### France foils 'terror' attack on military

AFP, Paris

France has foiled a "terrorist" plot to capture and decapitate a member of its armed forces at a military base, officials said.

Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said security forces staged dawn raids on Monday and arrested four people, aged between 16 and 23, who were "planning to commit a terrorist act" at a French military installation.

The youngest was quickly released but the other three are suspected of planning to kidnap and behead a member of the military, possibly on December 31 when the facility was thinly staffed.

The oldest of the group served as a navy signalman at the base around the southern town of Collioure, which is also used for training by elite commando forces.

He was identified as Djebril and was recently kicked out of the navy, said a source close to the investigation who did not wish to be named.

The other key plotter was just 17, and was already being closely watched by authorities due to his activities on social media and connections to French jihadists in prison.

All three of those still under arrest had been planning to travel to jihadistcontrolled areas of Syria, the security source said, but the 17-year-old's mother contacted authorities and he was interviewed by counterterrorism officials.

No weapons were found during the arrests, the source said, although officials discovered documents on preparing explosives. The news of the arrests

followed a statement from President Francois Hollande who said attacks had been thwarted in recent days.

"This week, we stopped terrorist attacks which could have taken place," Hollande said on a visit to the southern city of Marseille.





Ukraine moves

Ukraine's parliament took

the first step yesterday

toward granting temporary

self-rule to pro-Russian

rebels under a change to the

constitution the West hopes

can end one of Europe's

deadliest wars in recent

the floor on the day law-

makers also vote on belt-

tightening measures needed

for the quick release of a \$5-

billion (4.6-billion-euro)

IMF payment that could

spare cash-strapped Kiev

activity led visiting US

Assistant Secretary of State

Victoria Nuland to call

Thursday "yet another his-

toric day" in a war-torn

country that has seen 6,500

people killed since the over-

throw of its Russian-backed

leadership in February 2014.

Ukrainian President Petro

Poroshenko later to reassure

him of Washington's back-

ing and continued focus on

the government's 15-month

fight against separatists in

the shattered industrial east.

autonomous status to rebel-

run parts of Ukraine's east

for the coming three years

has struck a note of disquiet

among many lawmakers

and much of the Kiev media.

truce agreement that

Poroshenko and Russian

President Vladimir Putin

signed off on under strong

pressure from the leaders of

Germany and France in

voted by a commanding

288-57 majority to ask

Ukraine's constitutional

court to rule whether such

changes to the basic law

on the issue before any

formal vote is held in the

EU allies believe that partial

necessary because it was a

condition being sought with

increasing urgency by both

Brussels and Washington.

weeks or months to come.

The court must weigh in

Both Washington and its

Lawmakers yesterday

February.

were legal.

But it was inscribed in a

The idea of granting

Nuland will meet

The sudden flurry of

from slipping into default.

The divisive issue came to

to give rebels

self-rule

AFP, Kiev



(From left, clockwise) A protester hurls petrol bomb on riot police in central Athens, during an anti-austerity protest on late Wednesday; Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (R) and Finance Minister Eyclid Tsakalotos react during a parliament session; and people march against the bailout deal in Athens. PHOTO: AFP

# EU moves to restore Hope, doubt, anger funding to Greece

#### Greek House backs tough bailout measures

REUTERS, Athens

Europe moved to re-open funding to Greece's stricken economy yesterday, hours after a fractious Greek parliament approved a tough bailout programme in a vote that left the government without a majority and looking to new elections within months. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras won the

backing of parliament in the early hours of yesterday for the stringent reform measures demanded by Greece's creditors led by Germany, but was left weakened by a revolt in his left-wing Syriza party. His Interior Minister, Nikos Voutsis, said

that a snap election could be held in September or October, "depending on developments".

The move by the Greek parliament was enough to persuade the European Central Bank to re-open vital funds for the Greek banking system under its Emergency Liquidity Assistance (ELA) programme, after euro zone finance ministers signalled they would unlock 7 billion euros (\$7.6 billion) in bridge loans.

"Things have changed now," ECB President Mario Draghi told a news conference in Frankfurt. "We had a series of news

with the approval of the bridge financing package, with the votes, various votes in various parliaments, which have now restored the conditions for a raise in ELA."

Draghi said the ECB would increase ELA funding by 900 million euros. But he added that it was difficult to make decisions on Greece given the constraints of a programme which was never meant to provide unlimited and unconditional support.

Finnish and Lithuanian lawmakers gave their approval to begin negotiations, a day before the German parliament is due to vote on the issue, while the European Commission said it believed an agreement on providing short-term bridge financing to Greece could come shortly.

However, German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble underlined the risks still surrounding the negotiations that will need to be conducted over the next few weeks, saying a temporary Greek "timeout' from the euro may still be a better option.

European finance ministers held a conference call on Thursday morning to agree on a plan for the 7 billion euros in bridging funds to enable Greece to meet its immediate debt service needs and avoid defaulting on a repayment to the ECB next Monday.

# after Iran nuke deal

AFP, Tehran

Washington and London yesterday sought to ease concerns over the Iran nuclear accord as the country's supreme leader warned that major powers are not to be trusted over its implementation.

As part of an international charm offensive, British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who strongly opposes the landmark accord struck on Tuesday in Vienna between Iran and world powers led by Washington.

A defiant Netanyahu has condemned it as a "historic mistake" and hinted at a possible military response.

Ahead of his arrival in Israel, Hammond charged that the Jewish state would have opposed any deal with its arch-foe Iran.

After Hammond, US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter is due in Israel next week. Israeli opposition leader Isaac Herzog is also due to visit Washington, partly to push for security guar-

In Washington, Secretary of State John Kerry was to hold talks Thursday with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir, whose government has also been alarmed about the deal with its regional rival.

President Barack Obama insisted on Wednesday the landmark agreement was the only alternative to a nuclear arms race and more war in the Middle East.

"Without a deal," Obama said, "there would be no limits to Iran's nuclear program and Iran could move closer to a nuclear bomb ... Without a deal, we risk even more war in the Middle East." While Obama defended the deal in Washington, Iran's

supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned President Hassan Rouhani that "some" world powers are not to be trusted in implementing it. In a letter to Rouhani, Khamenei, who had the final word

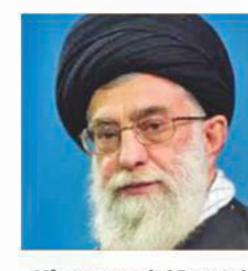
on the agreement, congratulated Iran's negotiators for "their tireless efforts". Bringing the talks to a close was a "milestone", Khamenei

said, but the agreement requires "careful scrutiny" before it is approved "You are well aware that some of the six states participating

in negotiations are not trustworthy at all," Khamenei said.



only alternative to more Mideast war

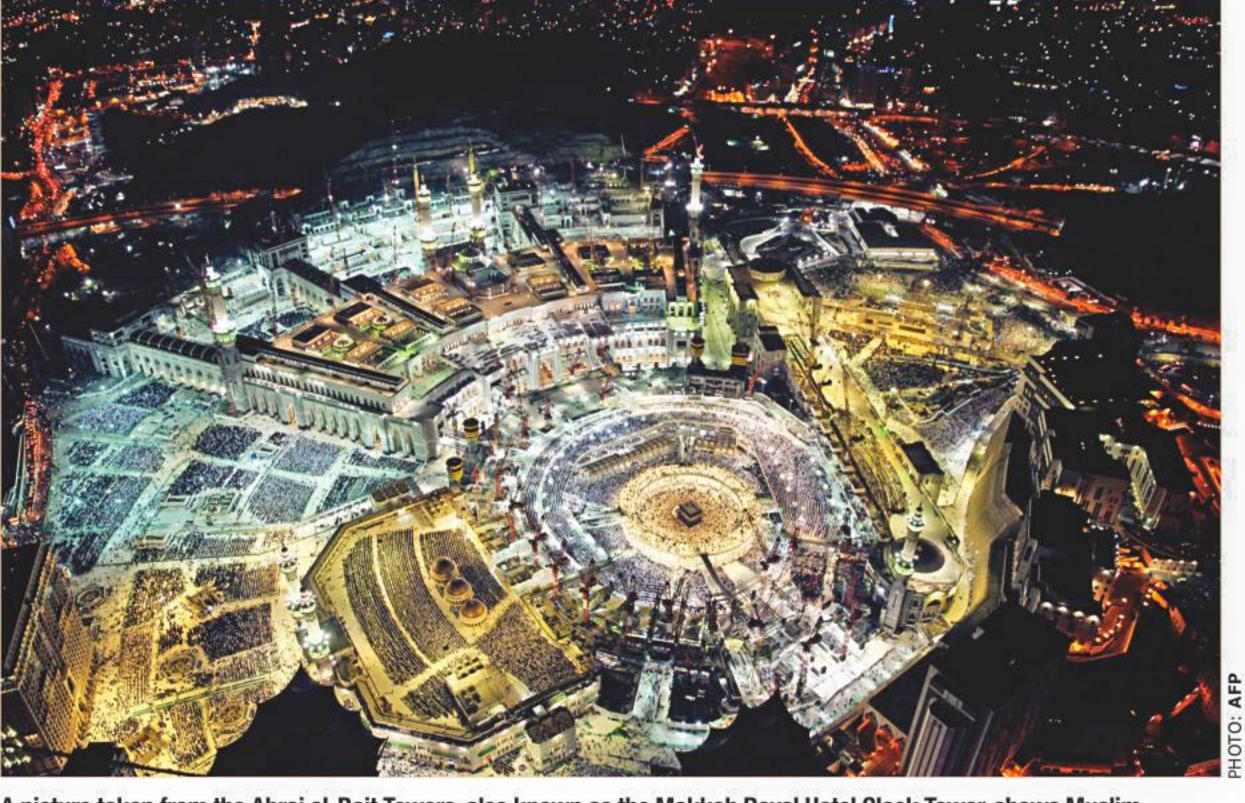


Khamenei: 'Some' world powers untrustworthy





Hammond: Israel wants a 'permanent stand-off' with Iran



A picture taken from the Abraj al-Bait Towers, also known as the Makkah Royal Hotel Clock Tower, shows Muslim worshipers praying at the Grand Mosque in the Muslim holy city of Makkah yesterday, a day before the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. The Grand Mosque, which contains Islam's holiest site the Kaaba, can now hold 1.85 million people.

## Loyalists vie to secure Yemen's Aden for exiled govt return

AFP, Aden

Loyalist forces battled to oust Iran-backed rebels from their remaining positions in Yemen's second city Aden yesterday as exiled ministers prepared to return to assess the damage from four months of fighting.

The planned visit by the three ministers would be the first since the Huthi rebels and their allies entered the southern port city in March forcing President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi and his government into exile in neighbouring Saudi Arabia.

Since the launch of Operation Golden Arrow on Tuesday, Hadi's loyalists have recaptured Aden airport and much of the surrounding Khormaksar diplomatic district, as well as the provincial government headquarters, in their biggest counteroffensive so far. Southern militiamen of the Popular Resistance, backed by reinforce-

ments freshly trained and equipped in Saudi Arabia, have also gained ground in the Crater and Mualla districts of the city. The rebels attempted to bring in reinforcements from the central province of Baida overnight but they were bombed by a Saudi-led coalition

which has been waging an air campaign against them since March. Coalition warplanes also bombed rebel positions on Aden's northern and eastern outskirts and in other districts of the city, military sources and

witnesses said. Pro-government fighters were using loudspeakers on Thursday to offer the remaining rebels in Crater, Mualla and Khormaksar safe passage out of the city if they surrender, local officials said.

The loyalists overwhelmed rebels who had been holed up in the Chinese consulate in Khormaksar and freed 22 of their comrades who had been held captive, Popular Resistance spokesman Ali al-Ahmadi told AFP.

### 'Israeli commandos' killed Syrian official

Reveals leaked US files

**BBC ONLINE** 

Israeli special forces were responsible for the assassination of a Syrian military official in 2008, a leaked US intelligence file

Brig Gen Mohammed Suleiman was shot by a sniper while at a beach resort near the Mediterranean port of Tartous.

Israel has never commented publicly on suspicions that it was involved. But a document leaked to The Intercept website by American whistleblower Edward Snowden says Israeli naval commandos were behind the shooting.

Former US intelligence officers said its classification markings indicated the National Security Agency (NSA), for which Snowden worked as a contractor, had made the discovery through monitoring Israeli communications.

Arab media reported at the time of Suleiman's killing said he was shot in the head and neck by a sniper on board a yacht on the night of 1 August 2008 while he was having dinner at his beachfront home.

