

Ex-president, 2 sons acquitted of graft charges

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Mubarak, Adly sentenced to life in prison Charges against 6 police chiefs dropped



Anti-Mubarak protesters reacting in Cairo's Tahrir Square yesterday.

OUSTED President Hosni Mubarak was yesterday sentenced to life in prison for his role in the killing of protesters during last year's revolution that forced him from power.

Mubarak and his two sons — Gamal and Alaa — were however acquitted on corruption charges, but the sons still faced a separate trial on charges of insider trading.

A ruling to this effect was delivered yesterday by Mr. Justice Ahmed Refaat

said Mubarak and el-Adly did not act to stop the killings during 18-day days of mass protests that were met by a deadly crackdown of security forces on unarmed demonstrators. More than 850 protesters were killed, most shot to death, in Cairo and other major cities.

Refaat described Mubarak's era as "30 years of darkness" and "a darkened nightmare" that ended only when Egyptians rose up to demand change.

"They peacefully demanded democracy from rulers who held tight grip on

in the moments before Refaat announced his verdict.

The crowd outside then erupted in joy. Anti-Mubarak demonstrators and a smaller crowd of his supporters threw stones at each other and at police.

The judge also sentenced el-Adly to life in prison. He sentenced Mubarak's two sons Alaa and Gamal to time already served after convicting them on some corruption charges and acquitting them on others. Six security officials were acquitted



Protesters gathering around a symbolic grave in Cairo's Tahrir Square yesterday.

life. Outside, families of the victims launched firecrackers.

The defendants were mostly obscured by police who stood in front of the black metal cage.

Mubarak and his two sons — Gamal and Alaa — were acquitted on corruption charges, but the sons still faced a separate trial on charges of insider trading. El-Adly also was sentenced to life for the protester killings.

But the relief turned to rage as the judge exonerated Mubarak's six police commanders, and his two sons on

representing the victims' families.

A senior lawyer for Mubarak's defence team said the former president, who was taken to the Cairo prison after the hearing, will appeal the sentence.

Mubarak was flown by helicopter, immediately after hearing the verdict, to Torah Prison. Reuters quoted a security official as saying that Mubarak initially wept and refused to leave the aircraft.

"He was crying and would not get out of the helicopter. Security officials spent some time convincing him to get out," the official said. "He was convinced and

took to the streets across Egypt.

Thousands of citizens thronged Cairo's Tahrir Square, the epicentre of anti-Mubarak protests, waving flags and chanting against the judiciary and the military council that took power when Mubarak was forced out on February 11, 2011.

"Either we get justice for our martyrs or we die like them," a section of the crowd shouted.

Many were furious that Mubarak had not been sentenced to death, as requested by the prosecution. Others were in shock



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AFP photos

at a nationally televised session of Cairo Criminal Court.

Refaat delivered a strongly worded statement before handing down the sentences. Mubarak, who wore sunglasses and a light brown jacket over his clothes, and his co-defendants were in an iron cage.

Refaat, who was presiding over his last court session before he retires,

from rulers who held tight grip on power," the judge said.

Silence fell over the courtroom, and outside where families of the victims had gathered, to hear the verdict in the trial.

Refaat started with a speech scolding Mubarak and his top security officials, who were crammed in a caged dock in the courtroom.

Total silence fell over the courtroom

security officials were acquitted.

Mubarak remained silent inside court cage while his once-powerful sons appeared nervous and had dark circles under their eyes. His elder son Alaa whispered verses from the Qur'an.

Gasps could be heard inside the courtroom, packed with police who lined up in front of the defendant's cage, when he sentenced Mubarak and al-Adly to

commanders, and his two sons on corruption charges.

"The people demand the purification of the judiciary," lawyers representing the victims chanted, before a brief scuffle broke out in the academy lecture hall the serves the courtroom.

"The sentencing will give them innocence in an appeal," said Ahmed Hassan, one of the lawyers

the official said. He was convicted and entered the prison shortly," he added.

Hours after the verdict had been delivered, thousands of citizens poured onto the streets after the verdict. Some wanted Mubarak executed, others feared the judge's ruling exposed weaknesses in the case that could let the former president off on appeal.

Thousands of angry demonstrators

by the prosecution. Cheers were in shock at the acquittal of the police chiefs.

"Life sentence for the people and acquittal for Mubarak," read one sign in Tahrir Square, of Mubarak's decision to appeal.

"If you think the old regime fell, you are wrong. The original version is currently being downloaded," read another.

Shafiq calls for accepting verdicts

PRESIDENTIAL frontrunner Ahmed Shafiq called yesterday on Egyptians to accept the verdicts against the former president Hosni Mubarak, his two sons, his interior minister, and six Interior Ministry officials.

Shafiq, who faces Muslim Brotherhood candidate, Mohamed Morsi in a presidential run-off later this month, was quoted by AFP as saying that the rulings against Mubarak and his interior minister, Habib el-Adly,



Ahmed Shafiq

would serve as a "historic lesson" for all future presidents.

Mubarak and el-Adly were accused of ordering the killing of hundreds of innocent demonstrators as they took to the streets on January 25 last year to demand the ouster of the regime.

MB describes trial a "farce", calls for protests

THE Muslim Brotherhood (MB), Egypt's strongest political group with majority in the two chambers of the Egyptian parliament, yesterday called for mass protests against the sentences issued against former president Hosni Mubarak.

The MB's presidential candidate, Mohamed Morsi denounced the verdict, describing them as a 'farce'.

In a statement on his account on the social networking website Twitter, Morsi demanded a retrial of the former



Mohamed Morsi

president, his sons, and the interior minister and the six Interior Ministry chiefs.

The Brotherhood said on its official Twitter account that this trial must be based on the necessary evidence for a just punishment.

AI: Ruling fails to deliver justice

THE acquittal of six security chiefs, on trial with Hosni Mubarak over the killing of protesters last year, fails to deliver justice and could continue to encourage a culture of police impunity, rights groups said yesterday.

Mubarak's sentence "is a significant step towards combating long-standing impunity in Egypt" but the security chiefs' acquittal "leaves many still waiting for full justice," Amnesty International (AI) said in a statement.

"Many see the acquittal of all the senior security officials as a sign that those responsible for human rights violations can still escape justice," Amnesty said.

Judge Ahmed Refaat earlier sentenced Mubarak to life in prison after convicting him of involvement in the murder of protesters during the uprising that ousted him last year.

A senior lawyer for Mubarak's

defence team told AFP the strongman, who was taken to the Cairo prison after the hearing, will appeal the sentence.

Also given a life term for the killings was the 84-year-old former strongman's interior minister Habib el-Adly, while six ex-police commanders were acquitted.

"The verdict fails to deliver justice, it fails to deter police from future abuse and it comes against the backdrop of acquittals in police trials," Heba Morayef, Cairo-based researcher for Human Rights Watch, told reporters.

"Today's verdict will continue to protect the impunity of the Interior Ministry for violence against protesters," she said.

Corruption charges against Mubarak's sons Alaa and Gamal were dropped due to the expiry of a statute of limitations, and the former president was acquitted in one of the graft cases.

Key events since January 25, 2011

JANUARY, 2011

- 25: Egypt protests erupt after a revolt topples Tunisia's ruler.

FEBRUARY

- 11: After daily protests, president Hosni Mubarak resigns and hands power to the army, led by Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi. About 850 people die in the unrest.

- 12: Promising a peaceful transition to democracy, the army suspends the constitution and dissolves parliament.

MARCH

- 19: Egyptians approve a new constitution, with 77.2 per cent voting yes.

APRIL

- 13: Authorities say Mubarak is being held in a hospital in the resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh.

- 16: A court dissolves Mubarak's National Democratic Party.

MAY

- 7: Fifteen die and 200 are injured as Muslims and Christians clash in Cairo.

JUNE

- 6: A political party formed by the opposition Muslim Brotherhood is declared legal.

- 29: More than 1,000 hurt as protesters and police clash in Cairo's Tahrir Square.

JULY

- 8: Thousands start a Tahrir sit-in to criticise the military's slow pace of reform.

- 29: Hundreds of thousands of Islamists pack the square in the biggest gathering since Mubarak's fall.

AUGUST

- 3: Trial of Mubarak, his two sons, former interior minister Habib el-Adly and six police commanders begins.

OCTOBER

- 9: Cairo clashes leave 25 people dead, mainly Coptic Christians.

NOVEMBER

- 19: Start of week-long clashes between police and

demonstrators opposed to the military that leave 42 dead.

- 28-29: Egypt holds its first post-revolt parliamentary election. Islamist parties win about three-quarters of seats.

JANUARY, 2012

- 11: The US State Department's number two sits down with Muslim Brotherhood party leaders.

FEBRUARY

- 1: Riots kill 74 people after a Port Said football match.

APRIL

- 10: A court suspends the Islamist-dominated commission tasked with drafting a new constitution amid a boycott by liberals, moderate Muslims and the Coptic church.

- 17: The electoral commission confirms 10 candidates have been barred from running for president, ruling out a challenge by two Islamists and Mubarak's ex-spy chief.

MAY

- 2: Thugs attack a protest near the Defence Ministry, leaving at least 20 dead, including supporters of Salafist politician Hazem Salah Abu Ismail.

- 23-24: Egypt holds its first free presidential election.

- 28: Officials announce a run-off vote between Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi and Ahmed Shafiq, who served briefly as Mubarak's last premier.

- 30: Mubarak's sons, already on trial for corruption with their father, face a new separate case for alleged stock market fraud.

JUNE

- 2: Mubarak and Adly are sentenced to life in prison in the murder case, while the six police commanders are acquitted. Original corruption charges against Mubarak's sons dropped.

A lawyer for Mubarak, who is taken to a Cairo prison, says he will appeal the verdict.

Outside court chamber:

Scuffles and divisions

SCUFFLES between Mubarak supporters and opponents broke out inside and outside the courtroom after the verdict was read.

Demonstrators outside the court, many of whom had been demanding the death penalty for Mubarak, greeted the verdict with fireworks and cries of "Allahu akbar (God is great)".

Soha Saeed, the wife of one of about 850 people killed in the street revolt that toppled Mubarak on Feb. 11, 2011, shouted: "I'm so happy. I'm so happy." Thousands of riot police cordoned off the building to prevent protesters and relatives of those slain during the uprising from getting too close. Hundreds stood outside, waving Egyptian flags and chanting slogans demanding

"retribution." Some spread Mubarak's picture on the asphalt and walked over it.

Mohamed Abdel Fattah, the father of 11-year-old Hassan, shot dead during the uprising, held up the bloodied shirt and jacket of his son, both punctured in the back with what he said was a bullet hole.

"It's void, it's void," he screamed of the sentence.

Riot police advanced as some of the enraged protesters threw empty soda cans at them, beating them back with truncheons. And they quickly moved in to separate the protesters when they began fighting with pro-Mubarak demonstrators.

"The second revolution will come. God willing, there will be a new revolution," Morsi vowed.

One man held up a sign calling for Mubarak to be executed, others chanted for a death sentence.



Red-handed

Hugh Nicol

Popping in and out: Detectives in Qaliub, el-Qaliubiya Governorate raided the home of a 50-year-old plasterer, where they arrested him and a divorced lady. The plasterer had been running his home as a brothel and the neighbours had called the police when they spotted various young ladies popping in and out at various times of the day.

The first suspect, originally from Shubra el-Kheima, also owns the flat in Qaliub that was raided by the Vice Squad and where it indeed seems that a lot of popping in and out was going on. The plasterer, named as Hussein, was preoccupied with the divorcee at the time of the raid.

More of the same: There was more of the same at a health club in Cairo owned by a lady who recruited young ladies to offer male patrons extra services. Officers raided the club, located in el-Abbasiya, and arrested Madame Jilan, two of her gals and the gentleman they were entertaining.

Madame Jihan, who was born on 21st October 1971 and lives in el-Waili near el-Abbasiya, also runs a health club in el-Nozha, not far from Cairo International Airport. Her ladies charged their customers LE400 each time. They'd split the cash 50-50 with Madame Jihan.

The man who was arrested was named as Tamer, a chef from Alexandria, born on 10th March, 1978, and the two gals as Rassem, a masseuse born on 19th September 1987, and another masseuse, Heba, born on 24th March, 1982.

No more sleeping around: Detectives have made an arrest in connection with the death of a young woman whose body was found in a sack in a drainage ditch in a village near Shebeen el-Qanater in el-Qaliubiya Governorate. She had been stabbed 11 times.

She had been murdered by her fiancé, one of her maternal cousins no less, who has been arrested. One of the

Mubarak from war hero to prisoner

WAR hero. Savior of the nation. An anchor of stability in a turbulent region. And in the twilight of his life, a criminal convicted for his role in the deaths of those fighting to oust him.

Hosni Mubarak was sentenced yesterday to life in prison after a court convicted him on charges of complicity in the killing of protesters during the 2011 uprising that forced him from power. His two sons — Gamal and Alaa — were acquitted on corruption charges.

It was an inglorious end for a leader who rose to power after Islamic extremists assassinated his predecessor Anwar Sadat and then steered the nation through the turmoil that swept the Middle East buffeted by wars, terrorism and religious extremism.

The 84-year-old Mubarak heard the verdict from a gurney in the defendants' cage, surrounded by his sons and former officials who stood in the dock to answer for the crimes of his nearly 30-year rule. The decision can be appealed.

That scene was in stark contrast to the image Mubarak had sought to portray as the rock-solid "father of the nation." In the early days of his rule, Mubarak's stern, colorless demeanour was a welcome change from the destructive charisma of Gamal Abdel-Nasser and the mercurial style of Sadat.

As Mubarak clung to power, the status quo that he personified became increasingly loathed. Like the Great Sphinx that sits immutable through the millennia, this ancient land once revered as the vibrant leader of the Arab world stagnated. Its masses struggled to feed and clothe themselves while countries of the Gulf — once little more than desert oases — seized the role that Egypt once enjoyed.

At home, Mubarak and his aging coterie of generals and business tycoons were unable to check boiling currents of popular fury, or harness the history unfolding in his nation of 80 million — the most populous in the Arab world.

A former pilot and air force commander with a combative, stubborn streak, Mubarak took tentative steps toward



Day of anger: A Cairo criminal court sentenced ousted president Hosni Mubarak to life imprisonment yesterday, on charges of complicity in the killing of demonstrators. But it acquitted six former senior Interior Ministry officials in the same case, provoking the public's fury.

democratic reform early in his presidency but pulled back toward the dictatorial style that eventually propelled the protests against him that began on Jan. 25, 2011.

He engineered Egypt's return to the Arab fold after nearly a decade in the cold over its 1979 peace treaty with Israel.

Early on, Mubarak crushed an insurgency by Muslim extremists, whose ranks had produced Sadat's assassins and some future al-Qaida leaders. In the 1990s, he fought hard against another resurgence of Muslim militants whose attacks included the slaughter of dozens of foreign tourists at the temple city of

In his early days, Mubarak made popular moves that held up promise of a more open society, including freeing 1,500 politicians, journalists and clerics jailed during Sadat's last months in office.

But hopes for broader reform dimmed. Mubarak was re-elected in staged, one-man referendums in which he routinely won more than 90 percent approval. He became more aloof, carefully choreographing his public appearances, and his authoritarian governance, buttressed by harsh emergency laws, fueled resentment.

Age took its toll on the president, who was once an avid squash player with a consistent style that matched his personality. He became hard of hearing, and was so devastated by the death of a 12-year-old grandson in 2009 that he canceled a trip to the United States.

Egypt's influence in the Middle East, meanwhile, waned as the militant groups Hamas and Hezbollah and their patron, Iran, gained momentum and followers. The oil-rich countries of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates seized the mantle of leadership regional leadership. The growing profile of Turkey, a democracy led by an Islam-inspired government, also chipped away at Egypt's heavyweight stature in the region.

In 2005, Mubarak held the country's first contested presidential election, an event marred by charges of voter fraud and intimidation. He retrenched when opponents made gains in ensuing parliamentary elections, launching a harsh campaign of arrests against the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's biggest and best organized opposition group that now dominates the parliament elected after Mubarak's downfall.

Before the protests began, Mubarak had been silent on whether he intended to seek re-election in September. But the quick rise of his son, Gamal, through the ruling party caused immense anxiety.

The Associated Press



Aswan Governor
Moustafa El Sayed

Compensation for Kom Ombo fire victims

ASWAN Governor Mostafa el-Sayed has decided to pay temporary compensation to families and sheep farmers who sustained losses in the fire in Kom Ombo, Aswan Governorate, last Thursday.

The Governor has decided to pay LE2,000 for every dead sheep and LE300 to families whose homes were destroyed in the blaze.

Forty homes and sheep pens were torched in the fire, that left dozens of people homeless.

Aswan Governorate has provided these homeless families with tents to shelter in.

Luxor to celebrate special anniversary

Noha Abdel-Mohssen

LUXOR is preparing to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun, the famous Pharaonic King, which was unearthed in the Valley of Kings in this Upper Egyptian city.

Luxor is now safe and secure after months of violence and attacks on tourists in the wake of the January 25 Revolution. Officials have successfully overcome a security vacuum that gripped the whole nation.

Jean Ashker, an Egyptologist, has urged tourists from round the world visit Luxor and its most important historical sites.

Row over Port Said future

that there must be no more of her sleeping around with other men.

On the day she died, she was sitting with her intended, 23-year-old unemployed Salah Eid, in a hut in a field in the village of Kom Ashfeen, when one of her boyfriends phoned up her up.

He could hear what he was saying to his cousin and the contents of their salacious conversation wasn't to his liking, so he fatally knifed her then disposed of her body in the ditch, where it was found four days later.

Selfish son: An elderly farmer living in a village in el-Minya Governorate was killed by his own son, who was angry with him for refusing to make over his home to him (the killer). The suspect, who lived with his father in the latter's home, shot him dead.

The victim was named as 75-year-old Rifaat Girgis, who died in the field he owned behind his home in the village of Abu Hans near Mallawi, and the son who killed him as Gomaa (43), two of whose relatives reported him to police.

Khalifa Riyadh (50) and Sami Girgis (52) said that Gomaa was always arguing with his father, because he wanted to get his hands on his father's property - his home and his land - even while he was still alive.

Prayer Times

Fajr (Dawn)3:10am
 Dhuhr (Noon)11:53am
 Asr (Afternoon)3:29pm
 Maghrib (Sunset) 6:52pm
 Isha (Evening)8:24pm

Nagar Saad

A bill stipulating the reestablishment of Port Said as free trade zone, suggested by MP Rashid Awad and approved by the People Assembly's Suggestions Committee, has led to controversy amongst industry and trade experts in Egypt.

In 2002 a governmental decree was issued annulling a 1976 law, which granted the Suez Canal town of Port Said duty-free status. When this decision was made, it aimed at protecting the local industry from the vagaries of smuggling and the challenges posed by cheap imported goods.

Some experts believe that the law, if

implemented, would contribute to promoting transit movements between Egypt and other countries and send the message to the world that Egypt was stable and sought recovery from the economic troubles caused by the political turmoil that plagued the nation after last year's revolution.

Ahmed Sheha, the Chairman of the Importers' Section at the Chambers of Commerce Federation, said that the reestablishment of Port Said as a free trade zone would attract new investments and contribute greatly to boosting the trade between Egypt and other countries.

"This suggestion also demonstrates Egypt's desire to extricate itself from

the economic and political turbulence caused by the unrest in the aftermath of the revolution," Sheha added, pointing out that if Port Said were a free trade zone it would be connected with ports like Dubai, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Mohamed el-Masri, the Deputy Chairman of the Chambers of Commerce Federation and the head of the Chamber in Port Said, said that the decision would affect the town's economic and trade sector in positive way. It would compensate for the losses of importers and traders following the massacre in the Port Said Stadium last February.

Hamdi Abdel Azim, an economic expert at the Sadat Academy, said the decision was good, but it should not be limited to the import of consumer products.

"We want to see Port Said become another Hong Kong or Singapore. This cannot be achieved without the implementation of new mechanisms, like introducing heavy industries into the town," Abdel Azim added.

Other industry experts are against this suggestion, claiming that it would encourage smuggling, since Port Said did not need more imports.

Magdi Tolba, the former Chairman of the Council for exporting clothes, agreed and added that the decision would lead to higher import quotas and smuggling would threaten the local industry.

"In 1977 under President Sadat, it was decided to turn Port Said into a free trade zone to facilitate transit movements between Egypt and other

countries in Africa and the Middle East. However, the decision had a negative impact on the local industry.

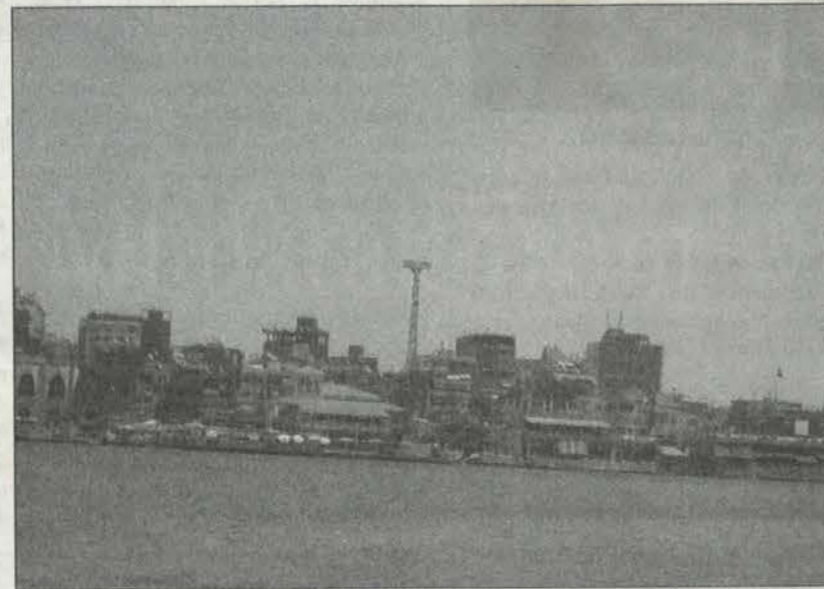
"Furthermore, turning the town into a duty-free zone will deprive the Treasury of custom duties and lead to the closure of many factories whose owners will become importers," Tolba added, wondering why Port Said was not transformed into a productive, industrial town to boost the local industry.

Yehia Zananiri, the head of the Clothes Section at the Chambers of Commerce Federation, asserted the importance of tightening control on the market to avoid any attempts at smuggling.

He added that although the decision, if implemented, would restore Port Said's position in the economy and commerce, it would be necessary to start with direct investments by estab-

lishing industrial projects to provide more jobs and increase the economic growth rates and resources.

Zananiri also pointed out that it was important to revive the ports of Port Said, since they could be expected to boost trade and investment. "A well-researched strategic plan must be drawn up," he asserted.



Supplied photo

Controversial law: A bill stipulating the reestablishment of Port Said as free trade zone, approved by the People Assembly's Suggestions Committee, has led to controversy among industry and trade experts.

In an interview, she said that one of these places is the tomb of Hoia, about 2km from the centre of the Valley of Kings.

Hoia seized the throne of Tutankhamun after allegedly killing him. The inscriptions and drawings in Hoia's tomb are similar to Tutankhamun's," Jean explained, adding that few tourists visit this tomb.

"Another important tomb is that of Sen Nefr in the Valley of the Nobles. You reach this tomb via some old stairs and there used to be a vineyard nearby," she said.

The tomb's walls are covered in inscriptions and drawings of grapevines and it is thought that Sen Nefr was a vine-dresser.

The third must-visit place is King Tohotmos' Hall of Celebration, behind the Karnak Temple.

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The Egyptian Gazette

SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 2012

Beyond verdict text

A PART from the content of the court ruling delivered yesterday in the 'Trial of the Century' and the consequent arguments raised by the proponents and opponents of the verdict, and also apart from fact that that trial has indeed been a huge event, given the names involved and actions investigated, it remains certain that it implies a special political and historical significance. At least a couple of considerations or dimensions could be cited in identifying that special significance.

First, it is now clear that law rather than influence will be the distinguishing characteristic of the developing democracy in Egypt. The ruling apparently augments the steps accomplished so far along the course of transition to democracy; namely, the reliance on free elections to institute two houses of parliament that truly reflect the free will

of the people, the conduct of a transparent election of a president and the challenging process of writing such a new constitution that would represent the common and shared aspirations of all segments of the public. Whether one agrees or differs with the content of yesterday's ruling, putting it in its natural and appropriate context is conducive to identifying its special significance. In post-January Revolution Egypt, political power and the exercise of authority would be shaped and guided by the stipulations and dictates of law. In the event of the emergence of conflicting claims or divergent views, the settlement can be only that which is recognised by constitutional provisions and set forth in the legislations in effect.

Secondly, it has now been established that ascension to the nation's top post will squarely mean the largest possible exposure to

accountability, be it formal or popular. In line with this understanding, each and every coming president will have to draw his true base of political support from the extent of the compatibility between his words and his deeds. It was therefore logical that the governing Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) issued yesterday an appeal to the presidential candidates campaigning in the run-off to show every keenness on getting their messages across to the people on the basis of winning the confidence and conviction of voters.

Once again, whether one agrees or differs with the content of yesterday's ruling, the prime mandate of future presidencies and senior executive post holders will be mainly a test field for the capability to serve the common good of the people and the interests of the nation rather than the mere exercise of influence and authority.

In the World Press

How Slow Can It Go?

THERE are two unavoidable conclusions from the May jobs report: The slow economy is getting slower, and there is no help on the way.

Republicans in Congress seem more determined not only to block any boost that President Obama wants to give the economy, but they are preparing to take the nation's credit rating hostage again over the debt ceiling. Mitt Romney, the Republican presumptive presidential nominee, has no new ideas.

The statistics on Friday were daunting. Only 69,000 jobs were created last month, far lower than what's needed just to keep up with population growth. The job tallies for March and April, shabby to begin with, were revised down for an

the length of the typical workweek.

Similarly, the rise in the number of people looking for work is normally considered a sign of optimism, but, on closer inspection, it appears to be simply the reversal of a drop in job-seekers in April.

Granted, it is better for jobless workers to be actively looking for work than sitting on the sidelines. But without enough jobs to go around, the inevitable result is higher official unemployment. The jobless rate ticked up from 8.1 per cent in April to 8.2 per cent in May, or 12.7 million people. Of those, 42.8 per cent, or 5.4 million people, have been out of work for more than six months, a profound measure of personal suffering and economic decline.

ees, investments in infrastructure and tax breaks for new hiring.

It was filibustered by Senate Republicans and not brought up for a vote in the Republican-dominated House, with Republican lawmakers claiming that deficit reduction was more important. Since then, they have balked at even smaller administration proposals, like modest investments in clean-energy projects.

Blocking constructive action is bad enough, but it's not the worst of it. Recently, the House speaker, John Boehner, has ratcheted up economic uncertainty by pledging to force another showdown this year over legislation to raise the debt ceiling. A debt-ceiling debacle would come on top of the expira-

The runoff in the Egyptian presidential elections



Hany of Akhbar Al-Youm

In the Cairo press Defending the Copts

YESTERDAY the editor-in-chief of Al-Wafd opposition newspaper Soliman Gouda defended Egypt's Copts from cruel charges that accused them of igniting sectarian strife and opening a chasm in society. The Copts are the victims of allegations that they rallied behind ex-Prime Minister

the first step towards a fully fledged democracy."

Shaken democracy: Contributing to Al-Ahram semi-official newspaper, columnist Abdel-Azim el-Basil wrote that the free and unrigged presidential election

smuggled Tramadol and Xanax into Egypt.

"The Saudi authorities got very tough with the smugglers of these two drugs when it transpired that they were detrimental to the health of young Saudis. Tramadol and Xanax addicts would lose their minds or be in danger

to begin with, were revised down, for an average monthly tally of 96,000 over the past three months, versus 252,000 in the prior three months.

The weakness was not only displayed in job growth. Average weekly wages declined in May, to \$805, as a measly two-cents-an-hour raise was more than clawed back by a drop to 34.4 hours in



home talk

Mohssen Arishie

THE advent of democracy is compelling the Egyptian nation to re-live the tragedy of Sisyphus in the Greek mythology.

Sisyphus was a king, whose punishment was to roll an immense boulder up a mountain only to see it tumble down again and eternally repeat the same futile task.

The Egyptians are in a similar position; they struggle hard to get rid of a centuries-old nightmarish battle-or conspiracy-between the military and religious men. Egypt is asked to encourage 'freely and democratically' the two demons to survive and push the nation again and again up the hill.

The January 25 revolution -and the presidential election-contributed substantially to the reenactment of the Sisyphus tragedy. The toppling of president Hosni Mubarak and his regime on February 11, 2011 encouraged the Egyptians to heave a sigh of relief and prepare themselves for a civil government. The bleeding nation decided to hold a presidential election, which could fulfil their centuries-old dream. 13 candidates introduced themselves as the nation's champions to achieve its aspirations.

The presidential candidates represented different political and religious camps: three came from religious movements and one from the military. A candidate representing Muslim fundamentalism and an ex-military man are the only ones to take part in the

decline.

There's no sign that Washington is prepared to shoulder this responsibility. President Obama's last big push for job creation, the \$450 billion package proposed last fall, would have created an estimated 1.3 million to 1.9 million jobs by providing aid to states for teachers and other vital public employ-

Egyptians in Sisyphus tragedy

election runoff. The win of these two candidates has ignited strong opposition all across the country. On the one hand, the fundamentalist candidate has generated the fear that he would establish an Islamic State. On the other hand, his rival has raised worries that he would reestablish and strengthen the military regime in Egypt.

Many Egyptians are planning to boycott the election runoff; others warn that the election of either candidate would give rise to a new spate of tragic violence. Some say that the SCAF (the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which governs Egypt in the absence of a President) is in possession of a magic solution that could end the nation's dilemma and save it from further violence. According to this belief, the SCAF would be well advised to launch a military coup. In other words, the Egyptians would see their 'immense boulder' tumble down, Sisyphus fashion, and they would have to push it up the mountain again.

For thousands of years, the nation has been the victim of an endless struggle between the Pharaoh (later given the title of President) and the temple (transformed into mosques and churches). The Pharaohs declared themselves gods; their divine powers were guarded by the adepts who lived behind temple walls. In collaboration with the God-Kings, they put fear into the worshippers' hearts (the nation). When tensions were ignited concerning the limits of authority between the King and the adepts, each side sought to manipulate the helpless people. The cosseted nation would be subjugated again and suffer from miserable conditions when

debate would come on top of the expiration at the end of 2012 of the Bush-era tax cuts and the onset of some \$1 trillion in automatic spending cuts. If allowed to take effect as planned, those measures would take a huge bite out of growth, further weakening the economy.

The International Herald Tribune/New York

peace prevailed between the two adversaries. The title of 'Pharaoh' was replaced with 'Caliph of the Muslim Faithful' when Muslims from the Arab peninsula succeeded in promulgating Islam in Egypt and the region. Parallel to this great development, temples were replaced with mosques and churches; and the adepts and disciples abandoned their ceremonial attire in favour of Muslim sheikhs and Christian bishops. Learning the lesson from the Pharaohs, the Caliph-or President-invited Muslim imams and Coptic priests to sit near him-but at a good distance, otherwise ordinary citizens would compare their authority to his. The Caliph (and later the President) delegated some of his powers to religious men, provided they helped him protect his throne (or the Presidential palace). Imams and priests were also asked to prove their loyalty to the ruler by using certain texts in their holy books in a misleading and cynical way to quell protests or revolts.

In the meantime, the ruler declared himself supreme commander of the army to suppress religious men, who planned a coup in the name of their God and wanted 'to take all-the land and the people' for themselves.

Accordingly, since ancient times, the Egyptians have been silently longing for their eternal Sisyphus tragedy to end. Throughout history, Egypt has staged many uprisings to eliminate the military's authority and religious powers' influence. The fact that the champions of these uprisings were killed or jailed did not stop their descendants from resuming the struggle.

they rallied behind ex-Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq in the first round of the presidential election. According to these allegations, the Coptic Church asked its faithful to campaign against the Muslim Brotherhood's candidate Mohamed Morsi.

Gouda wrote: "Leave the Copts alone! "Nobody knows for sure how many Copts voted for Shafiq. These allegations and accusations are baseless."

The writer also condemned those claiming that the Copts had instigated sectarian strife in society. He also reminded them that Shafiq was after all a Muslim. "Such claims would be more credible if a Copt was running in the presidential election."

Dark horse: In *Al-Shorouq* independent newspaper, columnist *Gamal-Eddin Hussein* called Hamdeen Sabbahi a dark horse. Although he was defeated in the first election round, he obtained no less than four million votes. Examining other aspects of Sabbahi's defeat, the writer asserted that the failed candidate had become a rising star in the political street. He also indicated that Hamdeen Sabbahi's strong performance in the first election round showed that the socialist spirit of Nasserism (an ideology advocated by president Gamal Abdel-Nasser in the 1950s and the 1960s) was still alive in Egypt.

"Sabbahi should capitalise on his dramatic defeat by forming a political party and lead the central left."

Nation in danger: Columnist *Wafaa el-Ghazali* voiced her concern in *Akhbar Al-Youm* (the weekly issue of *Al-Akhbar*) that the results of the first election round were threatening Egypt's future. Elaborating on her fears she wrote that the losers refused to accept their defeat, although international and regional monitors and observers had declared the election as fair and transparent.

"The results were rejected by the revolutionary movements, which oppose the runoff candidates Morsi and Shafiq."

El-Ghazali was against boycotting the runoff. "The Egyptian people should be aware that they have taken

and unrigged presidential election would now force the nation to choose between two evils.

"The Egyptians are in the difficult position where they have to vote for the establishment of a religious State under Mohamed Morsi or a dictatorial regime under Ahmed Shafiq."

El-Basil also rejected the 'democratic charter' prepared by the political elite to frustrate the creation of an Islamic state or a dictatorial regime. The writer doubted that Morsi in particular would commit himself to the 'democratic charter' if he became President.

"The MB, which stands behind Morsi, is notorious for abandoning its pledges and promises."

'We should pay more attention to the future of our country by continuing our great revolution.'

Future of democracy:

Columnist *Diaa Rashwan* advised the Egyptians in *Al-Masry Al-Youm* independent newspaper to ignore the Criminal Court's verdicts in the trial of ex-president Hosni Mubarak, his sons, his ex-Minister of Interior and assistants.

"We should pay more attention to the future of our country by continuing our great revolution."

He added that the flames of the revolution should motivate the Egyptian nation to lay a strong foundation for a proper and healthy democratic system. It would be of no importance if Mubarak and his aides were given the death sentence or put in jail for many years, but it was fundamentally important to keep the revolution's momentum going and build a prosperous and democratic country."

Death sentence for drug traffickers:

Contributing to *Al-Massa'iyah* state-owned newspaper, columnist *Mahmoud Abdel-Hamid* appealed to the local authorities to follow the example of their Saudi counterparts and introduce the death sentence for drug traffickers, who

would lose their minds or be in danger of dying. The situation in Egypt is more serious; drug traffickers imported huge quantities of the two drugs."

The writer also attributed the outbreak of violence in the street and among family members to these two drugs.

Battle over Constitution: Writer *Mohssen Moustafa* appealed to the Egyptians to stop fighting over Morsi or Shafiq assuming power in Egypt and focus instead on the impending battle over the Constitution, which would draw the roadmap of Egypt's future.

"The Egyptian people should rise above their differences and protect their country. There should be a big turnout in the election runoff. The collective will and decision of the Egyptian nation should be respected and binding."

Revelation: Columnist *Khaled Emam* of *Al-Messa* evening newspaper appealed yesterday to Mohamed Morsi, the chairman of the MB's Freedom and Justice Party, to reveal the names of those journalists and writers, who had allegedly received cheques with six digit figures to oppose the January 25 revolution. Morsi had voiced these accusations in a meeting in 6 October City with writers and members of the intelligentsia and the entertainment industry.

Addressing Morsi, Emam wrote: "Morsi's accusations are very serious. He should immediately hand all available documents substantiating his accusations to the Public Prosecutor."

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IAEA to discuss Iran's nuclear ambitions

VIENNA (AFP) – Iran's nuclear ambitions will again be in the spotlight when the UN atomic watchdog meets next week to discuss if Iranian scientists have used a military base for illicit nuclear weapons tests.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) released a damning report last November saying Iranian scientists had possibly carried out weapons tests at the base in Parchin, near Tehran, since 2003.

A demand for fast and unconditional access to the base will form the crux of discussions when the IAEA's 35-member board meets behind closed doors at its Vienna headquarters for a week from Monday.

The agency's chief inspector Herman Nackaerts on Wednesday showed satellite images dated May 25 showing two small buildings at Parchin that had been recently razed to the ground, according to Western diplomats.

Iran has persistently denied its nuclear programme is for anything but civilian purposes, but some Western powers suspect Iran is trying to cover up nuclear tests there.

The developments come amid mounting impatience from nations including the United States and Israel over Iran's perceived stalling to allow full inspections and oversight of its nuclear programme.

The US ambassador to Israel said Washington would not continue fruitless dialogue forever and said military action remained an option, along with other economic and diplomatic tools.

The IAEA has also pointed to evidence around another building where scientists may have carried out conventional explosives tests.

The opening of Parchin to inspectors should form part of a broader agreement between Tehran and the IAEA in which Iran would also address several outstanding questions about its nuclear programme the atomic watchdog raised in its critical November report.

IAEA chief Yukiya Amano, after a short trip to Tehran, said on May 22 that Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili had made a "decision to reach an agreement". However, no major developments have been announced since.



Arab and global concern about Syrian crisis: Arab League Secretary General Nabil al-Arabi arriving for an Arab ministerial committee meeting in Doha, to discuss the Syrian crisis, yesterday.

Arabs urge UN action on Syria

DAMASCUS/BEIRUT (News agencies) – Arab leaders called for UN action yesterday as at least 27 people were killed in Syria amid growing global concern that Kofi Annan's peace plan is failing and the country descending into civil war.

The Arab League's ministerial committee on Syria, meanwhile, called on UN-Arab League envoy Annan to set a time frame for his mission.

"We request Mr. Annan to set a time frame for his mission because it is unacceptable that massacres and bloodshed continue while the mission is ongoing indefinitely," Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al-Thani told a meeting of the committee in Doha, attended by Annan.

"We demand the UN Security Council refer the six-point (Annan plan) to Chapter VII so that the international community could assume responsibility," he added, without elaborating.

Earlier, Arab League chief Nabil al-Arabi said he had asked the Security Council to take strong action to protect civilians in Syria but did not raise the question of intervention.

"I sent a letter to the UN Security Council asking it to undertake all necessary measures to protect the Syrian people," Arabi told AFP shortly before the opening of the Doha meeting.

But asked if he had called for armed action against the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Arabi said: "I have not referred to military intervention".

Clashes between pro- and anti-Syrian regime gunmen yesterday killed at least eight people and wounded 21 others in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli, a security official said.

Among the dead were a woman and her son, killed by a rocket in the Bab al-

Tebanneh district the official said.

At least five were wounded in Jabal Mohsen, an area mainly populated by pro-Damascus Alawites.

Sporadic gun and rocket fire broke out at midnight and continued through the night, forcing some residents of the port city to flee their homes.

International peace envoy Kofi Annan warned yesterday of an all-out sectarian war in Syria, holding President Bashar al-Assad as the first responsible to act to end the conflict.

"The spectre of an all-out war with a worrying sectarian dimension grows by the day," he told a ministerial meeting on Syria in Doha.

"The situation is complex and it takes everyone involved in the conflict to act responsibly if the violence is to stop. But the first responsibility lies in the Syrian government and President Assad," he said.

Juba, Khartoum 'agree' on roadmap

KHARTOUM (News agencies) – Sudanese and South Sudanese negotiators agreed yesterday on a roadmap to guide their talks being held in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa under the mediation of the African Union (AU) High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), according to Sudan's news agency SUNA.

The two neighbours resumed talks four days ago under a three-month deadline set by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the African Union (AU) to conclude negotiations on oil exports, citizenship, border demarcation and the status of Abyei region.

Sudan said it had pulled its police forces from a disputed border region, removing a possible obstacle to troubled peace talks with its neighbour South Sudan

which also claims the fertile area.

The ownership of Abyei is a major bone of contention between the African countries which came close to war last month after border fighting escalated – the worst violence since South Sudan seceded last year under a 2005 peace agreement.

Meanwhile, an estimated 20,000 refugees have amassed on the South Sudan border after fleeing conflict and lack of food, the United Nations refugee agency said yesterday, adding that it is working to relocate them and provide

them with emergency aid.

A spokesperson for the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Adrian Edwards, told reporters in Geneva that many of the refugees in South Sudan's Elfoj border area had fled because of the ongoing bombing and ground fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army-North (SPLAN) in the Sudanese state of Blue Nile.

"As a result of the fighting, villagers had had limited access to food and the fields for farming. A number of refugees had arrived at hospitals in poor health after surviving on tree leaves for some time," Edwards said.

He added that refugees interviewed by UNHCR staff reported that up to 40,000 more people could be en route to South Sudan.

Since 19 May, UNCHR has transported several thousand refugees to its new camp, Yusuf Batil. Others have been relocated some 30 kilometres from Elfoj to Rum, a transit site where UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) are providing food rations and water.

According to Edwards, UNHCR is carrying out relocations three times a week from Rum to the Yusuf Batil camp, of about 1,000 people at a time, based on the capacity of services. However, rain and muddy roads are slowing down the movements.



Special forces free aid workers in Afghanistan



Efforts to overcome the crisis: Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki (L) and President Jalal Talbani before discussing the political crisis facing the government in Iraq last week.

Iraq crisis escalates with calls for PM to go

BAGHDAD (AFP) – A series of intertwined political crises that began with accusations that Iraq's prime minister was consolidating power have escalated into calls to unseat him, and paralysed the country's government.

The protracted drama has seen Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's deputy revert to decrying him as a 'dictator' and the leader of the autonomous Kurdish region call for him to go on one side, while the premier insists he has sufficient backing to stay on the other.

"The political crisis has reached its highest level since its beginning, but it is still running within the framework of the democratic game," Iraqi political analyst Ihsan al-Shammari said.

"The country is paralysed on all levels; there is a clear political paralysis paralleled

by governmental negligence and a failure of the legislative authority, while the people are disappointed and afraid of the security consequences," Shammari said.

The trouble began in earnest in mid-December, when the secular Sunni-backed Iraqiya Bloc began a boycott of parliament and the cabinet over what it said was al-Maliki's centralisation of power.

For his part, al-Maliki sought to sack Sunni Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlak, an Iraqiya member who had labelled the premier 'worse than Saddam Hussein'.

That month, an arrest warrant was issued for Sunni Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi, also of Iraqiya, for allegedly running a death squad.

Al-Hashemi fled to the autonomous Kurdistan region in north Iraq, which

declined to hand him over to Baghdad and then permitted him to leave on a regional tour that took him to Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

He is now being tried in absentia in Iraq. Kurdistan further entered the fray when its chief, Massud al-Barzani, launched a series of attacks against al-Maliki.

In April, the region stopped oil exports, claiming Baghdad has allegedly withheld more than \$1.5 billion (1.2 billion euros) that Kurdish officials said is owed to foreign oil companies working in the region.

And powerful Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, whose parliamentary bloc is part of the national unity government along with Iraqiya and the Kurdish alliance, referred to the premier as a 'dictator' hungry for acclaim, and accused him of wanting to postpone or cancel elections.

in Afghanistan

KABUL (News agencies) – Two female foreign aid workers kidnapped in Afghanistan last week have been freed in a special forces operation in which five kidnappers were killed, according to officials.

"Last night in a successful operation Afghan special forces freed two foreign and three Afghan hostages in Shahri Buzurg, Badakhshan," Lal Mohamed Ahmadzai, spokesman for security forces in northern Afghanistan, told AFP yesterday.

"Five kidnappers were killed during the operation. The hostages are in good condition," he said.

The report was confirmed by provincial police chief Sakhid Haidar, who said the hostages were freed in a joint NATO-Afghan operation in which special forces descended from an aircraft onto the house where they were being held.

The hostages were seized at gunpoint on May 22 while travelling on horseback to relief project sites in the remote and mountainous province of Badakhshan in northeastern Afghanistan.

They worked for the Swiss-based charity, Medair.

Badakhshan is an impoverished and mountainous province in Afghanistan's far northeast, and while mainly quiet, there have been pockets of insurgent activity.

Both criminals and Taliban insurgents waging a war against the Western-backed government of President Hamid Karzai have been responsible for kidnappings in the past.



Results of Sudan, S. Sudan conflict: Refugees coming from the Nuba Mountains, in Southern Kordofan, cue for registration at UNHCR offices in Yida, Unity State, South Sudan yesterday.

Kosovo Serbs and NATO troops clash in north

ZVECAN (Reuters) – At least three Kosovo Serbs and a NATO soldier were wounded in a gunfight late on Friday, as peacekeepers tried to dismantle Serb barricades blocking traffic, a Reuters witness and official said yesterday.

NATO troops in the Kosovo Force (KFOR) fired tear gas and small arms and some protesters fired back with handguns.

The troops, in armoured personnel carriers, were confronted by hundreds of Serbs who pelted them with stones near roadblocks in the villages of Rudare and Dudin Krs outside the town of Zvecan in a Serb-dominated northern area of Kosovo.

The roadblocks are among the last on major roads yet to be dismantled by KFOR. They were erected as part of a long-running Serb campaign to prevent the government of Albanian-majority independent Kosovo from imposing its rule in the area.

"One KFOR soldier has been wounded, has been evacuated and he is stable," said NATO spokesperson in Kosovo Uwe Nowitzki.

"KFOR will not allow the situation to escalate and will use a proportional level of force necessary to maintain a safe and secure environment," Nowitzki said. The operation to remove the roadblocks was continuing, he said.

Kosovo, which declared independence from Serbia in 2008, is 90 per cent ethnic Albanian. But Serbs opposed to independence dominate in a small swathe of the north bordering Serbia which continues to function as part of the Serbian state, resisting efforts by the Kosovo government to extend its authority.

A Reuters witness said extra KFOR troops arrived to reinforce the troops from Germany and the United States after the initial clashes and were deployed on hills overlooking Rudare.

US announces new strategy in Asia

SINGAPORE (News agencies) – As part of a 'rebalancing' with Asia, the United States will enhance military-to-military cooperation with China while also boosting the capabilities of its allies in the region, US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta said yesterday.

Panetta detailed the new defence strategy to a gathering of Asia's military leaders, saying the majority of US warships would move to Asia.

"By 2020 the Navy will reposition its forces from today's roughly 50-50 split from the Pacific and Atlantic to a 60-40 split in those oceans," Panetta said.

"We will also invest – invest in cyber, invest in space, invest in unmanned systems, invest in special forces operations," he said. "We will invest in the newest technologies. And we will invest in new technology to mobilise quickly, if

necessary," Panetta said.

Along with enhanced military co-operation, Panetta emphasized diplomacy and a 'rules-based order' that includes 'open and free commerce, and open access by all to their shared domains of sea and air' – a current point of friction in the South China Sea between China and regional nations. Panetta called for disputes to be resolved without coercion or the use of force.

The defence secretary was kicking off his eight-day trip to Asia, geared toward explaining the US strategy.

The so-called US 'tilt' to Asia includes beefing up the strength of its regional allies such as the Philippines and Vietnam.

"We will play an essential role in promoting strong partnerships that strengthen the capabilities of the Pacific nations to defend and secure themselves," Panetta said.

Asked if helping the militaries of regional allies would raise the potential for conflict, Panetta said, "I don't think we should take the attitude that just because we improve their capabilities that we are asking for more trouble".

Panetta said the United States should 'do everything we can' to help those countries defend themselves, but at the same time, the US would 'encourage them ... to abide by an international set of rules and standards and order'.

The increased regional involvement by the United States has raised concerns about tensions with China and suggestions it represents a threat to China.

"I reject that view entirely," Panetta said, calling the US shift "fully compatible with the development and growth of China. Indeed, increased US involvement in this region will benefit China".

Panetta said the United States will work to improve communication with China with an aim to 'build trust' between the two nations.

Looming over the discussions in Singapore is the conflict between China and various regional nations – such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and Taiwan – over the South China Sea.

The South China Sea, nicknamed 'the second Persian Gulf' because of its potential for massive oil and gas reserves, is also a key passageway for the world's oil and is home to enormously valuable fisheries.

A crisis in the area has the potential for major economic damage to the United States as well. As one of the busiest sea lanes in the world, disputes in the South China Sea could have a major impact on shipping by forcing costly rerouting.



New US strategy in Asia: US Secretary of Defence Leon Panetta (C) shaking hands with Japanese Senior Vice Minister of Defence Shu Watanabe (L), as Australian Defence Minister Stephen Smith watches on, before a trilateral meeting between the US, Australia and Japan during the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) 11th Asia Security Summit in Singapore yesterday.





Winning start for Pharaohs: Mahmoud Fathallah (2nd L) celebrating with his teammates after scoring against Mozambique during their 2014 World Cup qualifying match at Borg el-Arab Stadium Friday night.



1st competitive win for Bradley: Egypt's head coach Bob Bradley giving directions during the Mozambique qualifier. *Reuters photos*

'Winning the most important thing'

Pharaohs resume training for Guinea tie

Tamer Mohamed

on television and satellite channels." Bradley has decided to give the players two days' rest, prior to resum-

Egyptian striker Mohamed Zidan. "The players deserve praise and I am proud to be training them, despite

stressing that he will not include any new players in the next matches, as he will depend only on the 28 players

which witnessed the Pharaohs playing two games. They defeated Cameroon (with local players) 2-1 and Uganda 2-1, thanks to goals from

Olympic player Mohamed Salah and Ahly playmaker Abou Treika. Now, the coaching staff's main task

BOB Bradley, the technical coach of Egypt's senior football team, was delighted with the Pharaohs' first win in the group phase of the African qualifiers for the 2014 World Cup.

On Friday night, they beat Mozambique 2-0 behind closed doors in Alexandria, Egypt's official Middle East News Agency (MENA) reported.

"Beating Mozambique match was something that around 90 million Egyptians were waiting for," Bradley said.

"Before the game, I told the lads that, whenever you see empty seats in Borg el-Arab Stadium, just think of the millions of people watching you

players two days' rest, prior to resuming training tomorrow in readiness for playing Guinea away from home on June 10 in the World Cup qualifiers.

Egypt have been drawn in Group G, alongside Guinea, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, for the qualifiers.

The 56-year old tactician said in his remarks after the game that, at half-time, he'd told the players to be calm because they were capable of winning.

In the second half, Egypt's defender Mahmoud Fathallah scored the opener in the 54th minute. That was followed by an own goal from Mozambique goalkeeper Joao Rafael Kapango in the 63rd from a shot by

am proud to be training them, despite the difficult circumstances in the country at the moment," Bradley explained, adding that he urged the players to do their best to win.

Bradley, who replaced long-time coach Hassan Shehata, dedicated the victory to 90 million Egyptians, pointing out that the players were nervous in the first-half, which was why they delayed in scoring.

"We made serious opportunities in the first-half, but, due to the mental strain of the players, they didn't find the back of the net till second-half," he pointed out.

"The coaching staff reminded the players at half-time that they have the talent and the ability to win," he said,

ne will depend only on the 20 players who are with him now, and who participated in the training camps, in Dubai, Qatar and Sudan.

"Mozambique are a powerful team with many highly technical and talented players," the former United States coach stressed.

Bradley took over as US coach in 2007 after he was taken on as interim coach when the Americans struggled in the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

He guided the US team through the qualifiers for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, but they lost to Ghana in the second round after drawing with England in the group stage.

The senior Egyptian team held a four-day preparation camp in Sudan,

Cameroon (with local players) 2-1 and stunned Togo's national team 3-0.

Earlier last month, the Egyptian senior team held another preparation camp in Sudan, where they played two friendlies against Uganda and Chad. Bradley described the camps as useful, adding that the Pharaohs are improving.

In the first camp, they stunned Chad 4-0, thanks to a goal from Mohamed Salah in the 30th minute, a powerful Ahmed Khairi header in the 44th minute and a strike by Ahmed Hassan Mekki on 90 minutes; Chad defender Hassan Hussein also helped the Egyptian cause with an own goal in the 88th minute.

Prior to that, the Pharaohs defeated

Amly playmaker Abou Tleika.

Now the coaching staff's main task is to take Egypt to the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil; that would be Egypt's third-ever appearance and the first in 24 years.

Diaa el-Sayyed, the general coach of Egypt's senior football team, expressed his satisfaction and happiness after the Pharaohs' win over Mozambique, pointing out that the changes made by Bradley made all the difference.

"Winning all the three points was the most important thing, especially as it was our first 2014 World Cup qualifiers," MENA quoted el-Sayyed as saying. "The team had their moments, but winning was what mattered."

Federer faces Goffin today

PARIS – Roger Federer remembers the day he launched himself into tennis's collective consciousness when he walked out to face his hero Pete Sampras at Wimbledon in 2001 and beat him, **Reuters** reported.

Today the boot will be firmly on the other foot when the Swiss maestro takes on young Belgian David Goffin in the French Open fourth round.

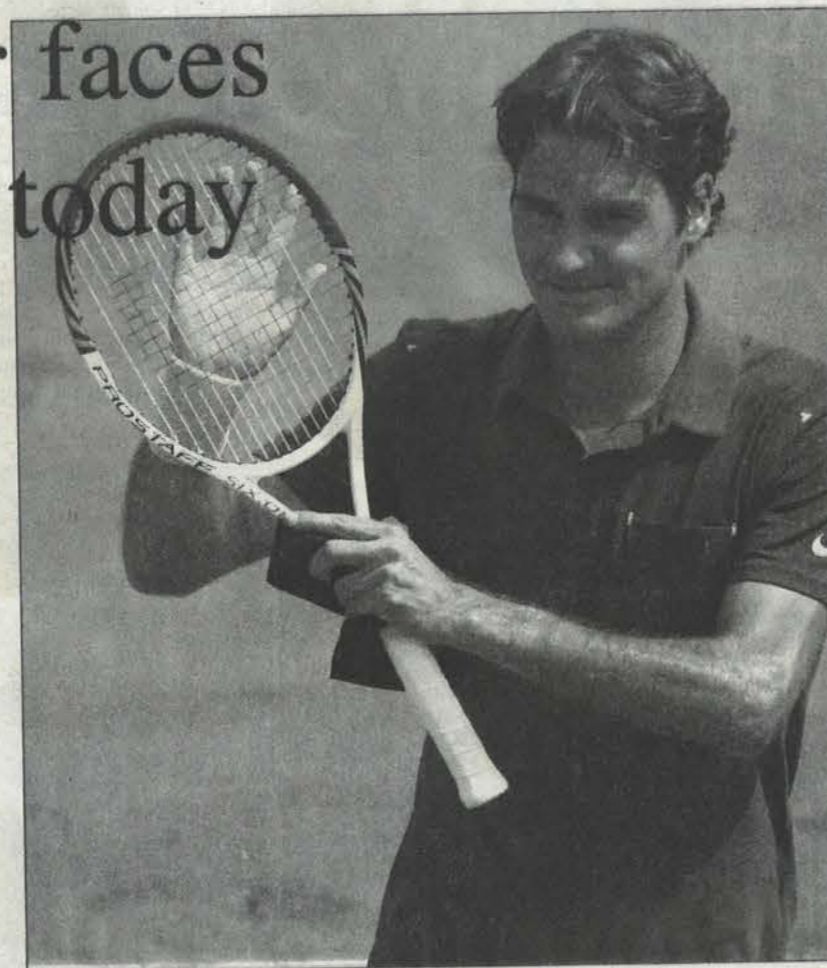
The 21-year-old Goffin is the first lucky-loser to reach the fourth round of a grand slam since 1995 and grew up idolising Federer as the Swiss stamped his mark on men's tennis by winning a record 16 grand slams.

Now he has the chance to do to Federer what the then 19-year-old Federer did to Sampras and upset a strong favourite early in a grand slam. "I've been watching Roger playing on telly for so many years," he told reporters.

"Roger has always been my favourite. He has perfect tennis, perfect technique, and I like the man. From a human standpoint, he is a great person, whether on the court or outside the court.

"So I expect a very difficult match on Sunday (today). If I say yes (I have a chance) I will sound arrogant; if I say no, you'll say I lack ambition. We'll see."

Goffin goes into the clash high on confidence after exceeding expectations, while the number three seed is perhaps



Ready for Goffin: Swiss Roger Federer celebrating after beating Romanian Adrian Ungur in the French Open tournament at the Roland Garros Stadium, in Paris.

looking over his shoulder having reached the fourth round with an edgy and unconvincing victory over Frenchman Nicolas Mahut.

Federer, however, knows exactly what it is like to play a former idol. "I would

have loved to play (Boris) Becker and (Stefan) Edberg," he said. "They were the ones for me growing up that I looked at and sort of idolised, and obviously Pete came along and I had a chance to play against him, which was just amazing.

Italy thrashed 3-0 in Euro warm-up

ZURICH – Italy's troubles mounted as they produced some slapstick defending in a 3-0 defeat by fellow Euro 2012 finalists Russia in their only warm-up match for the tournament, **Reuters** reported.

The game at the Letzigrund in Zurich was played against the backdrop of a match-fixing scandal back home that prompted Italy coach Cesare Prandelli to say he would not mind his side pulling out of the European Championship if it was the right move.

Friday's performance was a defensive nightmare for Italy, who conceded only twice in 10 games during qualifying, with Russia's second and third goals coming from defensive mix-ups involving substitute goalkeeper Morgan De Sanctis.

Italy had created more chances in the opening hour but their rearguard always looked shaky and they fell to pieces when Russia, who could have scored three times ahead of the break, went ahead through Alexander Kerzhakov just before the hour.

Roman Shirokov then added two late goals. It was Italy's third successive match without scoring following 1-0 defeats by Uruguay in November and the United States in February and their heaviest loss since Prandelli took charge following the 2010 World Cup. Italy have been drawn in a tough



More problems: Italy's defender Christian Maggio (L) vying for the ball with Russia's midfielder Roman Shirokov during their friendly match, in preparation for the Euro 2012 in Zurich.

Group C at Euro 2012 with world and European champions Spain, Croatia and Ireland.

Mario Balotelli drew a blank for the Italians, disappearing from the action in the last half hour after a bright opening.

"I have to do tests, we didn't have time for lots of preparations, there is not much time," said Prandelli.

In short

Ghana stuns Lesotho with seven goals

KUMASI, Ghana – Ghana crushed Lesotho 7-0 Friday in a World Cup African qualifier that lasted almost double the regulatory 90 minutes, **Reuters** reported.

A floodlight failure at the Baba Yara Stadium brought the game to a premature halt after 54 minutes and it took a further 86 minutes before power was restored.

Ghana were 4-0 up before the lengthy stoppage, but seemed unaffected as they added three more goals before the final whistle.

Next week they visit Zambia in another Group D qualifier.

Lambert leaves Norwich for Aston Villa

LONDON – Paul Lambert has been appointed manager of Aston Villa, the Premier League club said in a statement yesterday, **Reuters** reported.

Lambert joins from Norwich City, having offered his resignation earlier in the week, after leading them to a very respectable 12th place on their return to the Premier League last season. Villa dismissed Alex McLeish, also a Scot, the day after the season ended last month. McLeish ended his one season in charge with the former European champions in 16th place and just two points off the relegation zone.





A verdict at last: Egyptian protesters opposed to Hosni Mubarak celebrated after hearing the verdict in his trial outside a courthouse in New Cairo yesterday, where a judge sentenced the former president to life in prison, having found him guilty of involvement in the murder of protesters during the uprising that ousted him last year. Anti-Mubarak protesters excitedly waved the national flag after hearing the verdict and some of them even fainted, while many more flocked to Tahrir Square and other squares nationwide, together with the families of anti-regime protesters, martyred during the revolution.

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