

White House to Hold Global Security Summit: US Official

PARIS - U.S. President Barack Obama will invite allies to a Feb. 18 security summit in Washington to try and prevent violent extremism, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder said on Sunday after meeting his European counterparts in Paris. The gathering of justice and interior chiefs came as France mourned 17 victims of Islamist gunmen this week in the worst assault on its homeland security in decades. "We will bring together all of our allies to discuss ways in which we can counteract this violent extremism that exists around the world," Holder told reporters. French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said after the meeting that

European interior ministers had agreed to boost cooperation in an effort to thwart further jihadist attacks.

"We all agree that we need to put in place better control on certain passengers, on the basis of objective criteria and with respect for fundamental liberties and without disrupting cross-border travel," he said. He said Europe needed urgent progress in establishing a European Passenger Name Record database, which would facilitate the exchange of data about passengers between member states.

"We are convinced of the need for such a tool, to follow those who travel to terrorist operating theaters or who return from there," he said, add-



ing that this database would also be useful in the fight against other serious crimes.

Cazeneuve said the Internet needs to remain a space for free expression, but that Europe should fight against abusive use of the web to spread hate

speech, anti-Semitic messages and the recruiting vulnerable young people for violence. "We need to work more closely with Internet companies to guarantee the reporting and if possible removal of all content that amounts to an apology of terror-

ism or calls for violence and hatred," he said. Cazeneuve said EU interior and justice ministers planned to meet soon to discuss further action. A European source said the meeting could take place next week in Brussels. (Reuters)

IS Kills 24 Kurds in Surprise Attack in North Iraq

ARBIL - Islamic State militants have killed at least 24 members of the Kurdish security forces in a surprise attack in northern Iraq, Kurdish officials said, in one of the deadliest single battles for the Kurds since last summer. Three Kurdish officers reported continued clashes with Islamic State on Sunday, one day after the deaths, near Gwer, a town some 40km (25 miles) southwest of the autonomous Kurdish region's capital Arbil.

Kurdish-controlled Gwer is likely to be a launch-pad for any future attempt by Iraqi and Kurdish forces to retake Mosul, the biggest city in northern Iraq which Islamic State seized last June.

Islamic State militants crossed the river Zab in small boats on Friday night and entered Gwer, but were driven back by Kurdish peshmerga forces, the officers said.

"We've been engaged in fighting with them for the past two days," said one senior Kurdish officer on the Gwer frontline as the sound of gunfire rattled in the background.

The officer, who asked to remain anonymous, said around 60 militants in total had been killed and that by intercepting the frequency they used to communicate via walkie-talkie and listening in, it appeared many more were injured.

Both he and another officer blamed the Iraqi army for allowing the militants to reach Gwer. (Reuters)

Turkey Ready to Cooperate Against Terror Threats: PM

ANKARA - Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu on Sunday stressed his country's readiness to cooperate with the international community to face terror threats. "Turkey has always showed its eagerness to cooperate with other states to deal with risks of terrorist attacks. Our close cooperation with other countries will continue on this issue," Davutoglu told reporters at Ankara Esenboga Airport before leaving for Paris to join a rally there against extremism.

On whether Turkey's National Intelligence Agency has informed the French authorities about the terror suspect, Hayat Boumediene, after she arrived in Turkey, Davutoglu said that the process of sharing information with France regarding the

issue was "ongoing." "Turkey is a country to which millions of tourists come. Prevention becomes very hard when there is no warning beforehand," he said.

Boumediene is a wanted partner of a man suspected in recent terror attacks in France. The Turkish police have tracked Boumediene's movement, said a Turkish source who asked not to be named, adding that Ankara did not arrest her due to the lack of timely intelligence from France. The Turkish authorities have reportedly informed French officials that Boumediene traveled from Turkey to Syria on Thursday.

Also on Saturday, the French authorities said they believed that Boumediene has reached Syria from Turkey. (Xinhua)

Global Business Summit Kicks Off in W.India

MUMBAI - A three-day international investors' summit, or the Vibrant Gujarat Summit, kicked off on Sunday in western Indian state of Gujarat, with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurating the opening ceremony. UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, among other distinguished figures, attended the summit. Vibrant Gujarat Summit is a biennial global business summit organized by the government of Gujarat since 2003, when Modi was Chief Minister of the state. Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel said the state has become a global business hub and everyone would benefit from the three-day summit. As one of the Indian business leaders, the country's richest man, CEO of Reliance Industries Mukesh Ambani, said his group would invest 1 trillion Indian Rupees in 12

18 months across businesses in Gujarat. Among foreign companies, Australian mining giant Rio Tinto's CEO Sam Walsh said the group would add 30,000 jobs in diamond cutting industry in Gujarat, adding that Australia is looking forward to the state as a promising business destination. Singapore's Second Trade and Industry Minister S Iswaran said "Singapore companies have strong commercial interests in Gujarat", while British Trade and Development Minister Lord Livingston said they will open a new deputy High Commission in Gujarat in a few weeks.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon lauded Indian government's efforts in using more renewable energy, while U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said he is "highly inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's slogan of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas'", which means together with all, development for all. (Xinhua)

Merkel Urges Putin, Poroshenko to Implement Peace Plan

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel has told Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko she's ready to take part in four-way summit over the Ukraine conflict only if there's a chance of real progress. The leaders of Germany, Russia, Ukraine and France are working on setting up a possible meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan.

But Merkel's office said

late Saturday that it's not yet clear whether the meeting can take place.

In talks with Putin and Poroshenko, she stressed that for the discussions to be successful there has to be progress on implementing a much-violated peace deal that was drawn up in Minsk in September. Merkel has insisted that every point of that agreement must be fulfilled. The foreign ministers of the four countries will meet in Berlin on Monday. (AP)



U.S. 'At War with Terrorists': AG

WASHINGTON - U.S. Attorney General (AG) Eric Holder said on Sunday that the United States is "at war with terrorists" who commit violent acts and use Islam to justify their actions.

Holder said on NBC's "Meet the Press" program that Americans should feel secure, but the potential for "lone wolf" attacks bothers him. "That is the thing that I think keeps me up most at night, this concern about the lone wolf who goes undetected," he said. (Reuters)

World Leaders Join Mass Paris March to Honor Attack Victims

PARIS - Dozens of world leaders including Muslim and Jewish statesmen led hundreds of thousands of French citizens in an unprecedented march under high security to pay tribute to victims of Islamist militant attacks.

President Francois Hollande and leaders from Germany, Italy, Israel, Turkey, Britain and the Palestinian territories among others, moved off from the central Place de la Republique ahead of a sea of French and other flags. Giant letters attached to a statue in the square spelled out the word "Pourquoi?" (Why?) and small groups sang the "La Marseillaise" national anthem.

Some 2,200 police and soldiers patrolled Paris streets to protect marchers from would-be attackers, with police

snipers on rooftops and plain-clothes detectives mingling with the crowd. City sewers were searched ahead of the vigil and underground train stations around the march route are due to be closed down.

The silent march - which may prove the largest seen in modern times through Paris - reflected shock over the worst militant Islamist assault on a European city in nine years. For France, it raised questions of free speech, religion and security, and beyond French frontiers it exposed the vulnerability of states to urban attacks. "Paris is today the capital of the world. Our entire country will rise up and show its best side," said Hollande in a statement. Seventeen people, including journalists and police, were killed in



three days of violence that began with a shooting attack on the weekly Charlie Hebdo known for its satirical attacks on Islam and other religions as well as politicians. It ended on Friday with a hostage-taking at a Jewish deli in which four hostages were killed.

Overnight, an illuminated sign on the Arc de Triomphe read: "Paris est Charlie" ("Paris is Charlie").

A video emerged featuring a man resembling the gunman killed in the kosher deli. He pledged

allegiance to the Islamic State insurgent group and urged French Muslims to follow his example. A French anti-terrorist police source confirmed it was the killer, Amedy Coulibaly, speaking before the action.

"We're not going to let a little gang of hoodlums run our lives," said Fanny Appelbaum, 75, who said she lost two sisters and a brother in the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz. "Today, we are all one." Zakaria Mounim, ... (More on P4)... (16)

Kerry Urges Rapid Growth in US-India Trade, Commercial Ties

AHMEDABAD - U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on Sunday called for a rapid expansion of U.S.-India trade and commercial ties as he attended an international investment conference ahead of visit by President Barack Obama later this month.

Kerry led the U.S. delegation to the investment summit in Ahmedabad, the main financial city in Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat. Kerry said it was imperative that economic ties between the two countries grow for the sake of Indian development, reducing poverty and fighting climate change.

"We can do more together, and we must do more together, and we have to do it faster," Kerry told

the conference, which Modi opened.

Commerce and investment between the United States and India have jumped in recent years, growing nearly five-fold since 2000 with bilateral direct investment at almost \$30 billion. But it still faces obstacles due to restrictive Indian laws and regulations and concerns about intellectual property rights and protection. In addition, talks on liability issues that have kept American nuclear power operators from doing business in India have been inconclusive to date.

U.S. officials said they were working on agreements that could include a solar energy deal, a plan to improve rural electrification and potentially a carbon reduc-



tion pact that they hoped could be signed when Obama visits India to participate in India's annual Republic Day ceremonies on Jan. 26. Modi has invited Obama to be the "chief guest" at the celebration, the first sitting American president to be so honored.

Last year, to the surprise of many, Obama was able to seal a carbon emissions reduction pact with China during a visit to Beijing. The U.S., China and India are the largest emit-

ters of carbon. Kerry has made fighting climate change, largely through clean and sustainable energy development and reducing emissions, a priority. He has given a number of speeches on the dangers facing the planet if urgent action is not taken, and Sunday's address in Ahmedabad was no exception. "There is one enormous cloud hanging over all of us which requires responsibility from... (More on P4)... (17)

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Certain Regional States Required to Alter Terrorism Policies: Zarif

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif asked certain regional states to stop wrong policies towards terrorism.

"We should focus on fighting terrorism and ISIL as the main goal in the region and some countries are needed to change their wrong policies," Zarif said in a meeting with his Cypriot counterpart Ioannis Kasoulides in Tehran on Sunday morning.

Stressing that the future of Syria should be decided by the Syrian people, he said, "Iran helped to the establishment of a new government in Iraq and we are ready to cooperate with all the regional states to settle the problems in the region. Solutions to the regional problems should have the potential for implementation."

Elsewhere, he referred to the relations between Iran and Cyprus, and said, "The two countries are able to further enhance the level of their relations more than ever through cooperation in different political, economic and cultural

fields." Kasoulides, for his part, underlined his country's enthusiasm for the development of relations with Iran in all fields, and said, "Several delegations will visit the Islamic Republic of Iran in future to boost mutual cooperation in economic, energy and tourism fields." Elsewhere, he described the ISIL terrorist group as the most important concern of the regional states, and underscored the necessity for the settlement of the Syrian crisis through cooperation among different states to help enhance efficiency of the war on ISIL. Kasoulides described Iran as a regional power, and said the country's assistance is a main contributor to the settlement of the regional problems. He also invited Zarif to visit Cyprus which was accepted by the Iranian top diplomat. In relevant remarks yesterday, Kasoulides lauded Iran's efforts in the campaign against ISIL, and voiced his country's willingness to cooperate with Tehran in war on terrorism. (FNA)

Unity of Political Parties Against Terrorism A Welcome Sign: Sharif

LAHORE - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Sunday said it was a welcome sign that all the political parties were united against terrorism. Speaking to Punjab chief minister Shahbaz Sharif during a

meeting in Raiwind, the prime minister said that big successes had been achieved during Operation Zarb-e-Azb. The prime minister expressed resolve to eliminate each terrorist from the country. (Monitoring Desk)

China, Kenya Pledge to Deepen Ties, Cooperation

NAIROBI - China and Kenya have pledged to further deepen bilateral relations and practical cooperation, visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Saturday. "We have agreed to make further progress in the comprehensive cooperative partnership between our two countries featuring equality, mutual trust, mutual benefit and win-win outcomes," Wang told media after meeting with his Kenyan counterpart Amina Mohamed.

The two sides also agreed to continue to support each other on issues regarding their core interests and major concerns, so as to lay even firmer foundation for the development of bilateral relations, he added.

Wang said China is willing to transform bilateral traditional friendship into impetus for common development, and work with Kenya to convert its potential in human and natural resources into economic strengths. The Chinese foreign

minister stressed that both sides would further cooperation in seven priority areas of agricultural modernization, infrastructure development, industrial relocation, renewable energy, ecology and environmental protection, people-to-people exchanges, and peace and security cooperation. Meanwhile, the two sides also signed a memorandum of understanding on establishing a bilateral steering committee, Wang said.

Kenya is China's important partner in Africa, Wang said, adding that he chose Kenya as the first stop of his trip to Africa to implement the important consensus and agreements reached by the leaders of both countries. During his visit, Wang expected to "hear the views and suggestions of African friends for the preparation of the 6th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation to be held in South Africa this year. (Xinhua)

Head of Tajik Jewelers' Association Elected to Head Sozandagoni Vatan

DUSHANBE - The head of the Tajik Jewelers' Association, Isfandiyo Abdurahmonov, has been elected new leader of Sozandagoni Vatan (Homeland Builders), which is the youth wing of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP).

"A meeting of the board (Shuro) of Sozandagoni Vatan that took place in Dushanbe on January 8 board brought together representatives of the organization from all regions of the country," Usmon Soliyev, the head of

the PDP public relations department, told Asia-Plus in an interview. According to him, Isfandiyo Abdurahmonov was elected new leader of the organization, replacing Adham Mamurzoda, who now works with President's Executive Office. The PDP created the Sozandagoni Vatan organization in 2011 and its founding conference took place on July 27, 2011. The organization was registered with the Ministry of Justice in November 2011. (Asia-Plus)