

# NEWSIN brief

## Mexican volcano erupts, 70 evacuated

AP, Mexico City

Ash and cinders spewed Saturday from the Colima Volcano in western Mexico, prompting authorities to close the airport in the state capital of Colima and order the evacuation of a half dozen hamlets on the flanks of the peak. At least 70 people were staying at a shelter by the late afternoon. The volcano began erupting on Thursday and has become increasingly active, leading officials to issue orders to relocate people living nearby.

## ISIS claims Italian Consulate bombing in Cairo

AP, Cairo

A car bomb ripped into the Italian Consulate in Cairo early Saturday, destroying a section of the historic building in a powerful blast that killed one Egyptian and marked the most significant attack yet on foreign interests as militants target the country's security forces. A group calling itself The Islamic State in Egypt claimed responsibility for the bombing in a message circulated on social media. The authenticity of the claim could not be immediately verified.

## Spanish nursing home fire kills eight

AP, Madrid

Spanish officials say eight elderly residents have died and eleven others were injured as a fire swept through a nursing home just outside the northeastern city of Zaragoza. Regional Interior Ministry spokesman Gustavo Alcalde said the cause of the fire, which broke out in early yesterday, is still unknown and was being investigated.

## Rights group ends S Carolina boycott

AFP, Washington

A leading US civil rights organization, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said Saturday it was ending its 15-year economic boycott of South Carolina after the controversial Confederate flag was removed from the state's legislature. The Civil War-era battle flag, regarded by many as a bitter symbol of racism and slavery, was taken down Friday following protests in the wake of last month's church massacre that left nine African-American worshippers dead.



## Mexico kingpin 'Chapo' escapes prison again

AFP, Almoloya De Juarez

Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman escaped through a lengthy tunnel under his prison cell's shower, authorities said yesterday, marking his second jail break.

A massive manhunt was launched after Guzman vanished late Saturday from the Altiplano maximum-security prison. The Sinaloa cartel kingpin, whose empire stretches around the globe, had been in prison for 17 months after spending 13 years on the lam.

After his escape, guards went into the cell and found a hole 10 meters deep with a ladder, National Security Commissioner Monte Alejandro Rubido said.

The gap led to the 1.5-kilometer tunnel with a ventilation and light system, Rubido said, adding that its exit was in a building that was under construction in central Mexico State.



An Indian youth performs with fire as he rehearses for the forthcoming annual Lord Jagannath Rath Yatra in Ahmedabad yesterday. The 138th annual Lord Jagannath Rath Yatra in Ahmedabad is scheduled for June 18.

PHOTO: AFP

# EU scraps Greece summit

AFP, Brussels

The EU cancelled a full 28-nation summit yesterday to decide whether Greece stays in the European single currency as a divided eurozone struggled to reach a reform-for-bailout deal.

The summit had been billed as a last chance to stop Greece crashing out, but was scrapped as eurozone finance ministers returned Sunday to marathon talks after failing overnight to overcome distrust with Greece's leftist government.

With Greece facing growing misery from capital controls and fears its banks could collapse within days, a meeting of the leaders of the 19 countries that use the euro was still due to go ahead in Brussels on Sunday.

"I have cancelled EUCO (the European Union summit) today," European Council President Donald Tusk tweeted. "Eurosummit to start at 1600 (1400 GMT) and last until we conclude talks on Greece."

The talks on Saturday ended with deep divisions about whether to trust Greece's radical Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras with a third bailout worth more than 80 billion euros (\$89

billion), following months of wrangling.

Fiscal hawks Germany floated a plan for a temporary "Grexit" from the euro while Finland reportedly decided flat out not to accept a new Greek rescue programme, causing panic.

Their downbeat assessment came despite Greece's international creditors calling Athen's new proposals a positive step forward after months of wrangling on a follow-up to two previous bailouts in 2010 and 2012 worth 240 billion euros.

The proposals -- including pension cuts and tax hikes that had been largely rejected by Greeks in a referendum a week ago -- were approved by the Greek parliament in the early hours of Saturday.

In Greece, there is growing alarm at capital controls that have closed banks and rationed cash at ATMs for nearly two weeks, leading to fears that food and medicine will soon run short.

Economy Minister Giorgos Stathakis warned the restrictions will likely stay in place for "months" even if there is a deal.

Greek newspapers expressed alarm, with the headline of the Eleftheros Typos in Athens saying: "The future of Greece on a razor's edge" and asking "what will happen in the case of the nightmare of a Grexit?"

The European Central Bank is providing emergency liquidity to keep Greek banks afloat but has frozen the limit, with fears that failure to reach a deal could cause it to shut off the taps completely.

But a lack of trust in Greek authorities was blocking any agreement by the eurozone ministers, who repeatedly called for further steps from Athens to show commitment to reforms.

Italian Economy Minister Pier Carlo Padoan urged the Greek government to take steps as early as Monday to prove it would stick to its word.

"I would like the Greek government to take concrete measures starting in parliament tomorrow," Padoan said.

His outspoken Slovakian counterpart Peter Kazimir said it was "not possible there is a deal today."

# Malala says world failing Syrian children

AFP, London

Malala Yousafzai told world leaders they were failing Syria's children, as the Nobel Peace Prize winner spent her 18th birthday yesterday on the Syrian border.

As she became an adult, the teenager, who was shot by militants in her native Pakistan for campaigning for girls' rights, opened a school for more than 200 Syrian girls living in refugee camps in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

The Malala Yousafzai All-Girls School will offer education and skills training to girls aged 14 to 18.

"I am honoured to mark my 18th birthday with the brave and inspiring girls of Syria," Yousafzai said in a statement received in London.

"I am here on behalf of the 28 million children who are kept from the classroom because of armed conflict.

"Their courage and dedication to continue their schooling in difficult conditions inspires people around the world and it is our duty to stand by them.

"On this day, I have a message for the leaders of this country, this region and the world: you are failing the Syrian people, especially Syria's children. This is a heart-breaking tragedy -- the world's worst refugee crisis in decades."

Lebanon is hosting nearly 1.2 million registered Syrian refugees, though the total number in the country may be even higher.

The influx has placed strains on Lebanon, which has just four million citizens.



# HELP FOR GREECE Russia considering direct fuel deliveries

AFP, Moscow

Russia is considering direct deliveries of fuel to Greece to help prop up its economy, Energy Minister Alexander Novak said yesterday, quoted by Russian news agencies.

"Russia intends to support the revival of Greece's economy by broadening cooperation in the energy sector," Novak told journalists, quoted by RIA Novosti news agency.

"Accordingly we are studying the possibility of organising direct deliveries of energy resources to Greece, starting shortly."

Novak said that the energy ministry expected "to come to an agreement within a few weeks," but did not specify what type of fuel Russia would supply.

Greece's left-wing leadership has made a show of drawing closer to Moscow in recent months as the spat with its international creditors has grown more ugly.

In June, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras during a visit to Russia sealed a preliminary agreement for Russia to build a 2-billion-euro (\$2.2 billion) gas pipeline through Greece, extending the TurkStream project, which is intended to supply Russian gas to Turkey.

# 10 lions dead in India floods: report

AFP, New Delhi

Ten endangered Asiatic lions, 1670 blue bulls and 87 spotted deer were amongst hundreds of wild animals killed in the recent floods to hit west India's Gujarat, a government report said yesterday.

The flash floods that hit Saurashtra region of the state in late June also killed at least 55 people with thousands evacuating their homes for safer areas after heavy rains.

"Till July 2 this year, carcasses of ten lions were recovered," Press Trust of India (PTI) said, quoting from a report prepared by Gujarat's Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF).

Gujarat is home to about 500 Asiatic lions in their last remaining sanctuary globally.

"Besides, carcasses of 1670 blue bulls, 87 spotted deer, nine black bucks and six wild boars were also recovered," it added.

In some of the worst affected parts of the region the water levels rose by almost 2.8 metres in a short span of time.

The forest department officials and local activists who began the process of assessing damage to habitat and wildlife after the floods, PCCF told PTI, had come across lions in "weak health and shocked condition."

Besides immediate concern for the wellbeing of the affected wildlife, the flash floods have also reignited the ongoing debate about relocating lions outside their only habitat in India.

Several wildlife experts have questioned the government's reluctance to allow the endangered species to move outside its current west India habitat to other suitable sanctuaries across the country.



PHOTO: AFP

A farm vehicle travels along a dirt road while the 3,300-metre Mount Raung volcano emits a column of ash and steam as seen from Bondowoso district, located in eastern Java island yesterday. Ash spewing from the Indonesian volcano closed the airport again on neighbouring Bali yesterday just a day after it reopened, causing fresh travel chaos for weary holidaymakers stranded on the resort island.

# India to become most populous nation by 2050

TIMES OF INDIA

India on Saturday recorded a population of 127,42,39,769, which is growing at a rate of 1.6 per cent a year, and could make the country the most populous in the world by 2050.

At 5pm on that day, the World Population Day, the number of Indians hit 127,42,39,769, and is 17.25 per cent of the global population, as per National Population Stabilisation Fund (NPSF), an autonomous body under the union health ministry.

The ministry has raised concerns about over-population related problems, if the rate persists.

Noting that India's population was growing at a faster rate than that of China, which is now the world's most populous country at around 1.39 billion, an official of the fund said that India could become the most populated one by 2050.

"If the current growth rates continue, India will have 1.63 billion people by 2050 and will surpass China," the official said.

According to data from NPSE, the total fertility rate in India has seen a decline and stood at 2.3 in 2013 although the decline is not consistent.

The population of India, at 1.21 billion as per the 2011 Census, is almost equal to the combined population of the USA, Indonesia, Brazil, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Japan put together.

## Israel releases Khader Adnan

CNN ONLINE

Israeli authorities early yesterday released an often-detained member of a Palestinian militant group after he spent more than 11 months in jail.

Khader Adnan of Islamic Jihad was turned over at a West Bank checkpoint before being taken to Jenin Hospital for medical tests.

The deal to release him was struck two weeks ago on June 29, ending a 55-day hunger strike. Adnan first gained international attention for a 66-day hunger strike that ended in February 2012.

He was held under a controversial Israeli military procedure known as "administrative detention" that allows Israel to hold detainees indefinitely on security grounds. The process also allows for detention based on secret evidence, and there is no requirement to charge the detainees or to allow them to stand trial.

# 'Final phase' in marathon talks

AFP, Vienna

Tortuous talks towards a historic Iran nuclear deal entered yesterday what France's foreign minister said he believed is the "final phase" but with Tehran warning that "political will" was still required.

"I hope we are finally entering the final phase of these marathon negotiations. I believe it," French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius told reporters as he returned to Vienna on the 16th day of talks.

"A deal is in reach," agreed Iranian diplomat Alireza Miryousefi, adding however on Twitter on the eve of the latest effective deadline for an accord: "It only requires political will at this point."

Earlier, US Secretary of State John Kerry, who has been locking horns with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif in the Austrian capital since June 27, was hopeful but said that "tough" issues remained.

"I think we're getting to some real decisions. So I will say, because we have a

few tough things to do, I remain hopeful. Hopeful," Kerry said, calling his latest meeting with Zarif "positive".

The talks are aimed at nailing down a deal curbing Iran's nuclear activities in order to make it extremely difficult for Tehran -- which denies any such aim -- to develop the atomic bomb.

In return Iran will be granted staggered relief from painful sanctions, although the six powers are insisting that they retain the option to reimpose the restrictions if Tehran violates the deal.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini who chairs the P5+1 group -- the US, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany -- said Sunday on Twitter that these were the "decisive hours".

And a diplomatic source said Saturday as a flurry of bilateral and multilateral meetings went deep into the night that "98 percent of the text is finished".

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was meanwhile on his way to join the talks in Vienna, his ministry said.

# EU welcomes Libya's UN deal as step toward stability

AFP, Tripoli

European states yesterday welcomed a UN peace deal initialled by some Libyan factions but not the opposition as a step towards restoring stability in the lawless North African country.

Plunged into chaos since the 2011 overthrow of dictator Muammar Gaddafi, Libya has two parliaments and governments vying for power, as a slew of armed groups battle for control of its oil wealth.

The elected parliament which initialled Saturday's agreement in Morocco along with some members of political parties and civil society and local officials, is based in the eastern city of Tobruk.

The rival General National Congress is based in Tripoli and was set up by a militia alliance, including Islamists, known as Fajr Libya, after it seized the capital last August.

The two sides have been locked in months of thorny negotiations brokered by UN envoy Bernardino Leon who has been struggled to clinch a deal to set up a national unity government and hold fresh polls.

The GNC boycotted Saturday's ceremony in the Moroccan resort of Skhirat, after having said Leon's draft deal was not "satisfactory" and calling for "modifications".

The European Union and Italy welcomed the agreement as a step toward restoring peace in Libya.

The UN Security Council has urged Libyan factions to sign on to Leon's proposals in a bid to stem rising violence and the spread of radical organisations such as the Islamic State group.

The jihadists have taken advantage of the Libya's divisions to establish itself in the country, close to Europe's shores.