

# EU Leaders Vow to Implement Existing Agreements on Migration

BRUSSELS - European Union (EU) leaders agreed early Friday to implement existing agreements concerning the ongoing migration crisis hitting Europe, especially cooperation with Turkey in handling the crisis. "The full and speedy implementation of the EU-Turkey Action Plan remains a priority, in order to stem migration flows and to tackle traffickers and smugglers networks," the leaders concluded during a two-day summit. The action plan is a document signed in Nov. 2014 between Turkey and the EU, in which Turkey agrees to protect EU borders from the flood of refugees in exchange for three billion U.S. dollars and a new look at its EU membership



bid. European Council President Donald Tusk said in a joint press conference with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker that the EU was to organize a special meeting with Turkey at the beginning of March. The EU leaders welcomed NATO's support in monitoring illegal crossings on the Aegean sea and called on all NATO members to support this measure actively. The meeting also called for unity of all EU institutions and member states. "We must look for a synthesis of different approaches. There is no good alternative to a comprehensive European plan," Tusk said. (Xinhua)

## Syrian Kurdish Militia Used U.S. Weapons on Civilians: Erdogan

ISTANBUL - Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said U.S.-supplied weapons had been used against civilians by a Syrian Kurdish militia group that Ankara blames for a deadly suicide bombing, and said he would talk to President Barack Obama about it later on Friday. U.S. support for the Syrian Kurdish PYD, which Washington considers a useful ally in the fight against Islamic State, has enraged Turkey and risks driving a wedge between the NATO allies. Turkey

sees the group as a terrorist organization linked to Kurdish militants waging an insurgency on its own soil. Erdogan and the Turkish government have said the PYD's armed wing, the YPG, was responsible for a suicide car bomb attack in the administrative heart of the capital, Ankara, on Wednesday which killed 28 people, most of them soldiers. Erdogan said he was saddened by the West's refusal to call the PYD and YPG a terrorist



group and would explain to Obama by phone how weapons provided by the United States had aided them. "I will tell him, look

at how and where those weapons you provided were fired," he told reporters in Istanbul. "Months ... (More on P4)...(24)

## THAAD Deployment in S. Korea to Raise Regional Tension: Russian Expert

MOSCOW - The deployment of an advanced U.S. missile system in South Korea in the wake of the launch of a satellite by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) earlier this month could raise tension in the region, a Russian expert warned Thursday. The deployment of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) "will lead to a dangerous increase in tension between the United States and a number of Northeast Asian nations," Yevgeni

Kim told Xinhua in an interview. Kim, a senior researcher at the Center for Korean Studies of Russian Academy of Sciences, said the move is aimed at Russia and China, rather than at the DPRK as it claimed. Washington and Seoul started earlier this month to negotiate the deployment of THAAD to South Korea in response to the launch of a satellite by the DPRK. The launch, which took place about a month after Pyongyang claimed ... (More on P4)...(25)

## Refugee Policies in Europe to Create "Unspeakable Scenes": Refugee Expert

VIENNA - The current refugee policies in Europe will lead to "unspeakable scenes" in the Aegean, an Austrian refugee expert said, referring to the massive refugees who were denied deep entry into Europe and were stranded in Greece. Omissions in the past are responsible for the current refugee situation in Europe, Herbert Langthaler, a refugee expert from nongovernmental organization (NGO) Asylkoordination Austria, said in a recent interview with Xinhua. The European Union (EU) would have

had the opportunity to improve the care situation around the crisis, in which he said many refugees were stopped at the Slovenian-Austrian border and were deported through Slovenia and Croatia. The European Convention on Human Rights prohibits such deportations, said Langthaler, charging "this is a violation of law." Consequently the refugees will concentrate in Greece, which faces a debt crisis itself, said Langthaler, worrying about where the refugees should go after ... (More on P4)...(26)

## Turkey-Israel Talks on Ending Gaza Blockade Made Progress: Hamas

GAZA - Talks between Turkey and Israel over ending around nine years of Israeli blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip have made progress, a senior Islamic Hamas movement official said Friday. Ismail Haneya, Hamas deputy chief told prayers at one of Gaza city's mosques that the Turkish talks with Israel aim at speeding up the construction plan of Gaza and the file of Gaza seaport.

Haneya didn't give more details on the issue. However, a senior Turkish official had announced two days ago that talks on normalizing ties between his country and Israel, that has been going on for a long time, reached its final stage. Israel Public Radio reported that according to the Turkish official, the two countries are very close to sign on an agreement on all issues the two sides have been negotiating and

discussing. Turkey had conditioned an end of the Israeli blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip for the normalization of political and economic ties with Israel. The blockade was imposed in 2007, following Hamas violent takeover of the coastal enclave. Meanwhile, Haneya said his movement's armed wing, al-Qassam Brigades, discovered listening devices and cameras underground to unveil the armed

resistance tunnels that militants dig underneath Gaza. "Gaza has now a deterrence power for any upcoming confrontation with Israel," Haneya said, adding that "there is no imminent war (with Israel) on Gaza in the horizon." He said the Israeli occupation is carrying out defensive maneuver "and this is a clear evidence that they (Israelis) are not preparing to wage a war on the Gaza Strip soon." (Xinhua)

## Ruling Socialist Party under Fire after Unveiling French Labor Reform

PARIS - Critics from the right and even the ruling Socialist Party have condemned the proposals of French President Francois Hollande's cabinet to reform the labor code. During a government meeting scheduled for March 9, Labor Minister Myriam El Khomri will present a draft bill to renegotiate working hours, holidays and overtime pay while maintaining the French 35-hour working week. Speaking to the business daily Les Echos, El

Khomri said: "We want the country to progress through social dialogue while better guaranteeing rights and making companies more competitive." "The debate is going to be fierce because there is a change of philosophy," she added. The proposed reforms drew a deluge of criticism even from the ruling Socialist Party head Jean-Christophe Cambadélis who said he could not vote for the bill in its current form. "Everything in this bill on lay-

offs for economic reasons is open for debate and will be debated," Cambadélis told the news channel BFMTV. Socialist lawmaker Yann Galut said the proposals for the reform of labor were unacceptable, and pledged a parliamentary battle to water down the government's efforts. On the right camp, former French prime minister Francois Fillon cast doubt over "the government's democratic legitimacy" to reform the labor code. (Xinhua)

## U.S. Warplanes Bomb IS Militants in Libya, over 40 Dead

TRIPOLI - U.S. warplanes on Friday bombed positions of Islamic State (IS) affiliates in the Libyan city of Sabratha, killing more than 40 extremists, a municipal official said. The attack left six others injured, Mayor of Sabratha Hassan Thwadi said in statements. The airstrike targeted Noureddine Chouchane, a senior Tunisian militant linked to two deadly attacks last year in Tunisia, media reports said. Sabratha is a Libyan coastal city located near the Tunisian border. Western officials claim the city is a haven of IS affiliated militants. The IS in Libya dominates the city of Sirte, nearly 450 km east of the capital Tripoli, as well as the eastern city of Derna. Libya has been suffering a security vacuum and a state of anarchy since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's administration in 2011. The poor security conditions in the north African country enabled militants to spread and gain more power on ground. (Xinhua)

## Saudi Arabia Stops Military Assistance to Lebanon

RIYADH - Saudi Arabia announced on Friday that it will stop helping the Lebanese army and security forces because of the Lebanese political stances, Saudi Press Agency reported. Saudi Arabia has decided to protect its own interests, through stopping the military assistance worth three billion U.S. dollars to the Lebanese army and the unpaid one billion U.S. dollars to the security forces, the report said. A Saudi government official said that despite of the decision, the country will continue to stand with Lebanese nationals as such stances don't represent them. Lebanon hasn't condemned the attacks on the Saudi diplomatic missions in Tehran and Mashhad last month. (Xinhua)

## UN Aid Official Decries Lack of Attention Given to Yemen War

GENEVA - The U.N. humanitarian agency's coordinator for Yemen has decried the lack of attention that has been given to the war in the Arab world's poorest country. Jamie McGoldrick says "civilians are the losers" and that the fighting in Yemen is being "overlooked" amid greater attention on Syria's war. His remarks came on Friday as he detailed a \$1.8 billion funding appeal for Yemen this year by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. He says most of that money would go toward food assistance for nearly 7.6 million people in Yemen. The U.N. estimates at least 6,000 people have died in a nearly year-long conflict pitting the government, backed by a Saudi-led coalition, against Shiite rebels allied with an ex-president. (AP)

## US Warplanes Strike IS Training Camp in Libya

WASHINGTON - American warplanes struck an Islamic State training camp in Libya near the Tunisian border Friday, and a Tunisian described as a key extremist operative probably was killed, the Pentagon announced. In Libya, local officials estimated that more than 40 people were killed with more wounded, some critically. In a

written statement, Pentagon press secretary Peter Cook said the training camp was near the Libyan town of Sabratha and that the targeted extremist was Noureddine Chouchane, a Tunisian national whom Cook called "an ISIL senior facilitator in Libya associated with the training camp." Another U.S. official ... (More on P4)...(27)

## Sri Lanka's Opposition Strongly Opposes New Deal with India

COLOMBO - Sri Lanka's opposition on Friday said that it has decided to strongly oppose a proposed Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement (ECTA) with India. A statement by the opposition, which includes some members of the political party headed by President Maithripala Sirisena, said that an economic and technical pact with India will make sense if Sri Lanka can obtain from In-

dia some technical or economic input which Sri Lanka cannot provide for itself, such as in the automotive, chemical or pharmaceutical industries. However the opposition says the present government seems to be intent on handing over to the Indians what can easily be done by locals. The opposition is of the view that before any new agreement is entered ... (More on P4)...(28)

## Nieghbor News

### EU Ruling Boosts Bank Mellat Against UK



TEHRAN - Speculations are rising that a ruling by a top European Union court that Iran's Bank Mellat has been mistakenly sanctioned has paved the way for the bank to seek hefty damages not only from the British government but also from the EU. "Bank Mellat has already successfully challenged the sanctions placed upon it by the UK Treasury, and is awaiting a decision on a \$4 billion (£2.8 billion) damages claim before the English court," Sarosh Zaiwalla, a lawyer who represents Bank Mellat in London has been quoted as saying by the Guardian.

The Court of Justice of the European Union on Thursday ruled that the assets of the bank had been unfairly frozen from 2010, citing an "error of law". The court said that it rejected the reasoning linking the bank to Iran's nuclear and missile programs. The EU court's ruling in favor of Bank Mellat was the first ruling in favor of an Iranian entity since international sanctions were lifted last month as part of a nuclear deal with the P5+1. The Guardian said that the case may encourage other Iranian firms to lodge similar compensation claims. (PressTV)

### Sharif, Modi Likely to Meet in Washington Next Month

WASHINGTON - The United States, Pakistan and India are quietly exploring the possibility of a meeting between Indian and Pakistani prime ministers in the US capital next month, diplomatic sources told Dawn. Prime Ministers Nawaz Sharif and Narendra Modi have both accepted US President Barack Obama's invitation to attend a nuclear summit he is hosting in Washington on March 31 and April 1. "The chances are strong, very strong," said a senior official who did not want to be identified. "But you know the history of India-Pakistan talks, you cannot be certain about an event until

it has happened," the official added. It will be the first time that both Indian and Pakistani premiers will be attending the nuclear security summit, which President Obama initiated in 2010. The summit has a specific aim, preventing terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons and it brings leaders from across the world to discuss various proposals for attaining this goal. The first summit was held in Washington on April 12-13, 2010. The second summit in Seoul, South Korea in 2012 and the third was held in The Hague in 2014. (Agencies)

### WB and DFID Co-Fund Tajikistan PFM Reform Programme

DUSHANBE - The World Bank (WB) is to work with Tajikistan towards improvements in its public financial management through a \$20m project, part funded by the UK. The bank's International Development Association will provide \$10m, complemented by \$9.8m from the UK's Department for International Development, in order to enhance the effectiveness, control and accountability of

public spending in the Central Asian country. According to the bank, the project will strengthen budget planning and execution, treasury accounting and financial reporting across government entities through the modernisation of the automated financial management system and the strengthening of accounting and reporting capabilities in state-owned enterprises. (Agencies)

### China Responds to Australia, New Zealand Officials' Comments on SCS

BEIJING - The Chinese Foreign Ministry on Friday asked Australia and New Zealand not to interfere in the South China Sea (SCS) issue as they are not directly involved. Spokesman Hong Lei was responding to reports that officials of Australia and New Zealand on Friday urged China to refrain from stoking tensions in the South China Sea. Hong said the islands in the South China Sea have been China's terri-

tory since ancient times, and China has the right to maintain its territory, sovereignty and maritime interests. He noted that deploying national defense facilities on its own territory is China's right granted by international law. What China has done has nothing to do with militarization, Hong said, urging Australia and New Zealand not to ignore the facts while raising some suggestions which are not constructive. (Xinhua)