

NEWSIN brief

Japan 'expands military's role' Parliament enacts controversial security laws; China says move 'threat' to regional peace



GREECE POLLS Tsipras regains slim lead ahead of today's vote

AFP, Athens

Greece's election hung on a knife-edge yesterday as radical former premier Alexis Tsipras retook a slight lead in the final hours of a tight race against the conservatives for the helm of government.

Hours before a midnight ban on voter surveys, four polls forecast victory for Tsipras over conservative party chief Vangelis Meimarakis by margins ranging from 0.7 to 3.0 percentage points.

A September 20 victory for Syriza would deliver "a key message for Europe", Tsipras told his closing rally in Athens on Friday, referring to the refugee crisis and to EU economic woes.

"Do we want a Europe of austerity or one of solidarity and democracy?" he said.

Meimarakis warned voters against re-electing a man who has publicly admitted to opposing the bailout he signed.

Tsipras won office in January on an anti-austerity ticket but then upset supporters in July with a U-turn cash-for-reforms deal struck with Greece's international creditors despite a huge "no" vote in a referendum on the issue.

Ballots open at 0400 GMT today and close exactly 12 hours later.

The vote is expected to deliver a hung parliament, though, and with both Syriza and New Democracy having pledged to stick to the cash-for-reforms package, there will likely be more unpopular austerity on the way whoever ends up in charge.

AGENCIES

Japan's parliament yesterday voted into law a defence policy shift that could let troops fight overseas for the first time since 1945, a milestone in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's push to loosen the limits of the pacifist constitution on the military.

China reacted strongly, accusing Tokyo of threatening regional peace, saying that its rival should learn "profound lessons from history".

Japan's ruling coalition, led by nationalist Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, pushed the laws through in the early hours yesterday after days of tortuous debate that at times descended into physical scuffles in parliament.

For the first time in 70 years, the new laws will give the government the power to send the military into overseas conflicts to defend allies, even if Japan itself is not under attack.

China's defence ministry yesterday said the reforms had "aroused grave concern among its own citizens, Asian neighbouring countries and the international society," state media reported.

A Xinhua editorial added that Japan's new security bills "not only broke Japan's promise to the world after World War II, but also betrayed its own people".

Japan's nationalist premier has argued the laws are necessary to protect against



threats from what it views as an increasingly belligerent China and unstable North Korea, but opponents fear the vague wording could see Japan dragged into far-flung foreign wars.

But South Korea also called on Japan to remember the need for transparency in implementing its new defence policy "while maintaining the spirit of the pacifist constitution," its foreign ministry said in a statement cited by the Yonhap news agency.

Abe has faced bitter opposition at home

over the changes, which have seen his popularity slump, and opposition lawmakers have vowed to do everything in their power to fight them.

"This is not an end," said Renho, a senior lawmaker from the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan, who goes by one name.

"Let's make it the beginning of the beginning," she said on Twitter.

Mizuho Fukushima, a senior lawmaker from the Social Democratic Party, told a

crowd of more than ten thousand who gathered outside parliament during the debate: "Abe's cabinet criminals... Let's get them out of here."

Speaking after the vote, Abe said the changes were "necessary in order to protect people's lives and peaceful way of life".

"This is designed to prevent wars," he told journalists.

Abe had been unable to muster support to amend the pacifist constitution and instead opted to "re-interpret" the meaning of self-defence in order to push through the new laws, but the move has sparked a groundswell of opposition not seen for decades in Japan.

A hard-core group of some 300 protesters gathered outside parliament yesterday, calling for the legislation to be abolished and vowing never to stop their fight against Abe.

Legal scholars have argued the legislation violates Japan's pacifist constitution, imposed by the US after World War II, and several groups yesterday said they were preparing to challenge the new laws.

Susumu Murakoshi, chairman of the 36,000-strong national bar association, yesterday criticised the government for going against the will of the people and pledged to see the changes abolished.

The laws have "left a black stain on the history of Japan as a constitutional democracy," he said in a statement.

US says Assad has to go Kerry urges Russia, Iran to convince him to step aside

REUTERS, London

US Secretary of State John Kerry yesterday said Syria's President Bashar al-Assad has to go but the timing of his departure should be decided through negotiation.

Speaking after talks with British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond in London, Kerry called on Russia and Iran to use their influence over Assad to convince him to negotiate a political transition.

Kerry said the United States welcomed Russia's involvement in tackling the Islamic State in Syria but a worsening refugee crisis underscored the need to find a compromise that could also lead to political change in the country.

"We need to get to the negotiation. That is what we're looking for and we hope Russia and Iran, and any other countries with influence, will help to bring about that, because that's what is preventing this crisis from ending," said Kerry.

"We're prepared to negotiate. Is Assad prepared to negotiate, really negotiate? Is

Russia prepared to bring him to the table?"

Russia's buildup at Syria's Latakia airbase has raised the possibility of air combat missions in Syrian airspace. Heavy Russian equipment, including tanks, helicopters and naval infantry forces, have been moved to Latakia, US officials say.

Kerry said of Assad's removal: "For the last year and a half we have said Assad has to go, but how long and what the modality is...that's a decision that has to be made in the context of the Geneva process and negotiation."

Kerry said he did not have a specific time frame in mind for Assad to stay. "I just know that the people of Syria have already spoken with their feet. They're leaving Syria."

Hammond, who on Sept 9 said Britain could accept Assad staying in place for a transition period, said Assad could not be part of Syria's long-term future "but the modality and timing has to be part of a political solution that allows us to move forward."

Qaeda in Syria executes 56 regime troops

AFP, Beirut

Al-Qaeda's Syria affiliate and its Islamist allies have executed at least 56 regime troops at a military airport they recently seized in the northwest, a monitoring group said yesterday.

Al-Nusra Front and the Islamists shot dead the regime fighters, who were being held as prisoners, "execution-style" inside the Abu Duhur airport, said Rami Abdel Rahman, director of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

He said the killings in Idlib province had occurred earlier this week but his monitoring group -- which gathers news from sources on the ground -- confirmed them yesterday.

Turkish jets hit Kurdish camps in Iraq; 55 killed

AFP, Diyarbakir

At least 55 militants were killed when Turkish warplanes hit Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) camps in northern Iraq overnight, security sources said yesterday, as Ankara shows no sign of easing up strikes on insurgents ahead of a Nov. 1 election.

The jets took off from a base in Diyarbakir, in Turkey's southeast, and later returned without damage, the sources said.

Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast has been hit by almost daily waves of deadly fighting between PKK militants and security forces since the collapse of a ceasefire in July.

Security forces have responded by launching frequent bombing raids into mountainous northern Iraq where the PKK has camps. It is the worst violence NATO member Turkey has seen in two decades, coinciding with fighting across the border in Syria involving government troops and Islamic State militants.

The PKK began its separatist insurgency in 1984, triggering a conflict that has killed more than 40,000 people. The group, which says it is now fighting for greater Kurdish autonomy, is designated a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the European Union and the United States.

Corbyn unlikely to be elected UK PM: poll

REUTERS, London

Almost three in four people do not believe that the new leader of Britain's opposition Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, looks like a prime minister-in-waiting, according to a poll published in The Independent newspaper yesterday. Corbyn, a veteran left-winger, opponent of austerity and anti-war campaigner, was elected as the leader of the Labour Party last Saturday.



(From left, clockwise) Alameddin, a 13-year-old Syrian boy plays the violin in front of a police barricade as he march with other migrants on a highway near Edirne yesterday, on their way to the border between Turkey and Greece; a man climbs through the window as refugees struggle to get on a train from Gyor to Hegyeshalom in Hungary; and Afghan refugees swim frantically ashore after their dinghy with a broken engine drifted out of control off the Greek island of Lesbos while crossing a part of the Aegean Sea from the Turkish coast.



PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

Sisi swears in new Egypt government

REUTERS, Cairo

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi kept his finance, investment and interior ministers in a new government sworn in yesterday as he tries to rebuild an economy battered by Islamist militant violence.

Sisi named former head of the state oil company Tarek al-Mullah as petroleum minister, charged with easing the country's energy crisis and attracting more foreign investment in a strategic sector.

Mullah succeeds Sherif Ismail, seen as one of the best-performing ministers, who became prime minister.

The new government faces many challenges. Islamic State, which seized large parts of Iraq and Syria, has gained the backing of the most active militant group in Egypt, the recently renamed Sinai Province.

Militants have stepped up attacks on Egyptian soldiers and police since the army toppled Islamist President Mohamed Mursi in 2013 after mass protests against his rule. Hundreds have been killed in bombing and shooting attacks.

Egypt is struggling to get large volumes of foreign investment after years of political turmoil triggered by the 2011 uprising that toppled autocrat Hosni Mubarak, even though Sisi's economic reforms have won praise.

The new cabinet includes 16 new ministers out of 33 in total but few important posts were handed to newcomers. The defence, foreign and justice ministers all kept their jobs as did most economy-related ministers such as planning and supplies.

African Union suspends Burkina Faso

AFP, Ouagadougou

The African Union on Friday suspended Burkina Faso and slapped sanctions on the leaders of its military coup as troops tried to stop protesters from marching on the capital's Revolution Square.

The 54-member bloc also imposed a travel ban and asset freeze on the junta's leaders, with Uganda's representative denouncing the kidnapping of Burkina's interim leaders on Wednesday as a "terrorist" act.

The latest coup was orchestrated by an elite army unit loyal to deposed president Blaise Compaore who claim that interim president Michel Kafando was excluding Compaore's supporters from the upcoming October 11 polls.

15 killed as Saudi-led planes pound Sanaa

AFP, Sanaa

Air raids by Saudi-led coalition warplanes killed 15 people in Yemen's capital in one of the heaviest nights of bombardment in months, aid workers and witnesses said yesterday.

One rescuer told AFP that at least 10 civilians were among the dead. "Ten members of the same family were killed in the Al-Falihin neighbourhood, in Sanaa's old town," he said.

Residents said four houses were destroyed by a bomb and that 15 other buildings were damaged in the strikes. Witnesses said five Iran-backed Huthi rebels were killed in a raid on their position in the capital, which the Shia fighters seized unopposed last year.

A Saudi-led coalition has conducted air strikes on rebel positions across Yemen since March and has provided troops, training and heavy weapons to forces seeking to reinstate the government of exiled President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi.

Residents of Sanaa's Al-Hassaba neighbourhood said coalition jets conducted several sorties overnight, targeting an interior ministry building and a police station.

A residence of ousted president Ali Abdullah Saleh, whose forces have allied with the Huthis, was also bombed, as well as an office of his political party, according to residents.

The insurgents still control the capital but have lost ground in the south since July when the coalition sent in armour, troops and Yemeni fighters trained in Saudi Arabia.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Fire Service & Civil Defence Directorate Kazi Alauddin Road, Dhaka

Memo No. FS&CD/Foreign/Unna Chha-05/2015-2016/9156 Date: 14/09/2015

Invitation for Tenders

Table with 2 columns: Item No. and Description. Contains details for tendering for fire fighting appliances.

Table with 5 columns: Tender inquiry No., Description of Fire Fighting Appliances, Quantity, Cost of tender documents (Tk.), and Tender security (Tk.).

- Informational text regarding tender procedures, including participation rules, document requirements, and submission details.

Signature block for Lt. Col. Mohammad Musharaf Hossain, Director (Planning, Development & Training), Fire Service & Civil Defence Directorate, Dhaka.