

NEWS IN brief

Landslide kills 12 in Indonesia

Twelve people were killed and 11 houses buried after a landslide triggered by heavy rain in Indonesia's main island of Java, an official said yesterday. The landslide hit Tegal Panjang village in Sukabumi district in west Java late Saturday after a particularly heavy downpour.

Air Canada jet skids off runway; 23 injured

An Air Canada jet came off the runway after landing at the Halifax airport in Nova Scotia yesterday, sending at least 23 people to hospital, officials said. Heavy snow fall is believed to be the cause of the accident. Five crew and 133 passengers were on board the plane.

To Gear row: BBC chief gets death threat

British police were yesterday investigating death threats against BBC director-general Tony Hall following his decision to drop popular "Top Gear" presenter Jeremy Clarkson. Scotland Yard police headquarters confirmed it was examining allegations made on Wednesday, when Hall confirmed Clarkson was sacked for hitting a producer.

Guinea declares 45-day Ebola 'emergency'

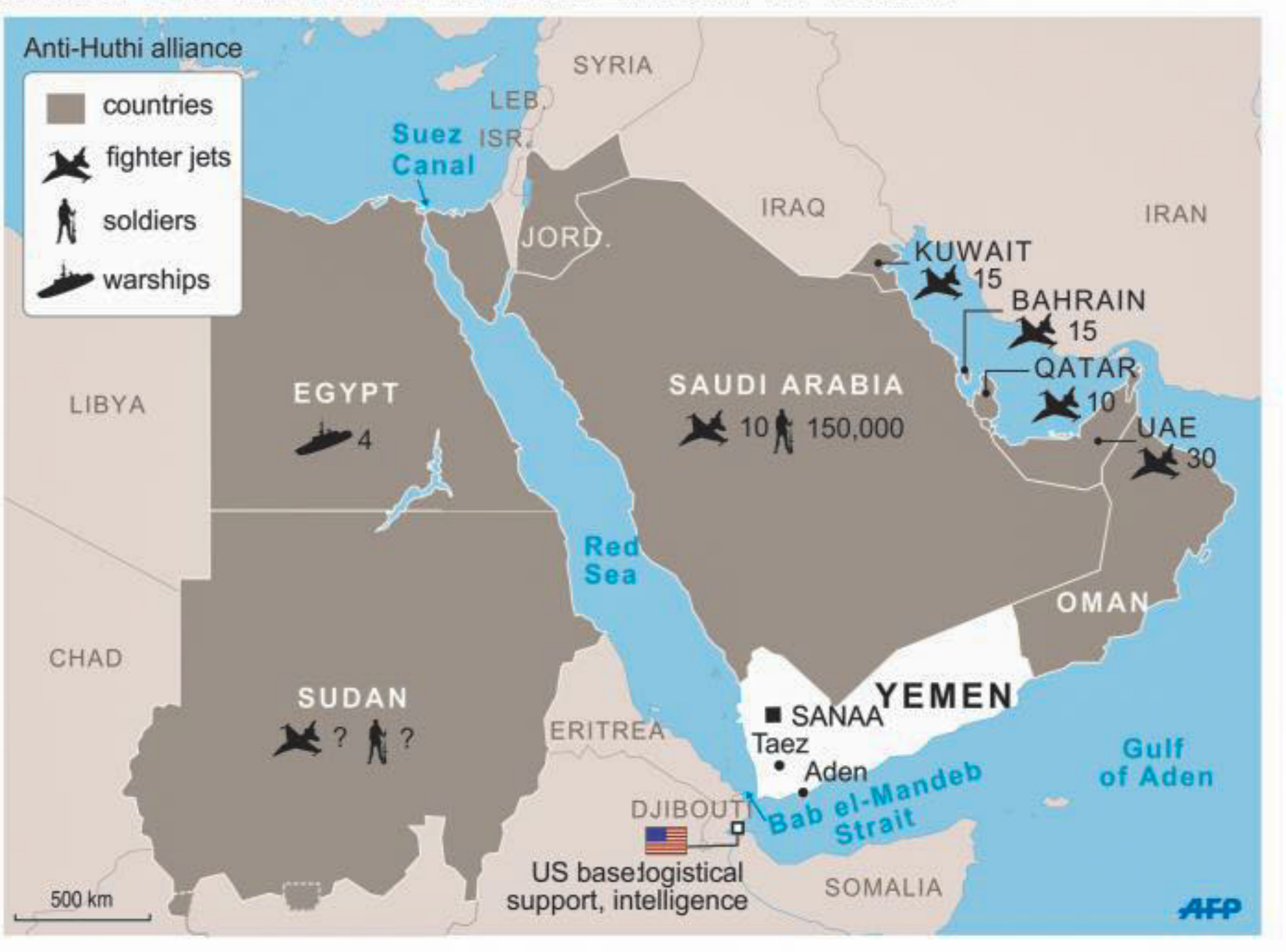
Guinean President Alpha Conde has declared a 45-day "health emergency" in five regions of the Ebola-hit nation in a bid to stem the spread of the deadly disease. Since the Ebola outbreak began in Guinea in December 2013, more than 10,000 people have died.

Ground incursion looms over Yemen

Oversized military trucks painted in desert beige hauled tanks in the same camouflage color down a dark highway late Saturday past glowing billboards in the Saudi Arabian town of Jazan. With the border with Yemen little more than 20 miles away, the trucks captured on a video distributed by the news agency Reuters also carried a message: Suggestions of a ground incursion into Yemen, which is in the throws of a Houthi rebel uprising, may be more than just talk. Saudi Arabia and Egypt have both spoken about the possibility of putting boots on the ground before. And on Saturday, Yemeni Foreign Minister Riyadh Yaseen said he expected coalition troops to be in Yemen within days. Saudi leaders have said that if troops do go in, they won't leave until they have degraded the Houthis' ability to do battle, CNN's Ian Lee reported. The Houthis are apt guerrillas. A fight on the ground could prove bloody and lengthy. The Saudi-led coalition fighting the Shia

Houthis, who deposed the Yemeni government and seized territory in a series of offensives, began its military action last week. Saudi Arabia has set up a blockade, effectively cutting off Houthi supply lines, and its air force controls Yemeni airspace. They have threatened to attack ships that might supply the rebels. The Shia Houthis are allied with Iran, a majority Shia nation. Saudi Arabia has accused Iran of beefing up the Houthis' weaponry for their offensive. The United States voiced approval of the airstrikes. It's supporting them logistically and aiding coalition forces in locating targets, but it is not participating in active battle. Houthi rebels and the government began doing battle in 2004, but arrived at a ceasefire in 2010, according to the CIA World Factbook. The country has seen much unrest in the wake of the Arab Spring uprising. Yemen was plunged into chaos when the Houthi rebels, who have long felt marginalized in the majority Sunni country, began seizing control of the capital and

SAUDI-LED MILITARY INTERVENTION IN YEMEN



India, Pakistan to airlift citizens

Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj yesterday said it was preparing to airlift stranded citizens from war-torn Yemen despite the bombing of the country's main international airport. Some 4,100 Indians are currently in Yemen, including 3,100 in Sanaa, 500 in Aden and the rest around the country, the minister said. India will also send a ship to help the process. Meanwhile, Pakistan yesterday sent a jumbo jet and a naval frigate to evacuate its citizens and diplomatic staff from Yemen. Pakistan's ambassador to Yemen Irfan Shami told state television that 482 Pakistanis will be evacuated on the first flight. Around 3,000 Pakistanis live in Yemen.

'Open the damn door'

Captain shouted as more details about co-pilot emerge

The captain of a passenger jet that investigators believe was deliberately crashed into the French Alps, killing all 150 aboard, shouted at the co-pilot to "open the damn door" as he desperately tried to get back into the locked cockpit, a German newspaper reported yesterday. Full transcripts of the black box voice recorder recovered from Flight 9525 revealed for the first time the apparently premeditated nature of Andreas Lubitz's actions, which prosecutors say deliberately killed himself and 149 other people on the Airbus A320. It also emerged that emerged Lubitz made repeated efforts to get the captain to leave him alone in the cockpit. According to the Sunday edition of the German newspaper Bild, Lubitz twice urged captain Patrick Sondheimer to go to the toilet in the first 20 minutes of the flight from Barcelona to Dusseldorf. When the captain eventually left the cockpit, the co-pilot manually set the door to "lock" and changed the autopilot from 38,000ft to 100ft, bringing the plane crashing

down into the French Alps after a gradual descent. French officials believe that the more senior pilot, identified by Germany's Bild newspaper as Patrick S., tried desperately to reopen the door. It said "loud metallic blows" against the cockpit door could then be heard, before another warning alarm went off and then the pilot is heard to scream to a silent Lubitz in the cockpit "open the damn door". As investigators seek to build up a picture of Lubitz and any possible motives, media reports have emerged that he suffered from eye problems, adding to earlier reports he was severely depressed. German prosecutors believe Lubitz hid an illness from his airline but have not specified the ailment, and said he had apparently been written off sick on the day the Airbus crashed. Bild's Saturday edition had published an interview with a flight attendant who it said had had a relationship last year with Lubitz and recalled him saying: "One day I'm going to do something that will change the whole system, and everyone will know my name

PLANE CRASH IN FRENCH ALPS



China court jails Uighur for growing beard

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A court in China's mainly Muslim Xinjiang region has sentenced a man to six years in prison for "provoking trouble" and growing a beard, a practise discouraged by local authorities, a newspaper reported yesterday. The court in the desert oasis city of Kashgar sentenced the 38-year-old Uighur to six years, while his wife was given a two-year sentence, according to the China Youth Daily. For more than a year the authorities in Xinjiang have been campaigning against men growing beards -- a practice officials associate with extremist ideas. A campaign dubbed "Project Beauty" also encourages women to leave their heads bare and abandon wearing the veil, a relatively widespread practice among the Uighurs -- the main Muslim ethnic group in Xinjiang.

Expected nuke deal worse than feared

Says Netanyahu as Iran talks near 'end game'

Iran and six major powers were exploring possible compromises to break an impasse in nuclear negotiations yesterday, but officials cautioned they were unable to move on several sticking points. The news came as Israel said the details of a possible agreement emerging from talks in Lausanne, Switzerland were worse than it feared. "This deal, as it appears to be emerging, bears out all of our fears, and even more than that," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his cabinet in Jerusalem. Netanyahu referred to advances made by Houthi rebels allied to Tehran in Yemen, and accused the Islamic republic of trying to "conquer the entire Middle East". "The Iran-Lausanne-Yemen axis is very dangerous to humanity, and must be stopped," he said. In a significant development in talks

aimed at securing a preliminary nuclear deal, several officials told Reuters Tehran had indicated a willingness to accept fewer than 6,000 nuclear centrifuges and to send most of its enriched uranium stockpiles for storage in Russia. Western powers, on the other hand, were considering the idea of allowing Iran to conduct limited, closely-monitored enrichment-related work for medical purposes at an underground facility called Fordow, the officials added on condition of anonymity. The six powers have an end-March deadline for a political framework agreement, which officials close to the talks say could result in a brief document of several pages. That would form the basis of a comprehensive deal, including all technical details, to be agreed by June 30. Officials say there is no guarantee they will get a framework agreement this month or, if they do, a final one in June.



Tunisians wave their national flag during a march against extremism outside Tunisia's Bardo Museum, yesterday. Thousands of Tunisians set off for a march "against terrorism" through the capital following the massacre of foreign tourists at the country's national museum.

Jihadists chief behind Tunisia attack killed

Tunisia said it killed the leader of the jihadists accused of organising the massacre at its national museum, as thousands took to the streets yesterday in a march against extremism. Authorities said Lokmane Abou Sakhr -- an Algerian who was singled out as the organiser of the museum attack -- was killed along with at least eight others from the notorious Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade. Officials had accused Abou Sakhr and his group of organising the attack on the Bardo Museum that left 21 foreign tourists dead, despite a claim of responsibility from the Islamic State group. Tunisian forces "were able yesterday (Saturday) to kill the most important members of the Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade including its head Lokmane Abou Sakhr," Prime Minister Habib Essid told reporters.

Nigerian voters try again after glitches

Nigeria's closely fought general election went into a second day yesterday after failures in controversial new technology snarled the polling, including for President Goodluck Jonathan. At the same time, military fighter jets and ground troops pounded Boko Haram fighters in the northeastern state of Bauchi after a series of attacks on polling stations on Saturday and yesterday. The presidential election in Africa's most populous nation is the closest in the country's history, with the first credible challenge from an opposition party. Jonathan's Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has been in power since Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999 but is being pushed to the wire by former military ruler Muhammadu Buhari. One government spokesman claimed there was a "record turnout" and voting was largely peaceful despite sporadic pockets of unrest mainly in southern states such as the key battleground of Rivers. The technical difficulties, however, set the tone for a potential dispute as the PDP has opposed the use of the devices to authenticate voters, saying they were not sufficiently tested. Buhari's All Progressives Congress (APC) supports the new system as a means of curbing voter fraud that has marred previous elections. All ballots were expected to be cast by Sunday night, said INEC Borno spokesman Tommy Magbuin, with the number of registered voters put at almost 69 million. A final result had been due within 48 hours of polling stations closing before the extension.

Stephen Hawking to trademark his name

World-renowned British physicist Stephen Hawking is set to trademark his name, joining the ranks of celebrities such as JK Rowling and David Beckham who have turned their names into brands. Hawking, 73, has applied to the Intellectual Property Office to have his name formally registered, while another English physicist, Brian Cox, has already made the move. For Hawking, whose fame was recently boosted by the Oscar-winning success of the film 'The Theory of Everything', the primary aim is to prevent others from exploiting his name with inappropriate products. Hawking has also applied to trademark his name for charitable purposes, giving him the option of setting up a foundation, such as to promote physics, or for research into motor neurone disease, which has paralysed him, 'The Sunday Times' reported. His trademark would cover computer games, powered wheelchairs, greetings cards and healthcare.



Nation building: Lessons from a 'Grand Master'

Dozens of Asia's best and brightest government officials each year join what has become known as the "Mayors' Class" - studying good governance, economic management and how to make their countries work like Singapore. As prime minister for its first three decades, Lee Kuan Yew raised a poor port from the bottom rungs of the third world to the first world in a single generation. As it prepares to mark its 50th anniversary as a nation, Singapore is today an ultra-modern metropolis of almost six million people with higher per capita GDP than the United States, according to the World Bank. Some say Singapore's story is sui generis: Something that could only happen in that time and place. But its remarkable performance has less to do with miraculous conditions than with Lee's model of disciplined, visionary leadership. Leaders of other aspiring-to-develop nations, and even the US, should take pages from Lee Kuan Yew's playbook to address current challenges. Concept is good but result is the last word. First, Lee insisted that governance was first and foremost about results. In his words, "the acid test of any legal system is not the greatness or the grandeur of its ideal concepts, but whether, in fact, it is able to produce order and justice." About the core purposes of government, he was crystal clear. In terms America's founding fathers would recognize, he believed that "the ultimate test of the value of a political system is whether it helps that society establish conditions which improve the standard of living for the majority of its people, plus enabling the maximum of personal freedoms compatible with the freedoms of others in society." Moral leadership. Second, superior performance requires superior leadership. Lee demanded of leaders both intellectual and moral superiority. Contrary to modern Western democratic theory that emphasizes citizens' participation in governance, his views were closer to Plato's



field that allows each individual to achieve his or her maximum. As he put it, the leader's objective was to "build up a society in which people will be rewarded not according to the amount of property they own, but according to their active contribution to society in physical or mental labor." Discipline, not democracy. Fourth, about democracy, particularly Western liberal democracy, Lee had serious reservations. In part, this attitude stemmed from his own experience, but it also reflected a deeper philosophical aversion to ideologies. As he liked to say, "the acid test is performance, not promises. The millions dispossessed in Asia care not and know not of theory. They want a better life. They want a more equal, just society." Lee enjoyed engaging American critics who insisted that without democracy Singapore could not develop an advanced economy. In contrast, he argued that what most countries needed was more "discipline," rather than democracy.