

# NEWS IN brief

## US Polls: Hillary 'takes campaign HQ' in NY

AFP, New York

Hillary Clinton is yet to announce her run for the White House, but she's picked New York's gentrifying, hipster-obsessed borough Brooklyn for her 2016 campaign headquarters. Politico, which broke the story, said the clock is now ticking on Hillary's announcement.

## Egypt army kills 40 militants in Sinai

PTI, Cairo

At least 40 militants have been killed in Egyptian army's major ground and aerial offensive in the volatile North Sinai region, a day after 15 soldiers and two civilians died in separate attacks by Islamist militants. Twenty militant headquarters and seven vehicles belonging to the terrorists were also destroyed in the offensive.



A Catholic devotee portrays Jesus Christ during a re-enactment of the crucifixion during Holy Week in the Petare shantytown in Caracas on Friday. Christians around the world are marking the Holy Week, commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, leading up to his resurrection on Easter.

# US-Iran to remain foes despite deal

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama, eager to resolve at least one intractable conflict in his final two years in office, has his eye on a major prize: reconciliation with Iran.

Thursday's agreement on a road map for the final phase of negotiations on a nuclear accord could open a way to a broader realignment that would redraw the map of the Middle East.

But analysts warn that the long-time foes remain far from a rapprochement and any future cooperation would be limited.

"In Barack Obama's head, there's this fantasy of a grand bargain, an alliance with Iran, and of reconstructing the architecture of the region for a paradigm shift," said Joseph Bahout, a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Center.

"This is the fantasy of the Obama administration, but he knows it will never happen because Iran is a lot colder.

"They'll take the nuclear deal, but everything will remain business as usual," he added.

Relations between Tehran and Washington are haunted by the 1953 coup, orchestrated by the CIA, which overthrew Iranian prime minister Mohamed Mossadegh and restored royal rule.

Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was overthrown in turn in the 1979 revolution that brought Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamist and explicitly anti-American government to power.

The divide between the powers has been deepened by decades of hostile rhetoric.

The United States is regularly denounced as the "Great Satan" by Iranian leaders, and Washington has slammed Tehran as a "rogue state," part of an "axis of evil."

Obama hailed the "historic understanding" with Iran Thursday, and said he is willing to engage with Iran "on the basis of mutual interests and mutual respect."

## ARAB'S YEMEN INTERVENTION Russia pushes UN to pause air strikes

AFP, United Nations

Russia yesterday presented a draft resolution to the UN Security Council calling for a humanitarian pause in the Saudi-led air campaign in Yemen, now in its 10th day.

Russia called the emergency meeting of the 15-member council amid growing alarm over the rising civilian death toll from the fighting in Yemen.

The one-page text distributed to the council called on the Saudi-led coalition to halt air strikes to allow the evacuation of foreigners, but it did not specify the duration of the pause.

Yemen slid deeper into turmoil after the coalition launched an air campaign on March 26 to stop an advance by Shia Huthi rebels that forced President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi to flee to Saudi Arabia.

Coalition warplanes and ships bombarded Huthi positions in the southern port city of Aden yesterday and air-dropped weapons and ammunition to Hadi's supporters.

The Russian-drafted text made no reference to previous calls by the Security Council for the Huthis to pull back and return to political talks.

Saudi Ambassador Abdallah Al-Mouallimi declined to say whether his country would agree to a pause, telling reporters that while he shared Russia's concern for the humanitarian situation, the "mechanism" for ensuring assistance would have to be discussed.

Some 591 people including at least 62 children have been killed and nearly 1,700 injured in two weeks of fighting in Yemen, according to UN officials.

# Iran deal good for Sino-US ties: China

REUTERS, Beijing

This week's framework nuclear deal with Iran was also good for boosting relations between China and the United States, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi said in a call with US secretary of state John Kerry.

The agreement can be attributed to all sides seizing a historic opportunity through concerted efforts, Wang told Kerry, China's foreign ministry said in a statement released late on Friday.

"China and the United States, both taking on major responsibilities in safeguarding the international nuclear non-proliferation system, maintained good contact with each other during the negotiations, while instilling positive energy into bilateral relations," the statement cited Wang as saying.

"In a bid to finalise a comprehensive deal as scheduled, China will maintain close coordination with all parties concerned, including the United States, and continue to play a constructive role during the process," Wang added.

While China and the United States are at loggerheads over everything from cybersecurity to the value of China's yuan



But he sent Tehran a strong warning.

"This deal alone -- even if fully implemented -- will not end the deep divisions and mistrust between our two countries," he said.

"So make no mistake: We will remain vigilant in countering those actions and standing with our allies," Obama added, referring to what he called Iran's "sponsorship of terrorism."

Despite signs of outreach, restoring full diplomatic ties, severed some 35 years ago amid the 1979 storming of the US Embassy in Tehran and the painful 444-day hostage-taking, remains far off.

Alireza Nader, senior international policy analyst at the RAND Corporation, is skeptical about how close Washington and Tehran will be in the future.

"I do not believe that the establishment in Iran wants normal ties with the United States," he told AFP.

"Perhaps President Rohani and his government want diplomatic relations, but the Supreme Leader and his supporters view it as being against their interests."

"The two countries will continue to be competitors, especially if there are no major domestic changes in Iran," Nader added.



## Pentagon chief to visit India in May

PTI, Washington

US defense secretary Ashton Carter will visit India in May seeking further strengthening of bilateral defence ties. On April 6, Carter will launch his first Asia trip in Japan and the Republic of Korea.

## Three troops killed in restive east Ukraine

AFP, Kiev

Three Ukrainian soldiers died when a mine exploded in the separatist-held east where isolated clashes continue to undermine a ceasefire aimed at ending a year-long war. The fatalities were the first announced by the Kiev government in almost a week.

# Did MH370 crashed near Maldives?

## Remote islanders saw 'low-flying jumbo jet' on the day MH370 disappeared

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

"This is the biggest plane I have ever seen from this island...I have seen pictures of the missing plane- I believe I saw the plane...I strongly felt those people who were searching should come here," said 34 year-old IT manager, Ahmed Shiyaam

Witnesses have also suggested that the plane was travelling north to south-east, towards the southern tip of the Maldives, when it was sighted.

The islanders claims are not in line with recent approximations as to where the MH370 plane went down.

Calculations based on satellite connections currently suggest that the plane crashed within a 180km arc southwest of Perth.

However, acoustic scientists have suggested that a high energy sound measured around the time the plane was thought to have crashed, could place the aircraft's final destination as near to the Maldives.



Former Cuban president Fidel Castro (L) greeting a member of the Venezuelan delegation "Il flight Solidarity Bolivar-Marti" who are in Cuba taking part in social and political activities, in Havana on March 30, 2015. With that meeting, Castro has made his first public appearance in 14 months, local media reported yesterday.

### QUOTE of the day

With his Iran deal, Barack Obama is for the 300 million souls of the United States what Andreas Lubitz was for the 150 souls on the German Wings flight

Former US Representative Michele Bachmann

# Kenya will 'run red with blood'

## Al-Shabaab warn of more bloodshed after university massacre

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The death toll from the siege has risen to 148, Interior Minister Joseph Nkaissery said on Friday.

Police killed the four suspected militants who carried out the massacre after cornering them 15 hours after the siege started but five more people suspected of involvement have been arrested.

**SHE HID IN A CLOSET FOR 2 DAYS**

A survivor of Kenya's university massacre who hid in a wardrobe for two days too terrified to come out was rescued safely yesterday, dehydrated but apparently unharmed, Kenya Red Cross said.

The 19-year old woman was initially too scared to come out until a university lecturer she knew came to convince her that the police officers were not the Shebab gunmen who carried out the killing of nearly 150 of her fellow students, police said.

The BBC said she told them she drank "body lotion when she felt hungry."

Kenyan troops searching the building were alarmed when they heard sounds coming from inside a wardrobe.

Four survivors were also found on Friday, Shiundu said.



## Good news for Iran women

REUTERS, Dubai

Iran has partially lifted a ban on women attending men's sports matches, the Deputy Sports Minister said on Saturday, days after a court pardoned Chonchek Ghavami, an Iranian-British woman, who had been jailed for protesting against the law.

In January, the government said it would allow foreign women to attend men's matches, but Iranian women were still forbidden from doing so.

The new policy for women and families will come into effect during this Iranian year. The Iranian calendar year ends in March 2016.

# US man walks free after 30 years on death row

AFP, Washington

An Alabama man who spent 30 years on death row for crimes he didn't commit walked free from court on Friday after his conviction for a 1985 double murder was overturned because of insufficient evidence.

Anthony Ray Hinton, 58, emerged from Jefferson County Courthouse to cheers from well-wishers before being embraced by tearful friends and relatives, a day after a judge had dismissed all charges against him.

"Sun do shine," an emotional Hinton said moments after his release.

"They had every intention of executing me for something I didn't do...I shouldn't have sat on death row for 30 years."

Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge Laura Petro dismissed all charges against Hinton after his lawyers from the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) argued there was not enough evidence linking him to the crimes.

Hinton, who was 29 at the time of the killings, was one of the longest-serving death row prisoners in Alabama history and among the longest-serving condemned prisoners to be freed, according to EJI.

Hinton was charged after two restaurant managers were shot dead in a robbery at a fast-food restaurant in Birmingham, Alabama.

Police did not find eyewitnesses or fingerprint evidence, according to EJI. That same year, another restaurant was held up at gun point and the manager was shot and seriously injured.

The manager identified Hinton as the suspect, though Hinton said he was at work at the time 15 miles (24 kilometers) away. A manager and colleagues backed his alibi.

Chief attorney Bryan Stevenson said Hinton, who is black, was wrongly convicted in part because of the color of his skin.

"Race, poverty, inadequate legal assistance, and prosecutorial indifference to innocence conspired to create a textbook example of injustice," Stevenson said.

Hinton is the 152nd person on death row to be cleared since 1973 and the second to be exonerated in 2015, according to the Death Penalty Information Center.