

World News Roundup

France

'Apocalyptic'

Clean-up after floods claim 19

BIOT, France, Oct 5, (AFP): Volunteers and firefighters began the gruelling task Monday of cleaning up French Riviera towns strewn with mud and debris, as the death toll from floods which tore through the normally glitzy region rose to 19.

Citizens of Britain, Italy and Portugal were among those who died when a torrential weekend



Leroy

downpour trapped people in garages and retirement homes in Mediterranean resort towns beloved by jet-setting tourists. Water gushed through the streets of Cannes, Nice and Antibes, leaving cars including Porsches and Ferraris scattered about, often upside down and hundreds of metres from where they were parked.

Another person was found dead Monday in the worst-hit town of Mandelieu-la-Napoule, with eight now confirmed killed there after being trapped in garages when they tried to remove their cars, a local official said.

And in Cannes a body was found in an underground parking lot, leaving one person still missing in the city that hosts the annual film festival, with another missing in nearby Antibes.

Mandelieu-la-Napoule mayor **Henri Leroy** on Sunday described the situation as "apocalyptic".

Died

Britain's Foreign Office said a British national had died in the floods, without giving further details, while a local official said an Italian woman and Portuguese man also died.

In the town of Biot, about 40 kilometres (25 miles) from Monte Carlo where three people drowned in a retirement home, hundreds of clean-up workers clad in diving suits and carrying chainsaws removed trees and debris strewn around a river.

As the Mediterranean sunshine returned, volunteers grabbed brooms and mops to help victims of the damage clean out thick layers of mud from their homes and businesses.

"It is everywhere, it smells bad and it seeps into everything. It is making the furniture swell up," said one local, who did not give her name.

Some 9,000 households in the region still had no electricity after the record rainfall that saw 180 millimetres (seven inches) of water fall on Cannes alone — nearly two months' worth in three hours.

Funds

President Francois Hollande toured the region, where he said a state of natural catastrophe would be declared Wednesday to allow emergency funds to be channelled to the devastated region.

As criticism grew over the fact the region had been placed only on "orange alert" status ahead of the storm — short of the top level of readiness — meteorologists were called onto local television stations to explain how their systems had failed to raise the alarm ahead of the torrential downpour.

Pascal Brovelli of the Meteo-France weather service told AFP the damage was due to more rain than expected falling in a very short period of time in heavily urbanised areas.

"Should we have been" on alert red? "We will have to see if we could have anticipated what happened," government spokesman Stephane Le Foll said on France Inter radio.

Hollande said Sunday an environmental lesson should be learned.

"There have always been catastrophes. But their frequency and intensity are on the increase," he said, urging that environmental decisions "be taken" as France prepares to host UN-led climate talks in December on a post-2020 pact to curb greenhouse gases.

Also hard-hit was Antibes Marineland, Europe's biggest marine park, where penguins and sea lions found themselves in mud-filled pools.

"We have no electricity, no flowing water," said park director Bernard Gianpaolo, as dozens of firemen worked to pump out water blocking filtration systems at the park.

Shocked residents gave graphic accounts of the drama.

"I saw water pour in from the veranda. Within five minutes, it was up to my waist," said France Oberlin, a retired resident of Mandelieu-la-Napoule.

Guy Morales in Cannes described how he was in his car when "a sort of wave carried us away. We couldn't do anything, the car hurtled down the street."



Migrants and refugees cross the Croatian-Hungarian border in the village of Baranjsko Petrovo Selo, near the North-Eastern Croatian town of Beli Manastir, on Oct 4. (Inset): In this Oct 3, photo the body of a person washed up in the eastern shore of Tripoli, Libya, is seen as members of the Libyan Red Crescent retrieve bodies. (AFP/AP)

Migrants

Germany expects 1.5 mn asylum-seekers this year

Erdogan mocks EU over migrants

2 children found dead in Kos

85 dead migrants washed up in Libya

BRUSSELS, Oct 5, (Agencies): Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan mocked European Union overtures for help with its migration crisis during a long-awaited visit to Brussels on Monday that in the end was partly overshadowed by Russia's violation of Turkish airspace near Syria.

Erdogan, preparing for a Nov 1 parliamentary election, boasted of Turkey's record in taking 2 million refugees from neighbouring Syria and Iraq, and contrasted it with the numbers passing through the bloc.

"While we host 2.2 million refugees, Europe as a whole houses less than 250,000 refugees in total," Erdogan said at a televised meeting with Belgian business leaders.

He had told supporters in France the day before: "What do they say to us? ... 'Oh my, don't open your doors, don't let them reach us,'" according to Hurriyet newspaper.

The typically bullish remarks will concern European Union officials who are hoping to convince Erdogan to shelter more Syrian refugees in return for aid and also reflect Turkish anger at what Ankara sees as Europe's failure to help more in Syria's civil war, either by intervening or taking more refugees.

Despite Erdogan's tone, however, top European officials due to meet the Turkish leader later on Monday are likely to refrain from any criticism of a man they view with growing suspicion, looking to Turkey's most popular politician to help solve its worst migration crisis since the break-up of former Yugoslavia.

Erdogan's trip, officially a state visit to Belgium, has been repeatedly postponed amid tension over Turkey's stalled bid to join the EU, what the bloc sees as Erdogan's growing authoritarianism and fears for press freedoms in Turkey.

But in a sign of the underlying ties between NATO member Turkey and the West, NATO's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg called Russia's violation of Turkish airspace as "unacceptable" and called a meeting of NATO ambassadors on Monday.

Turkey, which has the second-largest army in NATO, said the Russian jet entered Turkish airspace south near the Syrian border on Saturday prompting Ankara to scramble two F-16 jets to intercept it and summon Moscow's ambassador in protest.

"I call on Russia to fully respect NATO airspace and to avoid escalating tensions with the alliance," Stoltenberg said following a meeting

TRIPOLI, Oct 5, (AFP): The bodies of 85 migrants have been found washed up on the coast of Libya, a major departure point for the sea crossing to Europe, the Red Crescent said Monday.

Since Tuesday, volunteers have recovered dozens of bodies of migrants in an advanced stage of decomposition on beaches near the capital, spokesman Mohamed al-Misrati said.

They found 75 bodies around Tripoli and another 10 in Sabratha, 70 kms (43 miles) to the west, he said.

The Libyan coastguard said it had also rescued 212 migrants from two overloaded rubber dinghies off the Libyan coast.

"We were informed of the presence of two large zodiacs off the coast of Garabulli" 60 kms east of Tripoli, a coastguard officer told AFP.

He said that 22 women were among the rescued migrants, who were of different nationalities including many Senegalese and Sudanese.

Libya, with a coastline of 1,770 kms, has for years been a stepping stone for Africans bound for Europe.

Most head for Italy's Lampedusa

island which is 300 kms from Libya.

People smugglers have taken advantage of chaos in Libya since the 2011 uprising that toppled and killed veteran dictator Moamer Kadhafi to step up their lucrative business.

In exchange for steep fees, they take would-be migrants on board rickety boats for the treacherous crossing.

About 515,000 migrants have crossed the Mediterranean this year alone, with up to 3,000 people dead or reported missing in that period, according to the UN High Commission for Refugees.

Elsewhere, the badly decomposed bodies of two children were found washed up on the Greek island of Kos on Sunday, the latest victims of a crisis that has seen 630,000 people enter the EU illegally this year.

A dead baby boy, thought to be less than a year old, was discovered on a hotel beach early Sunday, dressed in green trousers and a white t-shirt.

The decomposed body of an older child, wearing blue trousers and a pink t-shirt, believed to be three- to five-years old, was found hours later at the same spot.

Authorities believe the children

were from migrant families that had been trying to reach Kos by dinghy, Greek media reported. Both bodies have been transferred to hospital for an autopsy and DNA testing.

Greece has been struggling to cope with a wave of migrants making the dangerous crossing from Turkey.

The EU's border chief Fabrice Leggeri said 630,000 people have entered the bloc illegally this year.

Brussels and Ankara are reportedly set to approve Monday a plan that would see Turkey join Greek coastguard patrols in the eastern Aegean, coordinated by EU border protection agency Frontex.

Any migrants picked up would be taken back to Turkey, where six new camps for up to two million people would be built, co-financed by the EU.

Frontex chief Leggeri said "more integrated management" was needed to cope with the regions' worst migrant crisis since World War II, including giving the agency power to act without member state approval.

Over 310,000 of the migrants have landed in Greece this year, according to UN refugee agency figures, and nearly 3,000 have died or disappeared during the crossing.



Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reviews the honour guard during an official welcoming ceremony at the Royal Palace in Brussels, on Oct 5. (AFP)

Europe

Central European action eyed:

The Czech government has proposed that three central European states send hundreds of troops and police to help protect Hungary's borders against a migrant influx into Europe's Schengen passport-free travel zone, officials said on Friday.

The central Europeans have stressed the need to secure the European Union's outer borders as the basis of any response to the inflow of hundreds of thousands of refugees this year. Hungary's position is seen as pivotal as it forms part of the external boundary of Schengen.

"Our government is prepared to help Hungary with protection of the Schengen border. We are proposing joint V4 action," Czech Prime Minister **Bohuslav Sobotka** said on his Twitter page, referring to the Visegrad 4 group that comprises his country, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary.

Sobotka said their interior ministers would meet on Oct 8 to tackle the idea.

Czech news agency CTK quoted Interior Minister Milan Chovanec as saying the plans could include sending hundreds of Czech, Polish and Slovak soldiers and police officers to help patrol Hungary's southern border for several months. (RTRS)

'Violence could spiral': There is a risk of violence among asylum seekers getting out of hand at accommodation centres in Germany, the country's police union chief said on Friday in remarks reflecting growing concern over a record refugee influx.

More than 200,000 migrants are estimated to have arrived in Germany in September alone — roughly the same as for the whole of last year — and the government estimates that 800,000 or more could come over the course of 2015.

More than 500,000 migrants have reached the European Union so far this year, many fleeing war in the Middle East and Africa with others pursuing a better life in the affluent EU, with Germany and Sweden among the most favoured destinations.

"We're running the risk that the situation in refugee accommodation will get out of control," police union chief Rainer Wendt told the mass-circulation newspaper Bild.

"Our experience suggests that in many places there are, unfortunately, very targeted and well-prepared violent clashes with ethnic or religious motivations almost every day".

German police arrested 15 asylum

seekers on Tuesday suspected of being involved in a fight at their hostel in Suhl, in the eastern state of Thuringia, which left 11 people hurt, local broadcaster MDR reported. (RTRS)

Leaders to visit Lesbos: Austrian Chancellor **Werner Faymann** will become the first European Union leader on Tuesday to visit the Greek island of



Sobotka



Faymann

Lesbos to see the impact of Europe's migrant crisis on one of the refugees' preferred entry points into the EU.

Lesbos, just 4.4 km (2.8 miles) off the Turkish coast, is struggling to cope with tens of thousands of migrants fleeing war, persecution and poverty in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere and seeking a better life in Europe.

Austria and Germany have committed to backing Greek efforts to secure more

EU funds to cope with the influx and to boost staff on the ground. Many of the almost 400,000 migrants who have arrived in Greece this year have later passed through Austria on their way to Germany.

Faymann and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras will visit registration and first-reception facilities on the island and discuss further cooperation between the two countries on managing migration flows, Tsipras's office said. (RTRS)