

CASTRO IN FRANCE Paris calls for end to Cuba sanctions

French President Francois Hollande called Monday for an end to US sanctions on Cuba during a historic visit to Paris by President Raul Castro, seen as a key step in rebuilding ties with the West.



French President Francois Hollande (L) welcomes Cuban President Raul Castro on his arrival at the Elysee Presidential Palace in Paris on Monday.

EU unveils plan to avoid 'Brexit'

Sceptics unmoved; Brussels gives greater power to London

REUTERS, London/Brussels

European Council President Donald Tusk yesterday presented proposals for keeping Britain in the European Union to a mixed response, underlining the challenges Prime Minister David Cameron faces to win over his people and other EU leaders.



The proposals, which addressed all four areas where Cameron has demanded reform, did little to ease doubts among his more Eurosceptic lawmakers and even some of the prime minister's closest allies wondered out loud if the package -- which must still be agreed by other EU states -- would be enough.

War on IS to intensify

US, allies report progress in Iraq, Syria

AFP, Rome

Washington and its allies yesterday vowed to "accelerate and intensify" the fight against Islamic State jihadists in Syria and Iraq but distanced themselves from calls for military action to curb the group's expansion in Libya.



'Dam is about to burst'

Warns Jordan about refugees; study accuses rich nations of not doing enough; nine more drown off Turkey; Finnish PM halts plan to keep refugees in his home

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A refugee camp in Jordan. File photo.

King Abdullah of Jordan said his country is at "boiling point" because of an influx of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees. Ahead of a donor conference on Syria, the king told the BBC that there was enormous pressure on Jordan's social services, infrastructure and economy.

Avoid support to militant groups in Kashmir

Pak parliamentary panel to govt; 'ISI agent' arrested in Pathankot

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Pakistani parliamentary panel has asked the government to avoid "encouraging" support to militant groups in Kashmir and take action against outfits involved in attacks there to dispel international concerns.

UN talks falter as war rages

Opposition cancels meeting with UN envoy

REUTERS, Beirut/Geneva

A Syrian military offensive threatened critical rebel supply lines into the northern city of Aleppo yesterday and Damascus echoed its opponents in contradicting a UN envoy's assertion peace talks had begun.



The main Syrian opposition council said after meeting De Mistura on Monday it had not and would not negotiate unless the government stopped bombarding civilian areas, lifted blockades and released detainees. It said yesterday that it will not attend a planned afternoon meeting with the UN special envoy, adding further doubts about the prospects for peace talks in Switzerland.



Bill Clinton applauds his wife Hillary Clinton during latter's caucus night rally in Des Moines, Iowa, on Monday.



Ted Cruz speaks after winning at his Iowa caucus night rally in Des Moines, Iowa, on Monday.

'No one remembers who came in second,' Trump said in 2013

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After months of bold statements about being the Republican frontrunner for the most powerful job in the world, Donald Trump has been beaten into second place in the Iowa caucus.



Donald Trump

Clinton wins Iowa by coin toss

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A coin toss was used to decide whether Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders won at six precincts in the Iowa caucus.

NEWS IN brief

IS suicide bomber kills 18 troops near Ramadi

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

Fighters from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (IS) group have killed 18 Iraqi soldiers in a suicide car attack north of Ramadi, continuing their counterattack after being driven from the city by Iraqi troops last month.

Israel lifts restrictions on access to Ramallah

AFP, Ramallah

Israel late Monday lifted day-long restrictions on access into and out of the Palestinian political capital Ramallah on the occupied West Bank, imposed after a checkpoint shooting that wounded soldiers, in a stepped-up response to such attacks.

Anupam Kher 'denied Pak visa' for Karachi fest

TNN, New Delhi

Pakistan yesterday denied a visa to actor and BJP sympathiser Anupam Kher, who has been invited by the organisers of a literary festival in Karachi as one of their guests.

Snow strands 'nearly 100,000' in China

BBC ONLINE

Heavy snow has disrupted public transport in southern China, stranding tens of thousands of people outside a rail station, police said. The crowd outside Guangzhou station swelled to nearly 100,000 at its peak on Monday night.

Indian rape survivor raped again in hospital

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A rape survivor has allegedly been sexually assaulted again in an Indian hospital where she had been taken for treatment. The unnamed 15-year-old said she was raped for a second time by a security guard at the Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Hospital in Jamshepur City just a few days after she was admitted after being raped by a teenager in her neighbourhood.

School picnic turns tragic

14 Indian students drown in sea while swimming

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Fourteen students have drowned in western India during a school picnic by the sea.

Three men and 10 women were swept away while swimming off the beach town of Murud, senior police official Raja Pawar said, while a fourth male student's body was recovered later in the evening, the Times of India reports.