

# IS RECRUITING CLAIM Trump calls Hillary Clinton a liar

REUTERS, Washington

US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said on Sunday that Democrat Hillary Clinton was a "liar" for claiming that his proposal to ban entry of all foreign Muslims into the United States has aided Islamic State's propaganda efforts.

Speaking on NBC's "Meet the Press," Trump said Clinton had no evidence to back up a charge she made during a debate on Saturday that the Republican frontrunner is becoming the extremist group's "best recruiter."

"She's a liar and everybody knows that," Trump said. "She just made this up in thin air."

Trump's call to ban all Muslims from entering the United States following a Jan. 2 attack in San Bernardino, California that killed 14 people has drawn widespread criticism from Republican rivals as well as Democrats like Clinton.

During Saturday night's Democratic debate, Clinton said Islamic State is using Trump's rhetoric to enlist fighters to radical jihad.

"They are going to people, showing videos of Donald Trump insulting Islam and Muslims in order to recruit more radical jihadists," the Democratic frontrunner said.

Counterterrorism experts and Reuters reporters who monitor Islamist online activity have found no evidence so far that Islamic State has mentioned Trump in its official online accounts.



Afghan National Army soldiers adjust their equipment in Helmand yesterday as the Taliban pressed an offensive to capture a key district in the southern province.

PHOTO: AFP

## JUVENILE GANG RAPIST Delhi court rejects plea to stop release

AFP, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court yesterday rejected an appeal against the release of the youngest convict in a fatal gang-rape, sparking fury from the victim's parents who said the ruling was a betrayal of women.

Amid growing outrage at the freeing of the 20-year-old, judges said there were no legal grounds to allow a petition by the Delhi Commission for Women, which wanted to reverse his release from a youth correctional facility.

At a hearing presided over by Justice A K Goel and U U Lalit, the court said "there is nothing in the law" that would allow them to order him back behind bars and he therefore could not be detained any longer.

# Fierce fight for Helmand

## Afghan Taliban gains ground in Sangin district of the province

AFP, Kandahar

Clashes intensified yesterday as the Taliban pressed an offensive to capture a key district in Helmand's opium-growing heartland, a day after an official warned the entire southern Afghan province was on the brink of collapse.

Local residents reported crippling food shortages in Sangin district, long seen as a hornet's nest of insurgent activity, after the Taliban began storming government buildings on Sunday.

"The Taliban have captured the police headquarters, the governor's office as well as the intelligence agency building in Sangin," deputy Helmand governor Mohammad Jan Rasoolyar told AFP.

"Fighting is escalating in the district."

Rasoolyar's comments come a day after he posted a desperate plea on Facebook to President Ashraf Ghani, warning the entire province was at risk

- Helmand's deputy governor earlier used Facebook to plead for help in holding off the group
- Taliban bomber kills six Nato soldiers near Kabul

of falling to the Taliban.

The grim assessment bore striking similarities to the security situation that led to the brief fall of the northern city of Kunduz in September -- the biggest Taliban victory in 14 years of war.

The fall of Helmand would deal another stinging blow to Afghan forces who have struggled to rein in the ascendant insurgency after the US-led Nato combat mission ended a year ago.

Meanwhile, at least six foreign soldiers were killed yesterday when a

Taliban suicide bomber on a motorcycle attacked a joint Nato-Afghan patrol near Bagram airbase outside Kabul, officials said.

"The attack left six coalition soldiers dead and two others wounded. Three Afghan policemen were also injured in the attack," said Mohammad Asem, governor of Parwan province where the airfield is located.

A security official in Bagram district gave a higher toll, saying five foreign soldiers had been killed and six others had been wounded. The nationalities of the troops were not immediately known.

In a brief statement Nato confirmed the attack but gave no details. "There has been a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack in the vicinity of Bagram Air Field. At this time, the incident is under investigation," it said.

The Taliban claimed responsibility, with a spokesman claiming on Twitter

## SPAIN ELECTION

# Tough talks ahead after historic result

BBC ONLINE

Spain's political parties are facing a struggle to form a stable government after a historic election that broke the traditional two-party dominance.

The incumbent conservatives took most votes, but the surge of two new forces stripped it of its majority. King Felipe VI will now talk to all parties before nominating a candidate for PM, who must then win a vote of approval in the hung parliament.



- Ruling PP win most votes, but well short of majority
- Socialists second, Podemos third, Ciudadanos fourth
- Left-wing parties gain most clout
- Split results points to weeks of deal-making

For decades the conservative Popular Party (PP), now led by incumbent PM Mariano Rajoy, and the Socialists (PSOE) had dominated the Spanish political scene. But a surge of support for the anti-austerity Podemos party and the centrist Ciudadanos has broken the mould.

The PP took 28.72% of the vote in Sunday's election, the PSOE 22.01%, Podemos 20.66% and Ciudadanos 13.93%.

In the 350-seat parliament this translates to: PP (123); PSOE (90); Podemos (69); Ciudadanos (40). Rajoy's immediate reaction was to insist his party was "still the number one force" and he would attempt to form an administration.

Socialist leader Pedro Sanchez was equally adamant that Spain wanted "a move to the left".

Although he acknowledged Rajoy had won the right to have the first attempt at forming a government, the Socialists made it clear they would not back a Rajoy-led government. This is the beginning of a new, multi-party era in Spain. The unrivalled dominance of the PP and the Socialists, who alternated in power for 32 years, always with parliamentary majorities, is over.

Compromise and co-operation, so fundamental in Spain's transition to democracy at the end of the 1970s, but generally absent in much of the political discourse since, will have to become the new watchwords of Spanish politics. A PP-led government, or one led by the Socialists, will require long and complicated negotiations.

The new parties, particularly Podemos, would surely demand radical changes in the way Spain is governed and in economic policy, before risking being a junior partner in



Physics teacher Wu Guangguo sits in an empty laboratory as he teaches a class during an online course at Jingshan School, on a smoggy day under a "red alert" for air pollution, in Beijing China yesterday. Schools are recommended to close and outdoor construction is banned under "red alert" for smog.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Syrian's 7-hour swim to new life

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A desperate Syrian refugee has revealed how he braved massive waves and deadly currents to swim for seven hours to reach Greece from Turkey.

Ameer Mehter explained he did not have enough money to pay smugglers to transport him to Europe after his family lost their home and were left penniless as a result of the five-year civil war ravaging his homeland.

Having previously trained with the Syrian national swimming team in the capital Damascus, Mehter realised his only chance of starting a new life in the EU was to take his chances swimming the four miles across the Aegan Sea from

Turkey to the Greek island of Samos.

The refugee, whose age was not clear, spent several months preparing for the perilous crossing, training nearly every day with a swimming coach in the sea off the coast of Lebanese capital Beirut, where he had been living after fleeing Syria in May.

It was not until September that he felt ready to attempt the crossing, having spent time studying maps of the Aegan to work out the shortest route between Turkey and Samos.

On the night he finally took to the water near the town of Guzelcamli, Mehter said he had to run for more than an hour to evade Turkish police officers who line the beach looking for people smugglers.



# 'We don't want the USSR back': Putin

AFP, Moscow

Russia is not trying to bring back the USSR, President Vladimir Putin said in a documentary aired Sunday, but the problem is that "nobody wants to believe it".

Since the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, which saw pro-Russian leader Viktor Yanukovich ousted by pro-European demonstrators, Moscow has accused the West of using "the politics of containment" in a Cold War throwback.

"With Ukraine and other areas of the former USSR, I'm sure our Western partners aren't working in the interests of Ukraine, they are working to prevent the recreation of the USSR," he said in "World Order", a documentary broadcast on the public Rossiya 1 channel.

"But nobody wants to believe us, nobody wants to believe that we're not trying to bring the Soviet Union back," he said.

The president also used the documentary to take a familiar swipe at Western intervention in North Africa and the Middle East.

"You can't just impose your version of democracy, of good and evil, onto people of other cultures, with other religions and traditions in this mechanic, automatic way," he said.

"Apparently (the West) think they're infallible, but when the moment comes to take some responsibility, they disappear."

# IS radio show seeks new recruits in Afghanistan

REUTERS, Jalalabad

Islamic State militants in eastern Afghanistan have taken to the airwaves to win recruits as they try to build strength and replace the Taliban as the leading force in the Islamist insurgency.

Officials have been increasingly concerned by the broadcasts, which encourage young people to find a sense of direction in the radical movement.

If the broadcasts take hold, officials fear they will feed off a growing sense of hopelessness among many injured to war and struggling to get by in an increasingly tough economic climate. "Most of our people are jobless and this radio will encourage lots of people to join their ranks," said Ahmad Ali Hazrat, head of the provincial council in Nangarhar.

"Now Daesh are seven kilometres outside Jalalabad city and if the government doesn't act soon it will expand its broadcast

and recruit even from Kabul," he said, using the term widely used for Islamic State.

The 90-minute daily Pashto language broadcast, called "Voice of the Caliphate", consists mainly of interviews, messages and songs about Islamic State.

It can be heard in Nangarhar, the eastern province where Islamic State has established its stronghold. It controls several districts wrested from the Taliban, who are seeking to re-establish their hard-line Islamist regime after being toppled by US-led military intervention in 2001. In one programme, an Islamic State member said the broadcasts were to counter the negative public image of the group fostered by reports of extreme violence.

Islamic State is a relatively new force in Afghanistan and there is some dispute about how strong it is, how many members it commands and how closely it is linked operationally to the movement's main arm



## India FM sues Kejriwal over graft claims

AFP, New Delhi

India's finance minister yesterday filed a defamation suit against Delhi's leader who had accused him of large-scale corruption in his former role as head of the capital's cricket association. Arun Jaitley personally went to a Delhi court under tight security to sue Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and five other members of his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for making "false and defamatory" statements against him.

## Nigerian troops kill 12 Boko Haram fighters

AFP, Lagos

Nigerian troops have killed 12 Boko Haram fighters and recovered a cache of arms and ammunition from the hardline Islamist group whose six-year insurgency has claimed thousands of lives, a military spokesman said. Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari has given the military until the end of the month to crush the Boko Haram rebellion.

## Saudi intercepts missile from Yemen

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia intercepted a missile fired before dawn yesterday from Yemen towards its southern border region, the coalition said, in the latest such attack despite a ceasefire and peace talks. In a brief statement, the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen since March said air defences stopped the missile from reaching the kingdom's southern Jazan district.

## Huge China landslide leaves 85 missing

AFP, Shenzhen

Some 85 people were missing yesterday after a huge landslide caused by illegal soil dumping buried more than 30 factory and residential buildings in a sea of mud, China's second industrial disaster in four months. Witnesses of the landslide late Sunday morning described a mass of red earth and mud racing towards an industrial park in the city of Shenzhen in "huge waves".

## US city schools closed due to threat

AFP, Washington

Authorities in the northeastern US city of Nashua said they ordered schools closed yesterday following a threat, less than a week after Los Angeles city officials took a similar decision. "We have received a detailed threat of violence to harm students and staff at both high schools," Mark Conrad, superintendent of the Nashua School District, said in a statement Sunday. "Because the threat is specific and extends to several schools we will be cautious and close all of our public schools in Nashua," he added.