

German Parliament Approves Plan to Join Combat Mission Against IS

BERLIN - The Bundestag, lower house of the German parliament, voted on Friday with a large majority to join the combat mission against the Islamic State (IS). German Chancellor Angela Merkel's ruling coalition used its majority in the Bundestag to pass the deployment of German armed forces against the IS under UN and EU collective security laws. The mandate was endorsed by 445 parliamentarians, with 146 others voting no and seven abstaining. The deployment outlined earlier this week by German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen will



involve six "Tornado" reconnaissance planes, a refueling aircraft, a frigate to help guard the French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle, as well as logistics and command personnel and satellite

links. In total, Germany plans to send up to 1,200 troops to support the international alliance in its anti-terror actions. The mission becomes Germany's largest overseas deployment of troops at

the moment. The German armed forces are expected to start deploying reconnaissance planes in the coming week to Turkey where a NATO military base is located. Berlin's decision for the anti-IS mission came after France requested aid in combating the IS following deadly attacks in Paris on Nov. 13 that claimed 130 lives. The IS claimed responsibility for the attacks. The German cabinet approved on Tuesday a mandate offering military assistance in the fight against the IS in Syria. The mandate would stay in effect until December 31, 2016. (Xinhua)

S. Arabia to Host Syrian Opposition Ahead of Peace Talks

BEIRUT - Saudi Arabia is hosting Syrian opposition groups and many of the main rebel factions next week in an effort to come up with a unified front ahead of peace talks with representatives of the government in Damascus, scheduled to begin early next year. The meeting is the first of its kind in the Sunni kingdom, which is a main backer of the Syrian opposition, underscoring how the internationally backed effort is the most serious yet

in attempts to end the nearly five-year civil war. The conflict has killed more than a quarter of a million people and triggered a refugee crisis of massive proportions. The rebel factions' participation points to the evolution in the position of many of them that long rejected any negotiations with Damascus as long as President Bashar Assad was in power. Now they are on board to attempt a process that the United States and other NATO members that the Russian defense industry and the military have entered a new phase of de-

Russian Military Enters new Phase of Development: Official

MOSCOW - The Russian airstrikes in Syria showed that the country's military has entered a new phase of development, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin said Friday. In an interview with NTV, Rogozin said the use of high-precision modern weapons by Russian forces in Syria, while showcasing the nation's respect for troops on the front, has proven to the United States and other NATO members that the Russian defense industry and the military have entered a new phase of de-



velopment. He said that Russia's defense purchase increased 50 percent from last year and about 96 percent of defense orders for this year will be fulfilled. He also said that the Russian defense industry is now capable of producing certain weaponry items that used to be imported. (Xinhua)

205,880 Foreign Nationals take Spanish Nationality in 2014

MADRID - A total of 205,880 foreign nationals obtained Spanish nationality in 2014 according to figures published on Friday by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE). The figure shows a decline of 8.8 percent on that of 2013 and it looks certain that the trend is going to continue in 2015 as the INE also confirmed that just 66,454 foreigners obtained Spanish nationality in the first half of this year. The majority

of those who have taken Spanish nationality were either Moroccan, Ecuadorian or Colombian, with 34,807, 32,757 and 25,115 respectively. They were followed by Bolivians, Peruvians, people from the Dominican Republic and Argentineans. However, while there was a high proportion of new Spanish nationals from Latin American, there were very few from Asia, with Pakistan ... (More on P4)... (18)

Turkish PM Urges Russia to De-Escalate Tensions

BAKU - Visiting Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu Friday urged Russia to de-escalate tensions between Turkey and Russia arising from the recent downing of a Russian warplane by the Turkish air force. Turkey has always attached importance to relations with Russia, Davutoglu said here, urging Russian President Vladimir Putin to resolve the dispute over the plane downing through diplomatic means. Turkey neither intends to escalate the situation regarding the

downing of the Russian warplane, nor would apologize to Russia for the incident, Davutoglu said at Azerbaijan's ADA University here, pointing out that Russia's accusations of Turkey stabbing Moscow in the back are groundless. "Turkey can also state that by violating its airspace, Russia stabbed Ankara in the chest," the PM said, adding that Turkey had confidence in solving this crisis through talks. "We didn't shot down the Russian plane over Syria's territory...The plane was shot



over Turkey's territory. Moreover, there were no insignia on it," Davutoglu said. On Nov. 24, NATO member Turkey shot down a Russian Su-24 Fencer jet for allegedly violating its airspace. One of the two Russian pilots aboard was killed by militants when parachuting from the burning jet, while the other was saved ... (More on P4)... (19)

India Among World's Fast Growing Economies: Modi

NEW DELHI - Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that India was still seen as one of the fastest growing economies in the world while the global economy was slowing down. "All this when the world economy is slowing down. Going by statistics, we can say that India is moving at a steady pace towards a shining future," Modi said at a media conclave in Delhi. However, he stressed that the states must work hand in hand with the central government to keep the pace of growth going. "States have the most important role in India's progress and for that the central government and states



must work together in improving the ease of doing business in India," Modi said. He also allayed fears over a possible stalemate in the parliament, given that opposition parties, mainly the Congress, have been disrupting proceedings, leading to complete washout of many sessions. "The parliament

Iran to Present Updated WAVE Version to UN: Official

TEHRAN - Iran plans to put forward an updated version of a resolution based on President Hassan Rouhani's proposal for the World Against Violence and Extremism (WAVE) to the United Nations General Assembly for ratification. Iranian Ambassador to the UN Gholam Ali Khoshrou made the announcement on Thursday at a meeting of the General Assembly in New York. The Islamic Republic, he said, has held preliminary talks with several countries to pave the way for adoption of the updated draft. In December 2013, the General Assembly overwhelmingly voted to approve President Rouhani's WAVE proposal, which called on all nations across the globe to denounce violence and extremism. The Iranian president had made the proposal in his address to the UN Disarmament Conference in New York on September 25, 2013. Based on the developments of the past two years, the draft will be presented by Iran to the Assembly in the near future, Khoshrou said. Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian envoy referred to a recent letter by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei to the young people in the West. (PressTV)

Syria Govt., Rebels Could Cooperate Vs IS before Assad Goes: Kerry

ATHENS - U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Friday it might be possible for the Syrian government and rebel forces to cooperate against Islamic State militants without Syrian President Bashar al-Assad having first left power. However, Kerry said it would be "exceedingly difficult" to achieve this if rebel forces that have been fighting against Assad for more than four years did not have some confidence that the Syrian leader would eventually go. Kerry was asked at a news conference during a visit to Greece whether Assad's departure was a precondition for Western-backed rebels to cooperate with government troops against IS, which has captured a swathe of Syria and Iraq and carried out a string of attacks in other countries. "With respect to the question of Assad and the timing, I think the answer is... it is not clear that he would have to 'go' if there was clarity with respect to what his future might or might not be," Kerry said. That clarification could come in many forms that ... (More on P4)... (20)

US to Help Greece Return to Economic Growth, Face Refugee Crisis: Kerry

ATHENS - The United States will help Greece return to economic growth and face the refugee crisis, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said during his one-day visit to Athens on Friday. The top U.S. diplomat praised the debt-laden country's efforts to address the six year financial crisis, the escalating refugee crisis this year, as well as a series of other challenges concerning the wider region. On the agenda of discussions between Kerry and Greece's ... (More on P4)... (22)

S. Sudan Conflict Forces over 4,000 People to Flee to DRC: UN Agency

GENEVA - Fighting between local factions and the South Sudanese army in the country's Western Equatoria region has forced over 4,000 people to seek refuge in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) Dungen Territory, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported Friday. So far this week, UNHCR teams have registered 3,464 new arrivals in DRC border areas, while 1,206 Congolese refugees, previously in South Sudan, have also fled to the same region because of violence. According to the UN agency, 90 percent of South Sudanese refugees are women and children. Reports show that some have walked for three days while carrying only their most vital possessions. UNHCR recorded that most men have stayed behind in South Sudan where fighting erupted between local groups known as the Arrow Boys and South Sudanese armed forces on Nov. 17 despite a peace agreement having been signed ... (More on P4)... (21)

Nieghbor News

PIA Flight Cleared for take off in China after Bomb Hoax

TIANJIN - A Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight made an emergency landing at China's Tianjin airport Friday, following a bomb hoax. After taking off from Beijing, flight PK-852 was en route Tokyo when it made the emergency landing in Tianjin amid a bomb scare, PIA spokesman Danial Gilani told Dawn.com. The information about the presence of the bomb originated in China, said

Gilani. The source of the bomb threat is being probed by Chinese authorities. At Tianjin, the plane was searched and passengers made to disembark, following which Chinese authorities gave clearance to the plane to take off for Tokyo. PIA flight 852 had departed from Islamabad Beijing, from where it was scheduled to reach Tokyo after a brief stopover in China. (Agencies)

Uzbek Businessmen Held Talks with New UK Envoy

BISHKEK - Uzbek entrepreneurs held a meeting with the newly appointed Ambassador of the UK in Uzbekistan, Christopher Allan, on the eve of their business trip to the UK to discuss interested issues in Tashkent on Thursday, reports the Association of International Business and Technologies (AM-BiT). Ambassador praised companies that are included in the program of the trip to the UK. He talked to the participants of the tour and answered their questions. The Association of International Business and Technologies or-

ganized information tours for Uzbek entrepreneurs to Belgium, the Netherlands, Kazakhstan, India, the U.S. during 2014-2015. This time, the Association with the support of the British Embassy is preparing a business trip of Uzbek entrepreneurs to the UK, which will take place from January 26 to February 2, 2016. The route of trip includes three cities - London, Cambridge and Edinburgh. Format of the tour will allow not only to see the sights of the country, but also to explore the best experience, ideas and approaches of the global companies. (AKIpress)

China Key to Brokering Global Climate Deal in Paris: Leinen

BRUSSELS - Against the backdrop of the 2015 United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference in Paris, European Parliament member Jo Leinen said China's participation is crucial in the effort to clinch a global climate deal. Leinen, chair of the Delegation for Relations with China in the European Parliament, made the remarks in an exclusive interview with Xinhua on Wednesday. Leinen said he hoped China will stick to its commitments expressed in the U.S.-China Joint Announcement on Climate Change issued in November 2014, use its influence "to enlarge the number of countries willing to be committed to a sustainable compromise," and "play a role of honest broker between the different

'camps' during the negotiations in Paris." China and the United States, the world's top two greenhouse gas emitters, made a joint announcement on climate change in November 2014 to curb their carbon emissions, followed by a U.S.-China Joint Presidential Statement on Climate Change that resulted from Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Washington in September 2015. "Chinese President Xi Jinping along with U.S. President Barack Obama have demonstrated their clear position by recalling and reaffirming the November 2014 Joint Announcement and the September 2015 Joint Presidential Statement on Climate Change," Leinen said. (Xinhua)

Preventing Iran Bomb more Important than Past Nuclear Activity: Kerry

ATHENS - U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Friday that preventing Iran developing a nuclear weapon in future was more important now than "ambiguities" about its past military efforts. Kerry said it would be premature to comment on a leaked report by the U.N. atomic watchdog that strongly suggested Tehran had a nuclear weapons program for years until 2003, since deliberations were not completed. But he told a news conference on a visit to Greece: "Nobody has had any doubts whatsoever about Iran's past military endeavors.

From the get-go, we have consistently said we know that Iran was pursuing a nuclear project." What really mattered now, Kerry said, was "making certain that none of whatever happened in the past can happen going forward into the future". That was why full implementation of the agreement reached on July 14 between Iran and six major powers on curbing its nuclear program was crucial, he added. Iran has always denied that its nuclear program had any military component or intention. (Reuters)