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GENERAL

**Across Regions**  
**Small island states, facing rising seas, seek economic overhaul**

Small island states facing a "frightening" rise in sea levels will seek investments in everything from solar energy to fisheries to boost their economies at a UN summit next week. Leaders will meet in Samoa in the Pacific from Sept. 1-4 to drum up partnerships with companies, development banks and donors on projects that bring in dollars and jobs while protecting oceans and environments. Many islands from the Indian Ocean to the Caribbean are suffering erosion and coastal flooding from storm surges as global warming raises sea levels by melting ice from the Himalayas to Greenland.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/small-island-states-facing-rising-seas-seek-economic-overhaul/**](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/small-island-states-facing-rising-seas-seek-economic-overhaul/)

CEE/CIS

**Across CEE/CIS**

**Slim chance of progress as Russian and Ukrainian leaders meet**

Divided by mistrust and mutual recriminations, the Russian and Ukrainian leaders will hold rare talks on 26 August that offer only a slim hope of progress towards ending five months of separatist war in Ukraine. The diplomatic crisis has only deepened, especially since the downing of a Malaysian airliner over rebel-held territory last month with the loss of 298 lives. Ukraine accused Russia on 25 August of sending soldiers across the border to open a new front, a charge that Moscow dismissed as the latest salvo in a campaign of misinformation. In the latest twist in a protracted conflict, the Ukrainian military said a group of Russian forces, disguised as rebels, had crossed into south-east Ukraine with 10 tanks and two armoured infantry vehicles. It said border guards had halted the column outside Novoazovsk, Ukraine's most south-easterly point on the Azov Sea.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/25/us-ukraine-crisis-column-idUSKBN0GP0MB20140825**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/25/us-ukraine-crisis-column-idUSKBN0GP0MB20140825)

**Russia says wants to send second aid convoy to east Ukraine**

Russia wants to send a second humanitarian aid convoy to eastern Ukraine in the near future, the Russian Foreign Minister said after Kiev and the West criticized Moscow for sending the first cargo without official permission. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko on Monday expressed his "extreme concern" about Moscow's plan to send a second aid convoy to the east and the alleged crossing of Ukraine's border by Russian armoured vehicles.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/25/us-ukraine-crisis-russia-lavrov-idUSKBN0GP0J520140825**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/25/us-ukraine-crisis-russia-lavrov-idUSKBN0GP0J520140825)

**Turkey**

**Three Chinese engineers kidnapped in southeast**

Suspected Kurdish militants have kidnapped three Chinese engineers in southeast Turkey near the border with Iraq and Syria. The workers were seized from a shop in the border town of Silopi late on 24 August by suspected members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) who then went on to attack a power plant construction site where they worked. A spokesman from the Chinese embassy in Turkey said that three Chinese workers have "disappeared" after a thermal power plant in Silopi, which is being constructed by China Machinery Engineering Corporation, was attacked by militants at around 9 p.m. local time on 24 August.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/26/us-turkey-china-kidnapping-idUSKBN0GQ04N20140826**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/26/us-turkey-china-kidnapping-idUSKBN0GQ04N20140826)

**Ukraine**

**Ukraine's president dissolves parliament**

Ukraine's president has dissolved parliament and called for early elections in October, as his country continues to battle a pro-Russian uprising in its eastern regions. Petro Poroshenko announced on Monday in a statement posted on his website that he had dissolved parliament and called for snap elections on October 26. "Many deputies who are in the Rada [parliament] are direct sponsors or accomplices, that is to say allies of the militant separatists," said Poroshenko.

**Al Jazeera –** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/08/ukraine-president-dissolves-parliament-201482519244297142.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/08/ukraine-president-dissolves-parliament-201482519244297142.html)

**Weapons convoys seen rolling in the east**

For several evenings this month, convoys of military weaponry passed with clockwork-like regularity through Krasnodon, a rebel-held town in eastern Ukraine near the porous border with Russia. The convoys were seen three times last week by Associated Press reporters, and one of them carried about 30 units of weaponry and supplies. All were coming from the direction of Russia and heading west to where pro-Moscow separatists were fighting Ukrainian troops.

**AP -** [**http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/weapons-convoys-rolling-eastern-ukraine-25117805**](http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/weapons-convoys-rolling-eastern-ukraine-25117805)

**Merkel pledges $690M in aid to eastern Ukraine**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel pledged more than $690 million in aid to conflict areas in eastern Ukraine after visiting with Ukrainian President Petro O. Poroshenko on Saturday. The move came one day after Russia sent more than 227 humanitarian aid vehicles into eastern Ukraine.

**UPI -** [**http://www.upi.com/Top\_News/World-News/2014/08/23/Germany-promises-690M-in-aid-to-Ukraine/1681408849324/**](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2014/08/23/Germany-promises-690M-in-aid-to-Ukraine/1681408849324/)

EAP

**Myanmar**

**Thousands starved, beaten in risky boat escape to Malaysia: UNHCR**

Tens of thousands of people are fleeing violence in Myanmar only to be robbed, beaten and starved on boats helmed by human traffickers, according to a new report from UNHCR. In the 12 months to June, around 53,000 people left ports in the Myanmar-Bangladesh border area -- 61% more than the previous year -- many with the hope of reaching family in Malaysia, according to the report ["Irregular Maritime Movements."](http://www.unhcr.org/53f1c5fc9.html) The UNHCR report said upon arrival in Thailand, new arrivals said they were driven through the night in pickups with 15 to 20 other people who were forced to sit or lie on top of one another.

They were then taken to camps where hundreds of people, including women and children, were held while smugglers phoned family members abroad, demanding more money for their loved ones' safe passage to Malaysia. Demands "were accompanied by threats or, when payment was not immediate, severe beating and prolonged detention in a smugglers' camp for up to six months," the report said.

**CNN -** [**http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/26/world/asia/rohingya-malaysia-bangladesh-boats/index.html?hpt=ias\_c1**](http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/26/world/asia/rohingya-malaysia-bangladesh-boats/index.html?hpt=ias_c1)

**UNHCR Report -** [**http://www.unhcr.org/51dc0122b.pdf**](http://www.unhcr.org/51dc0122b.pdf)

ESA

**South Sudan**

**To country's woes, add famine - 50,000 kids at risk of death**

According to UNICEF and the WFP, close to a third of South Sudan's population faces "acute" or "emergency" levels of hunger and malnutrition. Aid agencies estimate that 235,000 children could become dangerously malnourished by the end of the year, and 50,000 of them could die unless they get treatment. South Sudan's food crisis is almost entirely man-made. After eight months of civil war, about 1.1 million of its roughly 11 million people are internally displaced. Farmers missed this year's planting season because of the violence. Livestock, which accounts for as much as 70% of the calories consumed by some communities, has been looted, killed and scattered in the mayhem.

**WP -** [**http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/to-south-sudans-woes-add-famine--50000-kids-at-risk-of-death/2014/08/23/19c21638-2949-11e4-86ca-6f03cbd15c1a\_story.html**](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/to-south-sudans-woes-add-famine--50000-kids-at-risk-of-death/2014/08/23/19c21638-2949-11e4-86ca-6f03cbd15c1a_story.html)

**Rivals sign new ceasefire deal**

South Sudan's warring leaders signed a fresh ceasefire deal on 25 August vowing to end more than eight months of conflict, according to mediators who threatened sanctions should the agreement fail once again. East Africa's regional IGAD bloc, which mediated the talks between President Salva Kiir and his sacked deputy Riek Machar, called on the leaders to forge a unity government within 45 days.

**AFP -** [**http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/8/25/south-sudan-peace.html**](http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/8/25/south-sudan-peace.html)

**Child soldiers - a step backwards - UNICEF mention**

Children are being used as soldiers by both the government and the opposition in the ongoing conflict in South Sudan, aid and human rights agencies say. South Sudan's army spokesperson reported that it was checking on the number of children within its ranks. In April UNICEF reported that more than 9,000 children were being used as child soldiers in South Sudan's conflict. "UNICEF is greatly concerned by these reports because they are based on very reliable observations of children wearing military uniforms and carrying guns. There are at least 9,000 children being used as fighters by military and armed groups when even the national laws prohibit this, including voluntary recruitment," Doune Porter, chief of strategic communications for UNICEF in South Sudan, reported.

**IRIN -** [**http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportID=100534**](http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportID=100534)

LAC

**Colombia**

**Breakthroughs and hurdles in peace talks**

High-level army, air force, navy and police officers flew to Cuba, under the command of General Javier Alberto Flórez, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In the 24-hour technical mission they met with their archenemies, the FARC to discuss “how to implement a definitive bilateral ceasefire, and how the FARC would disband and lay down their arms,” said President Juan Manuel Santos. Santos described the participation of active officers in the talks, as part of a sub-commission installed on Friday Aug. 22, as “a historic step forward.”

**IPS -** [**http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/08/breakthroughs-and-hurdles-in-colombias-peace-talks/?utm\_source=rss&utm\_medium=rss&utm\_campaign=breakthroughs-and-hurdles-in-colombias-peace-talks**](http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/08/breakthroughs-and-hurdles-in-colombias-peace-talks/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=breakthroughs-and-hurdles-in-colombias-peace-talks)

**Mexico**

**Intense Hurricane Marie affects 10,000 families, leaves 3 people missing**

Intense Hurricane Marie, a Category 5 storm, affected 10,000 families in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, while three fishermen were reported missing in Baja California Sur state, officials said. The storm damaged roads, triggered landslides, caused rivers to overflow their banks and flooded houses, the Oaxaca state government said, adding that Juquila and Pochutla were the two worst-hit districts. The federal Government Secretariat will be asked on 25 August to declare a state of emergency and disaster in 10 cities affected by the storm so 10,000 families can receive assistance.

**EFE -** [**http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=2349469&CategoryId=14091**](http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=2349469&CategoryId=14091)

MENA

**Across MENA**

**Rocket fired from Lebanon hits northern Israel**

A rocket fired from Lebanon crashed into northern Israel on 25 August night, without any immediate reports of injuries. "At least one rocket fired from Lebanon hit the Upper Galilee," a message on the military's official Twitter feed said. Israeli artillery returned fire. It was the third consecutive day in which Israel came under rocket fire from the north as well from the Gaza Strip in the south. Five rockets from Syria hit the Israeli-occupied sector of the Golan Heights on 24 August and the day before a rocket was fired from Lebanon.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/rocket-fired-lebanon-hits-northern-israel-army-195243121.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/rocket-fired-lebanon-hits-northern-israel-army-195243121.html)

**<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Aug-25/268477-at-least-one-rocket-fired-from-lebanon-lands-in-northern-israel.ashx#axzz3BSQr7RNO>**

**UAE aircraft bombed militants in Libya, US says**

The United Arab Emirates has secretly sent warplanes on bombing raids against militias in Libya over the past week, using bases in Egypt. The two attacks carried out over seven days mark a dramatic expansion of the conflict as the United States and its European allies denounced "outside interference" in Libya. The strikes signaled a step toward direct action by regional Arab states that previously have fought proxy wars in Libya, Syria and Iraq in a struggle for power and influence. The bombing raids were first reported by The New York Times and militant forces in Libya also had alleged strikes had taken place.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/uae-bombed-islamist-militias-libya-us-officials-221610682.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/uae-bombed-islamist-militias-libya-us-officials-221610682.html)

**Egypt**

**More prisoners in Egypt join ongoing hunger strike**

The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information issued a statement Monday saying at least a dozen protesters and activists behind bars have gone on hunger strike in the past week. The group says the rise is in reaction to "unfair trials" and "noticeably prolonged detentions" without trial in cases involving freedom of expression. The group said Mahienour el-Masry, a secular activist sentenced for violating a controversial protest law, started a hunger strike Sunday. Security officials say at least 20,000 people have been detained since the government crackdown began last year. Most of the detained are Islamist supporters of Egypt's ousted President Mohammed Morsi.

**AP -** [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Aug-25/268416-more-prisoners-in-egypt-join-ongoing-hunger-strike.ashx#axzz3BTh85HGj**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Aug-25/268416-more-prisoners-in-egypt-join-ongoing-hunger-strike.ashx#axzz3BTh85HGj)

**Egypt to be negatively impacted by Libyan conflict: ESCWA**

The flow of Libyan refugees, returning Egyptian migrants, and security turmoil from Egypt's western neighbour could hurt the Egyptian economy, according to a paper published 12 August by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The return of Egyptian migrants is the most significant consequence of the instability in Libya, it said. Approximately 1.5 million Egyptians, most of whom are low and semi-skilled workers, were employed in Libya before the current crisis, said the International Organization for Migration. If the fighting continues, the report said, around 250,000 Egyptians are expected to return within the next few weeks. The World Bank estimates that formal and informal inward remittance flows from Libya accounted for 0.89% of Egyptian GDP.

**Daily News -** [**http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/08/25/egypt-negatively-impacted-libyan-conflict-escwa/**](http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/08/25/egypt-negatively-impacted-libyan-conflict-escwa/)

**Iraq**

**UNHCR on target to deliver 2,410 tons of aid for displaced**

The UNHCR said that a massive aid push for some 500,000 displaced Iraqis was going to plan, with a second airlift of aid to Erbil and more flights due on 22 and 23 August. The operation began on 20 August and a second flight landed in the Iraqi Kurdistan city of Erbil on 21 August with more tents. Also on 21 August, UNHCR loaded 16 containers of aid (kitchen sets, blankets and jerry cans) from warehouses in Dubai onto a ship due to sail to Bandar Abbas in Iran on 23 August. From there it will be loaded onto trucks for Erbil. Meanwhile, inside Iraq, shelter remains a top priority for displaced people – too many of whom are living in dreadful conditions. The Kurdistan region of Iraq is now hosting close to 700,000 displaced Iraqis, most having arrived in early June.

**UNHCR -** [**http://www.unhcr.org/53f72a759.html**](http://www.unhcr.org/53f72a759.html)

**IS fighters kill up to 670 prisoners, says UN chief**

UNHCR has said Islamic State fighters reportedly killed up to 670 prisoners in Mosul and committed other abuses in Iraq that amount to crimes against humanity. Navi Pillay, the body''s top human rights official, said the violations include targeted killings, forced conversions, abductions, trafficking, slavery, sexual abuse, destruction of places of religious and cultural significance and besieging entire communities for ethnic, religious or sectarian reasons.

**Star Tribune -** [**http://www.startribune.com/world/272544491.html**](http://www.startribune.com/world/272544491.html)

**Libya**

**Libya jihadists urge Islamist unity as lawmakers fight back**

A Libyan jihadist group urged other Islamists to unite under its banner on Monday after parliament appointed a new army chief to tackle the unrest sweeping the North African nation. Ansar al-Sharia, which Tripoli and Washington have both branded a "terrorist" organisation, made the call as Libya's foreign minister and his counterparts from neighbouring states met in Cairo to discuss the Islamist threat. "Unite with the mujahedeen in Benghazi so together we can defend the same objective -- a total rejection of any Western plan" for Libya, Ansar al-Sharia said in an online message aimed at other militias in the violence-plagued country.

**AFP -** [**http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/109186/World/Region/Libya-jihadists-urge-Islamist-unity-as-lawmakers-f.aspx**](http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/8/109186/World/Region/Libya-jihadists-urge-Islamist-unity-as-lawmakers-f.aspx)

**State of Palestine**

**Palestinians eye UN deadline to end Israel occupation**

The Palestinian leadership is to demand the international community set a deadline for Israel to end its occupation of the territories, a senior official told AFP on Monday. The move comes as Palestinian and world leaders continue to push for a halt to seven weeks of bloodshed in Gaza, and seek a more permanent end to violence between Israel and the Islamist movement, Hamas. The Palestinian leadership is preparing "to go to the UN Security Council to enforce an end to the (Israeli) occupation," senior Palestine Liberation Organisation official Wasel Abu Yusef told AFP.

**AFP** - [**http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Aug-25/268406-palestinians-eye-un-deadline-to-end-israel-occupation.ashx#axzz3BTh85HGj**](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Aug-25/268406-palestinians-eye-un-deadline-to-end-israel-occupation.ashx#axzz3BTh85HGj)

**Israeli air strikes target more Gaza high-rises**Israel bombed more of Gaza's tallest structures on Tuesday, bringing down a 13-story apartment and office tower and destroying most of a 16-floor residential building after warning occupants to get out. The Israeli military, declining to comment specifically on the attacks that flattened the Basha Tower and wrecked the Italian Complex, said it attacked 15 "terror sites", including some in buildings that housed Hamas command and control centers.  
**Reuters -** [**http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/26/us-mideast-gaza-idUSKBN0GM11320140826**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/26/us-mideast-gaza-idUSKBN0GM11320140826)

**Syria**

**Russia sees West changing tack on Syria, urges engagement with Assad**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Monday urged Western and Arab governments to overcome their distaste for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and engage with him to fight Islamic State insurgents. In comments likely to irritate Washington, Lavrov said the United States had made the same mistake with Islamic State as it had with al Qaeda, which emerged in the 1980s when U.S.-backed Islamist insurgents were fighting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. "I think Western politicians are already realizing the growing and fast-spreading threat of terrorism," Lavrov said, referring to Islamic State advances in Syria and Iraq.

**Reuters -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/russia-sees-west-changing-tack-syria-urges-engagement-125224522.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/russia-sees-west-changing-tack-syria-urges-engagement-125224522.html)

**Obama backs surveillance flights over Syria**

President Obama has authorized military surveillance flights over Syria to gather intelligence about Islamic extremists ahead of possible U.S. airstrikes, senior administration officials said Monday, the Times reports. The Pentagon began the flights in recent days and is prepared to use both manned and unmanned aircraft to gain a better picture of IS.

**AP -** [**http://www.boston.com/news/2014/08/25/source-obama-backs-surveillance-over-syria/ZTF60csKgV0P63bG5SZKsI/story.html?p1=Topopage:Test\_B:Main\_headline**](http://www.boston.com/news/2014/08/25/source-obama-backs-surveillance-over-syria/ZTF60csKgV0P63bG5SZKsI/story.html?p1=Topopage:Test_B:Main_headline)

**Yemen**

**Fears of war grow as mediation with Houthis fails**

Talks between a committee appointed by Yemen's President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi to mediate with the leader of the Houthi movement occupying protests sites around the capital broke down on Sunday, amid rising tensions in Sana'a. The movement, led by Abdul Malik Al-Houthi, has massed thousands of its members on the outskirts of Sana'a since the start of last week, demanding that the Yemeni government resign and restore fuel subsidies that were recently slashed as part of an economic reform package.

**AA -** [**http://www.aawsat.net/2014/08/article55335849**](http://www.aawsat.net/2014/08/article55335849)

SA

**Afghanistan**

**Abdullah threatens to pull out of poll audit**

One of two candidates competing to succeed Afghan leader Hamid Karzai has threatened to pull out of a UN-supervised audit of a disputed presidential election in a move that might undermine a process meant to defuse a standoff between the contenders. A senior member of Abdullah Abdullah's campaign demanded on Tuesday that the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Independent Election Commission accept Abdullah team's proposals for vote invalidation or else they would withdraw from the audit process.

**Al Jazeera -** [**http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/08/abdullah-threatens-poll-audit-ashraf-ghani-afghanistan-201482681246355574.html**](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/08/abdullah-threatens-poll-audit-ashraf-ghani-afghanistan-201482681246355574.html)

**Bangladesh**

**Flooding leaves nearly half a million people homeless**

Floodwaters pouring through villages in northern Bangladesh have left nearly half a million people homeless, washed away roads and damaged crops. The low-lying and densely-populated country has been battered by flash floods for more than a week, with officials warning that heavy monsoon rains could cause fresh areas to be submerged in the next few days. The government said so far no one has died in the flooding. Experts at the Flood Forecasting and Warning Center in Dhaka said two of Bangladesh's main rivers, the Meghna and the Brahmaputra, continue to rise, leaving people in 14 of Bangladesh's 64 districts either marooned or forced to seek shelter on higher ground.

**WSJ –** [**http://online.wsj.com/articles/flooding-in-bangladesh-leaves-nearly-half-a-million-people-homeless-1408969241**](http://online.wsj.com/articles/flooding-in-bangladesh-leaves-nearly-half-a-million-people-homeless-1408969241)

**Pakistan**

**Pakistan cleric leading anti-government rally of thousands warns leaders of 48-hour deadline**

A Pakistani cleric leading a mass anti-government rally in front of parliament has issued a 48-hour deadline for the country's prime minister to step down or he says he's prepared to die. Tahir-ul-Qadri showed protesters a white burial shroud Monday in a speech issuing the deadline for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who has refused to step down. It's not clear what Qadri plans to do after his deadline expires, though some have feared protesters may try to enter parliament, which is protected by soldiers. That could set off a violent confrontation.

**AP -** [**http://www.startribune.com/world/272560481.html**](http://www.startribune.com/world/272560481.html)

WCA

**Across WCA**

**Thousands flee to Cameroon after Boko Haram attack in Nigeria**

Boko Haram on 25 August overran a border town in northeast Nigeria, forcing residents and soldiers to flee in the latest indication of the militants' growing ability to strike at will and unchecked. The attack on Gamboru Ngala came after the town was almost entirely destroyed in a devastating assault in May that left more than 300 people dead and prompted outrage at the lack of military response. Many residents sought refuge from the latest strike across the border in the northern Cameroon town of Fotokol, where Cameroonian troop reinforcements were sent, a security service source reported. Nigerian soldiers were said to be among the exodus, according to locals and the Cameroon military, who said "more than 450" had fled their posts from elsewhere in Borno state in fear of Boko Haram attacks.

**AFP -** [**http://news.yahoo.com/thousands-flee-latest-boko-haram-attack-nigeria-115742224.html**](http://news.yahoo.com/thousands-flee-latest-boko-haram-attack-nigeria-115742224.html)

**CAR**

**Seleka rebel infighting kills 17**

Seventeen people were killed in a gun battle between rival factions of the Seleka rebels in territory they control in Central African Republic, a rebel spokesman said on Tuesday. The clash over control of potentially lucrative roadblocks highlights factional tensions within the coalition that for months has controlled the north of a country riven along sectarian lines by a conflict that has killed thousands of people and displaced around 1 million. Three people were also wounded in the clash that started on Monday in central market area of the town of Bambari and was continuing on Tuesday, the rebels' spokesman, Captain Ahamat Najat, said.

**Reuters -** [**http://www.trust.org/item/20140826121209-jo2e5/?source=fiOtherNews2**](http://www.trust.org/item/20140826121209-jo2e5/?source=fiOtherNews2)

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