

Turkey Set to go for Early Elections in Autumn Amid Violence

ANKARA - Turkey's election board has proposed November 1 as the tentative date for snap elections on Thursday as talks for a possible coalition government formally collapsed earlier this week. The Supreme Election Board (YSK) submitted the offer to the representatives of all four major political parties in the Parliament, signaling that it may finalize the work within two months. Akif Hamzacebi, the lawmaker from the main opposition Republican Peoples' Party (CHP) said whatever the date is, the CHP is ready for snap polls. Speaking to reporters



on Wednesday, the interim Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu floated the possible dates for election as

October 25, November 1 and November 8.

The exact date will be determined by the YSK after

negotiations with the political parties.

The snap polls came to Turkey's agenda after Da-

vutoglu who is also the chairman of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) failed to form a partner-

ship with an opposition party to lead the next government.

The AKP lost its parliamentary majority in June parliamentary elections for the first time in 13 years and no other political party secured enough seats to form a single-party government. The 45-day deadline on the formation of a new government is set to expire on August 23 and the hope for establishing a coalition government has already faded away.

Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan signaled that he will not extend the deadline. (Xinhua)

EU Welcomes France, UK Cooperation over Migration Crisis

BRUSSELS - Senior European Union (EU) officials on Thursday welcomed British and French authorities' cooperation over migration situation in Calais and highlighted efforts in dealing with migration pressure in Europe. European Commission's First Vice President Frans Timmermans and Migration and Home Affairs Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos made the remarks in a joint statement. It said the very operational measures announced in Calais by French and British ministers "will help speed up the processing of the asylum seekers and ensure the swift return of the irregular migrants."

EU officials announced that they will both visit Calais on 31st of August to discuss next steps. They said the European Commission is deeply committed to delivering every aspect of the European Agenda on Migration, and to support Member States in dealing with the current migration crisis. "Managing migration is not just about emergencies, but also about long-term solutions," they said, adding that "We need a permanent emergency relocation mechanism." Officials said the Commission has proposals ready, calling for the commitments of Member States. (Xinhua)

IS Destroys Christian Monastery in Central Syria

DAMASCUS - The Islamic State (IS) destroyed a Christian monastery in the central Syrian town of Qaryateyn, a monitor group reported on Thursday. The IS destroyed the Mar Elian Monastery in Qaryateyn, which was overrun by the terror-labeled group earlier this month, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The IS militants destroyed the monastery by bulldozers amid over 20 Syrian airstrikes against the IS positions in the town, the UK-based watchdog group added. It said over 110 people, including Christians, from Qaryateyn were moved to the group's de-facto capital of Raqqa in northern Syria. After overrunning the town, the IS militants kidnapped over 230 people, including 60 Christians. IS was

later said to have released 48 of those kidnapped. The town has a strategic importance for IS due to its location on the road connecting the IS-held ancient city of Palmyra with the eastern part of the mountainous region of Qalamoun, where the IS has positions. Syria's Christians, who take up about ten percent in the country's Sunni-majority population, have suffered from the expansion of the ultra-radical groups in different part of the Syria. The Christians showed support to the embattled President Bashar al-Assad whose administration has boasted itself as a defender of the minority groups in Syria, which consists of a remarkable melange of sects and beliefs. (Xinhua)

Ukraine, NATO to Hold Joint Military Exercise "Sea Breeze-2015"

KIEV - Ukraine-NATO joint military exercises "Sea Breeze-2015" will kick off on Aug. 31 in southern Ukraine, the country's Defense Ministry said Thursday. "The aim of the exercises is to practice a multinational security operation in crisis region," the press service of the ministry said in statement. The land, naval and air drills, which will last until Sept. 12, are also designed to improve interoperability between the Ukrainian Naval Forces and the Naval Forces of North Atlantic Treaty Organization member



and partner countries, the statement said. The exercises, which will be held under the NATO's Partnership for Peace program, will involve around 2,500 military

personnel, including about 1,000 troops from Ukraine. A total of 14 ships, eight planes and helicopters and about 90 vehicles are expected to participate in the drills.

The "Sea Breeze" military exercises have been conducted annually in Ukraine since 1997, except for the years of 2006, 2007 and 2009. (Xinhua)

S. Korea, U.S. up Joint Alert Level Amid DPRK Forward Deployment

SEOUL - South Korea and the United States raised their joint alert level toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) after the exchange of fires between the two Koreas in border areas, local media reported Friday citing the South Korean military.

The WATCHCON, or Watch Condition to measure reconnaissance posture against the

DPRK, was upgraded after South Korea and the DPRK traded fires across border Thursday over the propaganda broadcasts. The five-tier alert level is usually set at four, and is up when tensions rise on the Korean Peninsula. Under the alert level upgrade, more reconnaissance military assets are mobilized to close monitor the move of DPRK forces. Seoul and Wash-

ington kicked off their joint annual war game, called Ulchi Freedom Guardian (UFG), on Monday, and the computer-assisted simulation exercise would last until next Friday. Meanwhile, the DPRK has forward-deployed more fire units to the frontline areas already packed with major DPRK artillery such as 240-mm multi-

rocket launchers and 170-mm self-propelled howitzers. The forward deployment came after the two Koreas traded fires Thursday over the resumption of the propaganda broadcasts. South Korea resumed blaring the propaganda message with loudspeakers from Aug. 10, which the DPRK called a declaration of war. The resumption came as two South ... (More on P4)... (24)

EU Says "Not Concerned" about Bailout Implementation after Tsipras' Resignation

BRUSSELS - The European Union (EU) said Friday that it was not concerned about the implementation of Greece's third bailout program, a day after Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announced his resignation and called a snap election. "The commission respects the decision of Prime Minister Tsipras to go to the polls swiftly. For us, it was not a surprise,"

said Annika Breidhardt, coordinating spokesperson for Economic and Financial Affairs of the European Commission, or the executive body of the EU. Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has had "repeated phone calls" with Tsipras and Greek President Prokypis Pavlopoulos and, as such, "we expected it," Breidhardt told a press briefing. As



the Greek parliament has overwhelmingly voted in favor of a third bailout package for Greece, the spokesperson said reforms

have been decided and can be implemented immediately. "The Commission considers it important that ... (More on P4)... (25)

N. Korea's Kim Jong-Un puts Frontline Troops on War Footing

SEOUL - North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un ordered his frontline troops onto a war footing from Friday, as military tensions with South Korea soared following a rare exchange of artillery shells across their heavily fortified border. South Korean forces are already on maximum alert after the North's military issued an ultimatum on Thursday for Seoul to switch off loudspeakers blasting propaganda over the border within 48 hours or face concerted military action. An emergency meeting late Thursday of the North's powerful



Central Military Commission (CMC) - chaired by Kim Jong-Un - endorsed the ultimatum and ratified plans for "a retaliatory strike and counterattack on the whole length of the front". According to the official KCNA news agency, Kim ordered frontline,

combined units of the Korean People's Army (KPA) to "enter a wartime state" from Friday 5:00 pm (0830 GMT). The troops should be "fully battle ready to launch surprise operations" while the entire frontline should be placed in a "semi-... (More on P4)... (26)

Russia Says to Build Cross-Border Aerial Ropeway with China

MOSCOW - Russia and China will build an aerial ropeway across a border river to promote tourism and facilitate border crossing by individuals between the two countries, the Russian government press service said Friday. Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has signed an order authorizing relevant government departments to clinch with the Chinese side an intergovernmental agreement on the construction, operation and maintenance of the

750-meter-long ropeway across the Amur River in Russia's Far East (the Heilongjiang River in northeast China) on the common border, the government press service said. The project is to be started this year, while the commissioning of the ropeway is expected by the first quarter of 2018. The construction of the ropeway is expected to enhance the attractiveness of the Amur region as a tourist destination, attract investment for improvement of tourism infrastructure and promote

socio-economic development in the region. Besides, a 2,215-meter-long railway bridge, which also crosses the river, is slated for completion by the end of 2016. The bridge will link Tongjiang city in Heilongjiang Province with Nizhnelenskiy in Russia's Jewish Autonomous Oblast. With a designed annual shipment volume of 21 million metric tons, the bridge will contribute to the development of cross-border trade, transportation and tourism. (Xinhua)

Neighbour News

Pakistan Militar Launch Ground Offensive in N. Waziristan

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani troops, backed by air power, on Thursday launched ground operation against militants hiding in the mountains in North Waziristan tribal region, local media reported Friday. Taliban militants, who had fled urban areas in North Waziristan, moved to the inaccessible mountains to avoid air strikes. Fighter jets have killed nearly 200 militants in Shawalmountains this week in a final push to clear the whole region. On Thursday, air strikes killed 43 militants in Shawal and the nearby Gharlamai area, the army said.

"The Chief of the Army Staff General Raheel Sharif directs achievement of military objectives as soon as possible," army spokesman Maj Gen Asim Bajwa said. Pakistani forces launched the long-awaited major offensive in North Waziristan in June last year and have killed nearly 3,000 militants so far. The operation was launched against the outlawed Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan and several other armed groups, including the Haqqani Network and remnants of al-Qaeda who had been using the region as their main bases. (Xinhua)

Iran to Launch Massive Missile Maneuver Soon : IRGC Commander

TEHRAN - On Friday, Commander of the Aerospace Division of the IRGC Brigadier General Amirali Hajzadeh said that Iran has never suspended its ballistic missile programs, adding that a massive missile maneuver will be held in the near future to show Iran's military power to enemies. The senior military official further rejected claims that the IRGC has called off its ballistic missile program and drills or bargained over such issues, saying the defense development remains on the agenda of the forces, and that the IRGC's missile maneuvers

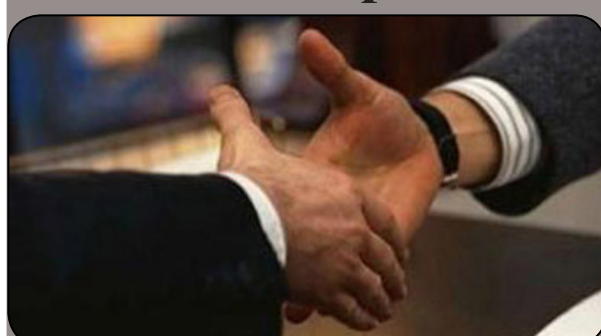
have continued and will continue as planned. The Islamic Republic will press ahead with its missile program and has clinched important victories in this field over the past two years, he stressed. During nuclear negotiations between Tehran and the P5+1 group of countries - the US, Britain, Russia, China, France and Germany - the six states exerted pressure on Iran over its military capabilities. Iran, however, said it would only discuss its nuclear program and that its missiles are solely used as a deterrent against any potential foreign aggression. (PressTV)

Chinese Vice Premier Meets IOC Chief Bach

BEIJING - Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong met on Friday with President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Thomas Bach in Beijing, the host city of the World Athletics Championships which will open here on Saturday. The Vice Premier extended gratitude to the IOC and its full membership for trust in China as the Chinese capital Beijing was awarded the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Kuala Lumpur in July. Liu said China would be strictly in compliance with IOC rules, in particular following the

guidance of the Olympic Agenda 2020 to present a fantastic, extraordinary and excellent Winter Olympics in the seven years to come. Bach congratulated Beijing on winning the right to host the Games, and expressed his confidence about the successful delivery of the Games. The 15th World Athletics Championships kicks off in the "Bird's Nest" National Stadium and runs through to Aug. 30. According to the organizers, about 1,900 athletes will compete here and most of 570,000 tickets were sold. (Xinhua)

Turkmenistan, Tajikistan Intend to Enhance Cooperation



ASHGABAT - Ashgabat hosted the talks between President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, who paid an official visit to this country, Turkmen Dowlathabarary news agency reported Aug. 20. Stressing the existing impressive potential for further intensification of fruitful Turkmenistan-Tajikistan cooperation, the sides noted the mutual readiness to ensure its effective implementation, the statement said. The views were exchanged to increase the bilateral partnership

in the context of implementing the previous agreements. The views on new opportunities were also exchanged to enhance the mutually beneficial relations. The trade and economic sphere, the fuel and energy complex, energy, transportation and others are among the priority areas of cooperation. Two Central Asian countries are involved in a number of major regional projects. The construction of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan railway was launched in 2014. China, Kyrgyzstan and Iran can join it. (Agencies)