

# UNSC to Take on Syrian, Yemeni Issues in April

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) will deal with various issues related to Syria, Yemen and the Middle East under China's rotating presidency in April, China's permanent representative to the UN said Friday.

The council will look at three aspects of the Syrian issue, namely, the political process, chemical weapons and humanitarian access, Liu Jieyi said at a press conference as he took over the rotating presidency of the Security Council for April.



With regard to Yemen, there are talks going on between relevant countries. The council's discussions

help move these talks forward and improve conditions for the implementation of the ceasefire that

has been agreed upon, he said. April will also see three open debates on the Middle East, counter-ter-

rorism and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, Liu said. Sponsored by China, the open debate on counter-

terrorism is aimed at enhancing international cooperation and coordination in the fight against the surging terrorist activities in Europe and Asia, Liu added.

Under the UN Charter, the 15-member Security Council has the primary responsibility to maintain peace and security in the world at large. China is one of its five permanent members. The council also has 10 non-permanent members that are elected in groups of five by the UN General Assembly for two-year terms. (Xinhua)

## 52 IS Militants Killed As Security Forces Fight to Free Iraqi Town

BAGHDAD - A total of 52 Islamic State (IS) militants were killed on Saturday in airstrikes and clashes with security forces fighting to liberate a town in Iraq's western province of Anbar, while the troops repelled an attack by extremist militants in Salahudin province, security sources said. In Anbar province, Iraqi security forces and allied paramilitary Sunni tribal fighters advanced on the IS-held town of Heet, some 160 km west of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, and managed to seize al-Ma'mil district on the eastern edge of the town

after heavy clashes with IS militants, a provincial security source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity. The troops killed 14 IS militants and destroyed a booby-trapped vehicle during the clashes that also resulted in the killing of three soldiers and the wounding of four others, the source said. The battles continued at the end of the day as the troops progress toward the central part of the town was slowed to give opportunity to thousands of civilians trapped between ... (More on P4)... (22)

## Indian Congress Leader Calls for Coalition with Leftwing Parties in Eastern State

NEW DELHI - India's opposition Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi Saturday called for setting up a coalition government with leftwing parties in West Bengal as the eastern state is to hold a local election. At a joint election rally in Kolkata with Left Front leaders, Gandhi said Congress members should go to the field together with leftwing parties to win the local election. Gandhi also criticized the incumbent government of West Ben-

gal led by chief minister Mamata Banerjee for going back on its promises made five years ago. The West Bengal was ruled for over three decades by leftwing parties until 2011, when the Trinamool Congress led by Banerjee came into power. The local election is also considered a crucial test for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, two years after coming to power to the central government in Delhi. (Xinhua)

## Russia Deeply Concerned with Azerbaijan-Armenia Border Conflict, Urging De-Escalation

MOSCOW - Russia expressed grave concern on Saturday over the recent military conflict along the Azerbaijan-Armenia border, calling on all parties involved to stop fighting and exercise restraints. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Saturday held talks with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, said Maria Zakharova, a spokeswoman for the Russian Foreign Ministry. She said

that Russia would maintain constant contact with Armenia and Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu also held emergency phone talks with his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts, according to the Russian Defense Ministry said. Earlier in the day, Russian President Vladimir Putin urged both conflicting parties to cease fire immediately and exercise restraint.



Heavy fighting broke out on Saturday between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Azerbaijan claimed that 12 Azerbaijani soldiers were killed and a helicopter downed by the Armenian forces. (Xinhua)

## Greece Set for First Migrant Returns to Turkey from Lesbos

LESVOS - Greek authorities in coordination with Turkish and European authorities were making final preparations on Saturday for the start of the returns of refugees from the Greek Aegean Sea islands to Turkey on Monday, while NGOs were scheduling protests. Under March's European Union (EU)-Turkey agreement, from April 4 migrants who entered Greece via the Aegean after March 20 and were declared not eligible for asylum protection in Greece will be read-



mitted to Turkey. According to sources who spoke to Xinhua on condition of anonymity the process will start from the port of Mytilene on Lesbos island on

Monday. Two Turkish vessels have been chartered by the European border control agency Frontex via Greek shipping companies to transfer the first batch of

migrants from Lesbos to Turkey. The "Nazlijale" will carry a total of 200 refugees escorted by 200 Frontex officers ... (More on P4)... (23)

## DPRK Test-Fires New-Type Guided Rockets: Report

PYONGYANG - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has test-fired "new-type anti-air guided rockets" under the observation of its top leader Kim Jong Un, the country's official KCNA news agency reported Saturday.

The rockets accurately hit the aerial targets of the simulated enemy, the KCNA said without specifying when and where the test was carried out. Kim was satisfied with the test, saying it demonstrated the DPRK's rapidly growing defense capability. The DPRK on Friday fired a ground-to-air missile into its eastern waters, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The launch came just three days after Pyongyang fired a rocket in northeastern direction. Pyongyang's frequent projectile launches in recent weeks are said to protest the ongoing U.S.-South Korea joint military exercises and newly-adopted international sanctions on the DPRK.

In early March, UN Security Council adopted tougher-than-ever sanctions on Pyongyang over ... (More on P4)... (26)

## Syrian Army Storms Key IS-Held City Near Palmyra

DAMASCUS - The Syrian army backed by Russian warplanes unleashed on Saturday a wide-scale offensive on a key city controlled by the Islamic State (IS) group near the recently-captured ancient city of Palmyra, a military source told Xinhua.

The Syrian ground forces succeeded to break through the IS defenses in the western part of the predominantly-Christian city of Qaryatain, the military source said on condition of anonymity. The Russian warplanes are playing significant role in the battle for the recapture of Qaryatain, the source added.

The military campaign for retaking Qaryatain came



less than a week after the Syrian army captured the ancient city of Palmyra, which had been held also by the IS. Meanwhile, the state news agency SANA said the Syrian army and allied forces carried out "intensive attacks" against the

IS positions in the city of Qaryatain, which resulted in the military recapture of several key areas in that city's surroundings, mainly in its western parts. Citing a military source, SANA said the Syrian bomb squads also worked ... (More on P4)... (24)

## Turkish Coast Guard Detains Migrants Ahead of EU Deal Entering Force

DIKILI - Turkey's Coast Guard stopped 63 Palestinians and Syrians trying to cross to a Greek island on Saturday, underlining the scale of the security forces' task in convincing illegal migrants they won't be allowed into the EU. A controversial European Union deal to return rejected asylum seekers to Turkey is due to go into action on April 4. The group stopped on Saturday was trying to cross to the Greek Island of Lesbos from the Turkish town of Dikili on the Aegean ... (More on P4)... (27)

## Syria Cease-Fire Unravelling as Fighting Erupts Near Aleppo

BEIRUT - Syria's partial cease-fire is unravelling, as fierce fighting between government forces and opposition fighters, including members of the al-Qaida affiliated Nusra Front, erupted Saturday outside the country's second largest city of Aleppo. At least 25 pro-government and 16 opposition fighters died in clashes south of Aleppo, where the Nusra Front and rebel militias captured a hill overlooking a major highway, ... (More on P4)... (28)

## Syrian Opposition Not Optimistic About Geneva Peace Talks

BEIRUT - The Syrian opposition is not optimistic about upcoming peace talks in Geneva because there is no international will for a political transition, opposition member Riad Hijab told Al Araby Al Jadid television late on Friday. The Syrian opposition has consistently said that it wants a halt in attacks on civilians and for the Geneva talks to result in a transitional governing body for Syria that does not include President Bashar

al-Assad. "There is no international will, especially from the U.S. side, and I do not expect anything to come of the negotiations," said Hijab, the coordinator for the Saudi-backed Higher Negotiation Committee (HNC), the main opposition bloc.

The HNC will attend the next round of talks, scheduled to start around April 9 in Geneva, Hijab said, but "I will be clear to our people: we have no optimism ... (More on P4)... (25)

## Iran Nuclear Deal Proved Diplomacy Paying Off: China President

TEHRAN - Chinese President Xi Jinping has hailed the landmark nuclear deal between Iran and the P5+1 as a "milestone," saying the political breakthrough has provided inspiration for the settlement of other issues through diplomacy. He made the comments during a meeting with leaders of the countries involved in nuclear talks with Iran - Russia, the US, the UK, France and Germany - on the sidelines of the fourth Nuclear Security Summit in Washington on Friday. The meeting was

also attended by EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, who chaired the P5+1 states during the nuclear negotiations. Xi further said the nuclear deal, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), proved that serious disputes can be resolved through dialogue and cooperation, calling for the full implementation of the accord reached between Tehran and the six world powers on July 14, 2015. After the JCPOA went into effect on January ... (More on P4)... (29)

## Neighbor News

### Iran Navy Might Untouched by US Sanctions: Commander



TAHRAN - Iran's Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari says sanctions by the United States and its allies will fail to hinder the country's plans to boost its military might.

"Regardless of opposition from the US and its allies, [our] plans will be implemented based on requirements to defend the country's maritime borders," Sayyari told reporters in the southern Iranian port city of

Bandar Abbas on Saturday on the sidelines of a ceremony to welcome the 38th fleet of the Iranian Navy.

Despite sanctions, the Iranian naval forces have succeeded in making great achievements, Sayyari said, adding that if all countries opposing the Islamic establishment pool their resources they will fail to make any breakthrough to hinder the Iranian Navy's progress. (PressTV)

### Pakistani Forces Capture Top Taliban Commander in North Waziristan

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani security forces on Saturday captured senior Pakistani Taliban commander, Ahmad Mehsud, in a remote mountainous region of North Waziristan, security officials said.

Ahmad Mehsud is considered an important commander of the banned Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan as he had been behind attacks on the forces and the tribal elders in Waziristan region. The commander was injured and was hiding in a house in Razmak area of North Waziristan, security officials said. The forces also recovered a big cache of arms and explo-

sives from the hideout. Security sources said commander Mehsud had fled to Afghanistan after the security forces launched a major operation in the region in June 2014, adding that Mehsud was wanted by the authorities for his involvement in several terrorist attacks. The forces conducted an operation on a tip-off about the presence of the Taliban commander in a house, an official said. The authorities are describing the arrest of Mehsud as a major success as his arrest can lead to capturing other Taliban who are hiding in the mountains. (Xinhua)

### China Plays Responsible Role in Safeguarding Global Nuclear Security

BEIJING - At the fourth Nuclear Security Summit (NSS), Chinese President Xi Jinping reaffirmed China's resolve regarding its commitment to safeguarding global nuclear security. With an impressive nuclear security record, China has undertaken a constructive and responsible role in safeguarding global nuclear security. In his speech at the summit held in Washington, Xi announced a slew of new measures to shore up China's nuclear security, pledging to build

a network for nuclear security capacity building by using the existing platforms to train nuclear security professionals and carry out plans for exercises and exchanges regarding nuclear security technologies. China will, in the coming five years, review the radioactive sources in the country, improve the security system and give priority to real-time monitoring of high-risk mobile radioactive sources, said the Chinese president. (Xinhua)

### Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan Explore International Border Delegate Cooperation Models

BISHKEK - Twenty-five officials from border security and management agencies of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan completed a week-long workshop at the OSCE Office in Tajikistan on the role of effective border delegates. The course organized by the Border Management Staff College and the Political-Military Department of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan highlighted that border delegates of national agencies are officials who are assigned according to international agreements for

maintaining effective border management, cross border co-operation and resolving border-related incidents. "The best border delegate practices of Belarus, Latvia, and the Russian Federation were demonstrated at the workshop which I believe will help further develop the mechanisms for border-related cooperation with the aim of jointly addressing transnational threats in the region," said Markus Muller, Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan. (AKIpress)