

EU Border Force Plan Faces Resistance from Governments

BRUSSELS - A proposal to give the EU's executive the power to send forces unbidden into member states to defend the common European frontier will face resistance from some countries when it is published this week. The European Commission wants to be able to deploy personnel from a new European Border and Coastguard Agency without, as currently required, the consent of the state concerned, EU officials told Reuters in early December, reflecting frustration with Greek reluctance to seek help with migrants. European Un-



ion officials call it a largely theoretical "nuclear option" and stress that any infringement of national

sovereignty would be balanced by the power of a majority of member states to block Commis-

sion intervention - similar to checks agreed during the euro debt crisis. The Commission will set out

the plan on Tuesday to re-inforce its Frontex agency with up to six times more staff, EU officials said, fol-

lowing a commitment to an EU border guard in September by President Jean-Claude Juncker. "We think the current situation justifies a certain ambition," the Commission's chief spokesman said on Friday, expressing confidence about backing from member states. Failure to strengthen the external borders, senior officials argue, will see more states reimpose frontier controls inside the bloc, wrecking its cherished free movement area, and foster the rise of anti-EU nationalists like France's National Front. (More on P4)...(18)

Britain's Cameron to Drop Demand in EU Vote Talks

LONDON - British Prime Minister David Cameron is prepared to drop a key demand in order to strike a deal on renegotiating Britain's membership of the European Union, several newspapers reported Sunday. London had sought to limit access to state benefits for migrants from within the EU, but that demand could be set aside if other ways of limiting migration were agreed instead, the Telegraph, Times and Independent reported, citing government sources. The

idea, which would have forced EU migrants to wait four years before accessing state benefits in Britain, had been a key point in Cameron's renegotiation of Britain's membership of the 28-member bloc, ahead of a referendum on whether the country should remain in the EU due by the end of 2017. Dropping the demand would allow for a referendum to be held as soon as July 2016, the Independent reported. EU leaders are due to discuss reforms to Britain's



membership in a summit in Brussels this week. "Levels of migration from the EU to the UK are a major concern for the Brit-

ish people... What matters most is to fix the problems, not the precise form of the arrangements," ... (More on P4)...(19)

French Regional Election Run-Off Tests Far-Right Strength

PARIS - The French people voted on Sunday in runoffs for regional elections that will show whether the far-right National Front (FN) can turn popularity into power. Marine Le Pen's party achieved a breakthrough last week by taking the lead in the first round of the vote, drawing strength from fears over Europe's refugee crisis and the Islamic State militant attacks that killed 130 people in Paris a month ago. "For me, she is going to win. Maybe it

will make all those politicians stop and think," said voter Evelynne Risselin in Le Pen's electoral home base Henin-Beaumont in northern France. But the anti-immigrant, anti-European Union FN was by no means certain to take any of the 13 regions. The outcome will depend largely on what left-wing voters will do after the ruling Socialist party withdrew from the race in the two regions where the FN was ... (More on P4)...(20)

Nieghbor News

Shawal Almost Cleared of Terrorists: Pak Army

ISLAMABAD - Indicating that Zarb-i-Azb could be nearing completion, the military on Saturday said that it had cleared Shawal Valley of terrorists except for a pocket to its north-west. "Shawal itself has been cleared. Action is, however, continuing in a pocket that is north-west of the valley," Pakistani military spokesman Lt Gen Asim Bajwa told Dawn after releasing statistics about the actions the armed forces had taken against terrorism over the past 18 months. He highlighted the progress achieved in the tasks assigned to the military since the National Action Plan (NAP)

was launched. The statistics were released in the run-up to the first anniversary of the Army Public School tragedy next week. The ISPR described the figures as an 'update on Zarb-i-Azb', but also included elements like military courts formed after introduction of NAP in the aftermath of the Dec 16 APS attack in which 147 people, including 122 schoolchildren, were killed. "Support of the entire nation and resolve expressed against terrorism after APS attack has been the bedrock of the operation," Gen Bajwa said. (Agencies)

Iran Keen on Russia's Agricultural Market

TEHRAN - Iran has urged Russia for the ease of customs duty for its agricultural exports, head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce Mohsen Jalalpour told Tasnim news agency. Iran's President Hassan Rouhani has held phone talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin about the "enhancement and facilitation of the export of Iranian agricultural and food products to Russia," Jalalpour was quoted as saying. Rouhani has urged Russia to "reconsider" the process of importing ag-

ricultural and food products from Iran on which the country has imposed heavy customs duty, he added. "Iran has now a golden opportunity to increase the export of its agricultural products to Russia to replace Turkey," he said. On Nov. 26, the Russian government announced that it had tightened control over imports of farm products from Turkey as ties between the two countries plummeted after the downing of a Russian warplane by Turkey near Syrian border. (Xinhua)

Gambia President Declares Country an 'Islamic State'

BANJUL - President Yahya Jammeh has declared the Gambia "an Islamic state", but stressed that the rights of the Christian minority in the small west African country would be respected and that women would not be held to a dress code. The announcement came as the president addressed supporters in the coastal town of Brufut on Thursday, and the comments were later broadcast on state television and repeated on his website. "Gambia's destiny is in the hands of the Al-

mighty Allah. As from today, Gambia is an Islamic state. We will be an Islamic state that will respect the rights of the citizens," he was quoted as saying on the presidential website. In television footage of the address on GRTV, seen by AFP on Saturday, the president did not go into detail about what the change would mean for the country, but he reassured Christians and followers of other faiths they would be able to worship freely. "Christians will be ... (More on P4)...(21)

Indian PM Lauds Historic Climate Accord in Paris

NEW DELHI - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday lauded the historic climate accord in Paris, saying that "climate justice has won". "Outcome of Paris agreement has no winners or losers. Climate justice has won & we are all working towards a greener future," Modi tweeted. The deliberations at the climate summit and the agreement reached "demonstrates the collective wisdom" of world leaders to mitigate climate change, he added. The climate



agreement, which was adopted by 195 nations in Paris Saturday, aims at limiting the rise in global temperatures to less than two degrees Celsius.

The pact is the first to commit all countries to cut carbon emissions, but it is partly legally binding and partly voluntary. The prime minister had at-

tended the summit for the initial two days, during which India-mooted International Solar Alliance was launched. (Xinhua)

Russian Warship Fires Warning Shots to Avoid Collision with Turkish Fishing Boat

MOSCOW - A Russian warship fired warning shots to avert a collision with a Turkish fishing boat in the Aegean Sea on Sunday, the Russian Defense Ministry said. "The crew of the Russian frigate Smeltlivy, located 22 kilometers from the Greek island of Lemnos in the northern part of the Aegean Sea, has used firearms to avert a collision with a Turkish fishing boat," the ministry said, adding that a military attaché at the Turkish Embassy in Moscow has been summoned to the ministry. The RIA Novosti news agency said that the Turkish vessel was detected



about one kilometers away from the anchored Russian warship, and the crew was forced to fire warning shots when the distance between the two ships were about 600

meters. The Turkish fishing boat sharply changed its course and passed by about 540 meters away from the vessel after the warning, according to the report. (Xinhua)

Saudi-Led Air Strikes Kill 19 Yemeni Civilians: Residents

DUBAI - Saudi-led air strikes killed 19 Yemeni civilians in bombings of homes and a market on Sunday, residents said, a day before a U.N.-brokered ceasefire is set to start ahead of peace talks to end eight months of war. Villagers in al-Hajawara in northern Hajjah province said multiple air bombings killed 12 people inside their homes and wounded 30 others. Residents in the southern district of Qabatiya said 7 civilians were killed in an attack on a market. A Saudi military spokesman could not be immediately reached for comment.

Yemen's Iran-allied Houthi group is fighting a civil war against loyalists of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, whose embattled government has been backed by air strikes and ground forces from a mainly Gulf Arab coalition led by Saudi Arabia. Half of the nearly 6,000 people killed in the fighting and air strikes are civilians, including 637 children, according to the United Nations. A seven-day ceasefire is due to start on Monday, the day before planned U.N.-sponsored peace talks in Switzerland, senior officials on both sides of the civil war said.

Previous peace talks in June failed and a ceasefire the next month quickly unraveled, but months of stalemate in ground combat and reports of increased pressure by Gulf Arabs' Western allies to end the war may encourage a political settlement. (Reuters)

12 IS Militants Killed in Air Strike in Western Iraq

BAGHDAD - An air strike by U.S.-led coalition aircraft targeting a position of the terrorist Islamic State (IS) group in Iraq's western province of Anbar on Sunday killed 12 IS militants, a security source said. The international warplanes bombarded a suspected car bomb making factory in the IS-held town of Heet, some 160 km west of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, destroying the target and leaving at least 12 IS militants killed, the source told Xinhua, citing intelligence report. Iraqi security forces and allied paramilitary units, known as Hashd Shaabi, have been fighting for months to retake control of key cities and towns in Iraq's largest province from IS militants, who have seized most of Anbar and tried to advance toward Baghdad. In Salahudin province, two policemen were killed in a clash with IS militants during a security operation in Himreen mountainous area aimed to rescue 10 family members who escaped the IS-held town of ... (More on P4)...(22)

Singapore Welcomes Paris Climate Change Agreement

SINGAPORE - Singapore welcomes the historic climate change agreement, which was adopted Saturday in Paris, Teo Chee Hean, deputy prime minister of Singapore said Sunday. "It is a fair and comprehensive agreement, where all parties will take action to tackle this key issue of climate change that affects the future of the global community," Teo said in a statement. Teo said Singapore will work towards the pledge to reduce the emissions intensity by 36 percent from 2005 levels by 2030, and to stabilise the country's emissions ... (More on P4)...(24)

Syria Opposition Deal under Fire Ahead of US-Russia Meet

BEIRUT - Syria's Al-Qaeda affiliate rejected the outcome of an opposition summit that agreed to negotiate with President Bashar al-Assad, and Russia denounced the gathering in Saudi Arabia as unrepresentative. The latest developments come with US Secretary of State John Kerry due in Moscow Tuesday in a new bid to push for a peace plan to end Syria's nearly five-year conflict. In a sign of the tough task ahead, at least

16 people were killed in the Syrian city of Homs Saturday in an attack claimed by the Islamic State group (IS). The Moscow meeting would build on the momentum of Vienna talks last month and an unprecedented two-day gathering this week in Riyadh among Syria's main political and armed opposition groups. Those talks yielded an agreement to negotiate with Assad's regime, but also insisted that the ... (More on P4)...(23)

New Phase Starting in Development of Turkmenistan's Galkynysh Field

MARY - A foundation was laid on Sunday for the third phase of development of Turkmenistan's Galkynysh gas field, which is the second largest gas field in the world after Iran's South Pars. Trend's special correspondent reported from Turkmenistan that Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani, Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif

and India's Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari took part in the groundbreaking ceremony. The reserves of Galkynysh stand at 21.2 trillion cubic meters. The field includes four deposits in the east of Turkmenistan: Yeloten, Osman, Yashlar and Minara. Turkmenistan possesses estimated gas reserves of 50.34 trillion cubic meters, according to recent geological ex ... (More on P4)...(26)

Uzbekistan Holds the 4th Republican Phase of the National Forum of NGOs

TASHKENT - The 4th Republican phase of the National Forum of NGOs of Uzbekistan was held at the Youth Palace of Tashkent city on December 10-11. The goal of the event is - increasing of active participation of NGOs in solving urgent development problems of the country, strengthening of social partnership of NGOs with government bodies and local gov-

ernance, strengthening the role of the National Association of Nongovernmental Non-profit Organizations of Uzbekistan in consolidating the efforts of civil society organizations. The forum worked out a comprehensive program for strengthening the social partnership between government agencies and NGOs, which is aimed at increasing the ... (More on P4)...(27)