

US And Cuba To Restore Diplomatic Ties

WASHINGTON (AP) — After more than a half-century of hostility, the United States and Cuba declared Wednesday they will reopen embassies in each other's capitals this month, marking a historic full restoration of diplomatic relations between the Cold War foes.

For President Barack Obama, the opening of the U.S. Embassy in the heart of Havana is one of the most tangible demonstrations of his long-standing pledge to engage directly with U.S. adversaries. Heralding the embassy agreement, Obama declared: "This is what change looks like."

Cuban television broadcast Obama's statement live, underscoring the new spirit. In a letter to Obama, Cuban President Raul Castro praised the embassy announcement as a way to "develop respectful relations and cooperation between our peoples and governments."

Despite the historic step, the U.S. and Cuba are still grappling with deep divisions and mistrust.

The U.S. is particularly concerned about Cuba's reputed human rights violations. Cuba is demanding an end to the U.S. economic embargo, the return of the U.S. military base at Guantanamo Bay and a halt to U.S. radio and TV broadcasts aimed at the island.

Collusions In Airlines Keeps Fares High

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government is investigating possible collusion among major airlines to limit available seats, which keeps airfares high, according to a document obtained by The Associated Press.

The civil antitrust investigation by the Justice Department appears to focus on whether airlines illegally signaled to each other how quickly they would add new flights, routes and extra seats.

A letter received Tuesday by major U.S. carriers demands copies of all communications the airlines had with each other, Wall Street analysts and major shareholders about their plans for passenger-carrying capacity, or "the undesirability of your company or any other airline increasing capacity."

The Justice Department asked each airline for its passenger-carrying capacity both by region, and overall, since January 2010.

Justice Department spokeswoman Emily Pierce confirmed that the department is looking into potential "unlawful coordination" among some airlines. She declined to comment further or say which airlines are being investigated.

Greek Leader Presses On With Vote

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — The Greek government vowed Wednesday to go ahead with plans to have the people decide whether they want more austerity measures in exchange for a rescue deal. Greece offered more concessions to its creditors, but was rebuffed — Eurozone finance ministers refused to negotiate any more aid until the referendum clears up what the country wants.

The moves came on a fast-paced day of zigs-and-zags that saw the Greek prime minister back off his earlier refusal to consider creditors' belt-tightening demands, yet hold firm on putting the measures to a popular vote.

The strategy was met with a cool response. Following a late-night teleconference, the 19 eurozone finance ministers announced they were putting any further talks on hold.

"Given the political situation, the rejection of the previous proposals, the referendum which will take place on Sunday, and the recommendation by the Greek government to vote 'No,' we see no grounds for further talks at this point," said Dutch Foreign Minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem, who heads the eurozone finance ministers' body known as the eurogroup.

NY Prison Security Measures Beefed Up

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — A range of new security measures is being put in place at a maximum-security prison to close gaps exploited by two inmates who escaped last month.

The state correction department said Wednesday that includes stepped-up searches of inmates' cells, staffing changes to ensure bed checks are more effective and installation of security gates in the facility's tunnels.

The department also announced that 30-year correction veteran Michael Kirkpatrick will be the new superintendent of the prison, the Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora. He replaces Steven Racette, who was placed on paid leave Tuesday along with two of his deputies and nine other staff members, including guards, after an internal review of how convicted killers David Sweat and Richard Matt escaped June 6.

Racette was named superintendent on May 14, shortly after the retirement of his predecessor and just before a watchdog group released a report on violence and racial tension in the prison.

Matt was shot dead Friday after a three-week manhunt. Sweat was shot and captured on Sunday.

Episcopalians Set To Vote On Same-Sex

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Episcopalians were set to vote Wednesday on allowing religious weddings for gay couples, just days after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage nationwide.

In 2003, the denomination made history by electing its first openly gay bishop. Since then, many Episcopal dioceses have allowed their priests to perform civil same-sex weddings. Still, the church hadn't changed its laws on marriage.

The vote was set for late afternoon in Salt Lake City at the denomination's national assembly.

The proposal would eliminate gender-specific language from church laws on marriage so that same-sex couples could have religious weddings. Members of the clergy could still decline to perform the ceremonies.

The Episcopal Church, with nearly 1.9 million members, has included many of the Founding Fathers and presidents.

Dolphin Jumps Onto Boat

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP) — A dolphin leaped onto a boat in Southern California, crashing into a woman and breaking both her ankles.

Chrissie Frickman was boating with her husband and two children June 21 when a pod of dolphins swam alongside them. One of the animals jumped on the vessel, knocking Frickman over and landing on her legs, the Orange County Register reported.

Her husband, Dirk, pulled her out and called authorities as he headed toward an Orange County harbor. While he steered, he splashed water on the 350-pound dolphin to keep it alive as it thrashed around and bled from some cuts.

"I could hear my phone buzzing and beeping on the floor - it was covered in blood," he said.

Dirk Frickman got help pulling the dolphin onto a dock with a rope and then releasing it.

Breaking Baseball Barriers For Women

PARIS (AP) — Simply by playing ball, Melissa Mayeux is busting through barriers.

Becoming the first ever woman on Major League Baseball's international registration list, making her eligible to be signed by pro teams, is just the latest trail blazed by the 16-year-old shortstop from France. Previously, she successfully got a "no-girls-allowed" rule abolished so she could keep playing baseball with French boys.

Even on a scratchy Skype call from the pitching and hitting clinic in Germany where she's working on her swing this week with two-time All-Star Steve Finley, Mayeux's drive shines through.

A baseball pioneer from the land of Tour de France cycling and the 1998 World Cup champions: Who'd have thought it? France saw its first baseball game played in the shadow of the then unfinished Eiffel Tower in 1889 but never grew into a hotbed for the sport.

Mayeux's baseball ambitions started out simple enough: Her older brother, Dylan, played and "I just wanted to do everything the same."

Indonesia Plane Crash Death Toll 141 As Search Effort Ends

BY NINIEK KARMINI

Associated Press

MEDAN, Indonesia — Indonesia's air force promised Wednesday to investigate whether the aging transport plane that crashed into a city neighborhood, killing 141 people, was violating rules by carrying non-military passengers who paid for their flights. A local military commander said the search for bodies has ended.

The dead included all 122 on the plane, including military personnel and family members, and people in a residential area of Medan city where the C-130 Hercules crashed shortly after takeoff on Tuesday, North Sumatra police Maj. A. Tarigan told TVOne station.

The final death toll may not be determined for some time. Body parts were also retrieved from the rubble and transported to a hospital in two body bags.

The cause of the accident is not yet known but the pilot was trying to return to the airport because of an engine problem. At Adam Malik Hospital where bodies were taken, regional military commander Edy Rahmayadai told reporters that the rescue operation involving hundreds of soldiers and police had finished.

The C-130 was carrying many more passengers than the military first reported. Initially, the air force said there were 12 crew members on the 51-year-old plane and did not mention passengers. It then repeatedly raised the number of people on board, indicating confusion about how many people had boarded and alighted during a journey covering several cities.

Relatives and friends of some victims said they had paid for their flights. Hitchhiking rides on military planes to reach remote destinations is common in Indonesia, a sprawling archipelago that spans three time zones. The military has previously promised to crack down on the practice.

The plane had traveled from the capital, Jakarta, and landed at two locations before stopping over at Medan on Sumatra, one of Indonesia's main islands. On the doomed leg of the journey, its final destination was the remote Natuna island chain.

Interviewed at Adam Malik Hospital, Indra Bakara said his cousin was one of the civilians



YUONO TANTO H/NURPHOTO/ZUMA PRESS/TNS
A relative of a passenger from an Indonesian military plane Hercules C-130 cries at the scene where the plane crashed on June 30 in Medan, Indonesia. The Hercules C-130 plane crashed just two minutes after taking off in the city of Medan, and the death toll for the crash has risen to more than 140 people.

on the flight and paid about 1 million rupiah (\$75) to go to Natuna. As he spoke, the dead woman's mother, Nacita Batubara, wept and shouted her daughter's name, wailing that she had driven her to catch the plane.

"Lack of transportation to Natuna has forced us to go there by military flight, no choice," Bakara said. "But now we realize we cannot expect any compensation or insurance or even an apology from the military over this accident." He said he was unaware of regulations prohibiting most civilians on military flights.

Riski Ananda, a 20-year-old university student, said his friend Musyawir paid a small administrative fee to board the flight at Pekanbaru in Sumatra along with other university students heading to Natuna. Students in Pekanbaru often use military flights to visit families who may be military or civil servants on the islands.

Air force chief Air Marshal Agus Supriatna told reporters the C-130 was only authorized to carry military personnel and their families. He said he would investigate allegations of paying passengers.

A copy of the manifest seen by The Associated Press shows 32 passengers with no designation. The rest are

described as either military or military family members. In some circumstances, civilians such as government officials or researchers can get authorization to fly on military planes, according to Supriatna.

Dozens of family members gathered at Adam Malik Hospital on Wednesday. Outside its mortuary, more than 100 wood coffins were arranged in rows and women cried and screamed the names of loved ones killed in the disaster.

A group of students from a Catholic high school in the city screamed hysterically as a body bag was opened, revealing the badly bruised corpse of classmate Esther Lina Josephine, 17, clasping her 14-year-old sister.

"She looks like she wanted to protect her younger sister," said the school's principal, Tarcisia Hermas. "We've lost kind and smart students who had so many creative ideas."

Hermas said the sisters were traveling during school vacation to see their parents in Natuna, where the father of the teenagers is stationed with the army.

Adam Malik Hospital spokeswoman Sairi M. Saragih said more than 60 bodies have been identified.

Indonesia has a patchy civil aviation safety record and its cash-strapped air force

has suffered a series of accidents. Between 2007 and 2009, the European Union barred Indonesian airlines from flying to Europe because of safety worries.

The country's most recent civilian airline disaster was in December, when an AirAsia jet with 162 people on board crashed into the Java Sea en route from Surabaya to Singapore. There have been five fatal crashes involving air force planes since 2008, according to the Aviation Safety Network, which tracks aviation disasters.

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo said has ordered a "fundamental overhaul" of military weaponry.

"We have to be involved from the beginning in design, production, operations, training, maintenance and elimination of aged weapons," he told reporters in Depok, West Java.

Indonesia's military has a longstanding reputation for corruption and has never totally accepted its reduced status after the fall of dictator Suharto in 1998 forced soldiers out of politics. It is engaged in a recurrent turf war with police over internal security roles and illicit money-making opportunities. Low wages also foster corruption among officers and the rank and file.

New Mexico Gov. Denounces Trump's Comments

BY RUSSELL CONTRERAS

Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez denounced GOP presidential hopeful Donald Trump's recent remarks about Mexican immigrants and called his comments "horrible."

After a news conference Wednesday on new state laws aimed at protecting abused children, the nation's only Latina governor said she strongly disagreed with Trump's comments that have drawn criticism across the country. Macy's, for example, said in a statement the retailer is disappointed and distressed by Trump's remarks and it would no longer carry a Trump menswear line.

"I think those are horrible things to say about anyone or any culture ... anyone of any ethnicity," said Martinez, a Republican. "I mean, that is uncalled for ... completely."

Martinez said she hadn't been keeping up with Trump, but expressed shock after learning about comments he made during his presidential campaign announcement.

The outspoken Trump asserted that some Mexican immigrants bring drugs and crime to the U.S. and are rapists.

The comment struck many as insensitive, and Univision's decision last week to back out of televising Miss USA and break off its business ties with Trump led to a cascade of others following suit, including the Macy's department store chain.

The PGA Tour, LPGA Tour, USGA and PGA of America also on Wednesday distanced themselves from Trump in a statement and said his remarks were "inconsistent with our strong commitment to an inclusive and welcoming environment in the game of golf."

Martinez, a rising star within the Republican Party, has been vocal about candidates toning down rhetoric on immigration reform. She is actively involved in efforts to recruit more women and minority candidates to run for office under the GOP.

In addition, Martinez has gone on a number of trade missions to Mexico and has been pushing for more infrastructure at the booming border town of Santa Teresa.

Last year, she won re-election in blue-leaning New Mexico, the state with the largest number of Hispanic residents, by a wide margin.

Martinez has faced criticism from immigrant advocates for her efforts to repeal a state law that allows immigrants in the country illegally to obtain a state driver's license.

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