

EU Finances 2.4 Bln Euros to Support Member States on Migration

BRUSSELS - The European Commission has approved approximately 2.4 billion euros (2.63 billion U.S. dollars) to support member states on managing migration, it said in a press release Monday. The funding is under the European Union (EU)'s Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF) with a total budget of almost 7 billion euros. Money will flow to frontline member states such as Greece, Italy and others also dealing with high migratory flows for the period 2014-2020. The AMIF funding supports national efforts to



improve reception capacities, integrate migrants at local and regional levels and increase the effective-

ness of return program. Funding from ISF complements national efforts to improve member

states' border management and surveillance, in particular through the use of modern technologies.

Dimitris Avramopoulos, European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship said:

"Member States nowadays face unprecedented challenges in the fields of migration and security and the Commission is taking action in a spirit of solidarity."

"The national programs approved by the Commission provide significant financial assistance to the Member States to address these challenges," he said.

The European Commission has approved 23 national programs under the AMIF and ISF in August, and an additional 13 program will be approved later this year. (1 euro = 1.09 U.S. dollars) (Xinhua)

Iraq Speaker Calls on PM to Sack 'Corrupt' Ministers

BAGHDAD - Iraq's parliament speaker called Monday for Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to sack ministers found to be negligent or corrupt as part of a wide-ranging reform drive. Abadi on Sunday proposed a series of measures aimed at curbing corruption, streamlining the government and improving services after weeks of protests and a call from Iraq's top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah

Ali al-Sistani for drastic change. Parliament speaker Salim al-Juburi called on MPs to approve Abadi's measures and said even more reforms were required. The house is to discuss the reforms on Tuesday. "We asked the prime minister to dismiss a number of ministers who are clearly guilty of dereliction, negligence and corruption," Juburi said in televised remarks. Juburi did not name



specific ministers in his public statement. But a parliamentary official said those responsible for electricity and water

resources were both proposed for the chopping block in a meeting Monday between the ... (More on P4)...(24)

Germany Benefits Massively from Greek Crisis

BERLIN - Germany received significant benefits from the Greek crisis in recent years, saving more than 100 billion euros (about 109.7 billion U.S. dollars) in interest payments on its debts, a study found on Monday. Investors look for safe haven investments when facing uncertainties, said Halle Institute for Economic Research (IWH). Germany, the biggest economy in Europe, benefited from debt

crisis in the euro zone as the interests it had to pay investors for its bonds reduced when "bad news" happened. "Any time there was bad news about Greece, yields on German government bonds fell, and any time there was good news about Greece, German government bond yields rose," IWH said in a report, adding that other countries like the United States, the Netherlands or France

also benefited from such effect, but their gains were "significantly smaller." According to the institute, German bond rates declined by 300 basis points during the last five years, saving Germany interest payments of more than 3 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP). "The balanced budget in Germany is largely the result of lower interest payments due to the European debt crisis," it said, "a signifi-

cant part of this reduction is directly attributable to the Greek crisis." Germany, the biggest contributor to the 240-billion-euro bailouts to Greece since 2010, was reluctant to offer its southern European neighbor a third relief worth up to 86 billion euros, fearing of throwing more taxpayers' money to a "bottomless pit." Its Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaueble openly expressed his ... (More on P4)...(25)

Al-Qaida-linked Militants Withdraw from Frontline Positions in Aleppo

DAMASCUS - The al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front announced Monday its withdrawal from frontline positions against the Islamic State (IS) militants in Aleppo to protest against Turkey's intentions to impose a buffer zone in that area, according to a statement by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The Nusra Front left its positions to other rebel groups in the northern countryside of Aleppo, where Turkey is planning to create a safe zone. According to the



statement, the Nusra Front, which was fighting the IS in northern Aleppo, criticized the Turkish bid and also criticized some of the rebel groups which will be join-

ing Turkey in the move. It said the main aim behind the buffer zone plan is Turkish fear of the expansion of the Kurdish influence in that area and to

maintain Ankara's national security, not the Syrian one. "Based on that, it's not possible to join such a coalition or coordinate with it," the statement said, referring to the Turkish coordination with other Syrian rebel groups to impose the safe zone. Last Friday, reports said the Nusra militants ceded its positions on the Syrian-Turkish borders to other rebel group, saying the move was coordinated with major rebel groups in Aleppo. (Xinhua)

Poland's PM, New President Clash over First meeting

WARSAW - In a sign of tension growing between Poland's top leaders, Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz says she has not yet been invited to meet with the new president and insists such a meeting should include key ministers. Conservative President Andrzej Duda took office on Thursday, asking the government team of liberal opponents for cooperation. He said he wants to meet with Kopacz to discuss his welfare policy plans but

set no date. Kopacz insisted Monday that Duda should convene the Cabinet Council that also includes key government ministers, because that could help the decision-making. Commentators are expecting that Duda, coming from the opposition Law and Justice party, will have cold relations with the liberal Civic Platform government in the run-up to the October general elections. (AP)

Abbas Set to Visit Iran Eyeing Wider Cooperation

RAMALLAH - A senior Palestinian official said on Monday that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is scheduled to pay a visit to Iran within the coming two months. Ahmed Majdalani, official in Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and aide to Abbas, who is visiting Tehran, told Xinhua that he discussed with Iranian officials arrangements for the president's planned visit. He added that PLO delegation's current visit to Iran aims at regaining and correcting the Palestinian ties with the Islamic republic. The Palestinian delegation agreed with the Iranian officials to form a joint committee to cooperate in political issues, trade exchange and education. The ties between the Palestinian National Authority and Iran declined over the past

10 years in the view of Iran's support for Palestinian military factions which oppose the PNA, besides Iran's opposition to the peace with Israel. Abbas' last visit to Iran was when he joined a non-aligned states conference which was held in Tehran in 2012. Majdalani conveyed a letter from President Abbas to Iranian leaders, explaining the situation in the Palestinian territories and the endless Israeli assaults on the Palestinians and their holy places. Majdalani also discussed with senior Iranian officials the situation in Syria and the regional efforts to end the crisis there. President Abbas had proposed a complete ceasefire in Syria, formation of a transitional Syrian unity government and holding presidential election within six months. (Xinhua)

Neighbour News

Washington post Reporter Stands Trial in Iran over Spying Charges

TEHRAN - An Iranian court on Monday tried a Washington Post reporter for the fourth time over spying and propaganda charges, official IRNA news agency reported. Jason Rezaian, 39-year-old Iranian-American, stood trial at Branch 15 of Iran's Islamic Revolution Court, the same court before which he was previously tried for three times. It is not clear whether the Monday session would be the final hearing session for Rezaian. Director General of the Judiciary's Tehran Province Office Gholam Hossein Esmaeili said Sunday that the date of final court session of the Rezaian depends on the

judge's decision, according to IRNA. Rezaian faces charges of "espionage, collaboration with hostile governments, gathering classified information and disseminating propaganda against the Islamic Republic," Rezaian's lawyer, Leila Ahsan, said earlier. Rezaian assumed his job as Washington Post correspondent in Tehran in 2012. He was arrested on July 22, 2014, along with his wife, Yeganeh Salehi, a reporter for The National newspaper based in Abu Dhabi, and a female freelance photographer. Salehi and the photographer, who were released on bail in October 2014, also appeared in court on Monday. (Xinhua)

China to Blacklist Firms with Poor Work Safety Management

BEIJING - China will blacklist firms with poor work safety records and restrict their business, the country's work safety watchdog said Monday. Enterprises with records of major work safety accidents or with more than ten deaths within one year, or those which have attempted to conceal their safety record, or that have failed to improve conditions after rectification orders, have their work safety permits suspended or revoked and other illegal activities will be put on the blacklist, according to the State Administra-

tion of Work Safety (SAWS). The government will restrict the firms' expansion through restricting their land use and financing. The SAWS will release a blacklist before the 20th day of each quarter and will conduct random checks on blacklisted firms at least once each half year. The blacklist will expire after one year but the term will be extended to three years if the firm goes on the blacklist again. A nationwide work safety check from August to December will cover all regions and sectors. (Xinhua)

A Lot in Common Between Belarus, Pakistan in Regional, Int'l Affairs

MINSK - Belarus and Pakistan have a lot in common in regional and international affairs. Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif made the statement during talks with Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko on Monday, BelTA has learned. Nawaz Sharif underlined that Pakistan is glad to take the opportunity of further advancing ties with Belarus, including in economy, defense, and culture. "Our countries have a lot in common in regional and international matters," said the Prime Minister. He remarked that Pakistan would be honored to open an embassy in Minsk.

Nawaz Sharif reminded that preparations are underway for building a Pakistani embassy in Minsk. The relevant land plot has been chosen already. According to the Prime Minister, it is one of the best spots for placing Pakistan's diplomatic mission. "In our turn we will make a similar offer to your country. It will be done in the next few weeks," said the Prime Minister of Pakistan. He went on saying that people responsible for choosing the best location for the Belarusian embassy had been appointed already. The land plot will be presented to Belarus' representative in Pakistan some time later. (BelTA)

Tajikistan has been Considered the most Non-Creative Country in CA

DUSHANBE - Tajikistan takes the last place in Central Asia (CA) in the rating of the most creative countries of the world. In the recently published rating of "Global Creativity Index 2015" (GCI) Tajikistan is on 114th place among 139 countries of the world. Among the countries of Central Asia the highest place in this rating is taken by Kazakhstan (84th place). Uzbekistan is on 100th place, Kirgizstan - on 111th. Turkmenistan is absent in the research. The global creativity rating is made based on the researches of the experts that rest on three basic positions:

"Talan", "Technology", "Tolerance". Tajikistan took 85th place in the world for tolerance, 90th - for talent and 106th - for technologies. Australia took the first place in the overall ranking followed by the USA and New Zealand. The top ten countries include Canada, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Singapore and Netherlands. Russia turned out to be on 38th raw of the rating. The GCI rating is rounded up by Iraq. The GCI rating is compiled by the Canadian Martin Prosperity Institute and evaluates the economic prosperity of 139 states. (Asia-Plus)

Thailand FMsays North Korea Woos its Businesses

BANGKOK - Thailand's foreign minister (FM) says his North Korean counterpart has invited Thai businesses to invest in his country because Thais are trustworthy and don't interfere with matters that don't involve them. Thai Foreign Minister Tanasak Patimapragorn said visiting North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong told him in a meeting Monday that Thai businesses are invited to invest in a special economic zone in North Korea that will open soon, and would be given incentives and privileges. Ri did not speak to the media. (AP)

Tajikistan Proposes to Restore United Power System of Central Asia

BISHKEK - Electric power system of Tajikistan is ready for parallel operation within the United Power System of Central Asia, said Ministry of Energy and Water Resources of Tajikistan. We are ready to deliver our electricity to neighboring countries, particularly to Uzbekistan, if relevant agreements are achieved, says the message. Tajik side has always advocated the restoration of the power systems of the region in parallel. The proposal of restoration was supported by the participants of the CIS Electric Power Council meeting in Yerevan. Especially, Ta-

jikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were recommended to cooperate on this area, said the Ministry. Turkmen side supports the proposal and is ready to join the parallel operation at any time, added the Ministry. The only difficulty is that Uzbek side has dismantled its part of high-voltage 500 kV transmission line from the substation Regar (Tajikistan) to the Guzar substation (Uzbekistan). However, there are possibilities to restore this line, if desired, noted the Ministry of Energy of Tajikistan. After the transition of ... (More on P4)...(26)

Sri Lanka says not Officially Informed by India on Indo-Lanka Rail Link

COLOMBO - The Sri Lankan government Monday said it had not received any official communication from India to establish a road and rail link between India's southern coast of Rameshwaram and Sri Lanka's northern town of Talaimannar, an official said. According to reports, the Indian government has asked the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to carry out a pre-feasibility study for financing the project across Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka. The project may be a combination of bridge and underwater tunnel which may al-

low unhindered movement of ships. As the project is in the conceptual stage, it is too early to comment on the time bound program of this project, reports quoted the Indian government as saying last week. However, Deputy Foreign Minister Ajith Perera told Xinhua Monday that despite these reports, Sri Lanka was yet to be informed of any such proposal. Perera, who is a candidate from the ruling United National Party (UNP) for the August 17 parliamentary elections, nonetheless said that if his party wins the polls and continues in government,

they would consider India's proposal if it is officially communicated. However, he stressed that the negatives and positives of such a project would have to be carefully studied along with the social and economic impact it would have on both countries before discussing the matter further. "It is a massive project which has to be thoroughly studied before any decision can be made," Perera said. In the past, a short boat ride used to connect the railway lines that ended at Thalaimannar in Sri Lanka and Dhanushkodi in India, which was in operation till 1966. (Xinhua)