

Obama to Force Through Gun Control Measures

BEIJING - U.S. President Barack Obama is to roll out a set of gun-control measures on Tuesday amid strong opposition from the Republican Party, a defiant show of executive resolution in his last year at the White House. The move aims to curb gun violence by regulating gun sales and controlling illicit firearms purchases.

According to Attorney General Loretta Lynch, tighter rules will be enforced, including a mandatory register as a gun trader, a narrower loophole that allows buyers



to dodge background on purchases through in- While Obama stressed "entirely consistent" with the constitutional right to bear arms, Republicans, gun makers and weapons enthusiasts argue that the move is a serious infringement of the Second Amendment. According to the president, although the steps will not solve every violent crime or prevent every mass shooting, it will potentially save lives and spare families the pain and extraordinary loss as a consequence of firearms being in the wrong hands. In his weekly radio address on Friday, Obama blasted Congress for failing to act on curbing gun violence.(Xinhua)

German FM Warns of Risk to Freedom of Movement in Europe

BERLIN - German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier warned on Tuesday that European freedom of movement could be at risk after two countries reviewed their commitment to the Schengen borderless travel zone. Denmark said on Monday that it would reintroduce passport checks at its border with Germany in a bid to deter refugees without identification papers. Sweden has also imposed new security

checks on those traveling from Denmark by train, ferry, and bus. In an interview with German Bild newspaper on Tuesday, Steinmeier said he was convinced that the right to freedom of movement and travel was "perhaps Europe's greatest achievement." When asked whether freedom of travel in the Schengen zone is in danger, he replied, "I hope not, but I can see the risk." The minister renewed his call for EU countries to "join forces



to find European solutions to the refugee flow, while at the same time protecting our European external borders effectively." (Xinhua)

Indian DM Blames Security Lapses for Attack upon Airbase

NEW DELHI - "Security lapses" was to blame for an attack on an airbase by six gunmen in northern Indian near the Pakistan border last weekend, Indian Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar said Tuesday. During a tour to the Pathankot airbase in the northern state Punjab, Parrikar said all six gunmen who attacked the airbase have been killed in the airbase. While sanitizing operations were still going on, "it is only for

safety purposes," and that no more terrorists were believed hidden in the complex, he told the media. He did not specify on what security gaps had allowed the militants to sneak into the airbase without being discovered. "What is worrying is how they (terrorists) entered the base," he said. Local media said police received intelligence reports about possible terrorist attacks in Punjab but the ... (More on P4)...(12)

Syria's Declared Chemical Arms '100% Destroyed'

THE HAGUE - Syria's declared chemical arms arsenal has been completely destroyed capping more than two years of delicate work, the global watchdog charged with eliminating the world's toxic weapons said Tuesday. "One hundred percent has been destroyed," Malik Ellahi, the spokesman for the UN-backed Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), told AFP. But The Hague-based organisation still remains deeply concerned by

reports of the use of sarin and mustard gas in the country, as well as deadly chlorine gas in Syria's brutal civil war. Under the terms of a historic deal hammered out in September 2013 by US Secretary of State John Kerry and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov, Syria finally admitted to possessing over 1,000 tonnes of chemical weapons after years of denials and agreed to hand over the whole stockpile for destruction. The deal averted threat ... (More on P4)...(13)

Reports Say More Sri Lankans Joining IS

COLOMBO - At least 36 Sri Lankans have reportedly left for Syria with some having joined the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group, a senior official said. Sri Lanka's Defence Secretary Karunasena Hettiarachchi said that according to reports, the Sri Lankans had left with their families including women and children. "They had said they were going on pilgrimage but I believe that some of them had joined the ISIS," he said. However, Hettiarachchi said he was not in possession of the details of how or with whom



they had left the country. The first Sri Lankan, known as AbhuShuraih-Sailani who allegedly had joined the IS, was reportedly killed in an air strike in July in Syria.

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe had ordered an immediate probe to find out if Sailani was alone in deciding to head for Syria to join the terrorist group.

Sri Lanka's intelligence recently handed over as confidential report to President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Wickremesinghe re ... (More on P4)...(14)

British PM Cameron will Let Ministers Campaign for EU Exit

LONDON - British Prime Minister David Cameron will make clear on Tuesday that he will let government ministers campaign to leave the European Union in an upcoming referendum, a source in his office said, heading off the risk of resignations from his top team. Cameron is seeking to renegotiate Britain's EU ties before a vote due by the end of 2017. He has said he wants Britain to stay in a reformed EU but does not rule out leaving if ... (More on P4)...(15)

UK PM Cameron Delays Trip to Saudi Arabia

LONDON - British Prime Minister David Cameron has delayed a trip to Saudi Arabia, the Times newspaper reported on Tuesday, but cited senior officials as saying this was unconnected to regional tensions sparked by the execution of a Shi'ite Muslim cleric. Saudi Arabia's execution of Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr has angered Shi'ites across the Middle East and caused a major diplomatic row between revolutionary, mainly Shi'ite Iran and Saudi Arabia's conservative Sunni monarchy. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Sudan broke all ties with Iran and the United Arab Emirates downgraded its relations on Monday after the Saudi embassy in Tehran was stormed by protesters. Kuwait recalled its ambassador to Iran on Tuesday. The Times reported Cameron had been due to visit Riyadh in the coming weeks as part of a tour of Gulf states, but that the trip would not go ahead until March at the earliest. A spokeswoman for Cameron would not confirm that a trip to Saudi Arabia had been planned or delayed due to Nimr's execution.(Reuters)

Nine Killed as Refugee Boat Sinks Off Turkey

ANKARA - Nine refugees were killed early Tuesday as a migrant boat trying to cross to Greece sank in Aegean coast of Turkey, local CnnTurk broadcaster reported. The bodies of at least nine refugees washed up in Ayvalik town of western Balikesir province, said the report, adding that a total of 22 migrants were attempting to cross to Greece's Lesbos Island when their boat overturned in stormy weather. Turkish coast guards are conducting search and rescue mission for other migrants, according to



the report. More than 3,000 refugees fleeing war-torn Syria have died on their way to Greek islands via Turkey, according to the International Organization for Migration. Over 600,000 refugees have reportedly

reached Greek islands in 2015, in a crisis that has alarmed the European Union. The EU and Turkish leaders reached a deal in November for curbing the refugee influx from the Middle East to Europe. (Xinhua)

Charges Pressed Against Migrants for Sept. 16 Hungarian Border Incident

BUDAPEST - The Prosecutor's Office in Hungary's Csongrad County has officially pressed charges against nine Syrians and one Iraqi for the Sept. 16, 2015, border incident. The ten people were believed to be responsible for a border incident in which a fence was breached and Hungarian border control personnel were attacked. The charges were pressed on Wednesday last week, Csongrad

County Prosecution spokesman Ferenc Szanka has told Xinhua. The incident occurred on Sept. 16, after Hungary had declared a state of emergency on its southern borders and installed a fence, when the flow of refugees had risen to several thousand people a day. According to the charges, on this particular day hundreds of people had gathered on the Serbian side of ... (More on P4)...(17)

NATO Jets Scrambled More Often in 2015: Lithuania

VILNIUS - Lithuania's Defense Ministry says NATO jets patrolling the airspace of the Baltic countries scrambled 160 times to intercept Russian planes last year, a 14 percent increase from the year before. The ministry said Tuesday that the number was up from 140 in 2014 and 47 in 2013, reflecting in-

creased Russian air activities over the Baltic Sea. Spain and Belgium are taking over NATO's rotating Baltic Air Policing mission this week from Hungary and Germany. The alliance says the "efforts are focused on stopping incursions into NATO airspace and on preventing acts of air terrorism." (AP)

Nieghbor News

Iran Unveils Second Underground Missile, Likely to Irk U.S



DUBAI - Iran unveiled a new underground missile depot on Tuesday with state television showing Emad precision-guided missiles in store which the United States says can take a nuclear warhead and violate a 2010 U.N. Security Council resolution. The defiant move to publicize Iran's missile program seemed certain to irk the United States as it plans to dismantle nearly all sanctions on Iran under a breakthrough nuclear agreement. Tasnim news agency and state television video said the under-

ground facility, situated in mountains and run by Iran's Revolutionary Guards, was inaugurated by the speaker of parliament, Ali Larijani. Release of one-minute video followed footage of another underground missile depot last October. The United States says the Emad, which Iran tested in October, would be capable of carrying a nuclear warhead and U.S. officials say Washington will respond to the Emad tests with fresh sanctions against Iranian individuals and businesses linked to the program. (Reuters)

President of Tajikistan and OIC Discuss Stronger Cooperation

JEDDAH - The Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, OIC, Iyad-Ameen Madani, met yesterday with Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, who was on an official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. According to an OIC statement, the President and the Secretary-General had a useful and extensive exchange of views on promoting bilateral cooperation between the OIC and Ta-

jikistan, issues related to the OIC and the challenges facing the Muslim Ummah. They also discussed ways and means to promote economic development, especially in Central Asia, and strengthening intra-OIC cooperation. The President shared his vision on the future of the OIC and highlighted some important priorities, including regional peace and security, for the organisation to pursue. (WAM)

Pakistan, Sri Lanka Sign Eight MoUs for Bilateral Cooperation

COLOMBO - Pakistan and Sri Lanka on Tuesday inked eight memoranda of understanding (MoU) on the sidelines of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's visit to Sri Lanka. The MoUs and agreements for cooperation in fields of health, education, trade, science and technology, tourism, gem and jewelry, were signed during delegation-level talks

between the two countries. The premier and his delegation were accorded a formal welcome at the Presidential Palace upon his arrival for a reception. Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena warmly received Nawaz Sharif, who was accompanied by his wife Kalsoom Nawaz, reported Radio Pakistan.(Agencies)

China-India Cooperation to Benefit World: Ambassador

BEIJING - China and India are reemerging in a mutually supportive manner, and their cooperation will benefit the world, said Ashok Kantha, the Indian ambassador to China. In an exclusive interview with Xinhua, Kantha, who will complete his tenure and leave China this week, said he has a "sense of deep satisfaction" as relations between the Asian neighbors have gained momentum since he took office in 2014, adding that "2016 will be another year of rich harvest." According to Kantha, the last two years have been "the most productive phase" in the development of Sino-Indian ties, as shown by frequent high-level exchanges, es-

pecially the two "landmark" visits by leaders of the two countries. In September 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping started his trip to India in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat. In May 2015, Xi welcomed Modi to Xi'an, capital city of Shaanxi Province and Xi's hometown. In addition to reaching a series of agreements and understandings, the leaders also sent out "very powerful signals of the desire [by] India and China to work together," said Kantha. China will host the G20 summit in Hangzhou City and the BRICS summit in 2016. These two major events will provide opportunities for engagement between the leaders, he said.(Xinhua)