

The International

News via satellite from the world's foremost newswires



Landmark climate deal approved

DURBAN, South Africa - A UN climate conference reached a hard-fought agreement Sunday on a far-reaching program meant to set a new course for the global fight against climate change.

The 194-party conference agreed to start negotiations on a new accord that would ensure that countries will be legally bound to carry out any pledges they make. It would take effect by 2020 at the latest.

The deal doesn't explicitly compel any nation to take on emissions targets, although most emerging economies have volunteered to curb the growth of their emissions.

Currently, only industrial countries have legally binding emissions targets under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. Those commitments expire next year, but they will be extended for at least another five years under the accord adopted Sunday - a key demand by



developing countries seeking to preserve the only existing treaty regulating carbon emissions.

The proposed Durban Platform offered answers to problems that have bedeviled global warming negotiations for years about sharing the responsibility for controlling carbon emissions and helping the world's poorest and most climate-vulnerable nations cope with changing forces of nature.

The United States was a reluctant supporter, concerned about agreeing to join an international climate system

that likely would find much opposition in the US Congress.

"This is a very significant package. None of us likes everything in it. Believe me, there is plenty the United States is not thrilled about," said US climate envoy Todd Stern. But the package captured important advances that would be undone if it is rejected, he told the delegates.

Sunday's deal also set up the bodies that will collect, govern and distribute tens of billions of dollars a year for poor countries. Other documents in the package lay out rules for monitoring and verifying emissions reductions, protecting forests, transferring clean technologies to developing countries and scores of technical issues.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said the deal represents "an important advance in our work on climate change."

Today's Edition

[Page 2 The Americas](#)

[Page 3 Europe](#)

[Page 4 Middle East/Africa](#)

[Page 5 Asia Pacific/South Asia](#)

[Page 6 Finance](#)

[Page 7 Sport](#)

[Page 8 Weather](#)

In other news



Donald wins double

Luke Donald has become the only player to win the Money Lists of both US PGA and European Tour.

Russia to probe vote

MOSCOW - Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Sunday ordered election officials to check reports of vote fixing following a national protest over an election that handed a disputed victory to the ruling party.

Medvedev said he flatly disagreed with the idea of staging fresh elections but had already issued instructions for a closer look at the reports of rampant ballot stuffing and cases of officials fixing the vote count.

"I disagree with the slogans and declarations made at the meetings," the tech-savvy Medvedev wrote in his Facebook account.

"Nevertheless, I have issued instructions to check all polling station reports about (failure) to follow election laws," Medvedev wrote.

Saturday's historic demonstrations near the Kremlin saw more than 50,000 people deride the outcome of December 4 elections that were widely

seen as a litmus test for Vladimir Putin's planned return to the presidency next year.

The protests were the largest to hit the Russian capital since the tumultuous 1990s and levelled some of the most intense political pressure at Putin since he first rose to the presidency in 2000.

The former KGB agent currently serves as prime minister after making Medvedev his hand-picked presidential successor in 2008 and intends to return to the Kremlin for up to 12 more years in March elections that he appears destined to win.

But scenes similar to those witnessed Saturday in Moscow were also replayed on a smaller scale across the industrial hubs of Siberia and the Urals - a sign that Putin's path back may be more fraught than it first appeared.

US vacates air base

QUETTA, Pakistan - The United States on Sunday vacated a Pakistani airbase following a deadline given by Islamabad in the wake of anger over NATO air strikes last month that killed 24 soldiers, officials said.

Pakistan's military said in a statement that the last flight carrying US personnel and equipment had left Shamsi airbase, in the southwestern province of Baluchistan, completing a process that began last week.

Islamabad's fragile alliance with the United States crashed to new lows in the wake of the November 26 NATO air strikes that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers and which the Pakistan military called a deliberate attack.

The base was widely believed to have been used in covert CIA drone attacks against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda commanders in northwest

Pakistan's tribal areas, which border Afghanistan.

"The control of the base has been taken over by the Army," the statement said.

A senior security official requesting anonymity earlier said: "The Americans have vacated the Shamsi air base and it has been handed over to the Pakistani security forces."

Another official in Baluchistan confirmed that the last batch of US officials left in two flights on Sunday.

Following the November air strikes, Pakistan closed two border crossings to Afghanistan to US and NATO supplies and gave American personnel until Sunday to leave Shamsi airbase.

US Ambassador to Islamabad Cameron Munter told a Pakistan television channel last week: "We are complying with the request."

PEOPLE

Benicio del Toro's directorial debut shows in Cuba

HAVANA - Puerto Rican actor Benicio del Toro said the labor of love that went into his directorial debut in the movie "Seven Days in Havana" was so gratifying that he plans to keep working behind the camera.

"To see the motivation of all the artists, working 14 hours a day, to see the confidence they had in me, the collaboration between everything, is something very special," del Toro said Friday evening at a news conference in Havana, where "Seven Days" is screening this week at the city's annual film festival.

"It's an experience that motivates me to dream of trying it again," said del Toro, who won the 2003 Oscar for best supporting actor for his role as a Tijuana drug cop in "Traffic."

Angelina Jolie hailed for Balkan war film debut

LOS ANGELES - Oscar-winning actress Angelina Jolie has won praise for her directing debut - a powerful story of love amid the atrocities of the Bosnian war - from both film critics and victims' relatives.



Jolie and film cast

The Hollywood "A" lister is used to being feted for her performances in films ranging from "Girl, Interrupted" - which won her the best supporting actress Academy Award in 2000 - to the "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" movies.

But she has also been an ambassador for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees since 2001, and has drawn on that experience in the making of "In the Land of Blood and Honey," due out in the United States later this month.

The movie tells the story of a Serb soldier who re-meets a former lover, a Bosnian woman now held captive in the camp he oversees during the dark days of the 1992-95 Bosnian war.

"It's very difficult to make me sit and see this for two hours, it's so hard to watch, so you can imagine living it for years, as many of our cast did," she told reporters at a press screening in Hollywood on Thursday.

Noriega en route to prison in Panama

PANAMA CITY - Former strongman Manuel Noriega headed home to Panama Sunday to face justice for the murder of political opponents more than two decades after his ouster in a bloody US invasion and exile in US and French prisons.

An Iberia plane carrying the former dictator took off from a Paris airport shortly after 0800 GMT and headed to Madrid, from where the 77-year-old began the final leg of his journey home after a stopover.

Noriega, Panama's military ruler from 1983 to 1989, was due to arrive in the country at 5:30pm (2230 GMT), escorted by a delegation of six foreign ministry officials, police, doctors and a prosecutor who prepared the transfer in Paris.

"The time has come for Noriega to face justice in Panama for crimes against humanity," said Alida Spadafora, the sister of Hugo Spadafora, a Noriega critic and doctor who was kidnapped, tortured and beheaded in 1985.

The former general faces three separate 20-year sentences handed down in the 1990s for the murders of Spadafora, a military officer who organized a coup attempt, and a labor leader.

After his overthrow in the 1989 US invasion, he spent 22 years in prison in the United States and France on drug trafficking and money laundering charges.

"I want to go back to Panama to prove my innocence in these



Noriega in 1987

procedures that were carried out in my absence and without legal assistance," he told a French court during extradition hearing in November.

Aged now, with difficulty walking and suffering from various ailments, the former strongman also told the French judges that he wanted to return home "without hatred or resentment."

Gingrich assailed by rivals

DES MOINES, USA - Attacked as a lifelong Washington insider, newly minted Republican front-runner Newt Gingrich parried criticism from Mitt Romney in campaign debate Saturday night, telling the former Massachusetts governor, "The only reason you didn't become a career politician is because you lost to Teddy Kennedy in 1994."

"That's probably true," replied Romney, who lost that Senate contest. He then quipped that if he'd achieved his childhood dream, "I would have been a football star all my life, too."

Gingrich defended himself against attacks from Texas Rep. Ron Paul and Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann as well as Romney, the former front-runner, in the first debate since

he soared to the lead in polls nationally and in Iowa. The state's caucuses on Jan. 3 will kick off the competition for Republican National Convention delegates who will pick an opponent to President Barack Obama.

All six Republicans on stage assailed Obama's handling of the economy, the overriding issue of the election, yet split down the middle on legislation making its way toward a year-end vote in Congress to extend a Social Security payroll tax cut into 2012.

Romney, Gingrich and Paul said they favored it. Bachmann, Texas Gov., Rick Perry and former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum said they opposed the measure.

Strong quake shakes from Mexico City to Acapulco

MEXICO CITY - A magnitude-6.5 earthquake struck in Mexico's western Guerrero state, shaking buildings and causing panic in the nation's capital and the Pacific resort of Acapulco. Officials said at least three people died, but there were no reports of widespread damage.

The US Geological Service initially estimated the quake at magnitude at 6.8, but downgraded it to 6.7 and then 6.5. A quake of that magnitude is capable of causing severe damage, although the depth of this temblor lessened its impact.

Venezuela opposition 'united like never before'

SAO PAULO - The Venezuelan opposition to President Hugo Chavez is "united like never before", the man coordinating the choice of its presidential candidate said in an interview published here Sunday.

Ramon Guillermo Aveledo, ex-president of the Venezuelan Chamber of Deputies, also told the daily Folha de S. Paulo that the ailing Chavez needed to give Venezuelans assurances regarding the state of his health if he intends to run for re-election next year.

Asked whether a Chavez departure would not create a political vacuum given his strong leadership and lack of political heir, he replied: "This vacuum would be that of Chavism."

Peru Cabinet chief resigns

LIMA - Peruvian Cabinet chief Salomon Lerner resigned Saturday after less than five months in the post and was replaced by the interior minister, who inherits an unresolved dispute over the country's biggest mining investment.

The reason for Lerner's resignation was not explained, but he was recently involved in failed attempts to negotiate an end to protests that stalled the \$4.8 billion Conga gold mining project, which has been plagued by increasingly violent protests.

His resignation letter, posted online by the newspaper La Republica,

does not make direct reference to the conflict but hints Lerner was unhappy with the government's handling of it.

As Cabinet chief, Lerner wrote in the 1½-page resignation letter, "our direct mandate has been dialogue and the seeking of consensus to avoid confrontation between Peruvians."

After just one day of talks that Lerner led with local officials who fear the Conga project could taint and diminish water supplies affecting thousands, President Ollanta Humala on Dec. 5 called a state of emergency in four affected northern provinces for 60 days.

Clegg: Cameron's veto 'bad for Britain'

LONDON - The leader of the junior party in Britain's coalition government has criticized Prime Minister David Cameron's move to block European Union treaty changes, saying Sunday it was "bad for Britain" and he was bitterly disappointed by the outcome.

"Now there is a danger that the UK will be isolated and marginalized within the European Union," Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg said, warning that already the country is "retreating further to the margins of Europe."

Clegg initially had said he backed the decision, but he acknowledged that

when Cameron told him of the move in a 4 a.m. phone call he clearly expressed his disappointment.

"I said this was bad for Britain," he recalled to the BBC. "I made it clear that it was untenable for me to welcome it."

Clegg - who has advocated closer European ties even while Cameron's Conservatives lobby for distance from Brussels - said he will now do everything he can "to ensure this setback does not become a permanent divide."

Cameron rejected an invitation to join 26 European partners in a tighter

financial alliance to save the euro after failing to secure safeguards and exemptions for Britain's dominant financial sector.

The move isolated Cameron from the European Union and raised doubts about whether Britain realistically can remain a member of the 27-nation bloc, while eliciting toasts from the prime minister's typically anti-EU party and prompting speculation over the survivability of the coalition.

But Clegg - the leader of the Liberal Democrats - dismissed talk of a breakup of the coalition with Cameron's Conservatives.

Pope: Christmas will be tough

ROME - Pope Benedict XVI says he knows Christmas this year will be difficult, in an acknowledgement of the economic crisis gripping much of the West. But he is urging the faithful to remember there's more to the holiday than gift-buying.

Benedict spoke Sunday while visiting a parish in a working-class neighborhood on the outskirts of Rome. Italians are facing new and higher taxes as the country struggles with a government debt crisis.

The pope told parishioners he knows that Christmas will be "very difficult," but that he wanted to wish all a happy holiday. Benedict said that preparing for Christmas "doesn't only mean buying" gifts. Later, greeting pilgrims in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, he said real joy is linked to something deeper.

Helen Mirren hails Nobel Peace Prize laureates

OSLO - British actress Helen Mirren has hailed this year's Nobel Peace Prize to three women as historic, but says it's shameful that only 12 women have won the prestigious award in 112 years.

Mirren said she thinks the award marks an "extraordinary moment in the history of women."

She spoke before the Nobel Peace Prize concert in Oslo Sunday, which she will host together with American actress Rosario Dawson. The concert will honor this year's peace prize winners Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and women's right activist Leymah Gbowee, also of Liberia, and democracy activist Tawakkul Karman of Yemen.

Villepin announces run for presidency

PARIS - Former French prime minister and conservative politician Dominique de Villepin announced Sunday he would take on his right-wing rival President Nicolas Sarkozy in next year's presidential vote.

"I have decided to be a candidate in the 2012 presidential election," he told TF1 television.

"I intend to defend a certain idea of France... I have a conviction: the 2012 meeting will be a meeting of truth, courage and will."

Villepin, a suave diplomat best remembered for leading the charge against the Iraq war at the United Nations in 2003, is a protege of former president Jacques Chirac. It was under Chirac that he served as foreign minister from 2002 to 2004 and as prime minister from 2005 to 2007.

He and Sarkozy are bitter rivals and in September a French appeals



court confirmed his acquittal over a political scandal in which he was accused of having smeared the future president.

Villepin said he was "worried" to see "France humiliated by the law of the markets which imposes more and austerity".

"I have confidence in the ability of the French people to discern what is in the public interest and to what point, more than ever, national unity is required of us all," said Villepin.

Police arrest another neo-Nazi suspect

BERLIN - German police Sunday arrested a man on charges of providing support to a neo-Nazi cell believed to have killed 10 people in a case that has shocked the country, officials said. Police arrested Matthias D. at his home in the east of the country, the federal prosecutor said in a statement.

Matthias D. is suspected of helping the group rent two apartments, thus allowing its members "to live under false identities and to commit terrorist attacks without being discovered," the office said in statement.

The group calling itself the National Socialist Underground (NSU) is believed to have murdered 10 people,

mostly shopkeepers of Turkish origin, and also to have carried out at least 14 armed robberies to finance their activities.

Two NSU members were found dead last month in an apparent suicide and the other, a 36-year-old woman identified as Beate Z., has turned herself in but refused to speak to police. Officials declined to tell reporters whether she had since provided any evidence.

On November 24 authorities arrested a man identified as Andre E., who stands accused of making a chilling video in 2007-discovered only last month-in which the militants claimed responsibility for the murders.

SCIENCE

Species, and threats grow in Mekong region: WWF

BANGKOK - Scientists identify a new species every two days in the Greater Mekong region, the WWF said Monday, in a report detailing 2010's more unusual finds such as a leaf warbler and a self-cloning lizard.

But the conservation group warned some species could disappear before they are ever recorded because of man-made pressures in the Southeast Asian area, described in the report as "one of the last frontiers" for new discoveries.

More than 200 species were newly recorded last year in the Greater Mekong, which includes Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos and the south-western Chinese province of Yunnan.

Some, such as the snub-nosed monkey found in Myanmar's remote Kachin state, were already known to local communities but never previously identified by the scientific community.

A species of all-female lizard, which reproduces via cloning without the need for males, was spotted by a scientist by chance on the menu in a Vietnamese restaurant.

Sarah Bladen, spokeswoman for WWF Greater Mekong, based in Hanoi, said despite the number of new species found, the region faced "an extinction crisis".

"Unless these countries start to see biodiversity as something to be valued and invested in, we risk losing wild places and wild species at an extraordinary rate," she said.

The list, dominated by plants, included 28 reptiles and seven amphibians, such as a vibrantly-spotted newt species and a psychedelic gecko.

The only new bird found last year was the tiny limestone leaf warbler, so-called because it breeds in limestone karsts in Laos and has a loud, unique call-the sign that alerted researchers to a potential new find.

"While these discoveries highlight the unique biodiversity of the Greater Mekong they also reveal the fragility of this region's diverse species and habitats," the WWF report said.

Syrian troops clash with army defectors

BEIRUT - Syrian troops battled army defectors Sunday in clashes that left several military vehicles in flames. The fighting and other violence around the nation killed at least five people, activists said.

The 9-month-old uprising against Syria's authoritarian President Bashar Assad has grown increasingly violent in recent months as once-peaceful protesters take up arms and rebel soldiers joining the uprising fight back against the army. The UN says more than 4,000 people have been killed since March.

Israel Bedouin protest over relocation plan

JERUSALEM - Several thousand Bedouin demonstrated on Sunday outside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, protesting over a plan they say will displace tens of thousands of people from their land.

The demonstrators came from Bedouin communities across Israel, gathering outside Netanyahu's Jerusalem office holding signs reading "We are staying here" and "No to the Prayer Plan."

The plan, approved by the government in September, is supposed to address the problem of unrecognised Bedouin villages in the Negev desert of southern Israel.

New Israeli ambassador to Egypt slated to arrive

JERUSALEM - Israel's new ambassador to Egypt is scheduled to arrive in Cairo on Monday, an official said, three months after rioters ransacked the Israeli Embassy there.

Relations between the two countries have become strained since a popular uprising toppled Egypt's longtime leader Hosni Mubarak in February. Still, both governments seem eager to preserve an alliance that is a cornerstone of Mideast stability.

Israeli Ambassador Yaakov Amitai will join a small number of embassy staffers still in Cairo, the official said.

The previous ambassador, Yitzhak Levanon, most of the staff and their families were evacuated in an Israeli military plane in September after protesters tore down a security wall around the building housing the Israeli Embassy, then stormed embassy offices and trashed them.

Opposition activists called for a general strike starting Sunday to add to the pressure on the government to stop its bloody crackdown. Assad has refused to buckle under Arab and international pressure to step down and has shown no signs of easing his crackdown, which has included assaults by the military on unarmed protesters.

Now, fighting between loyalist forces and defectors calling themselves the Free Syrian Army threatens to push the confrontation into civil war.

In one of Sunday's clashes, which took place before dawn in the northwestern town of Kfar Takharim, two of the military's armored vehicles were set ablaze, said the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Three other vehicles were burned in another clash near the southern village of Busra al-Harir, the group said. Similar battles took place in several other parts of the south, said the Observatory and another activist group called the Local Coordination Committees.

Libya ex-rebels, army clash near airport

TRIPOLI - Libya's military said Sunday that ex-rebels have tried for a second time to assassinate the country's new army commander, as the two groups clashed near the capital's airport. The rebels denied the claim.

Army spokesman Sgt. Abdel-Razik el-Shibahy said fighters from the western mountain town of Zintan opened fire on two occasions on Saturday on the convoy of Gen. Khalifa Hifter, the commander of the newly rebuilt army. He said guard was killed and four others wounded in the second attack.

The spokesman said the Zintan fighters mistakenly believed that the army was coming to attack them at the airport, which they have occupied shortly after revolutionaries captured the capital from Moammar Gadhafi's

regime in August.

"Zintan rebels opened fire on the convoy from left, right and front ... They think that the army wants to take over the airport but this is not the case," he said.

The clashes were the latest in a series of violent incidents in the capital that illustrate the difficulties faced by Libya's transitional leaders in compelling the militias which overthrew Gadhafi to submit to the new government's authority.

The army says that it is trying to persuade ex-rebel militias to return to their homes, and, if possible, to enlist in its ranks. It has stopped short of demanding their weapons until the interim government can deliver on promises of jobs and training.

Iraq PM sets off for US

BAGHDAD - Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki headed to Washington on Sunday, for the first time as the leader of a country virtually empty of foreign troops as the US withdrawal from Iraq nears its final days.

Maliki is to hold wide-ranging talks with US President Barack Obama during his two-day visit, which comes less than a month before the complete withdrawal of US troops from Iraq and more than eight years after the launch of the US-led invasion that ousted Saddam Hussein.

"This will be the first visit where he is going as the chief of a country empty of foreign troops that can count totally on itself," Ali Mussawi, media advisor to Maliki said.

"We will discuss all the fields of collaboration ... and open a new phase

of relations between Baghdad and Washington, which used to be dominated by military affairs."

Maliki was accompanied by Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari, acting Defense Minister Saadun al-Dulaimi, Transport Minister Khayrullah Hassan Babakir, Trade Minister Hadi al-Ameri, and National Security Adviser Falah al-Fayadh.

Also on the trip are National Investment Commission chief Sami al-Araji, and Maliki's chief advisor and former oil minister Thamer al-Ghadban. The Iraqi premier is to hold talks with Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and US lawmakers, on issues including security, energy, education and justice.

AFRICA

Voters trickle into Ivory Coast legislative polls

ABIDJAN - Small numbers of voters trickled into polling stations on Sunday in Ivory Coast's commercial capital, as voters choose parliamentary representatives more than a year after a presidential poll sent the West African nation spiraling into violence.

In Abidjan's Abobo neighborhood, some 20 voters waited for polls to open Sunday morning. That polling station, like others in the city, opened late. Officials said the turnout paled compared to last year's presidential poll. This year's parliamentary election is the first such vote in 11 years.

Multiple blasts in Nigeria

LAGOS - Three bomb attacks blamed on a feared radical sect killed one person and wounded 11 others in a volatile central Nigerian city, an official said Sunday.

The bombs went off at about 10 p.m. Saturday in three places where people had gathered to view a televised match between Real Madrid and Barcelona, said Plateau state spokesman Pam Ayuba. Authorities suspect a radical Muslim sect locally known as Boko Haram which has launched similar simultaneous attacks in northern Nigeria, he said.

The sophistication of these latest attacks, which targeted some 600 people who were drinking while watching the high-profile match, suggests the work of Boko Haram, Ayuba said.

Red Cross condemns Somali air attack

GENEVA - The Red Cross on Sunday denounced an air attack on a food supply outlet in the southern Somali town of Bardera, stressing it came at a time of mounting food shortages.

"We are alarmed about the situation in Bardera," said Pascal Mauchle, head of the Somalia delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Although it was unmanned at the time of Saturday's raid, the center suffered extensive damage.

"This incident is particularly worrying at a time when the population is in dire need of food assistance," Mauchle said.

SOUTH ASIA

Afghan leader: Toll from attacks on Shiites now 80

KABUL - The death toll from last week's rare sectarian attacks on Shiite Muslims in Afghanistan has risen to at least 80, the country's president said on Sunday.

Hamid Karzai said during a speech in Kabul that the Dec. 6 bombings were carried out by people seeking to undermine peace and stability. An extremist group in neighboring Pakistan has claimed responsibility for the deadliest of the attacks, a suicide bombing that targeted Shiite crowds gathered around a shrine in Kabul.

India anti-corruption activist holds symbolic fast

NEW DELHI - A popular anti-corruption activist ramped up pressure on India's government for strong measures to fight graft by staging a brief symbolic fast Sunday in the capital.

Surrounded by thousands of flag-waving supporters, Anna Hazare held a seven-hour fast to demand sweeping legislation to end India's culture of corruption, in which bribes are paid for everything from health care to marriage certificates.

"My fast has begun. I will not speak much now," Hazare told his cheering fans gathered around the stage where he sat with about a dozen politicians discussing the bill. Later, he told the politicians they could take protests "to the streets" if the government rejects their suggestions in drafting a strong bill.

Berlin to start Afghan troop pull-out in February

BERLIN - Germany, which has over 5,000 troops in Afghanistan, will withdraw 200 soldiers at the start of February, a German weekly reported on Sunday. Germany plans to whittle its forces in Afghanistan to 4,900 next year against 5,350 at present. The NATO-led forces are due to be pulled out in 2014.

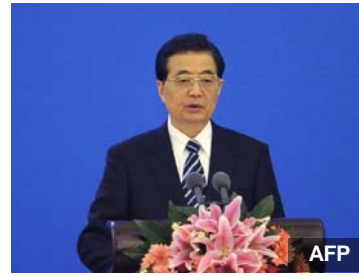
Berlin is drawing up its withdrawal plans, which will start on February 1 and involve 200 troops, Bild am Sonntag said, without naming any sources. Germany, which has the third biggest force in Afghanistan behind the United States and Britain, said at the start of the year that it aimed to begin pulling its military forces out, eyeing 2014 for complete withdrawal.

China to focus on expanding imports

BEIJING - Chinese President Hu Jintao said Sunday that China doesn't intentionally pursue a large trade surplus and that it will focus on expanding imports in the coming years.

In a speech broadcast live on state television, Hu said China's ultimate aim is to have balanced trade and that total imports will exceed \$8 trillion over the next five years, bringing "enormous opportunities" to businesses around the world eager to sell to hundreds of millions of Chinese consumers.

Hu was speaking at a forum to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of China's accession to the World Trade Organization. Other economies



AFP

are looking to China to help drive global demand, but its high trade surplus has meant that fewer of the gains are shared with other countries. Last year, China imported goods worth \$1.39 trillion. But imports are on the rise, reaching \$1.426 trillion in the first 10 months of 2011.

Philippine crash site searched

MANILA - Philippine investigators on Sunday combed through the smoldering wreckage of a Manila slum, hunting for more victims of a light plane crash as well as clues over the accident that left at least 13 dead.

The cargo plane plunged into the shanty town on Saturday, exploding on impact and causing a fire that gutted a 2,000-square-meter (half-acre) section of the slum that stands on either side of an open sewer.

The pilot, co-pilot, and a third person on board were killed, and the other fatalities were residents who died in the inferno that destroyed dozens of simple dwellings.

Five other people were reported missing, according to residents, while

at least 20 were injured. Emergency crews said they were carefully sifting through the rubble in hopes of finding bodies beneath.

"DNA testing will be done today on those who had been recovered to identify them. They were burnt beyond recognition," Philippine National Red Cross secretary general Gwendolyn Pang said.

Pang said that the injured had serious burns and were being treated at a hospital, including seven children who had been playing near the site where the plane crashed.

Among those in critical condition was 11-year-old Rodelyn Molino, who doctors said had sustained serious burns across half of her body.

SKorea to allow 2 more Christmas trees near border

SEOUL - South Korea will allow Christians to light two more Christmas tree-shaped towers near the tense border with North Korea despite strong opposition from Pyongyang, an official said Sunday.

The South Korean government allowed a Christian group to light a massive steel Christmas tree near the border last year for the first time in seven years as tensions flared in the wake of two deadly attacks blamed on the North.

That tree will be lit again this month, while South Korea has also decided to allow other Christian groups to light two other front-line Christmas trees, a Defense Ministry official said.

Indonesia paraders set records with 3,777 torches

JAKARTA - Officials say thousands of people from 50 countries have set two new world records by parading with more than 3,700 flaming torches in Indonesia's capital.

Organizer Yamal Hasmanan of Freedom Faithnet Global said Sunday that officials from Guinness World Records presented participants with certificates for the largest torch-lit image formed by people and for the largest torch-lit parade.

He says his group organized Saturday's 3,777-torch procession as a symbol of hope and prayer.

The group is also holder of a Guinness record for the largest number of floating lanterns sent aloft, with 10,318 launched into the sky simultaneously in December 2009.

KALEIDOSCOPE

Alec Baldwin apologizes to himself on 'SNL'

NEW YORK - Posing as the airline pilot of the flight he was kicked off of, Alec Baldwin apologized to himself on "Saturday Night Live."

The actor appeared on the sketch program's "Weekend Update" on Saturday night to lampoon Tuesday's incident, in which he was kicked of an American Airlines flight for refusing to stop playing a mobile phone game before takeoff.

As a Southern, mustachioed airline pilot, Baldwin issued an apology for the incident. The joke, though, was how obvious the ploy was. The actor referred to himself as an "American treasure" who was playing "a word game for smart people."

"Weekend Update" host Seth Meyers repeatedly questioned the thinly veiled performance, asking Baldwin, "Are you sure this is the right way to handle this?"

Dancing Santa lifts mood in Philippine traffic jams

MANILA - Thousands of traffic enforcers struggle grimly to keep the Philippine capital's notoriously gridlocked roads moving every day, but Ramiro Hinojas does it with a smile and a little help from Michael Jackson.



AFP

Rain or shine, seven days a week, the diminutive 55-year-old stands in the middle of one of Manila's major intersections, and to the cacophony of roaring engines, puts on an elaborate dance show as he deftly guides traffic flow.

The struts and footwork may have been copied from the King of Pop, Hinojas' deceased American idol, but the flare and passion by which he mixes them with hand signals to direct amused motorists are uniquely his own.

His sleek moves, which appear on Youtube, have made him a minor celebrity and a champion for the country's lowly paid traffic force that is faced with the impossible task of trying to keep roads flowing freely.

OPEC output 'highest in three years'

DUBAI - Oil production from OPEC's 12 members hit 30.785 million barrels per day in November, the highest level in three years with Saudi Arabia pumping almost 10 million bpd, according to MEES magazine.

Excluding Iraq, which is not part of OPEC's quota system due to the country's unrest, the cartel pumped 27.94 million bpd in November, almost 800,000 bpd higher than the previous month, MEES said in its latest edition to appear on Monday.

Half of the monthly increase came from Saudi Arabia, which boosted its

output from 9.5 million bpd in October to as high as 9.9 million bpd last month, said MEES which put Iraqi production at 2.845 million bpd.

The official production quota of members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries without Iraq stands at 24.84 million bpd since January 2009, but most members have been overproducing to meet rising demand.

Saudi Gulf partners Kuwait and United Arab Emirates have both exceeded their OPEC quotas with Kuwait and UAE pumping 2.69

million bpd and 2.49 million bpd, respectively, way above their individual quotas of 2.22 million bpd.

OPEC meets on Wednesday, possibly to decide on oil output levels.

The International Energy Agency estimated that actual OPEC production, excluding Iraq, stood at 27.32 million bpd in October, or 2.48 mbpd more than the cartel's official target.

Taking into account overproduction and output by Iraq, OPEC's dozen members are supplying 34 percent of the world's crude oil.

Bundesbank chief cites 'progress' at summit

BERLIN - The head of Germany's Bundesbank said Sunday that last week's EU summit represented "progress" towards resolving the debt crisis, but stood firm in his opposition to a greater role for the Central European Bank.

"Indeed I see progress in the decisions of the summit," Jens Weidmann said in an interview published Sunday by the Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung weekly, after EU leaders agreed to tighter budgetary discipline at a summit in Brussels on Friday.

However, he said: "All the parties concerned must now implement their announcements or every attempt at resolving the crisis will run into the wall."

Weidmann, whose institution symbolises strict budgetary orthodoxy, also insisted: "The summit confirmed it: finding a solution to the crisis is the duty of governments," and not central banks.

Some observers have theorised that the ECB could intervene massively in favor of struggling states once a political accord is reached on a new budgetary pact.

ECB president Mario Draghi tempered these hopes last week, and Weidmann, who sits on the ECB's board of governors, Sunday repeated his opposition to such a step.

"Financing of public debts by printing money is and remains forbidden by the (EU) treaties," he said.

France won't use state funds to shore up banks

PARIS - The French government will not use state funds to assist banks in their efforts to build up capital after being hit by the eurozone debt crisis, Budget Minister Valerie Pécresse said Sunday.

"The state will not put money into French banks," Pécresse, who is also the government's spokeswoman, said in a joint interview with Europe 1 radio and i>TELE television.

"We think the banks' financing needs are not so great that they cannot face them on their own," she said.

"The French (banks) can recapitalise to the tune of about 7 billion euros with their own funds, their own profits," she said.

European banks are facing

demands to boost their capital to restore stability and confidence in the markets as the eurozone crisis has raised concerns about their exposure to European sovereign debt.

France's major lenders are seen as overexposed to risky Greek, Spanish and Italian debt, and one, the Franco-Belgian specialist bank Dexia, has already been dismantled and partly nationalised.

The EU's banking regulator said Thursday that Europe's banks must raise an extra 114.7 billion euros (\$152.5 billion) in new capital, while the Bank of France said the amount for French banks is around 7.3 billion euros.

Bulgarian president vetoes rise in pension age

SOFIA - Bulgaria's outgoing President Georgy Parvanov on Sunday vetoed pension reforms that aim to gradually increase the retirement age by four months every year from 2012, his office said.

The reforms, part of the 2012 budget for social security spending adopted by parliament on Thursday, have already sparked protests from trade unions, calling for them to be postponed.

Parvanov attacked the reforms on Sunday as "violating social dialogue and being financially unjustified and socially inexpedient."

"Changes adopted in this manner make the state's social policy unpredictable and inconsistent," Parvanov said.

France's Areva to announce 'significant' losses: minister

PARIS - French state-owned nuclear giant Areva is to announce significant losses when it unveils its new corporate strategy this week, Industry Minister Eric Besson said on Sunday.

"I can confirm that Areva will announce losses, in all likelihood they will be significant," Besson told France's Radio J.

Areva CEO Luc Oursel is to meet with investors on Monday to present the new strategy, which follows decisions by some governments to drop nuclear power after Japan's Fukushima disaster and which is expected to involve major job losses. The strategy will be released publicly on Tuesday.

"The exact figures are for Areva President Luc Oursel to announce and explain," Besson said.

Egyptian PM says economy worse than expected

CAIRO - New Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal al-Ganzuri said Sunday that the country's economic problems were "a lot more serious" than expected, partly due to mismanagement under Hosni Mubarak's regime.

"The economic situation is a lot more serious than what we thought," said the 78-year-old premier who was sworn in along with his cabinet by the country's interim military leaders last week.

He highlighted problems in the energy sector in particular, which he said was partly a result of "embezzlement over the last 10 years" during the administration of Mubarak, who was forced from power by an uprising in February.

"The oil sector, a real goldmine for other countries of the world, is indebted to banks to the tune of 61 billion Egyptian pounds," he said, adding that the finance ministry had granted 330 million Egyptian pounds for work in the industry since July.

Ganzuri also said that the government needed to rein in its borrowing and reduce its gaping budget deficit. He estimated the budget deficit in this financial year at nearly 134 billion Egyptian pounds, saying he was "looking to reduce it by 20 billion pounds," or about 3.3 billion dollars.

Creditors resume crunch talks with Greece

ATHENS - Experts from the eurozone, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund resume talks with the Greek government on Monday on a second lifeline accorded to debt-ravaged Athens.

Three days after a make-or-break summit on the eurozone in Brussels, the eurozone's Matias Mors, ECB's Klaus Mazuh and the IMF's Pol Thomsen return to Greece for "a key phase," in the process of salvaging the Greek economy, said Finance Minister Evangelos Venizelos.

"We will begin this week in Athens with the troika two very important procedures to put into place a new loan decided in Brussels on October 26-27," and negotiations with creditors to wipe off 50 percent of Greek debt, the Greek minister said late Friday in Brussels.

Striker Anelka agrees to join Shanghai Shenhua

BEIJING - Chelsea striker Nicolas Anelka has agreed to join Shanghai Shenhua, the club said on Sunday in a major coup for Chinese football. The former Arsenal and Real Madrid star will be the biggest name to appear in China's Super League, which is growing in stature despite significant corruption problems that have left several officials facing jail.

"We have basically agreed on the details of the contract, but there are small details that we still need to confirm tonight," club spokesman Ma Yue said.

He added that the 32-year-old Frenchman would start playing for the team in January if all the fine details were ironed out, but was unable to reveal any details of the deal, adding a formal announcement would be made on Monday.

Al Sadd set up dream Barcelona tie

TOYOTA, Japan - Qatar's Al Sadd will play Barcelona in the semi-finals of the Club World Cup after the Asian champions stunned Esperance of Tunisia 2-1 on Sunday, sparking fan violence and a pitch invasion.

Newly crowned Japanese champions Kashiwa Reysol will play Santos in the other semi as they beat Monterrey of Mexico on penalties in front of a crowd of 27,525, after the game ended 1-1 after 120 minutes.

Al Sadd's win means Asian teams have won all five meetings against African opposition at the intercontinental tournament, but more importantly the Qataris will now test themselves against the sublime Catalans on Thursday.

Sexton boots champions to victory over Bath

PARIS - Six penalties from Irish fly-half Jonathan Sexton were enough to give champions Leinster an 18-13 victory away at Bath in their European Cup Pool 3 match on Sunday.

Victory saw Leinster - who have lost just two of their last 19 European Cup matches - top the table after three matches and looking forward to the visit of Bath at Lansdowne Road next weekend where they have already sold over 40,000 tickets.

Leinster coach Joe Schmidt welcomed the win but was far from happy with the number of try-scoring

Donald lands historic double



DUBAI - England's Luke Donald created history in style when he made three birdies in his last three holes at the Dubai World Championship to win the European Tour's Race to Dubai.

There were only two ways the world No1 could have won the honour - and thus become the only player in history to win the Money Lists of both US PGA and European Tour.

He either needed to finish inside the top-nine, or hope that world No2 Rory McIlroy did not win the \$7.5 million season-ending championship. Donald ticked both the boxes.

The 34-year-old played bogey-free golf for his last 46 holes - his last bogey coming on the eighth hole in Friday's second round - and successive weekend rounds of six-under par 66 saw him finish third at 16-under par 272.

On the other hand, a third consecutive one-under par 71 round by

McIlroy meant he finished tied for the 11th place at nine-under par 279.

While Donald walked away with the top share of the Race to Dubai Bonus Pool of \$1.5 million, the Dubai World Championship was won in emphatic style by Alvaro Quiros.

The Spaniard sank a 40-footer eagle putt on the final hole to win the \$1.25 million first prize at 19-under par 269.

The rejuvenated Paul Lawrie matched Quiros' final round of 67, but that left him two shots adrift of the champion. Donald was one behind at 272.

"It is difficult to sum up my emotions right now. I have wanted this for some months now and obviously, my come-from-behind win in Disney made this all possible," said Donald, whose final earning from the 2011 European Tour season was 5.323 million euros.

chances his team let slip.

"The frustration was that we couldn't get the ball over their line. We appeared to have a couple of gilt-edged chances," Schmidt said.

"We want to be a lot more accurate to make sure we finish opportunities that we create, but I am delighted with the result.

"Against a quality team it's hard to create opportunities, and the last thing you want to do is butcher them (mess the chances up) like we did today. We almost suffocated ourselves at times."

Glasgow are in second, three

points behind the Irish side after they edged a second-string Montpellier side 20-15 in an ill-tempered affair that saw three players sin-binned.

Four penalties from Glasgow's highly-thought-of 20-year-old fly-half Duncan Weir provided the hosts with the backbone of their victory.

The day's other match was another bad-tempered affair between French giants Clermont and two-time champions Leicester, with the English side going down to a 30-12 hammering.

Bayern pull clear

BERLIN - Bayern Munich went three points clear at the top of the German league on Sunday after coming from behind as Germany star Mario Gomez struck twice in the 2-1 win at 10-man VfB Stuttgart.

Stuttgart went ahead after ex-Germany midfielder Christian Gentner came onto a header from Austria striker Martin Harnik at pace and his volley flew past Munich goalkeeper Manuel Neuer on six minutes.

Earlier, Japan winger Shinji Kagawa's first-half strike was not enough to give Borussia Dortmund three points as the defending champions were held to a 1-1 draw at home to Kaiserslautern.

Udinese go top

ROME - Udinese went top of Serie A with a 2-1 win at home to Chievo as AC Milan were held to a 2-2 draw at Bologna on Sunday. Captain Antonio Di Natale and Dusan Basta gave Udinese a 2-0 lead before Alberto Paloschi's late consolation kept things interesting right to the end.

Udinese now lead by a point from Juventus with Milan and Lazio, 3-2 winners at rock bottom Lecce on Saturday, a point further back.

In Bologna it was a controversial tale of penalties given and not as Marco Di Vaio and Alessandro Diamanti scored for the hosts with Clarence Seedorf and Zlatan Ibrahimovic, from the spot, replying for the champions.

In other games Atalanta and Catania drew 1-1 while it remained goalless between Cagliari and Parma.

Opens propel Australia towards Test victory

HOBART, Australia - Opens David Warner and Phillip Hughes gave Australia a strong platform for victory over New Zealand before rain ended play early on the third day of the second Test on Sunday.

The two left-handers put on 72 without loss off 19 overs to give the Australians a flying start as they chase 241 at Hobart's Bellerive Oval to wrap up a two-nil series win over the Black Caps.

Australia thrashed New Zealand by nine wickets in the first Test in Brisbane last weekend.

SUNDAY'S SCOREBOARD

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Sunderland 2, Blackburn 1
Stoke 2, Tottenham 1

FRENCH LIGUE 1

Auxerre 2, Nice 1
Lille 2, Dijon 0
Lorient 0, Lyon 1

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Borussia Dortmund 1, Kaiserslautern 1
VfB Stuttgart 1, Bayern Munich 2

ITALIAN SERIE A

Atalanta 1, Catania 1
Bologna 2, AC Milan 2
Cagliari 0, Parma 0
Udinese 2, Chievo 1
Novara 1, Napoli 1

SPANISH LA LIGA

Rayo Vallecano 1, Sporting Gijon 3
Villarreal 1, Real Sociedad 1
Getafe 1, Granada 0
Malaga 1, Osasuna 1
Real Zaragoza 0, Real Mallorca 1
Athletic Bilbao 1, Racing Santander 1
Espanyol 4, Atletico Madrid 2

DUTCH EREDIVISIE

VVV Venlo 2, Roda JC 0
FC Utrecht 2, Feyenoord 2
RKC Waalwijk 0, Ajax 1
Vitesse Arnhem 0, FC Groningen 0

SATURDAY'S SCOREBOARD

NHL

Montreal 2, New Jersey 1
Boston 5, Columbus 3
N.Y. Rangers 4, Buffalo 1
Pittsburgh 6, N.Y. Islanders 3
Philadelphia 5, Tampa Bay 2
Vancouver 4, Ottawa 1
Detroit 7, Winnipeg 1
Nashville 3, Anaheim 2
Minnesota 4, Phoenix 1
St. Louis 1, San Jose 0
Calgary 3, Edmonton 0
Dallas 2, Los Angeles 1

Mourinho hits out at 'lucky' Barcelona

MADRID - Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho blasted Barcelona as lucky winners on Sunday after the defending champions came back from a goal down to clinch a 3-1 victory in El Clasico.

With the match level at 1-1, after Alexis Sanchez had equalized Karim Benzema's shock 23-second opener, Barca took the lead when a Xavi drive took a wicked deflection off Marcelo and past Iker Casillas in the Real goal.

Cesc Fabregas then scored with a diving header to secure the three points which put Barcelona top on goal difference although Real have a game in hand.

"Without taking anything away from them, this victory was partly due to luck. The second goal was very lucky," said Mourinho.

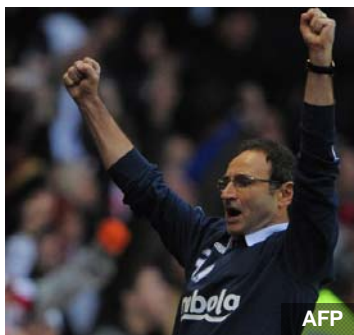
Larsson gives O'Neill opening victory

SUNDERLAND - Sebastian Larsson's stoppage-time goal enabled Martin O'Neill to mark his first match as Sunderland manager with a 2-1 come from behind win over fellow Premier League strugglers Blackburn Rovers on Sunday.

There were only six minutes of normal time left when David Vaughan's powerful shot drew Sunderland level in front of their own fans at the Stadium of Light.

And just when it seemed the hosts would have to settle for a draw, Rovers conceded a free-kick on the edge of their box and Sweden international Larsson curled a shot around the defensive wall that flew in at former England goalkeeper Paul Robinson's near post.

Victory meant Sunderland, who recently sacked Steve Bruce as their manager, climbed out of the relegation zone while Rovers remained in the



bottom three.

"The confidence was a little bit low, as you'd expect with where we are in the league, but hopefully we can get on a good run now," said Vaughan, after what was only the north-east side's third league success this season.

Larsson added: "Martin told us he believes in us. This will do the world of good for us. We needed this kind of win and we deserved it."

McIlroy pulls out of Thai tournament

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates - Rory McIlroy says he is pulling out of next week's Thailand Golf Championship as he continues to recover from the lingering effects of dengue fever.

McIlroy showed signs of fatigue during his 11th place finish at this week's Dubai World Championship. He said Saturday he felt exhausted and that blood tests have shown his white blood cell count remains low.

The US Open champion believes he picked up a "mild case of dengue fever" when he was playing tournaments in South Korea and China.

India deny West Indies

CHENNAI - India overcame an aggressive century by Kieron Pollard to defeat the West Indies by 34 runs in the fifth and final one-dayer in Chennai on Sunday to take the series 4-1.

Pollard smashed 10 sixes and four boundaries in his 110-ball knock before the tourists were bowled out for 233 in reply to India's 267-6 in the day-night match at the Chidambaram stadium.

Pollard was last man out, caught in the deep off Suresh Raina, to deny his team a win in the last match of the Indian tour, where the West Indies also lost the Test series 2-0.

Pakistan on top

CHITTAGONG - Younis Khan cracked an unbeaten double-century and Asad Shafiq made his maiden international hundred as Pakistan closed in on victory in the first Test against Bangladesh on Sunday.

Younis smashed a solid 200 not out and Shafiq an impressive 104 as Pakistan posted 594-5 declared in their first innings in reply to Bangladesh's 135 in Chittagong.

The hosts faltered against spin before reaching 134-4 in their second innings at stumps, with debutant Mohammed Nazimuddin and Shakib Al Hasan both unbeaten on 41, still trailing by 325 runs.

Khan ready for rematch

WASHINGTON - Britain's Amir Khan, saying he felt a rightful victory was stolen from him on Saturday, vowed to return stronger after a controversial majority decision defeat to American Lamont Peterson.

Referee Joe Cooper took points from Khan in the seventh and 12th rounds for shoving hometown hero Peterson and that proved to be the margin of Khan's loss before a sellout crowd of 8,647 at the Washington Convention Center.

WEATHER

24hr period ending 1200 GMT Sunday

	Min		Max		Weather
	C	F	C	F	
Amsterdam	3	37	7	44	rain
Athens	5	41	17	62	clear
Beijing	-4	24	9	48	clear
Belgrade	2	35	14	57	cloudy
Berlin	1	33	4	39	clear
Cairo	9	48	19	66	ptcloudy
Dubai	16	60	27	80	clear
Hanoi	11	51	18	64	ptcloudy
Hong Kong	10	50	17	62	ptcloudy
Istanbul	4	39	11	51	clear
Jakarta	25	77	32	89	rain
Johannesburg	13	55	22	71	ptcloudy
Kabul	-2	28	14	57	clear
London	0	32	6	42	clear
Madrid	2	35	9	48	cloudy
Mexico City	6	42	22	71	ptcloudy
New Delhi	11	51	23	73	clear
New York	-3	27	4	40	clear
Oslo	-8	17	-3	26	ptcloudy
Paris	3	37	7	44	cloudy
Rome	10	50	17	62	rain
Sao Paulo	17	62	25	77	rain
Singapore	24	75	29	84	rain
Stockholm	0	32	2	35	cloudy
Sydney	17	62	27	80	ptcloudy
Tokyo	7	44	13	55	clear
Toronto	-6	22	0	32	clear
Warsaw	0	32	4	39	ptcloudy

Lille, Lyon stay in title hunt

PARIS - Lille put their Champions League exit behind them with a 2-0 win over Dijon on Sunday which consolidated third place in the French first division, two points behind joint-leaders Montpellier and Paris Saint Germain.

Senegalese striker Moussa Sow grabbed his sixth goal of the season in the 16th minute with a close-ranger header before Belgian star Eden Hazard also took his tally to six in the 58th minute.

Hazard's goal was the result of a neat interchange of passes with English import Joe Cole which carved open the Dijon defense.

Lyon, fresh from their miraculous 7-1 Champions League win at Dinamo Zagreb in midweek, edged Lorient 1-0 to stay in fourth spot, two points behind Lille.

Bafetimbi Gomis, who scored the fastest hat-trick in Champions League history in Croatia to secure the team's last 16 place, helped create Alexandre Lacazette's 54th-minute winner.

Gomis held off three defenders to slip the ball to Lacazette and the French under-21 international slotted the ball past Lorient goalkeeper Fabien Audard.

"I am very proud with the performance of my players tonight," said Lyon coach Remi Garde.