

### Brazil joins 'high ambition coalition'

AFP, Le Bourget  
Brazil said Friday it had joined the European Union, United States and 79 developing nations in a group calling for a far-reaching deal at UN climate-saving talks in Paris. The informal "high ambition coalition", announced by the European Union during the 195-nation conference in Paris this week, includes more than half of the countries of the world but is not a formal negotiating bloc. Nevertheless, the alliance is calling for a legally binding, fair, durable agreement in Paris that must set a long-term goal, be reviewed every five years and include a system for tracking progress. Brazil is the first major emerging economy to join the group.

"If you want to tackle climate change, you need ambition and political will," Brazil's Foreign Minister Izabella Teixeira said in a statement. "Brazil proudly supports the high ambition coalition and pledges our political support to this effort."

Among the major players absent from the so-called high ambition coalition are India and China. India in particular has balked at moving toward the higher end of the spectrum on all these goals. However, the "high ambition coalition" members are not united on some key points, including on how the rich nations should mobilise finances for the developing world to pay for the cost of climate change.



Environmentalists demonstrate near the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, France, as the World Climate Change Conference 2015 (COP21) continues at Le Bourget, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

## End of fossil fuel era nears

AFP, Le Bourget

A global accord to tame global warming pending approval at UN talks in Paris yesterday would be a huge blow to the fossil-fuel industry, Greenpeace and other prominent environment groups said.

"The wheel of climate action turns slowly, but in Paris it has turned. This deal puts the fossil fuel industry on the wrong side of history," Greenpeace International executive director Kumi Naidoo said. Greenpeace, major green groups and climate change researchers gave a mixed report card on the many details in the planned accord.

But they emphasised that by striving to limit warming to 1.5 degrees C (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-Industrial Revolution temperatures, the draft accord would have an impact. "That single number, and the new goal of net zero emissions by the second half of this century, will cause consternation in the boardrooms of coal companies and the palaces of oil-exporting states," Naidoo predicted.

### KEY POINTS OF FINAL DRAFT DEAL

- Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.
- Parties aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, recognizing that peaking will take longer for developing country Parties, and to undertake rapid reductions thereafter in accordance with



best available science, so as to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century, on the basis of equity, and in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.

■ Prior to 2025 the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement shall set a new collective quantified goal from a floor of 100 billion dollars per year, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries.

Researchers and activists declared that the agreement, if it is adopted by ministers, would make history. May Boeve, executive director of 350.org, an organisation pressing financial institutions to divest from fossil fuels, also said the 1.5C reference was key. "This marks the end of the era of fossil fuels. There is no way to meet the targets laid out in this agreement without keeping coal, oil and gas in the

ground," Boeve said. "The text should send a clear signal to fossil fuel investors: divest now." But Tim Gore, policy director at British charity Oxfam, said the attaining 1.5C would require an unprecedented global effort. The emissions reduction plans submitted by some 185 nations ahead of the talks have put Earth on a path to least about 3.0C degrees of warming.

### Anger as human rights reference scrapped

AGENCIES  
Strongly held positions are frequently traded away or dropped by governments out of necessity in the last hours of international negotiations. But the removal of all reference to human rights in the final draft of the Paris climate agreement has dismayed leaders of nearly all the myriad civil society groups pressing for a strong outcome.

According to observers, Britain, Norway, the US and a small group of developed countries actively blocked inclusion of any mention of human rights in the text in retaliation for developing countries' refusal to give ground on a part of the text called "loss and damage".

Groups representing development, environment, young people, indigenous peoples, trade unions, women, and others, have all reacted angrily, calling the move "highly contentious" and "cynical".

"What we feared about the text has happened - it is an agreement that is good for the US and bad for the developing world. It says there should be a 'shared effort', which means both poor and wealthy countries are responsible for providing climate finance - this is totally a rewriting of the existing climate convention. This is indeed what the US and other developed countries have been pushing for for years," said Meena Raman, from the Third World Network.

### END IN SIGHT: THE LONG BATTLE AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING

A Paris deal came after a near three decade-long effort to rein in dangerous planetary warming. Here are the key events:

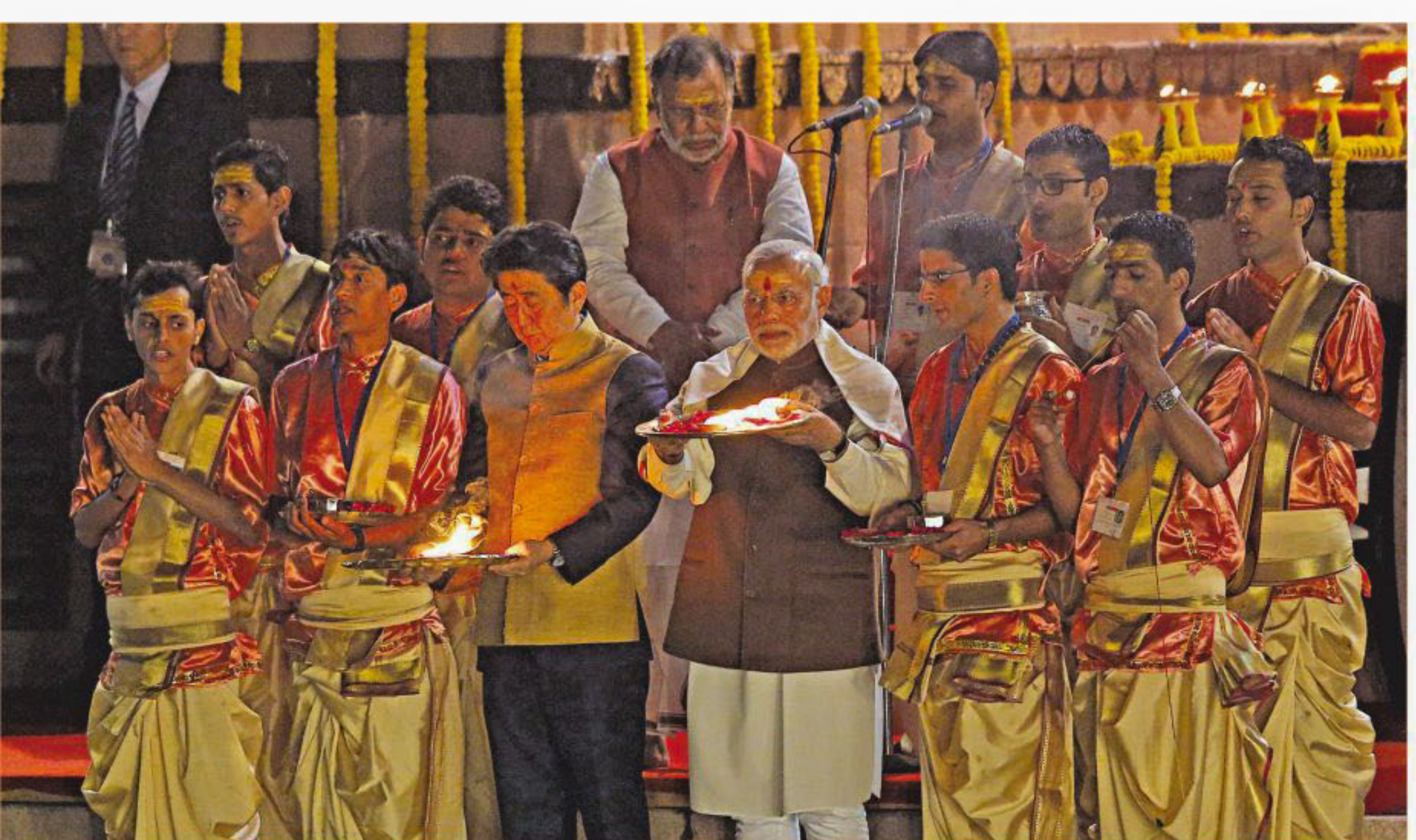
**CLIMATE ALARM**  
Alerted by scientists to signs that Earth's climate is warming, the UN establishes an international panel of scientists in 1988 to investigate. Two years later, the team reports that greenhouse gases generated by human activity are on the rise, and could intensify global warming. In a series of reports, evidence accumulates that human activity - voracious burning of coal, oil and gas and destructive farming practices - is warming Earth's surface and disrupting its climate system.

**FIRST RESPONSE**  
A UN "Earth Summit" held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 sets up a convention with the aim of stabilising greenhouse gas emissions to prevent "dangerous" interference with the climate system. All signatories - now 195 nations - have met every year since then in a gathering known as the Conference of Parties to chase that elusive goal.

**A DEAL IN JAPAN**  
Finally, in 1997, nations reach an agreement in Kyoto, Japan, after all-night talks in a chilly conference centre, setting a 2008-2012 timeframe for industrialised nations to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by an average 5.2 percent from 1990 levels. Developing countries, including fast-growing China, India and Brazil, are not required to take on binding targets. Four years later, the world's then-leading carbon emitter, the United States, deals the protocol a body blow by refusing to ratify it. George W. Bush says the deal is unfair as it lets developing giants off the hook. Nevertheless, the Kyoto Protocol takes effect in 2005 following its ratification by Russia - the 55th signatory needed.

**EVIDENCE MOUNTS**  
A year later, China overtakes the United States to become the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter. And in 2007, the UN's climate science panel reports that evidence of global warming is now "unequivocal". It forecasts warming of 1.8-4.0 Celsius (3.2-7.2F) by 2100 and a rise in sea levels of at least 18 centimetres (7.2 inches). The report also warns that extreme weather events will probably multiply. In October 2007, the scientific team share the Nobel Peace Prize with former US vice president Al Gore, but its reputation is later tarnished by revelations that its most recent report contains several errors.

**FROM COPENHAGEN COLLAPSE, TO PARIS**  
It is still the stuff of climate envoys' nightmares. The 2009 Copenhagen conference seeking a post-2012 agreement to replace Kyoto, is a near-catastrophe. Rather than the first climate pact to include all UN nations, the outcome is a watered-down, last-minute political "accord" among several dozen major emitters. The document sets a goal of limiting average global warming to 2C (3.6 F) but is vague on the method. Importantly, however, it enshrines a promise by rich countries to muster \$100 billion (91 billion euros) in climate aid for developing countries per year by 2020. In 2014, the science panel warns that average global temperatures by the end of the 21st century could be 3.7-4.8C (6.7-8.6F) higher than in the period 1850-1900 if nothing is done to ease the upward emissions trend. In December 2015, 150 heads of state and government converge on Paris to launch a new attempt to reach a universal greenhouse gas-cutting accord.



Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (front, 3rd L) and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi perform a religious ritual during evening prayers on the banks of the river Ganges in Varanasi, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Modi, Abe bolster ties

India to get Japan's bullet train; defence and nuclear deals signed

REUTERS, New Delhi  
Japan will provide \$12 billion of soft loans to build India's first bullet train, the two nations announced during a visit by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that also yielded deeper defence ties and a plan for civil nuclear cooperation.

Relations have strengthened between Asia's second and third largest economies as Abe and Indian counterpart Narendra Modi seek to balance China's rise as the dominant Asian power. Both men are nationalists who enjoy a personal friendship. The deal to build a high-speed train line between the financial hub of Mumbai and the city of Ahmedabad gives Japan an early lead over China, which is conducting feasibility studies for high speed trains on other parts of India's dilapidated rail network. "This enterprise will launch a revolu-

tion in Indian railways and speed up India's journey into the future. It will become an engine of economic transformation in India," Modi said in a speech. Japan has offered a "highly concessional loan" at an interest rate of 0.1 percent rate with repayment over 50 years and a moratorium for 15 years, Indian Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar told a news conference. India will be buying a Japanese high-speed train system, effectively with an export credit of \$12 billion. Under defence deals, two sides will share technology, equipment and military information, but the long-awaited sale of Japanese aircraft in a deal worth about \$1.1 billion was not concluded. Similarly, while they agreed to work towards cooperation in civil-nuclear technology, they stopped short of signing an agreement, citing outstanding technical and legal differences. Jaishankar did not cite a timeline for signing the final agreement with Japan. Japan, the only country to have suffered a nuclear attack, has been demanding additional non-proliferation guarantees from India before it exports nuclear reactors. India and Japan have been negotiating a nuclear energy deal since Japan's ally, the United States, opened the way for nuclear commerce with India despite its atomic bomb programme and shunning of the global Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).



US, Cuba renew postal service after 52 yrs

AFP, Havana  
The United States and Cuba have agreed to restore direct postal service 52 years after severing it at the height of the Cold War, the Cuban foreign ministry said Friday. It said the "pilot plan" would take effect "in the coming weeks" and then be rolled out permanently. The news comes six days from the first anniversary of the historic announcement by Presidents Barack Obama and Raul Castro that the two countries would renew diplomatic ties after more than half a century. The two nations reopened embassies in each other's capitals in July.

## Thai junta critic held over Facebook 'like'

AFP, Bangkok  
A Thai man who "liked" a doctored photo of the country's king on Facebook is being held incommunicado at a military base, the ruling junta said yesterday, as rights groups warned he risked becoming another victim of "enforced disappearance." Thanakorn Siripaiboon, 27, was arrested earlier this week and charged with sedition, lese majeste and computer crimes for clicking "like" on a photo of the king and sharing it, plus an infographic on a corruption scandal, with around 600 friends. "He is under military custody," Colonel Burin Thongprapai, junta legal officer, told AFP Saturday,

adding that he would be remanded at a military court Monday. "He is well and in good condition," he added. Under Thai law anyone convicted of insulting the revered but ailing 88-year-old Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej, and the queen, heir or regent can face up to 15 years in jail on each count. Prosecutions have soared since the army, which tags itself as the champion of the monarchy, grabbed power last year. In the last two months, at least two people - including the celebrity fortune teller of the crown prince - have died in custody after being charged with lese majeste following secrecy-shrouded investigations.

## 87 killed in a day of violence in Burundi

BBC ONLINE  
Eighty-seven people were killed in violence that broke out after three military sites were attacked in Burundi on Friday, the army says. Eight of those who died were security officers and 49 people were captured, Col Gaspard Baratuza said. Residents in the capital earlier said the bodies of some 34 men were found on the streets and accused police of taking revenge. It is not clear if that number is included in the army's total. Unrest has hit Burundi since April. There have been continued protests since President Pierre Nkurunziza announced his decision to seek a third term in office, which he won in a disputed election in July. Friday saw some of the worst violence since the unrest began. Officials described heavily armed attackers launching coordinated early morning assaults on army installations in three areas, Ngagara, Musaga and Mujejuru. Fighting could then be heard throughout

the day and sporadic gunfire continued overnight. Residents said dozens of men were rounded up as their homes were raided, and many of their bodies were found on the streets of the capital yesterday morning. The largest number of bodies were found in Nyakabiga district, a focus of anti-government protests. Others were discovered in the southern neighbourhood of Musaga. One witness told the AFP news agency that some of the victims were "kids" and had been shot execution-style "through the top of the skull". BBC Africa analyst Richard Hamilton says bodies on the streets are almost a daily occurrence in Bujumbura but this was by far the largest number of deaths in one night. Col Gaspard Baratuza, giving details of the final toll, said that "79 enemies" were killed, "45 captured and 97 weapons seized and on our side eight soldiers and policemen were killed and 21 wounded".

### NEWS IN brief

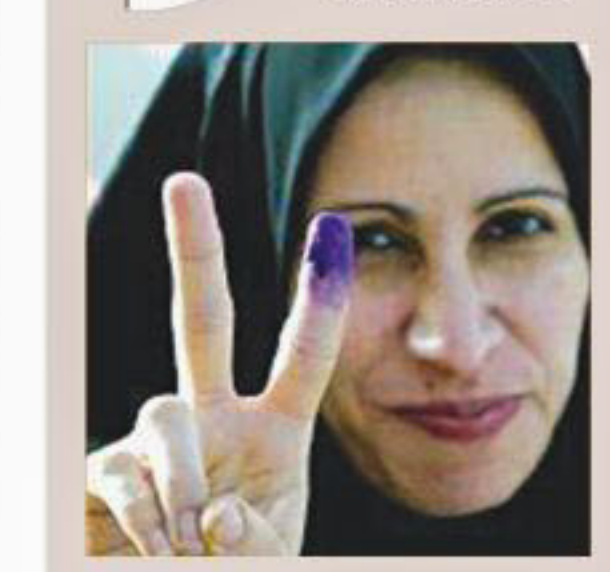
**Kerry to head to Moscow for talks**  
AFP, Paris  
US Secretary of State John Kerry will head to Moscow on Tuesday on a delicate diplomatic mission to try to keep the fragile Syrian peace process on track. In a sign of the complexity of the US-Russian relationship, the State Department said Kerry would meet President Vladimir Putin but the Kremlin would not confirm this. Kerry will also raise the issue of Ukraine, sources said.

**Gambia declared Islamic republic**  
BBC ONLINE  
Gambian President Yahya Jammeh has declared his Muslim-majority country an Islamic republic, saying the move marks a break with the colonial past. He added that no dress code would be imposed and citizens of other faiths would be allowed to practise freely. Some 90% of Gambians are Muslim. Jammeh has been president of the tiny West African country for 21 years.

**Iraq turns to UNSC over Turkish troops**  
AFP, United Nations  
Iraq has turned to the United Nations Security Council to complain about the deployment of Turkish troops to the country's north, the US envoy said Friday. The deployment of several hundred troops by Turkey in Bashiga, close to an area held by Islamic State extremists in northern Iraq, has enraged Baghdad, which has asked Ankara to withdraw all its forces, saying they entered the country illegally without its consent.

**Koreas end talks with no apparent deal**  
AFP, Seoul  
North and South Korea yesterday wrapped up two days of rare, high-level talks aimed at easing cross-border tensions, with no agreement and no set date for further discussions. The vice-minister-level talks, with a mandate to address a broad but unspecified range of inter-Korean issues, were the first of their type for nearly two years.

### 9 THINGS SAUDI WOMEN STILL CAN'T DO



Saudi women yesterday voted for the first time in elections but still face a host of other restrictions, among the tightest in the world. Under Saudi policies and practices women cannot:

1. Drive, Saudi Arabia is the world's only country banning women from getting behind the wheel.
  2. Travel, without the consent of a male family member known as a guardian
  3. Marry, without the consent of a guardian
  4. Work, without the consent of a guardian
  5. Appear in public without covering herself in a black abaya robe from head to toe
  6. Receive the same amount of inheritance as a man
  7. Work in certain jobs
  8. Mingle with unrelated men in public places such as restaurants
  9. Divorce as easily as a man
- SOURCE: AFP

## Trump holds lead despite outrage

REUTERS, Washington, New York

Donald Trump held onto his commanding lead in the Republican race for the White House after his call for a ban on Muslims entering the United States was condemned worldwide, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll, the first national survey conducted entirely after the billionaire's remarks. Trump led the pack of candidates seeking the Republican Party's nomination in the 2016 election with 35 percent of support from Republican voters, the opinion poll released on Friday found, the same lead he held before Monday, when he said Muslim immigrants, students and other travelers should be barred from entering the country. Most Republican voters said they were not bothered by his remarks, though many said the comments could still hurt Trump's chances of becoming president. Twenty-nine percent of Republicans, who will pick the party's nominee for the November 2016 election, said they found Trump's remarks offensive against 64 percent who did not. "He's really saying what everybody else is feeling," said Donna Fee, 57, a personal caregiver from Missouri. Fee, a Republican, said she supports Trump and agreed with his proposal to bar Muslims. But she said his bluntness could hurt him with other voters. Still, in a sign of how Trump's rhetoric has polarized the electorate, 72 percent of Democrats and 47 percent of voters overall said they were offended by Trump's comments. Retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson came in second among Republicans with 12 percent in the Reuters/Ipsos poll, and US Senator Ted Cruz of Texas and former Florida Governor Jeb Bush tied with 10 percent.

