

Obama to Address Nation on Steps to Fight Terrorism

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Barack Obama is to address the nation Sunday night on steps to fight terrorism in the wake of the shooting massacre in southern California, the White House said Saturday.

Obama will provide an update on the ongoing investigation into the Wednesday tragic attack in San Bernardino, California, in which two shooters killed 14 people and wounded 21 others, the White House said in a statement. It said the steps



being taken by the U.S. government after the attack were aimed at fulfilling Obama's highest priority: keeping American people safe. "The president will also discuss the

broader threat of terrorism, including the nature of the threat, how it has evolved, and how we will defeat it," the statement said. Obama will reiterate his firm conviction that the Islamic State (IS) will be destroyed and that the United States "must draw upon our values -- our unwavering commitment to justice, equality and freedom -- to prevail over terrorist groups that use violence to advance a destructive ideology," it added. (Xinhua)

IS Claims Responsibility for Killing Governor in Yemen

ADEN - The Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for assassinating the governor of Yemen's Aden province and six of his bodyguards in a bomb attack in the country's temporary capital on Sunday, the militant group said in a statement posted on social media. The IS also threatened to launch more attacks against the Yemeni government in a brief statement posted on Twitter. "Major General Jafar Mohammed Saad, the newly appointed governor of Aden, was killed in a bomb attack targeted his motorcade while he was pass-

ing through the Tawahi district in Aden heading toward his workplace at around 8:30 a.m. (local time) Sunday," a local military official said on condition of anonymity. Six of his bodyguards were also killed by the explosion in the Tawahi district, where the governor's residential building is located, the military source said. The attack was the second in recent months that was launched against high-level officials of the exiled Yemeni government. In October, a hotel in Aden where Yemeni Prime ... (More on P4)...(20)

Israeli Premier Rejects Kerry's Warning of Binational State

JERUSALEM - Israel's prime minister insists his country is not heading toward becoming a binational state, rejecting a warning to that effect by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry. At his weekly Cabinet meeting Sunday, Benjamin Netanyahu says "Israel will not be a binational state, but in order to have peace, the other side needs to decide that it wants peace as well."

Kerry warned Saturday about the dangers of the possible collapse of the Palestinian Authority. He told a conference at the Brookings Institution in Washington that if that were to happen, Israel would have to assume full governance of the West Bank, potentially leading to a one-state solution that would endanger Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state. (AP)

Germany Warns Saudi Arabia over Islamist Funding

BERLIN - Germany's Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel urged Saudi Arabia on Sunday to stop supporting religious radicals amid growing concern among some lawmakers in Berlin about the funding of militant mosques by the world's biggest oil exporter. The unusual criticism of the Gulf state follows a report by Germany's foreign intelligence agency which suggested that Saudi foreign policy was becoming more "impulsive". The German government rebuked the BND agency for making such suggestions about Saudi Arabia,

an important business partner which is involved in international talks to find a political solution to the Syria crisis. "We need Saudi Arabia to solve the regional conflicts," Sigmar Gabriel, head of the Social Democrats (SPD) who share power with conservative Chancellor Angela Merkel, told the mass-circulation Bild am Sonntag. "But we must at the same time make clear that the time to look away is past. Wahhabi mosques are financed all over the world by Saudi Arabia. In Germany, many dangerous Islamists come from these communities," he



said. Saudi Arabia follows the ultra-conservative Wahhabi form of Islam and is seen by some outsiders as a cause of the international jihadist threat. It has cracked down on jihadists at home and cut militant finance streams but some groups, including Islamic State (IS) and al Qaeda, follow an extreme interpretation of the Salafi branch of Islam of which Wahhabism was ... (More on P4)...(21)

Hollande, Cameron Pledge Reinforced Cooperation to Defeat IS

PARIS - Over a phone conversation, French President Francois Hollande and British Prime Minister David Cameron pledged to further cement cooperation to fight Islamic State (IS) in Syria, the French presidency said in a press release. According to the statement, they also vowed to further improve intelligence services between both countries. On Thursday, Britain joined France and the United States in their military offensive against IS



targets in Syria in response to French president's call on European partners to unite efforts to tackle terrorism. Hollande's plea for strong coalition to combat IS came after the terrorist group claimed responsibility of deadly attacks which struck the French capital last month and killed 130 people. (Xinhua)

France's Far-Right Expected to Gain in Regional Election

PARIS - Millions of French citizens began voting on Sunday to pick their representatives in regional councils across the country in a run-off likely to boost the chance of far-right Front National (FN) to win 2017 presidential election.

According to pollsters, the FN may come out first in six out of 12 regions, an unprecedented gain for the anti-immigrant party who is likely to benefit for rising security woes and immigrant crisis. A survey by Ipsos pollster showed on Thursday that the eurosceptic far-rightists were seen leading the first round with 30 percent of the votes. FN leader Marine Le Pen



was expected to win control of France's northernmost area, Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie region, the country's third biggest one while her niece Marion Marechal-Le Pen, was possibly coming first too in the southeastern Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region. Hopes of former president Nicolas Sarkozy to record

large victory for his Republicans party may be smashed as they are neck and neck with the far-rightists in opinion polls in the first round of regional election. The governing Socialist Party, already licking their wounds following heavy losses in last year's local and European elections, ... (More on P4)...(22)

Britain's Biggest Santa Dash Turns Liverpool into a Sea of Red

LONDON - Britain's biggest Santa dash took to the streets of Liverpool Sunday as thousands of men, women and children braved a rain storm wearing traditional Santa costumes. Organisers are now nervously waiting to learn if the coveted Santaz title for the world's biggest Santa dash will be retained by the seaport city. The world record came to Liverpool last year after 8,846 Santas took the title from previous holder Las Vegas, which staged this year's Santa

event on Saturday. Santa red is the traditional color worn by the bringer of gifts on December 25, and it's also the color of Liverpool FC. Supporters of city premiership rivals Everton were allowed to wear blue Santa costumes for the event. It was the 12th annual Medicash Santa Dash in Liverpool and the biggest, starting a five kilometer route at the waterfront Pier Head before heading on a route through downtown streets. The rain failed to ... (More on P4)...(23)

London Tube Stabbings a 'Terrorist Incident': Police



LONDON - A man was being held in custody Sunday after three people were stabbed at a London Underground train station in an attack police were treating as a "terrorist incident". One witness shouted "You're no Muslim" at the suspect as he was pinned down by officers at a suburban police station, amateur video footage showed, while a pool of blood was seen in the ticket hall.

Sky News reported that witnesses had said the lone suspect spoke of Syria and had "apparently shouted 'this is for Syria,'" although it did not quote anyone. Police could not confirm the report when contacted by AFP and it is not evident from video footage circulating online. Saturday's attack came at the end of a week in which the British parliament voted to extend air strikes on the Islamic State group (IS) from Iraq into Syria. The stabbings also come less than a month after the November 13 jihadist rampage in Paris, claimed by IS, which killed 130 people. Police said one man sustained serious knife injuries in the east London attack, but they were not thought to be life-threatening, while two others sustained minor injuries. (AFP)

Poland Considers Asking for Access to NATO Nuclear Weapons

WARSAW - A Polish official says that the Defense Ministry is considering asking for access to nuclear weapons through a NATO program which involves non-nuclear states borrowing them from the United States. Tomasz Szatkowski, the deputy defense minister, said that the ministry is currently discussing whether to ask for access to NATO's so-called "nuclear sharing" program to strengthen the country's ability to defend itself. Polish media say Szatkowski's comments Saturday to the private broadcaster Polsat mark the first time a Polish official has said the country wants to join the program. The 28-member NATO has three nuclear powers, the U.S., France and Britain, but only the U.S. has provided weapons to allies for nuclear sharing. Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey have hosted nuclear weapons as part of the program. (AP)

Armenians Vote in Referendum on Divisive Constitutional Reforms

YEREVAN - Armenians on Sunday began voting in a referendum on proposed constitutional reforms which the opposition says are aimed at keeping long-serving President Serzh Sarkisian in power. If endorsed, the constitutional change initiated by pro-Russian leader Sarkisian will transform the ex-Soviet country's system of government to one led by a prime minister, not a president. Under the proposal, there would still be a president in a ceremonial role, elected by parliament and serving for a term of seven years instead of the current five. The opposition alleges ... (More on P4)...(24)

Nieghbor News

China is a Dependable Partner: Nigeria

LAGOS - Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari has said China is a strategic and dependable partner in his administration's determination to change the direction and content of governance in the country. In a statement made available to Xinhua in Lagos, Nigeria's economic hub on Saturday, the Nigerian leader said his administration, since its inauguration in May 2015, had embarked on the task of refocusing governance on the real needs of the vast majority of Nigerians. He expressed the confidence that China will always stand shoulder to shoulder with Nigeria in its pursuit of prosperity and its quest

to fulfill people's aspirations. Chinese President Xi Jinping and dozens of his counterparts from African countries have wrapped up the two-day Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) held in Johannesburg, South Africa. Xi announced on Saturday that he and African leaders have reached consensus on upgrading China-Africa relations to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership. Nigerian president expressed the hope that the Summit would engender the right platform to engage Africa in all fields of development such as infrastructure, skills development, ca ... (More on P4)...(25)

Pakistan Proposes 8 New Sites for UNESCO's World Heritage List

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan will push for inclusion of eight more of its sites in the list of UNESCO's world heritage sites. "These sites are of national and cultural universal importance, and will attract tourists from across borders - that will help Pakistan generate income and improve its soft image," Dawn online quoted ministry of heritage joint secretary Mirza Mashood Ahmed as saying on Saturday. The eight new sites recommended by experts were Central Karakoram National Park, Juniper Forest in Ziarat, Deosai National Park, Karez System, the ancient city of Bhambhore in Sindh, Hingol National Park, Kallar Kahar's Salt Range

and Nagar Parkar in Sindh. Pakistan has been pushing UNESCO for over a decade to include 18 sites of universal significance to its list. The recommendations were rejected because the proposed sites did not meet UNESCO's criteria for world heritage sites. "The recommended sites and monuments were not maintained by the state and were missing public facilities and infrastructure such as roads, museums and information centres," archaeologist Ayesha Pamela Rogers said. She said another significant reason for failure was the lack of resources which were needed to prepare impressive dossier for the proposed sites. (Agencies)

Uzbekistan Assures Cooperation in Energy, Agriculture

ISLAMABAD - Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Furkat A Sidikov, has assured cooperation with Pakistan in various fields, especially energy and agriculture. Addressing a seminar on 23rd anniversary of the adoption of Constitution of Uzbekistan, he said Uzbekistan was promoting bilateral cooperation with Pakistan from last several years. The seminar was jointly organised by Preston University, Society of Civilisations Pakistan and Embassy of Republic of Uzbekistan. The Uzbekistan's ambassador urged the need to enhance close cooperation between Pakistan and Uzbekistan for trade, energy and cultural exchanges between the two countries. He said,

"We have good brotherly ties with Pakistan, and Pakistan always gave respect to Uzbek nationals." He said the direct flight from Lahore to Tashkent would be operational from March next year, which would enhance tourism between the said countries. Two scholars of M Phil, and PhD International Relations, Tariq Riaz Minhas and Tasleem Malik presented research papers on the occasion regarding Uzbekistan. A documentary on the development, tradition and culture was also shown on the occasion. The Uzbek ambassador presented shields to the keynote speakers including Prof Dr Zulfiqar Ali Qureshi and Prof Amanullah Memon of Preston University. (Agencies)

Unauthorized Military Intervention Spreads Terrorism: Larijani

TEHRAN - Iran's Parliament (Majlis) Speaker Ali Larijani says unauthorized military intervention in the Middle East conflicts will only help spread terrorism. "The fight against terrorism does not require the deployment of troops which is usually done to achieve other goals. Such deployment, per se, will contribute to the spread of terrorism," Larijani said during an open session of Majlis on Sunday. The Iranian Majlis speaker also warned that the deployment of

Turkish forces near the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, which is under the control of Daesh Takfiri terrorists, would only lead to more insecurity and crisis across the region. He said Turkey's military intervention in Iraq, which comes despite the Iraqi government's objection, pursues no other goal but to justify terrorist activities in Mosul. Larijani stated that some countries see regional chaos as a means to fulfill their plans but such a policy would backfire. (PressTV)