

UN Chief Calls for Holistic Approach to Tackle Violent Extremism

GENEVA - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Friday that a paradigm shift is needed to address violent extremism affecting communities across the globe. "Violent extremism is a direct assault on the UN charter and the universal declaration of human rights. It represents a grave threat to international peace and security," he said following a session of the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism: The Way Forward. In recent years,



the international community's response to violent extremism has centered

on countering the threat, though Ban cautioned that security and military

actions alone cannot defeat the spread of groups such as ISIL, al-Qaida and

Boko Haram. "We need a more comprehensive and balanced approach

that addresses the drivers of violent extremism; that is what is this conference is about, that is what my plan of action to prevent violent extremism is about," he explained. A UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism was launched earlier this year, providing over 70 recommendations to member states to catalyze international responses to address the challenge. According to the UN, the "plan calls for a comprehensive approach encom ... (More on P4)...(20)

NATO, Russia to Hold Council Meeting in Next Two Weeks

BRUSSELS - NATO on Friday said following consultations with Russia, the two sides had agreed to hold a meeting of the NATO-Russia Council at the ambassadorial level in the next two weeks. NATO said the meeting would discuss the crisis in and around Ukraine and the need to fully implement the Minsk Agreement. The two sides will discuss military activities, with particular focus on transparency and risk reduction. Moreover, the two sides will also address the security situation in Afghanistan, including

regional terrorist threats, according to NATO. "This meeting is the continuation of our political dialogue, as agreed by NATO Heads of State and Government. At the same time, there will be no return to business as usual until Russia again respects international law," said NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in a statement. The statement said that NATO decided to suspend all practical cooperation with Russia in April 2014 in response to the Ukraine crisis. "This decision stands. At the same time, NATO kept chan-



nels of political dialogue and military communication open," it said.

Since the start of the Ukraine crisis, there have been two NATO-Russia Council meetings, which

were held respectively in March 2014 and June 2014, and two meetings of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 2014 and in 2015, which included Russia. (Xinhua)

Refugee Numbers in Germany Fall Sharply in March: Minister

BERLIN - The number of refugees arriving in Germany has fallen sharply in March to about 20,000, German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere announced on Friday. "In December 2015, it was 120,000 people, in January 90,000, in February 60,000 and in March 20,000," de Maiziere said at a press conference in Berlin, citing data from the German government's EASY initial registration system. The number of asylum applications received in the first three months this year differs from the arrival figures and has shown an in-

crease of 112 percent compared to the first quarter of 2015, according to the minister. The German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) has significantly increased its staff numbers to deal with the large number of asylum claims. As Europe's top destination for refugees, Germany has taken in more than one million asylum seekers last year. The mass influx sparked a backlash in Germany, which has since reintroduced temporary border controls and taken ... (More on P4)...(21)

IS Believed to Massacre 175 Kidnapped Workers

DAMASCUS - The Islamic State (IS) group is believed to have committed a massacre against 175 workers it had taken hostage in a town northeast of the capital Damascus, pan-Arab al-Mayadeen TV reported on Friday. The 175 victims were among workers the IS had taken hostage in a sprawling cement factory in the town of Dumair northeast of Damascus. A day earlier, the al-Mayadeen report said a total of 140 workers had fled the IS captivity in the cement factory, spelling no further details about their whereabouts. Earlier reports said a group of re-

bels, who pledged alliance to the IS, were behind the attack on the factory and a nearby airbase in Dumair. The Syrian army has repelled the attack on the airbase, but the IS still controls the factory. Dumair is divided between Islamist groups and the Syrian army. State news agency SANA also reported the abduction incident, saying the Syrian authority is working on their release. Still, the circumstances of the abduction and the fate of the workers are still murky, with no clear response from the government about the incident. (Xinhua)

Implementation of EU-Turkey Migrant Deal Moves Forward

ANKARA - Turkey received the second batch of migrants from Greece on Friday that was sent back as part of the recent readmission deal between Ankara and Brussels to cut back on irregular migration. One ferry carrying 45 migrants left Greek island of Lesbos on early Friday, while other boats have reportedly picked up some 100 migrants from islands of Chios and Samos to bring them to Turkey's western province Izmir. Turkish Coast Guard accompanied one ferry



called "Lesvos" as it approached Turkish port. Migrants went through security checks and medical examinations before they were housed in tem-

porary tents. Riot police units were on standby near the port facility. On Monday, 202 migrants, mostly Pakistani and Bangladeshi nation-

als, were transferred from Greek islands in the Aegean to Turkey's coastal town Dikili in Izmir. However, the shipment of ... (More on P4)...(22)

Japan Hopes Minister's Meeting to Boost Understanding Between G-7 Members

TOKYO - Japan's Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said Friday he hoped the upcoming Group of Seven foreign ministers' meeting in Hiroshima will be a success and boost understanding between member countries. At a meeting with U.S. Ambassador Caroline Kennedy on Friday, Kishida said he hoped to further enhance Japan's special relationship with the U.S. while working toward global peace through dialogue with his counterparts at the summit. "I hope to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance and confirm solidarity among the

G-7 countries to make a firm contribution to international peace and prosperity," Kishida was quoted as saying. Along with Kishida, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, Britain, Canada, France, Germany and Italy's foreign ministers will convene on Sunday in Hiroshima for the meeting. The ministers will visit the Peace Memorial Park and museum in the city that was leveled by an atomic bomb in 1945. The G-7 countries include three nuclear powers, the United States, Britain and France, and it will be the first time the ministers of these countries have vis-



ited the famous Peace Memorial Park. Kishida said he hoped the visit to the memorial park would serve as an unforgettable experience for all concerned and provide a better understanding of the devastating effects an atomic bomb can have.

The two-day meeting will also see the ministers traverse a number of topics, including terrorism, nuclear non-proliferation and other global issues such as the refugee crisis and maritime-linked issues, the foreign ministry said. (Xinhua)

Jihadi Group Admits Using Chemical Gas in Attack Against Kurdish Fighters

DAMASCUS - The so-called Jaish al-Islam, or the Islam Army, admitted on Friday that one of its commanders used "unauthorized" chemical weapon in attack against the Kurdish fighters in a district in northern Aleppo province. Jaish al-Islam fired several mortar shells into Kurdish-controlled areas in the Sheikh Maksud district in Aleppo on Thursday. The mortars consisted of chemical gas that spread upon impact. A video of the aftermath of the attack appeared online, purporting to show how several people

were suffering from breathing difficulties after the attack. Activists said the attack killed nine civilians and injured 29 others. In its statement Friday, Jaish al-Islam said its fighters were responding to the attempts of the Kurdish fighters to take full control of Sheikh Maksud, adding that one of its commanders used unauthorized weapons during the confrontation, and was referred to a military court to get punished according to the group's laws. Sheikh ... (More on P4)...(25)

Syrian Forces Strike Several Rebel Positions in Aleppo Province

DAMASCUS - The Syrian army has pounded several rebel-held positions in the countryside of the northern province of Aleppo, in retaliation to the breach of the truce in some areas there, state news agency SANA reported on Friday. The government forces' shelling on the towns of Khan Tuman, Eis, Aran al-Mawaleh, Rashidin, RasmKhamis, and the vicinity of the aviation faculty, came in retaliation to the breach of the truce by some rebel groups in Aleppo which pledged alliance to the al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front, said the report. It added that tens of terrorists were killed in the ... (More on P4)...(26)

IS 'Spreading Like a Cancer': UN Chief

GENEVA - The Syrian conflict has acted like a greenhouse for extremist groups which are now spreading "like a cancer", the UN chief said on Friday, urging greater cooperation to prevent radicalisation. The war raging in Syria has "provided the perfect breeding ground for extremist and terrorists to take root in the society,"

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told reporters in Geneva. "Now (the Islamic State group) and all the extremists are spreading like a cancer around the world," he warned in remarks on the sidelines of a high-level conference on preventing violent extremism. In an earlier address to ... (More on P4)...(23)

Kerry Urges Iraq Not to Let Politics Impede War Against IS

BAGHDAD - U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, visiting Baghdad on Friday, urged Iraq not to let its political crisis interfere with the fight against Islamic State and voiced unequivocal support for Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. Abadi last week unsettled Iraq's politi-

cal elite with a proposed cabinet reshuffle that aims to curb corruption by replacing long-time politicians with technocrats and academics. His aim is to free Iraqi ministries from the grip of a political class that has used the system of ethnic and sectarian ... (More on P4)...(24)

EU Moves Summit Away from British Referendum Date

BRUSSELS - The European Union has postponed its summer summit by a week so it will not coincide with the June 23 British referendum on continued EU membership. Originally, the 28 leaders would have had the first day of their two-day gathering on referendum day. Instead the

office of EU President Donald Tusk announced Friday the days were moved to June 28-29 instead. The British referendum has become a key day in the EU because a possible departure of Britain would have a fundamental political and economic impact on the bloc. (AP)

Nieghbor News

Xinjiang Seals Pakistan Ties with \$2bn in Deals

BEIJING - Companies from China's violence-prone far western region of Xinjiang signed deals worth about \$2 billion with Pakistan this week during a visit to Pakistan by Xinjiang's top official, who sought to cement ties with an important security partner. Pakistan last year agreed energy and infrastructure projects worth \$46 billion with China to set up the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. In return, China will get a free trade zone in Paki-

stan's Gwadar port and access to the Arabian Sea. New Pakistani roads will open up routes for Chinese goods into Europe and the Middle East from landlocked Xinjiang, which borders Pakistan. During a four-day visit to Pakistan, Xinjiang's Communist Party chief Zhang Chunxian met Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, visited Islamabad, Karachi and Gwadar, the official Xinjiang Daily said on Friday. (Agencies)

Chinese-Sponsored Equipment for ASEAN Summit Handed over to Laos

VIENTIANE - The equipment offered by China for an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit later this year was handed over to Laos on Friday. According to an agreement signed between the Chinese and Lao governments, China will provide vehicles, security check facilities and office equipment, as well as installation and technical training. The aid project started in December 2015 and all the equipment arrived in Vientiane in March. China has also sent technical

personnel to train Lao drivers for the Chinese vehicles. The project, which will help Laos in preparation for the ASEAN summit, is also expected to open up a new era for cooperation between the two neighbors. Chinese Ambassador Guan Huabing and Lao Deputy Foreign Minister Khamphao Ernthavanh joined the signing of handover document. Vientiane will host the ASEAN summit in September as Laos took over the rotating presidency of ASEAN for 2016. (Xinhua)

Nazarbayev to Discuss Mutual, Global Issues in Iran

TEHRAN - Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev will make an official visit to Iran to discuss ways to improve mutual relations and the latest regional and international developments. Nazarbayev is scheduled to arrive in Tehran on April 11 for a two-day visit at the invitation of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. The Iranian and Kazakh presidents plan to discuss the implementation of agreements reached during Rouhani's trip to Astana in September 2014. Rouhani and Nazarbayev will also exchange views

about strengthening bilateral cooperation in trade, economic, investment, agriculture, transit and transport sectors as well as about improving regional and international security. The Iranian president visited Astana on September 8-9, 2014 at the head of a high-ranking politico-economic delegation and held talks with the country's senior officials including Nazarbayev. The two presidents inked a number of agreements to boost cooperation in various fields, particularly in the economic sphere. (PressTV)

Law on Trading Activity Enters into Force in Turkmenistan

ASHGABAT - A law on trading activity determining trading activity's legal, economic and organizational basis, as well as laying down the principles of government regulation, including in the areas of wholesale trade, retail and catering, has entered into force in Turkmenistan. The law was ratified by the Turkmen parliament and was signed by the country's President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov. The Turkmen media published the law

on Apr.7. At the beginning of 2016, in one of the governmental meetings Turkmen president demanded to strengthen the fight against corruption, including in the sphere of trade, where a number of shortcomings and breakings of law were revealed. In particular, the work of the country's Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations and the State Commodity and Raw Materials Exchange were subjected to criticism. (Agencies)

Tajikistan Makes Preparations for the 25th Anniversary of Its Independence

DUSHANBE - Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon held a joint meeting of the government and the organizing committee for celebration of the 25th anniversary of Tajikistan's Independence, according to the Tajik president's official website. Heads of relevant ministries and agencies reported on the process of

implementation of the national budget in the first quarter of this year, the process of implementation of the government's resolution on celebration of the 25th anniversary of the country's independence, and the process of preparations for implementation of the CASA 1000 Project. In a report released at the ... (More on P4)...(27)