

G7 FMs Agree to Strengthen Cooperation on Countering Terrorism

HIROSHIMA - The two-day G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting closed here on Monday, with the foreign ministers of the seven industrialized countries issuing a joint communique, reaching consensus on a variety of global and regional issues including terrorism, refugees, and the DPRK nuclear problem. Countering terrorism was placed ahead of other challenges in the communique. The communique condemned recent terror-



ist attacks in Turkey, Belgium and other regions and said a concrete G7 action plan on countering terrorism would be adopted at the G7 Ise-Shima Summit in May. The communique also condemned "in the

strongest terms" the nuclear test and missile launches by the Demo-

cratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and demanded the DPRK not to conduct any further nuclear tests or launches that use ballistic missile technology, nor engage in any other destabilizing or provocative actions. Regarding the issue of refugees, the communique said the flow of refugees, irregular migrants and internally displaced persons is at the highest level since WWII and requires a decisive response by the ...*(More on P4)...(19)*

Nearly 6,000 Refugee Minors Disappear in Germany in 2015: Report

BERLIN - Nearly 6,000 young refugees disappeared in Germany in 2015, while the German government has no indications of their whereabouts, German media reported on Monday. As 2,171 of 8,006 underage refugees reported as being missing had resurfaced, a total of 5,835 young refugees remained missing in Germany in 2015, Germany's third largest newspaper and magazine publisher Funke Medien-gruppe reported, citing a reply from the German Interior Ministry to a par-

liamentary inquiry. The missing, unaccompanied minors were mostly from Afghanistan, Syria, Eritrea, Morocco and Algeria, said the report. Meanwhile, every tenth missing refugee minor is a child. In Germany, child refers to any person under the age of 14. However, the German Interior Ministry could not give reasons for their disappearance, according to the report. In late March, several members of the European Parliament have pointed out in a letter that missing



underage refugees might be victims of pan-European gangs who abused them for sex, slavery or organ trafficking. (Xinhua)

Next Phase in Syria Talks 'Crucial': UN

DAMASCUS - The UN peace envoy to Syria on Monday said in Damascus that an upcoming round of negotiations in Geneva aimed at ending the country's five-year war would be "crucially important". "The Geneva talks' next phase are crucially important because we will be focusing in particular on the political transition, on governance and constitutional principles," Staffan de Mistura told reporters after meeting Foreign Minister Walid Muallem. "We hope and plan to

make them constructive and we plan to make them concrete," the envoy said. Scheduled to resume on April 13, the Geneva talks are aimed at ending a conflict that has killed more than 270,000 people and forced millions to flee their homes since it erupted in March 2011. The UN Security Council passed a resolution in December which paved the way for the talks and called for elections in Syria to be held 18 months after a transitional government is agreed. ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

Int'l Tactical Peacekeeping Exercises Begin in Kazakhstan

ALMATY - The first phase of an international tactical peacekeeping drill kicked off in Kazakhstan on Monday, the Kazakh Defense Ministry said. More than 60 troops from the United States and Britain took part in the military exercises, dubbed Steppe Eagle 2016, with Kazakh peacekeeping forces at the Ili-skiy training center near Almaty. During the first phase of the drill, the three countries' troops will exchange experiences on

tactical communications, operations of engineering and mine sweeping groups, medical care and evacuation, among others. The second phase of the drill will be held in Britain, and about 250 Kazakh troops are expected to participate. Steppe Eagle, which has been held annually since 2003, is designed to check the ability of peacekeepers to perform complex tasks as part of multinational forces and under a unified command. (Xinhua)

Suicide Attack Targets Police Station in South Russia

MOSCOW - Three suicide bombers blew themselves up on Monday as they tried to storm a rural police station in a usually peaceful region of southern Russia, causing no other casualties, police said. After the attack in the village of Novoselitskoye in the southern Stavropol region, regional authorities ordered the tightening of security measures in kindergartens, schools and hospitals. Russia's North Caucasus -- including Chechnya where the

Kremlin has fought two wars against separatists over the past 20 years -- has been gripped by nearly daily violence for years due to a simmering Islamist insurgency there. Attacks in the Stavropol region -- which is close to the Muslim-majority Northern Caucasus -- are rare, however. "We were holding a meeting in the morning when five explosions went off," Sergei Karamyshev, a senior local police official, told AFP. "Three people blew



themselves up after an officer on duty at the entrance blocked the door to the building," said Karamyshev. He said three of the explosions were

caused by the suicide bombers, while a fourth was caused by a grenade. The source of the fifth blast was not immediately ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

Greece Protests "Unacceptable" Violence Against Refugees by FYROM Forces

ATHENS - Greece's political leadership on Monday strongly condemned the "unacceptable" injuries of hundreds of refugees by Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) forces on Sunday at the Idomeni border crossing. "Countries that adopt unacceptable behaviors in terms of humanity, such as FYROM's behavior against refugees on Sunday, do not have place either in the European Union or in the NATO," Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos said in a press statement after a meeting with visiting Portuguese Prime Minis-

ter Antonio Costa. "It is a shame for the European civilization," Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said, according to Greek national news agency AMNA. More than 300 refugees, including several women and children, were injured by rubber bullets, stun grenades and fire gas, according to humanitarian groups offering assistance to refugees on the Greek side, when FYROM border guards opened indiscriminate fire on a group of some 700 people who attempted to break through the fence and cross into FYROM on Sunday. Three children have suffered



head injuries from rubber bullets, at least 30 people were injured by the bullets and among the cases who were treated for respiratory problems were also pregnant women, Nikitas Kanakis, president of the Greek branch of the Doctors without Borders, told

local MEGA television channel on Monday. Approximately 100 refugees and activists pushed a train wagon near the border crossing on Monday and climbed on top waving Greek flags next to the fence, eye witnesses said. (Xinhua)

Russia Begins to Inspect Troops in Eastern Military District

VLADIVOSTOK - Russia started to inspect troops in the eastern military district on Monday, to check their combat and mobilization readiness in the winter training season, Russian news agency RIA Novosti reported. "During the inspection of the formations and military units, the officers will check the combat and mobilization readiness, the level of combat training of personnel and coordination of units," the district's press head Col. Alexander Gordeyev was quoted as saying. "In total, over 20 tactical exercises at various levels will take place during the military inspection," he said. Russia's air force in Sakhalin Island as well as the Pacific Fleet will also be scrutinized during the inspection, which will last until the end of April. The eastern military ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

Ukraine Looks to New Pro-EU Government After PM Quits

KIEV - Ukraine prepared Monday to usher in a stable new pro-Western government following the resignation of Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk over public anger with his seeming inability to fight government graft. Yatsenyuk's announcement on Sunday came barely two months after he survived a no-confidence vote in parliament that left the government paralyzed and put the release of vital foreign aid on hold. The former Soviet republic has been roiled by a pro-Russian eastern revolt and an economic collapse that has wiped out people's savings and stirred public resentment toward the govern-

ment since Yatsenyuk assumed office in February 2014. President Petro Poroshenko's party has proposed replacing Yatsenyuk with parliament speaker Volodymyr Groysman -- a coalition builder who has gained stature by keeping the notoriously rowdy chamber in relative peace since his appointment in November 2014. But some economists fear that the 38-year-old protégé of Poroshenko may lack the toughness needed to stand up to a handful of tycoons who have dominated Ukraine's fractious politics for years. Parliament is to decide whether to ...*(More on P4)...(25)*

Germany Mulling Turkish Demand to Prosecute Comic

BERLIN - Germany is considering a request from Turkey to prosecute a TV comedian who wrote a crude poem about the Turkish president, Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman said Monday. The request poses an awkward choice for the German leader as she relies on Turkey to reduce the influx of migrants to Europe. Turkey sent a diplomatic note making "a formal request for criminal pros-

ecution" of comedian Jan Boehmermann, Merkel spokesman Steffen Seibert said. Boehmermann read the poem on ZDF television two weeks ago to illustrate what he said wouldn't be allowed in Germany, contrasting it with another channel's satirical song that also poked fun at Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Germany's ambassador was summoned ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

UN, AU Holds Workshop to Improve Humanitarian Operations in Somalia

MOGADISHU - A two-day training workshop on how to improve humanitarian assistance in Somalia has wrapped up in Mogadishu. The training aimed to formulate and create awareness on Somalia-specific humanitarian and civil-military coordination

guidelines, a statement received on Monday in Mogadishu said. The workshop which kicked off last Friday was jointly organized by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and the African ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

Saudi King Ends Landmark Egypt Visit with Firm Support to Sisi

and multi-billion-dollar investment deals, in a clear sign of support for President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's regime. The 80-year-old monarch's visit came as Riyadh aims to shore up ties with Cairo as it engages in several conflicts in the Middle East and competes with Shiite Iran for

regional supremacy. The visit also highlights Saudi Arabia's firm support for Egypt's fight against the jihadist Islamic State group, which has spearheaded a brutal insurgency in the Sinai Peninsula since the ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013. ...*(More on P4)...(26)*

Neighbor News

Tajikistan Expected to Mark President's Day

DUSHANBE - An official source at Tajikistan's lower house (Majlisi Namoyandagon) says that November 16 can be declared as President's Day in Tajikistan. We will recall that the 16th session of Tajikistan's former parliament Shuroi Oli (Supreme Council) took place in northern province of Sughd between November 16 and November 18, 1992 and Emomali Rahmon was elected as chairman of the Shuroi Oli. This issue is expected to be finally solved on April 13 at a regular sitting of the second session of the Majlisi Namoyandagon (Tajikistan's lower house of parliament) of the fifth convocation.

As it had been reported earlier, the Majlisi Namoyandagon board (Shuro) discussed amendments proposed to the country's law on holidays at an April 11 meeting, presided over by its head, Shukurjon Zuhurov. A group of deputies of the Majlisi Namoyandagon proposed a draft law to establish a new official holiday in the country that would mark the presidency of incumbent President Emomali Rahmon. According to the proposed legislation, the public holiday would be called either President's Day or the Day of the Leader of the Nation. (Asia-Plus)

Iran, Kazakhstan Sign Agreements to Boost Ties

TEHRAN - Iran and Kazakhstan signed 11 agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) here on Monday in a bid to boost cooperation in diverse areas, Tasnim news agency reported. The documents were signed by the two countries' senior officials with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his visiting Kazakh counterpart Nursultan Nazarbayev in attendance. Based on the

agreements, Tehran and Astana will cooperate in a variety of fields, ranging from technology, road and rail transport, commerce and environmental protection to prisoner exchanges, the report said. Heading a high-ranking economic and political delegation, Nazarbayev arrived in the Iranian capital on Monday for talks on bilateral ties as well as international issues with Iran. (Xinhua)

G20 Sherpa Meeting Lays Solid Ground for Summit: China

BEIJING - The second G20 Sherpa Meeting, with substantive discussions on major issues, has laid solid groundwork for the G20 summit that China will host in September, a spokesperson said on Monday. Foreign Ministry Spokesman Lu Kang was speaking at a news briefing when asked to comment on the meeting in Guangzhou last week. The sherpas -- officials who negotiate and prepare for an international summit before leaders take part in -- had substantive discussions on the agenda for the Hangzhou summit, Lu said, including a global agenda for sustainable development, guidelines for global investment and the interna-

tional hunt for fugitives and illegal assets. The spokesman underscored a presidency statement on climate change at the G20 Sherpa Meeting, according to which G20 members are expected to sign the Paris Agreement beginning on April 22 or after. It sent a strong signal that G20 members will address the climate change with united actions, Lu said, adding that UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the statement. China will work to hold an open, transparent and inclusive summit that will see G20 members focus on major economic and financial problems and contribute to global growth and economic governance, Lu said. (Xinhua)

Pakistan to Convert National Airlines into Public Limited Company

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani parliament on Monday unanimously approved a law, allowing the government to convert the country's national airlines from a corporation to a public limited company. The opposition lawmakers did not oppose the government move after their proposed amendments were incorporated into the "Pakistan International Airline's (PIA) (conversion) bill 2016." Minister for Law and Justice, Zahid Hamid, told the house that the genuine demands of the opposition members have been accommodated in the proposed bill and rights of employees have

been duly protected. The bill was previously rejected by the opposition-dominated Senate while the opposition MPs had also boycotted the National Assembly's proceedings when the bill was passed in February. The treasury and opposition benches had agreed on the retention of employees, their salaries, allowances and benefits, after the conversion of PIA from a corporation into a limited company. Both sides had also agreed that 51 percent management of the new subsidiary (to be established) will remain with the government. (Xinhua)