiful resources - which besides offshore gas and oil include huge coal deposits as well as farming and fisheries potential - be used to generate more jobs and higher living standards.

"We only want the country to get better," said Maputo resident Sara Chilundo, as she waited for a minibus taxi beside a wall plastered in red Frelimo election posters in the capital Maputo, where new malls and office blocks have sprouted skywards among the older colonial era houses and buildings.

"There has to be jobs for our children, schools," she added.

Frelimo's stewardship under outgoing President Armando Guebuza, who is barred by the constitution from standing for a third term, has come under fire over corruption and deep divisions between rich and poor in the nation of 25.8 million.