

Ceasefire takes effect in Aleppo

EU mulls sanctions; Turkey raids kill '200 Kurd fighters' in Syria

AGENCIES

A "humanitarian pause" yesterday began in the Syrian army's Russian-backed assault on rebel-held areas of Aleppo but clashes continued and there were no signs residents were heeding calls to leave.

The unilateral ceasefire took effect at 8:00 am (0500 GMT) and was to last at least 11 hours, with the aim of allowing civilians and fighters to evacuate the city's opposition-controlled east.

Gunfire and artillery exchanges erupted around a crossing point near the rebel-controlled Bustan al-Qasr district shortly after the pause began, an AFP correspondent said.

Russia yesterday extended the ceasefire by 24 hours.

The Syrian army has said it is opening eight corridors for civilians to leave, two of which can also be used by rebel fighters provided they leave behind their weapons.

Western powers have expressed scepticism. European Union leaders yesterday gathered for a summit in Brussels strongly condemn Syria and Russia over Aleppo and threatened to impose sanctions if fighting continues.



The sanction threat came as Russia has begun its "largest surface deployment" since the end of the Cold War in what is thought to be preparation for a final assault on besieged rebels in the city.

Eight Russian warships and the country's only aircraft carrier left Murmansk on Wednesday, sailing past Norway and into the English Channel en route to the Mediterranean, a senior Nato diplomat said, citing Western intelligence reports.

"They are deploying all of the Northern fleet and much of the Baltic fleet in the largest surface deployment since the end of the Cold War," the diplomat said on condition of anonymity.

"This is not a friendly port call. In two weeks, we will see a crescendo of air attacks on Aleppo as part of Russia's strategy to declare victory there," the source added.

Meanwhile, Turkish warplanes carried out deadly strikes on US-backed militias in northern Syria, including Syrian Kurdish fighters, a monitor said yesterday, action that is likely to raise tensions between the Nato allies.

The army, quoted by the official news agency Anadolu, said the raids hit 18 targets north of the battered Syrian city of Aleppo, areas recently recaptured by the People's Protection Units (YPG) from the Islamic State group.

It said the raids killed between 160 and 200 YPG militants.

Largest Russian military deployment since Cold War passes through British waters en route to 'crush' Aleppo

I'll keep you in suspense, okay?'

If Americans entered the debate concerned about what happens the day after this brutally fought election, Trump did little to assuage their fears.

An hour into the 90-minute battle, the Republican nominee was asked whether he would respect the election result and concede if he lost. His answer will go into the history books.

"I'll look at it at the time. What I've seen is so bad," he said, repeating unfounded allegations of vote rigging.

When pressed again, he simply said: "What I'm saying is I'll tell you at the time. I'll keep you in suspense, okay?"

Fellow Republicans rushed to denounce him, and his Democratic rival Hillary Clinton declared herself "appalled" by what she said was an attack on 240 years of US democracy.

'I never met Putin'

Asked about embarrassing leaked emails, Clinton pivoted to Trump's much scrutinized relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Republican's refusal to pin the leaks on Moscow.

Clinton suggested Putin wanted a "puppet" in the White House, which prompted a remarkable exchange.

"No puppet. No puppet," said Trump, talking over Clinton. "You're the puppet!"

"No, you're the puppet," he continued.

Composing himself, Trump said "I never met Putin. This is not my best friend. But if the United States got along with Russia, it wouldn't be so bad."

However, Trump has boasted several times in the past of his relationship with Putin, according to PolitiFact.

FINAL US PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE



A woman protests against Donald Trump outside Trump Tower in New York.

PHOTO: AFP

US presidency a 'step down' for Trump!

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Donald Trump's eldest son said that his father's run for the presidency was a "step down" from his business career.

Speaking to Fox News after the third presidential debate on Wednesday night, Donald Trump Jr emphasised that his father was effectively giving up a successful job already.

"Unlike Hillary Clinton who's gotten very rich being a politician, peddling American influence, he hasn't — this is only a step down," Trump said in Las Vegas.

He added that his father has spent his whole career "creating jobs" and helping American workers, and that if



he had spent his whole life as a career politician, he would be "the greatest politician in the history of the world".

The Trump campaign member was praised for a rousing and passionate speech about his father at the Republican National Convention in July, but has caused controversy in more recent weeks.

During an interview with the Pittsburgh Tribune Review about why his father has not released his tax returns, Trump did not toe the party line - that the tax returns would be released once they had been audited.

Mr Trump Jr was sat in the front row of the third presidential debate at the University of Nevada, alongside his sisters, brothers and mother-in-law Melania Trump. They did not shake hands with the Clinton family.

SOURCE: AFP

Clinton clear winner: polls

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Hillary Clinton is the winner of the third and final presidential debate, according to voters in the first opinion polls of the night.

One survey, conducted by CNN/ORC, found that 52 per cent of voters believe Clinton won the 90-minute debate on Wednesday night compared to 39 per cent of participants who said that her rival Donald Trump won the contest.

Clinton has now been declared the winner of all three televised debates by the CNN poll.

Democrats accounted for 36 per cent of the 547 registered voters surveyed, while only 29 per cent of respondents were Republicans.

The survey was first conducted between October 15 and October 18 and voters were re-interviewed after the debate. Results carry a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4 per cent.

Sixty per cent of debate watchers also said that Trump spent the majority of the debate attacking Clinton.

Despite losing the people's vote, Trump outperformed the expectations of voters with nearly six in 10 viewers

admitting that he did better than they anticipated. Forty-four per cent of voters said the same of Clinton.

Meanwhile, the latest YouGov poll also declared Clinton the clear winner on Wednesday night. Out of 1,503 registered voters who tuned into the debate, 49 per cent of participants said Ms Clinton came out on top. Thirty-nine per cent of voters argued that Trump won the contest while 12 per cent claimed it was a tie.

Sixty-eight per cent of voters disagreed with Trump by suggesting that both candidates pledge to accept the final election results come November.

'SUCH A NASTY WOMAN'

Some of the sharpest exchanges came when Trump accused Clinton and her campaign team of drumming up allegations that he has groped several women.

"I believe," Trump said, "she got these people to step forward," accusing Clinton of running a "very sleazy campaign" and adding of the claims aired by several women dating back decades: "It was all fiction."

Trump boasted, "I didn't even apologize to my wife," saying he did nothing wrong and so had nothing to apologize for.

Trump interjected: "Nobody has more respect for women that I do.



Nobody."

At which point, derisory laughter from the audience was audible. He repeated: "Nobody has more respect," prompting debate moderator Chris Wallace to try and hush the crowd, urging: "Please, everybody."

However, just one day ago, Ms Trump said that her husband apologized for the leaked, decade-old audio where he bragged about groping women with a giggling Billy Bush.

Later, when the topic turned to taxes, Clinton suggested that Trump might try to wriggle his way out of paying.

"Such a nasty woman," Trump said, leaning into the microphone.

Trump has been accused of various accounts of sexual harassment, as well as being recorded appearing to discuss sexual assault. He has strongly denied the allegations.

INDEPENDENCE BID Scotland pushes ahead with referendum

AFP, Edinburgh

Scotland's government yesterday published a draft independence referendum bill as a fallback plan if it is not able to keep strong ties with the EU and win more powers from London as part of Brexit talks.

The bill would give non-British EU citizens living in Scotland, who were not allowed to take part in the EU referendum, the right to vote on independence.

Scotland voted by 55 percent to stay part of Britain in 2014, but then voted by 62 percent to remain in the European Union in June, sparking a political crisis after Britain as a whole voted to leave.

The bill is broadly the same as the original Scottish Independence



Referendum Act 2013 which enabled a vote the following year.

Its opening paragraph states: "A referendum is to be held in Scotland on a question about the independence of Scotland. The question is --'Should Scotland be an independent country?'"

In her foreword to the consultation, Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: "The UK government's recent statements on its approach to leaving the EU raise serious concerns for the Scottish Government."

"We face unacceptable risks to our democratic, economic and social interests and to the right of the Scottish Parliament to have its say," she said.



Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga fighters fire a multiple rocket launcher from a position in Sheikh Ali village near the town of Bashliqa, some 25 kilometres north east of Mosul, yesterday, during an operation against Islamic State group jihadists to retake the main hub city.

PHOTO: AFP

LIBYA IN CHAOS AFTER ARAB SPRING

'West forgot after-sales service'

AFP, Paris

Should the West have intervened in Libya to overthrow the "Kafkaesque" regime of strongman Muammar Gaddafi?

Surveying the chaos in the north African country five years on, with rival authorities and factions vying for power, many now concede a disastrous lack of planning.

US leader Barack Obama has cited the Libya intervention as the worst mistake of his presidency, telling Fox News that he regretted having failed "to plan for the day after, what I think was the right thing to do, in intervening in Libya".

In Britain, a scathing parliamentary report last month found former prime minister David Cameron "ultimately responsible for the failure to develop a coherent Libya strategy".

Nicolas Sarkozy, who is angling to win back the French presidency next year, has defended France's role in Gaddafi's ouster, while admitting that after the country held elections in 2012 "we let Libya drop".

Today, the UN-backed unity government is struggling to assert its authority nationwide since arriving in Tripoli in March, with a rival parliament in the east refusing to cede power to it.

In the aftermath of Gaddafi's overthrow, the dictator's arsenals were looted, fighters fanned out through neighbouring Niger, Mali and Tunisia, and the



Islamic State jihadist group gained a foothold on Europe's doorstep.

In March 2011 the West, led by Britain and France and backed by Nato, enjoyed broad support for the intervention to support the revolution which was sparked by neighboring Tunisia.

It opened the way to Western and

Arab air strikes, leading eight months later to the overthrow and death of Gaddafi, who was lynched after his convoy was hit by a Nato air strike.

By then, the conflict had claimed more than 30,000 lives.

Five years on, Chadian President Idriss Deby is just one of the regional leaders to accuse the West of failing to follow up on the overthrow of Gaddafi.

"You forgot about after-sales service," he has often said.

The repercussions are also felt in relations with Russia, with President Vladimir Putin defending Moscow's role in Syria where it backs strongman Bashar al-Assad.

"Some of the responsibility for what is happening... lies especially with our Western partners, above all the US and its allies," Putin told French television.

"Remember how everyone rushed to support the Arab Spring? Where is that optimism now?" he asked. "Remember what Libya or Iraq looked like before these countries and their organisations were destroyed as states?"

Skirmishes put strain on Yemen truce

AFP, Aden

Scattered clashes between rebels and pro-government forces undermined a fragile ceasefire in Yemen Thursday as global pressure intensified for a lasting truce in a country where millions are homeless and hungry.

The ceasefire, for an initial period of three days, took effect shortly before midnight on Wednesday under a United Nations plan which aims to allow sorely needed aid to reach suffering civilians.

A Saudi-led Arab coalition intervened in March 2015 to support the government of President Abdrabbo Mansour Hadi after rebels overran much of Yemen.

Saudi Arabia and Washington accuse Iran of arming the insurgents, charges Tehran denies.

Palestinian stone-thrower shot dead

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli troops in the occupied West Bank shot dead a Palestinian teenager who hurled rocks at a patrol yesterday, the army said.

"Rocks were hurled at the soldiers, wounding one of them lightly," a spokeswoman told AFP, adding that the soldiers first fired warning shots "and then (fired) toward the suspect resulting in his death."

The incident occurred in the Beit Ummar area near the city of Hebron. The Palestinian health ministry named the dead stone-thrower as Khaled Bahar, 15.

Violence since October 2015 has killed 235 Palestinians, 36 Israelis, two Americans, one Jordanian, an Eritrean and a Sudanese national, according to an AFP count.

Most of the Palestinians killed were carrying out knife-guns or car-ramming attacks, according to Israeli authorities. Others were shot dead during protests or clashes, while some were killed in Israeli air strikes on the Gaza Strip.

জাতীয় এসএমই উদ্যোক্তা পুরস্কার ২০১৬

জাতীয় এসএমই উদ্যোক্তা পুরস্কার-২০১৬

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