

## ERDOGAN ACCUSES EU OF NOT PAYING UP UNDER MIGRANT DEAL

**BERLIN:** Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday accused the EU of not meeting its aid commitments under a deal to send Syrian refugees back across the Aegean, but Brussels denied the charge. Ankara and Brussels signed a controversial deal in March, in which Turkey agreed to take Syrian migrants landing on Greek islands in exchange for political and financial incentives.

The deal included billions of Euros in aid, visa-free travel for Turks in Europe and accelerated talks on Turkey's stalled bid for EU membership, but ties have

been strained by Erdogan's massive crackdown after a failed coup this month. The EU promised to pay 3 billion Euros (\$3.3 billion) — but Erdogan said the 28-nation bloc had so far only handed over a nominal one or two million. "The (European) governments are not honest," Erdogan told German public television station ARD. "Three million Syrians, or people from Iraq, are now in Turkey," he said. "The EU has not kept its promises on the matter." In Brussels, the European Commission, the executive of the 28-nation European Union, rejected

Erdogan's remarks. "The European Union is respecting its commitments and suggestions to the contrary are not true," Commission spokesman Margaritis Schinas told reporters.

He said the EU had already allocated 740 million Euros and another 1.4 billion would be set aside by the end of this month, bringing the total so far to more than 2.1 billion Euros. EU officials said 105 million euros have actually been disbursed so far.

Schinas stressed that the funds were "not for Turkey but for the refugees." The

Commission said in June it aimed to have 2 billion Euros allocated by the end of the summer, with half of that handed over to aid groups.

### Sweeping crackdown

Erdogan estimated the refugees, many of whom have fled the devastating five-year civil war in neighboring Syria, have cost Turkey \$12 billion (10.9 billion Euros). The EU made the deal with Turkey in an effort to control a huge influx of more than a million migrants who overwhelmed the bloc last year. Late last

month, Brussels said it had opened a new phase of negotiations with Turkey on its long-stalled bid for EU membership. But that bid has been hit by Erdogan's sweeping crackdown in the wake of the failed July 15 military takeover, which has seen thousands of people detained. The president repeated his call for capital punishment for the plotters, an issue that has provoked an angry reaction from the EU. Turkey abolished the death penalty in 2004 ahead of membership talks with Brussels that began the following year. —AFP

## TURKEY DETAINS GENERALS, JOURNALISTS IN WIDENING PURGE POST-COUP

### WARNS AGAINST WITCH HUNT

**ANKARA:** Turkey's opposition leader yesterday warned against a government witch hunt following the failed coup in the country, saying it would cast a shadow on the democracy which those who opposed the insurrection tried to protect.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Kemal Kilicdaroglu also said the United States should extradite a US-based Muslim cleric whom the government accuses of being behind the failed July 15 uprising.

based cleric Fethullah Gulen, although their direct links to the coup attempt is not clear. Gulen has denied any part in the foiled uprising by a faction within Turkey's military.

### 'Top Afghanistan general held'

On Tuesday, two Turkish generals serving in Afghanistan and a former Istanbul governor were detained as part of the crackdown. The two generals were caught in Dubai, while the governor, Huseyin Avni Mutlu, who served from 2010-

Kilicdaroglu cautioned that authorities should act within the law and pursue only those linked to the coup plot. "Are those who carried out the coup attempt guilty? Yes. The real culprits must be found," Kilicdaroglu said. "If we go out of the norms of the law, then we are no different to the coup-plotters."

"The detention of journalists is not a pretty development," Kilicdaroglu added. "If they have direct ties to the coup, that's a different matter. But the detention or arrest of a journalist for expressing opinions, for covering an issue is not right." Kilicdaroglu said he backed the government's efforts for Gulen's extradition from the United States. "It has been expressed that Fethullah Gulen was at the center of the coup attempt. It has been expressed that evidence (against Gulen) will be brought to light. If there is such an incident, then naturally Fethullah Gulen must be returned to Turkey," he said.

Gulen himself insisted in an opinion piece he wrote for the New York Times, that he had nothing to do with the coup and had denounced it from the start, and called on the US to reject Turkey's extradition request for him.

"Turkey's president is blackmailing the United States by threatening to curb his country's support for the international coalition against the Islamic State. His goal: to ensure my extradition, despite a lack of credible evidence and virtually no prospect for a fair trial. The temptation to give Mr. Erdogan whatever he wants is understandable. But the United States must resist it," Gulen wrote.

"For the sake of worldwide efforts to restore peace in turbulent times, as well as to safeguard the future of democracy in the Middle East, the United States must not accommodate an autocrat who is turning a failed putsch into a slow-motion coup of his own against constitutional government," Gulen said.

Gulen said that despite his "unequivocal protest, similar to statements issued by all three of the major opposition parties (denouncing the coup), Turkey's increasingly authoritarian president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, immediately accused me of orchestrating the putsch." He insisted his philosophy was one of "inclusive and pluralist Islam" that rejected armed rebellion and espoused the respect of all regardless of religious or political views or ethnic origins. "In Turkey, the Erdogan government's shift toward a dictatorship is polarizing the population along sectarian, political, religious and ethnic lines, fueling the fanatics," Gulen wrote. —AP



**ANKARA:** Pro-government supporters protest against the attempted coup, on the road leading to Istanbul's iconic Bosphorus Bridge on Thursday. —AP

"Those who are innocent should not be thrown into the fire with those who are guilty," said Kilicdaroglu, leader of the pro-secular main opposition Republican People's Party. "The start of a witch hunt would cast a shadow on the struggle that is being led for democracy."

Turkey has detained more than 13,000 people in the military, judiciary and other institutions in a purge in the wake of the attempted coup which killed about 290 people. Tens of thousands of others have been suspended from their jobs in sectors including education, health care, municipalities and even at the Turkish national airline. Those who have been purged are accused of ties to the movement led by US-

2014, was detained in Istanbul, an official at the office of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations on speaking to the media.

In another crackdown, police and prosecutors searched the Istanbul-based naval academy, an official said. At least 110 Culture and Tourism Ministry employees were suspended and detention warrants were issued for 29 lawyers in the central Turkish city of Konya, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported.

Police on Tuesday also detained two more journalists a day after authorities issued warrants for the detention of 42 journalists, many of them who had worked for Gulen-linked media.



**SAINT-ETIENNE-DU-ROUVRAY, SEINE-MARITIME, FRANCE:** French President Francois Hollande (L) holds and speaks with Hubert Wulfranc mayor of Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray (R) yesterday. —AFP

## HOLLANDE VOWS WAR ON IS 'BY EVERY MEANS' AFTER CHURCH ATTACK

**SAINT-ETIENNE-DU-ROUVRAY, FRANCE:** President Francois Hollande vowed yesterday to wage war against Islamic State (IS) "by every means" within the law after two men linked to the jihadist group killed a priest in a French church.

"We are confronted with a group, Daesh, which has declared war on us," Hollande said, using an alternative name for the Islamic State group. "We have to wage war, by every means, (but through) upholding the law, which is because we are a democracy."

Hollande was speaking in a lightning visit to the northern French town of Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray, just hours after the attack took place. Two assailants entered a local church, slitting the throat of an 84-year-old priest and leaving another hostage with life-threatening injuries, before being killed by police as they left

the building, police said. Hollande said the assailants "claimed to be from Daesh" and branded the assault as a "vile terrorist attack." "The Catholic community has been hit, but it is all of the French public which is concerned," Hollande said. He called for national unity in the face of terrorism, urging the French people to "create a solid bloc that no-one can split".

France remains on high alert after Tunisian Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel ploughed a truck into a crowd of people celebrating Bastille Day in Nice, killing 84 people and injuring over 300. The July 14 massacre was the third major terror attack in France in little more than 18 months.

The string of bloody incidents has left the country jittery and stoked political finger-pointing, with conservative politicians accusing the ruling Socialists of being weak or incompetent on security. —AFP

## PUTIN AND ERDOGAN TO MEET NEXT MONTH AMID GROWING RAPPROCHEMENT

**MOSCOW:** Russian President Vladimir Putin will meet his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan next month for the first time in almost a year, a sign that a rapprochement between the two nations is gathering pace.

Russian trade sanctions imposed on Ankara over the Turkish shooting down of a Russian jet near the Syrian border last November remain in place, and Economy Minister Alexei Ulyukayev said yesterday they were unlikely to be lifted before the two leaders met.

Ulyukayev was speaking as senior officials from the two nations, including Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek, met in Moscow to lay the ground for a gradual thaw in ties. The Kremlin and the Turkish government said Putin and Erdogan would meet on Aug. 9 in the Russian leader's home town of St. Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city.

The shooting down of the Russian fighter jet, which was taking part in the Kremlin's campaign to support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, prompted Moscow to impose sanctions on Ankara to hurt its tourism and construction sectors.

It also banned Turkish food imports. "The agenda has not been discussed yet ... but beyond all doubt, there is much to talk about," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told a conference call with reporters, referring to the planned Putin-Erdogan meeting.

"This will be the first meeting after that collapse in our relations, the first one after

the leaders of the two nations turned over that page," Peskov said. "Therefore, it's possible to say with confidence they won't lack topics for discussion."

Erdogan faced the biggest challenge to his rule this month when he defeated a coup staged by his own military. He is now trying to consolidate his power by purging the army and security structures. Turkey has thanked Russia for its solid support of its legitimate government during the abortive putsch. Mehmet Simsek, Turkey's deputy prime minister, said his visit and that of other officials was part of an ongoing attempt to try to mend ties with Moscow.

"We are here to improve our relations and to bring them to an even higher level than before Nov. 24," Simsek said at the start of a meeting on Tuesday with his Russian counterpart Arkady Dvorkovich.

Russian and Turkish officials discussed the possible lifting of the food import ban, Dvorkovich told reporters. Officials would later also discuss whether it was realistic to restart the shelved TurkStream project, which aims to build a natural gas pipeline from Russia to Turkey.

Dvorkovich said the resumption of charter flights between the two countries "will take some time." He said construction of the planned Akkuyu nuclear power plant project in Turkey was also on the agenda. "We plan to be able to move forward pretty fast," he said, giving no further details. —Reuters

## ITALIAN RIGHTWING LEADER COMPARES BOLDRINI TO BLOW-UP DOLL

**MILAN:** The outspoken leader of Italy's right-wing, anti-EU Northern League party has refused to apologize for comparing the lower house speaker to a blow-up sex doll.

Matteo Salvini has remained defiant in the face of strong criticism for degrading remarks aimed at house speaker Laura Boldrini, telling Sky TG24 yesterday that he had no intention of apologizing for holding a blow-up doll aloft at a weekend rally and calling it "Boldrini's clone." He has, instead, kept up the attack with Twitter posts with a hashtag that translates to "deflate Boldrini."

Boldrini has thanked all those who came to her defense, saying that Salvini has created "an Italy that cannot put up any more with the sexist obscenities." — AP

## UK COUNCIL INVESTIGATING EMPLOYEE WHO INSULTED PRINCE GEORGE

**LONDON:** The British Council, which promotes British culture and values worldwide, said yesterday that it has started disciplinary procedures against an employee who went on a social media rant against Prince George.

The woman posted obscene comments about George - who just celebrated his third birthday - on Facebook, using expletives and calling the youngster an example of "white privilege living off public money."

She also made fun of George's facial expressions. The British Council said in a statement that the comment was made on a "private social media account" and does not represent the council's views and values.

George's parents, Prince William and his wife Kate, have not commented. They released new pictures of George last week to mark his birthday. —AP



**NORFOLK, ENGLAND:** Recent but undated handout photo issued on Friday July 22, 2016 by William and Kate, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, of Britain's Prince George with the family dog Lupo, at Sandringham. —AP



**LONDON:** London Mayor Sadiq Khan (2L) poses with Brad Simpson (L), James McVey (2R) and Connor Ball (R), members of British band "The Vamps", to mark International Busking Day on Friday. —AFP

## LONDON MAYOR SEEKS MORE POWERS TO PROTECT POST-BREXIT CITY

**LONDON:** London Mayor Sadiq Khan, seeking more powers for the British capital to protect the city after Britons voted to leave the European Union, commissioned a study yesterday to draw up a list of devolution demands.

The June 23 vote to leave the EU is threatening to send Britain's \$2.4 trillion economy into a recession that would cast a long shadow over London, the centre of the country's prosperity and home to its world-leading financial services industry.

Khan, a centre-left former Member of Parliament who was elected in May on a pro-business platform, said he wanted more policy tools to make sure he could steer the capital's economy effectively as Britain negotiates its EU exit.

He did not elaborate but a previous study, published in 2013, recommended devolving property taxes and allowing London greater freedom to invest in infrastructure. "London needs a stronger voice so that we can protect jobs and growth from the economic uncertainty ahead," Khan said in a statement announcing a

new 'Finance Commission' tasked with drawing up a "wide-ranging suite of devolution requests".

Khan said he had already held preliminary talks with finance minister Philip Hammond on the subject, and that Hammond had indicated he was open to further devolution for London. As mayor, Khan already oversees a budget of 17 billion pounds (\$22 billion) with a remit that covers housing and transport, but he does not set policy for the financial sector or have full control over taxation, spending and borrowing.

"More than ever before, Londoners need their city's government to be agile and to have the power to use taxation generated locally to promote economic growth," said Tony Travers an academic who will lead the new finance commission and who chaired the previous study.

"Devolution would be good for London and would take pressure off the UK government at a time when it needs all its capacity to make Brexit work as well as possible," he added. —Reuters



**ANKARA:** This picture taken on Monday shows scarves with the effigy of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at a rally against the military coup. —AFP