

UN Warns of Nuclear Material Falling into Terrorist Hands

VIENNA - The head of the U.N. nuclear agency warned Monday of the dangers of nuclear material falling into the hands of terrorists and urged world nations to apply an agreement meant to minimize such dangers.

Two-thirds of the 89 countries agreeing with the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material must ratify it for it to enter into force. Yukiya Amano of the International Atomic Energy Agency says ratification by 11 more nations is needed.

Its application would "reduce the likelihood of terrorists being able to detonate a ... 'dirty bomb,'" which can spread radioactivity over a wide area and also reduce the risk of an attack on a nuclear power plant, said Amano.

He noted that nearly 2,800 incidents of radioactive material ... (More on P4)...(16)



Hundreds of Migrants Cut Through Hungary's Border Fence over Past Days

MORAHALOM - Police detained 501 migrants over the weekend who cut their way through Hungary's steel border fence, the highest number since Hungary sealed off its southern borders in mid-October.

Prime Minister Viktor Orban has boosted his public support with a tough stance on migration. His right-wing government has put up a fence on the

borders with Serbia and Croatia to keep out the mostly Middle Eastern migrants.

The fence diverted the flow of migrants away from Hungary toward Croatia and Slovenia last year when hundreds of thousands crossed the Balkans en route to Austria and western Europe.

However, as the weather improved in recent weeks, the number of migrants in-



creased, and more began to cut through the fence despite a heavy police presence. Not everyone jumps the fence, which is a crime in Hungary. On Monday a group of 20 to ... (More on P4)...(17)

Violence Rages in Syria As Kerry and Lavrov Reach Provisional Deal on Ceasefire

AMMAN/BEIRUT - U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Sunday he and his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, had reached a provisional agreement on terms of a cessation of hostilities in Syria and the sides were closer to a ceasefire than ever before. Meanwhile, violence continued to rage in Syria. Multiple bomb blasts in a southern district of Damascus killed at least 87 people on Sunday, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said, and twin car bombs killed

at least 59 people in Homs, the monitoring group said. Russian air strikes launched in September against rebels fighting President Bashar al-Assad have exacerbated suffering and destruction in Syria, where a five-year-old civil war has killed more than a quarter of a million people.

Assad said on Saturday he was ready for a ceasefire on condition "terrorists" did not use a lull in fighting to their advantage and that countries backing the insurgents stopped supporting them. (Reuters)

Australia Risks Missing Climate Change Commitments: Report

SYDNEY - Australia risks not meeting its commitments agreed to under the Paris Climate Change agreement while also being ill-prepared to offset the local impact due to job cuts at the nation's chief scientific body, a report by the nation's leading climate advocacy group released Monday said. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) recently announced it would halve the number of employees in its climate science program, with approximately 100 jobs to go from its two main climate moni-

toring and modelling stations. The losses are in response to significant budget cuts by former Australian Prime Minister and climate change sceptic Tony Abbott, but also current Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's drive for increased scientific innovation. As a result, the nation's chief climate advocacy group, Sydney-based Climate Council, looked into the national and international ramifications of the reductions, finding it would cut the nation's ability to respond to climate change ... (More on P4)...(18)

UNESCO, European Commission to Promote Cultural Routes

PARIS - United Nations' cultural agency UNESCO and the European Commission on Monday announced a scheme to develop cultural routes through promoting World Heritage sites and boosting other cultural assets.

Worth 1.5 million euros (1.65 million U.S. dollars), the project seeks "to promote European heritage routes to the public, particularly in China, North America, and Europe," according to the UNESCO, which stands for United Nations Educa-



tional, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

It would also offer visitors to UNESCO World Heritage sites the opportunity to use consumer-friendly

platforms and mobile applications in order to get maps and information concerning cultural places, as well as intangible cultural heritage events.

In a press release, UNESCO noted the first so-called heritage routes would be available by late 2017, and the pro ... (More on P4)...(19)

Greek Social Worker's Challenges in Helping Minor Refugees

ATHENS - While governments are grappling with a huge surge of refugees flooding into Europe, humanitarian groups work hard to help people fleeing war countries and support them.

Social workers from non-governmental organizations and thousands of volunteers dispose themselves in the front line at the shores of the Greek islands, in the capital and other big cities across country to provide shelter, food and clothing supplies, medical care to these vulnerable groups.

Sissy Levanti, a young sociologist who works at the accommodation center called "StegiPlus"



(Shelter Plus) for unaccompanied minors of the non-governmental organization PRAKSIS (Action) in the center of Athens told Xinhua the strength that someone must have to deal with the fate of the refugees.

"StegiPlus", which started operating in January 2014, is one of the 18 accommo-

dation centers providing housing, healthcare and other services to unaccompanied minors in Greece until the age of 18.

As Levanti said, it is not a typical nine to five job. She spends most of her time at the center, to cover the minors' needs. "We share our lives with these ... (More on P4)...(20)

France, Australia Call for Cease Fire in Syria's Aleppo

PARIS - French President Francois Hollande and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on Monday stressed the need to cease fire in Aleppo, Syria's second largest city where violent clashes escalated, French presidential office, the Elysee reported.

Over a phone conversation, both leaders "discussed the situation in Syria and stressed the urgency of a ceasefire to help the people of Aleppo and avoid a humanitarian crisis," according to the Elysee.

In a visit to the Pacific, Hollande and Turnbull also expressed their "full solidarity" with Fiji authorities after tropical cyclone Winston stormed the Pacific island nation and killed 21 people.

They pledged to provide Fijian officials with all the necessary support including medical and logistic help, the Elysee added. (Xinhua)

Iran, Russia Urge Ceasefire in Syria

TEHRAN - Senior Iranian and Russian diplomats have called for making efforts to establish a ceasefire in all areas in Syria except those held by terrorist groups.

In a Monday phone conversation, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Russian official Mikhail Bogdanov emphasized that the crisis in Syria should be settled only through political approaches. They also stressed the importance of dispatching humanitarian aid to war-stricken Syrian people. Amir-Abdollahian and Bogdanov said the resumption of peace talks between the Syrian government and opposition groups is a main priority for the Arab state. Bogdanov, who is the ... (More on P4)...(21)

Pound Plunges as Cameron Makes Pro-EU Case in UK Parliament

LONDON - Uncertainty over Britain's future in the European Union sent the pound plunging Monday, as Prime Minister David Cameron tried to shore up support for remaining in the bloc when the U.K. holds a referendum in June.

The pound fell 2.1 percent to \$1.4106 - after touching a seven-year low of 1.4058 - and also sagged 0.5 percent to 1.28 euros, as bookmakers shortened the odds on a vote to leave - though betting markets still favor a "remain" victory.

UBS Wealth Management said Monday it put the probability of a British EU exit - known as "Brexit" - at 30 percent. Simon Smith, chief economist at FxPro, said the next four months "won't be a fun time" for the ... (More on P4)...(24)

Russia Condemns Terrorist Attacks in Syria

MOSCOW - Russia's Foreign Ministry on Monday condemned the recent serial terrorist attacks in Syria and called for "proper principled responses."

"Moscow strongly condemns the inhumane terrorist attacks," which killed at least 150 people, the ministry said in an online statement. "We express our sincere condolences to

the families of those killed and wish a speedy recovery to the injured."

It urged the international community to make "proper principled responses" to the terrorist acts.

It is important to effectively thwart further attempts of the Islamic State (IS), the Nusra Front and other ... (More on P4)...(22)

Pentagon Reportedly Proposes \$50 Million Program to Help Tajikistan Fight Terrorists

DUSHANBE - EurasiaNet.org reports budget documents released by the White House show that the United States plans to give Central Asia an additional \$50 million in military aid under a new program, with the bulk of the aid focused on Tajikistan. The money would be part of the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF), a Pentagon pro-

gram launched in 2014 aimed at training militaries around the globe to fight terrorism. In the past, all of the funding in the program has gone to countries in the Middle East and Africa, but starting this year Central Asia would receive \$20 million from the fund, and next year, \$30 million. "The [Department of ... (More on P4)...(23)

Neighbor News

Chinese Foreign Minister to Visit U.S.

BEIJING - Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will pay an official visit to the United States from Tuesday to Thursday, at the invitation of U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said on Monday.

"We hope that China and the U.S. will arrange high-level exchanges and dialogues for 2016, discuss practical cooperation and the handling of sensitive issues to promote the sustainable, healthy and stable growth of bilateral relations through the visit," Hua said at a regular news briefing.

Responding to looming UN sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) for missile launches, Hua said "China and the U.S. are expected to exchange views on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue during Wang's visit," adding that the two

sides have been in communication over the issue recently.

The UN Security Council is discussing sanctions against the DPRK over its recent nuclear test and satellite launch using ballistic missile technology.

China supports the UN Security Council adopting a new and strong resolution against the DPRK while urging relevant parties to avoid actions that could escalate tensions, Hua said. She renewed the call for dialogue and promoting the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and a truce-to-peace mechanism in parallel.

When asked about the message that China will send to the U.S. on the South China Sea issue, Hua said the U.S. should honor its commitment of taking no position on competing territorial claims and stop playing up the issue or creating tension. (Xinhua)

Italian PM Renzi to Visit Iran in April

TEHRAN - Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi says he will visit Tehran in April after Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's trip to Rome last month.

Renzi made the announcement at a new conference in Rome on Monday. Iran and Italy signed deals worth up to 17 billion euros (\$18.42 billion) during Rouhani's 48-hour stay in Italy.

The premier said then that business agreements Italy signed with Iran were "just the beginning" for the two countries.

Rouhani headed a 120-strong delegation of business leaders and ministers, signing a pipeline contract worth between \$4 billion and \$5 billion for oil services group Saipem.

Italian steel firm Daniele signed up to 5.7 billion euros in contracts while business for infrastructure firm Condotte d'Acqua inked up to 4 billion euros.

The two countries further signed an agreement to expand and modernize Iran's rail network. (PressTV)

Fourteen Residents of Tajikistan Detained after 'Liking' ISIS Video

DUSHANBE - Fourteen residents of Tajikistan's Yovon district have been detained for questioning after they clicked a "like" button on an ISIS video that had been posted to the online Odnoklassniki

social network. An official in the Yovon district said on February 22 that the men were detained and questioned as part of an investigation into the video, which called on Tajik men to join the ISIS militant group.

Ten of the detained men were released after an interrogation, while

four remained in custody on February 22. Tajik authorities say at least 1,000 Tajik citizens have traveled to Iraq and Syria to fight alongside ISIS militants.

Tajik officials also have raised concerns because the ISIS recruiting efforts appear to be attracting Tajiks at an increasing rate. Authorities in other former Soviet republics of Central Asia also say hundreds of their citizens have fought alongside ISIS militants and other extremists in Syria and Iraq. (Agencies)

Pakistan at Tenth Place in List of World's Largest Arms Importers for 2015

BEIJING - Pakistan was the tenth largest arms importer in the world in 2015, down one spot from number nine the previous year, a military think tank database reveals, while Saudi Arabia was the leading arms importer in the world, followed closely by India.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) database shows India was the top arms importer

in 2014. Trend indicator values of imports of arms in Pakistan 2014 and 2015 in millions of dollars at constant prices.

Trend indicator values of imports of arms in Pakistan 2014 and 2015 in millions of dollars at constant prices.

Pakistan spent \$735 million on arms imports in 2015. In comparison, India imported arms worth \$3,078m. (Agencies)