

IAEA Should not Disclose Confidential Data to U.S. Senate: Iran

TEHRAN - An Iranian official urged on Saturday International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to refrain from leaking confidential information on a recent agreement between Iran and UN nuclear watchdog, days ahead of IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano's scheduled visit to Washington. Disclosure of the confidential agreement to the U.S. Senate will have repercussions, Reza Najafi, Iranian ambassador to IAEA, was quoted as saying by Press TV on Saturday. "Definitely, the agreements between a country and the UN agency, which are clas-



sified, can by no means be availed to any other country," Najafi said.

The IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano was invited by the members

of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to visit Washing-

ton next week, talking about the agency's role in verifying and moni-

toring nuclear-related measures in Iran. Iran and the IAEA recently signed a roadmap in the Austrian capital of Vienna for the clarification of past and present issues regarding Iran's nuclear program by mid-December. The confidential texts between Iran and the IAEA have not even been provided to the U.S. government and cannot be given to the Senate either, Najafi was quoted as saying. Amano has said that the roadmap "sets out a clear sequence of activities over the coming months, including the... (More on P4)...(22)

Exploring Greater Support for U.N. Plan to Form Libya Unity Government: Kerry

CAIRO - U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Sunday he would explore greater support for a United Nations plan to form a unity government in Libya.

Kerry said "spoiler groups" could not be allowed to destroy a peace process. Kerry was speaking in Cairo after talks with Egyptian officials.

Last month, the U.N. brokered a preliminary deal between Libya's warring



factions to form a unity government and end fighting but a non-recognized parliament in Tripoli refused to join the deal.(Reuters)

Nigeria Assumes Rotating UN Security Council Presidency for August

NITED NATIONS - Nigeria on Saturday assumed the rotating presidency of the UN Security Council for August. Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the UN, Uche Joy Ogwu, took over the rotating council presidency from New Zealand's permanent representative to the UN Gerard van Bohemen, who held the council presidency for July. On Aug. 4, Joy Ogwu will brief reporters on the Council's program of work at the UN headquarters. Under the UN Charter, the Security Council has the

primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security in the world. The Council is composed of five permanent members - China, the United States, Britain, France, and the Russian Federation - and 10 non-permanent members that are elected in groups of five, with a tenure of two years on the Council. The presidency of the Council rotates among its 15 member states based on the English-language alphabetical order of the countries' names on a monthly basis.(Xinhua)

Australian Parliament Speaker Resigns Over Scandal

CANBERRA - Bronwyn Bishop, speaker of the House of Representatives of Australian Federal Parliament, resigned Sunday over the travel expenses scandal which has dragged on for weeks.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott first made the announcement at a press conference in Sydney.

"After a number of conversations with the Speaker, Bronwyn Bishop, over the last few weeks, today, Ms Bishop called me to let me know that she will be resigning from that particular position," Abbott said. In a separate announcement later, Bishop said she had tendered her resignation to Governor General Peter Cosgrove effective immediately.

"I have not taken this decision lightly," she said. "It is because of my love and respect for the institution of parliament and the Australian people that I have resigned as Speaker." Bishop said she looked forward to continuing to serve voters in her electorate of Mackellar. Bishop came under fire earlier this month when it was revealed that in 2014, she used taxpayer dollars to pay for a chartered helicopter flight to a private fundraising event. The flight, which would normally take just one hour in a car, cost the Australian people 5,000 AU dollars (3,820 U.S. dollars) while, this week, a second investigation revealed she also claimed travel expenses to attend a private wedding for a colleague back in 2006.

The Department of Finance is reviewing into 10 years' worth of Bishop's travel claims and the result is due "as soon as possible". Bishop had said she will repay every dollar that's overspent. (Xinhua)

UN Member States Look Beyond Aid to Fund Ambitious New Development Agenda

UNITED NATIONS - With UN member states poised to agree on an ambitious new development agenda, Lenni Montiel, UN assistant secretary-general for economic development, told Xinhua about how governments plan to fund their proposed commitments. "I can unequivocally say that

the Addis Ababa action agenda has been a success for the international community," Montiel said in a recent interview with Xinhua, referring to an agreement reached by all 193 member states at the Addis Ababa Financing for Development conference which took place in the Ethiopian capital

from July 13-16. "I think we have just seen that the conversation about how development is financed has changed." The conference saw the international community bring other forms of funding to the table, and a shift away from seeing aid and concessional loans - known as official development

assistance (ODA) - as the only source of development financing. "Official development assistance is important for international development, but it's not going to be the only source of financing," Montiel said, noting that wealthy countries have still recommitted to making ODA 0.7 percent of

their gross national income - a goal only a handful of governments have so far reached. Beyond aid, other forms of funding include the public funds of governments, which are expected to provide many of the services needed to meet the sustainable development goals (SDGs). ... (More on P4)...(23)

Germany's Merkel has Chance of Absolute Majority, Poll Shows

BERLIN - Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel's leadership during the Greece crisis has given her conservatives a chance of winning an absolute majority if an election were held next week, an opinion poll on Sunday showed. The results of the poll came a day after Der Spiegel news magazine said in an unsourced report that Merkel had decided to run for a fourth term and had started planning her 2017 re-election campaign. The chancellor has ruled Germany since 2005 and now governs in coalition with the Social Democrats (SPD). Not



since Konrad Adenauer's third term as chancellor ended in 1961 has the CDU/CSU ruled with an absolute majority. The Emnid poll for weekly newspaper Bild am Sonntag put support for Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU) and their sister party, the Bavarian Christian Social Union

(CSU), at 43 percent. The survey of 1,860 people showed that for the first time since June 2005 support for the CDU/CSU was equal to that of all other parties that would surpass the 5-percent hurdle required to win seats in the Bundestag lower house of parliament.(Reuters)

Malaysia Seeks Assistance from Reunion Island's Surrounding Territories

KUALA LUMPUR - Malaysian Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai said Sunday that Malaysia is seeking assistance from several aviation authorities in territories within the vicinity of Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean.

"This is to allow the experts to conduct more substantive analysis should there be more debris coming on to land, providing us more clues to the missing aircraft," he said in a statement. He said the flaperon discovered on Reunion Island has been officially identified as being part

of a Boeing 777 aircraft, which was verified by French authorities together with aircraft manufacturer Boeing, U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the Malaysian team comprising the Department of Civil Aviation, Malaysia Airlines, and Malaysian ICAO Annex 13 Safety Investigation Team for MH370. Liow said Malaysia, the United States, China, France and Boeing will send representatives to participate in the verification of the flaperon in Toulouse on Wednesday. (Xinhua)

Israeli DM Orders Administrative Detention for Jewish Extremists

JERUSALEM - Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon has ordered administrative detention against Jewish suspects of a terror attack in which a Palestinian baby was killed and family members critically injured once they are captured, a ministry spokesperson confirmed to Xinhua on Sunday. Administrative detention is a tool used by the defense establishment to lock up suspected militants, used mostly against Palestinians, in which suspects are incarcerated without being brought to trial. A security official was quoted on Sunday by Israel Radio as saying that dealing

with Jewish terrorism necessitated the same tools used as when dealing with Palestinian terror suspects. He also added that Israeli security forces had yet to apprehend the suspects, believed to be Jewish extremists, who were careful not to leave traces behind them and did not carry cell phones, as those could help police locate them. Israeli officials, including Ya'alon and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the attack last week, calling it a "heinous" and "serious terror attack," with Ya'alon adding that Israel will "chase down the murderers until they are caught." Xinhua

U.S. Vice President Said to be Considering Presidential Run

WASHINGTON - U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden has begun to explore a possible presidential campaign, said U.S. media Saturday. According to The New York Times, Biden's associates have already started to contact Democratic leaders and donors who have so far not endorsed Hillary Clinton or who have become increasingly concerned about odds of a successful run by the Clinton camp. Quoting one longtime support of Biden, the newspaper report said the vice president has been "deeply moved" by his deceased son's desire for him to run. Meanwhile, one columnist

of The New York Times wrote that Biden had already been holding meetings at his house, "talking to friends, family and donors about jumping in to challenge Mrs. Clinton" in Iowa and New Hampshire, two early-voting states. If confirmed, Biden's entry would pose a direct threat to Clinton, who so far has been an undisputed front-runner of the Democratic field. Though starting with a strong momentum, favorability rating for Clinton dipped recently as the former Secretary of State was grappling with negative news coverage, including her controversial practice of exclusively us-

ing personal email account and server while working as the U.S. top diplomat. According to the latest Quinnipiac poll released Thursday, 57 percent of voters regarded Clinton as not honest and trustworthy, and 52 percent said that Clinton did not care about their needs or problems, in spite of the candidate's devotion of a fair amount of time since April to convincing ordinary Americans that she understood their struggle. By contrast, the same poll found that Biden's favorability rating reached its peak in seven years with 49 percent, with 58 percent saying he cares about them. (Xinhua)

Neighbour News

China Plans Expanded Serious Illness Insurance

BEIJING - The Chinese government has proposed extending serious illness insurance to cover more of the population. The proposal by the State Council, China's cabinet, on Sunday said the insurance should benefit all urban and rural residents covered in the nation's basic health insurance by the end of 2015. Serious illness insurance, so far used only on a trial basis, reimburses patients when their medical bills far exceed basic medical insurance. It is intended to help prevent people being dragged into poverty by medical costs. According to official statistics, the number of Chinese covered by the scheme has surpassed 700 million, half the population. The system should be integrated with the entire healthcare infrastructure by 2017, connecting with other programs like medical assistance system, which was established in 2008

to allocate money to help disadvantaged people purchase medical insurance and to subsidize healthcare not included in insurance programs. As of April, serious illness insurance pilot programs have been set up in 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, 16 of which have all their residents covered by the insurance. In 2014, the serious illness insurance program helped 1.15 million patients in China, with the total fund reserve for the program reaching 9.7 billion yuan (about 1.56 billion U.S. dollars). The State Council suggested the scheme's reimbursement ratio should reach at least 50 percent this year and increase gradually in future. Zhu Minglai, a medical care researcher at Nankai University in Tianjin, predicted that more than 70 percent of bills incurred through serious illness would eventually be reimbursed. (Xinhua)

Iran Keen on Boosting Ties with Armenia: Jahangiri

TEHRAN - Iran's First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri has called for the expansion of ties between Iran and Armenia in all fields. "Both countries can take effective steps to [serve] the two nations' interests through the expansion of ties and bolstering cooperation," Jahangiri said in a Sunday phone conversation with Armenian Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan. The Iranian official pointed to the growing relations between the two sides, saying that given the two countries' existing potential, their relations can further improve in a

range of areas. Jahangiri expressed Iran's readiness to bolster cooperation with Armenia in different sectors including energy, power generation and transmission as well as transit of commodities and passengers through Iran, Armenia and Georgia. Abrahamyan, for his part, called for expansion of cooperation with Iran in different fields. The Armenian premier expressed hope that officials of Iran, Armenia and Georgia would hold a meeting to prepare the ground for improvement of transit cooperation.(Agencies)

US Supports Increased Rights for Media and Armed Forces in Tajikistan

DUSHANBE - United States Ambassador to Tajikistan Susan M. Elliott, along with representatives from the U.S. Embassy, the Tajik government, media, and civil society, participated in the OSCE's Preparatory Human Dimension Implementation Meeting on July 27, 2015. According to the U.S. Embassy, the event highlighted discussion on the current state of human rights in Tajikistan. Ambassador Elliott gave remarks discussing the importance of emphasizing human rights in media freedom, domestic violence, migration, and security

in the armed forces. Ambassador Elliott stressed that a free and independent media is not the cause of security threats, but rather a safeguard against them. She noted that when reporting on security issues, the media should strike a balance between the legitimate security concerns of the government and the rights of the citizens guaranteed by Tajik and international law. The Ambassador also cautioned against restricting access to independent reporting and communication, an action that would leave Tajikistan's citizens more... (More on P4)...(24)

Pakistan Releases over 160 Indian Fishermen: Officials

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan on Sunday released over 160 Indian fishermen as a goodwill gesture amid tensions with India over cross-border fire exchanges in recent weeks. According to officials, the authorities in the port city of Karachi freed a group of 164 Indian fishermen, including an eleven-year-old boy who was taken into custody with his uncle when they had intruded into Pakistani water for fishing. Prime Ministers of the two countries agreed last

month in a meeting in Ufa, Russia, that they will release all fishermen in two weeks. However the release was delayed for some days due to escalations along the border. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi had also agreed to reduce tensions along the Line of Control in the disputed Kashmir and Working Boundary, the international border. The two leaders had also agreed that Pakistan security adviser Sartaj... (More on P4)...(25)