

# Austrian Presidential Election to be Re-Held Following Successful Court Challenge

VIENNA - The Austrian Constitutional Court (VfGH) ruled Friday in favor of a challenge to the result of the May 22 presidential election run-off round, concluding that a repeat election will need to be held. VfGH president Gerhart Holzinger said at the presentation of the findings in Vienna that the vote will be re-held nationwide, not simply in some electoral districts as media had speculated may happen. The decision largely came down to a lax handling of postal votes, he stated.

Holzinger said irregularities that occurred in the counting of the postal votes in 14 electoral dis-



tricts, such as their opening without the required presence of electoral au-

thorities. He said that no direct evidence of vote manipulation had been

indicated to have occurred by any electoral authorities who were

questioned by the court during proceedings. At the same time, Holz-

inger noted that the proper procedure for vote counting had been violated. As such, no proof that any vote manipulation took place was even necessary, he added. Holzinger said the nation-wide electronic availability of these partial results, that had been found to have occurred at about 1:00 p.m. (1200 GMT) on election day, should in the court's view not have been permissible.

Holzinger said the public availability of the running results "goes against the principle of freedom of choice," and that it could not ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

## Neighbour News

### Pak Army not Against Normalisation of India Ties: FO

ISLAMABAD - The Pakistani Foreign Office on Thursday rejected a perception that the military was obstructing normalisation of ties with India.

"No amount of effort can create a wedge between the civil and military leadership of Pakistan. Armed forces of Pakistan fully support the democratic process," Foreign Office spokesman Nafees Zakaria said at his weekly media briefing.

He was responding to comments by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in which he had tried to suggest that the civil-military imbalance in Pakistan was blocking his efforts to have better relations with Islamabad. In an interview with TimesNow TV, Mr Modi said: "The first thing is

that with whom in Pakistan you will decide about laxman rekha (red line) - with an elected government or with other actors?"

While underscoring that the armed forces were respected for the sacrifices rendered by them for the country, the FO spokesman reiterated that Pakistan remained fully committed to better relations with India.

"We feel that dialogue is the best option for both sides to resolve their issues. We have said this earlier also that we remain open to dialogue. We will be ready whenever India is ready," he said.

Mr Zakaria instead blamed India for the impasse in the relationship. *(Monitoring Desk)*

### U.S. Airports, Transit Centers to Step up Security over Holiday Weekend

WASHINGTON - U.S. Homeland Security chief Jeh Johnson said on Thursday enhanced security presence were expected at U.S. airports and other domestic transit centers over the July 4 weekend after the deadly Istanbul terror attack.

"The American public should expect to see this July 4th weekend an enhanced security presence at airports, train stations and other transit centers across the country by TSA (Transportation Security Administration) and state and local law enforce-

ments, as well as security personnel generally," said Johnson here at a congressional hearing.

"We will not shortcut aviation security in response to increased travel volume and longer wait times," Johnson added.

Meanwhile, Johnson warned that the federal government and the U. S. public should not only focus attention on transportation security.

"As we said in our national terrorism advisory system bulletin issued just about two weeks ago, we are...*(More on P4)...(25)*

### Paris, Moscow Admit Syria at Stalemate

PARIS - Paris and Moscow admitted Wednesday that war-torn Syria is at a stalemate, urging each other to pressurise their respective allies to restore a truce and relaunch a peace process.

"Today things are blocked," said French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault. "It is urgent to improve the situation on the ground and to encourage a resumption of negotiations. There's no other answer," Ayrault said after meeting in Paris with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

On Tuesday, Ayrault said



he would ask Moscow "to pressure the Damascus regime to stop air strikes claiming thousands of lives, notably in Aleppo". But Lavrov, saying "not

everything depends on the Russians", called on all sides to "pressure their proteges on the ground". "The problem will be resolved when our Western

partners convince their 'moderate' proteges to withdraw from the positions of the Al-Nusra Front", Al-Qaeda's affiliate in...*(More on P4)...(26)*

### Putin may Meet Turkish President Before G20 Summit: Kremlin

MOSCOW/SOCHI - Russian President Vladimir Putin may meet with his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, before this year's G20 summit, scheduled for September in east China's Hangzhou City, the Kremlin said Friday. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that Moscow did not rule out the possibility of such a meeting before the G20, but added that he is now not sure where this will take place. Putin and Erdogan had a telephone conver-



sation on Wednesday after the Turkish president had offered apologies for the downing of a Russian warplane in November

2015. Moscow said it accepted the apology, signalling its readiness for mending bilateral ties that soured after the in-

cident. Peskov said he expected a month of intense contacts of Russian officials with their Turkish...*(More on P4)...(27)*

### Russia Lifts Ban on Tourism to Turkey

MOSCOW - Russia lifted restrictions on tourism to Turkey on Thursday after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan apologized for the downing of a Russian warplane by Ankara last November.

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the decree lifting the ban on the sale of package tours to Turkey and instructed the government to allow the resumption of charter flights between Russia and Turkey.

Russia's Federal Tourism Agency (Rosturizm) has started restoring cooperation with Turkey. Special attention will be paid to

ensuring the security of Russian tourists during their vacation in Turkey, the agency said.

Ties between Ankara and Moscow soured after Turkey downed a Russian Su-24 bomber on the Turkish-Syrian border in November, triggering a diplomatic row between the two countries.

Russia has imposed a series of economic sanctions on Turkey, including banning travel, suspending the visa-free regime and freezing plans to build a new pipeline to carry Russian natural gas to Europe via Turkey.

...*(More on P4)...(28)*

### 22 Suspected IS Members Detained Following Attack at Istanbul Airport

ISTANBUL - Twenty-two suspected Islamic State (IS) militants were detained on Tuesday following a terror attack on Tuesday at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport.

The suspects were detained following operations in Istanbul and Turkey's western city of Izmir after the attack which has killed 42 people thus far.

Police undertook simultaneous operations in 16 different localities throughout Istanbul, detaining 13 suspected IS members, including three foreigners, the daily Hurriyet reported. In Izmir, counterterrorism teams detained at least nine...*(More on P4)...(29)*

### UN Security Council Slams Terrorist Attack at Istanbul Airport

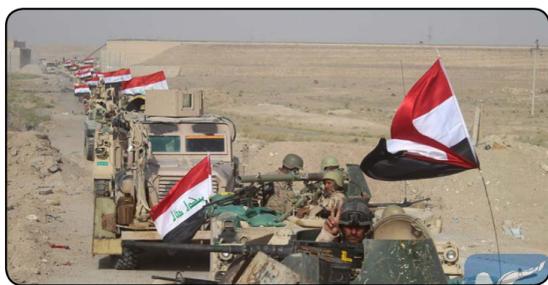
UNITED NATIONS - The UN Security Council on Thursday condemned "in the strongest terms" the terrorist attack at the Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul, Turkey.

On Tuesday evening, three attackers fired at crowds in Ataturk airport and then detonated their explosive vests, killing 42 people and injuring 238 others.

In a press statement, the 15-nation council underlined the need to bring perpetrators of these acts of terrorism to justice and urged all states to cooperate actively with the government of Turkey in this regard.

The three attackers targeting the airport have been identified as Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Russian nationals...*(More on P4)...(30)*

### Hundreds of IS Militants Killed in Airstrikes near Fallujah



BAGHDAD - Hundreds of Islamic State (IS) militants were killed in a series of airstrikes targeting their convoys early Wednesday when they fled Iraq's Fallujah, a provincial security source said on Thursday.

Dozens of IS vehicles were hit in airstrikes by the U.S.-led coalition and the Iraqi air force south of Fallujah, 50 km west of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

The IS vehicles were attempting to flee to the desert southwest of Fallujah, the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

The source could not give an exact number of vehicles nor human casualties, but American media reports cited a pre-

liminary estimate of at least 250 suspected dead militants and at least 40 destroyed vehicles.

Also on Wednesday, coalition and Iraqi airstrikes hit a convoy of 50 IS vehicles as they headed to the desert west of the provincial capital city of Ramadi, 110 km west of Baghdad, destroying all the vehicles and killing dozens of IS militants, the source said.

Apparently, the convoy near Ramadi had fled Fallujah earlier and headed toward the IS-held town of Qaim near the Iraqi-Syrian border, the source added.

Another convoy of 60 suspected IS vehicles was struck in Jazirat al-Khaldiyah, northwest of Fallujah, leaving all the vehicles destroyed and all occupants dead, the source said. The militants in the convoy...*(More on P4)...(31)*

### Double Suicide Attacks Kill at Least 28 in Cameroon

YAOUNDE - Double suicide bomb attacks killed at least 28 people and left several others injured in Cameroon's Far North Region on Wednesday night, military sources told Xinhua. The attacks took place in Djamkana, a densely populated town in the country's Far North Region bordering Nigeria, the sources said. Not much information is available for the moment about the attacks, which took place in the midst of Ramadan in the town, where majority of its population are Muslims. But Cameroonian security forces suspected Boko Haram was behind the attacks. Boko Haram, a Nigerian Islamic sect, has...*(More on P4)...(32)*

### Assad Blames U.S. for Worldwide Troubles and Chaos

DAMASCUS - Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said Friday that the consecutive U.S. administrations have only created troubles in the world without resolving them.

In an interview with the Australian SBS TV, whose content was also released by state news agency SANA on Friday, al-Assad said that since the 1950s of last century, the successive U.S. administrations have only created turbulences and had never resolved any problem.

Al-Assad gave the example of Iraq, saying former President George W. Bush had invaded Iraq and succeeded to occupy it within a few weeks, "but what was the next step. What did they...*(More on P4)...(33)*

### ADB Approves Loan to Support Small Business in Uzbekistan

TASHKENT - The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a loan worth \$100 million for financial support of small businesses in Uzbekistan, ADB said in a message July 1.

"Small businesses contribute over 50 percent of Uzbekistan's GDP and 80 percent of employment but their access to finance, particularly in rural areas, is hampered by limited services and a range of other obstacles," said the message.

The loan will be refinanced by four financial institutions: Davr Bank, Hamkorbank, Ipak Yuli

Bank and leasing company UzbekLeasing International A.O.

The loan will help meet a growing demand for credit and leases from small businesses and entrepreneurs, according to the message. The funds will be lent to small businesses at market-based rates. To ensure the participating financial institutions can service a larger range of businesses, the maximum single subloan amount has been set at \$300,000, three times the size of the subloan limit set under a previous ADB loan. In addition, to...*(More on P4)...(34)*

### Chinese Vice Premier Meets French President on Bilateral Ties

PARIS - Visiting Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong met with French President Francois Hollande here on Thursday on bilateral ties.

Liu met with Hollande in his presidential palace the Elysee after the third meeting of China-France High-level Mechanism for Dialogue on People-to-People Exchanges held Thursday in Paris.

The Chinese vice premier said Sino-French relations has developed steadily in recent years under the guidance of Chinese President Xi Jinping and French President Francois Hollande, and has become outstanding for its strategic, global and

up-to-date perspectives.

The Sino-French relations has always been a priority for China's diplomacy. The Chinese side is willing to maintain the frequent high-level exchanges, further expand consensus and increase mutual understanding, and actively develop strategic docking, in order to promote the development of Sino-French relations. Liu said she and French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault are both satisfied with the positive development of the China-France High-level Mechanism for Dialogue on People-to-People Exchanges and its...*(More on P4)...(35)*

### 100k Qaem Missiles in Lebanon Trained on Israel: Iran Cmdr

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian commander says the Tel Aviv regime is on the verge of complete collapse, stressing that more than 100,000 Qaem missiles based in Lebanon are ready to target the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories.

"Today, only in Lebanon, more than 100,000 Qaem missiles are ready for launch... so that any time the Zionist regime seeks to repeat its previous mistakes with miscalculations, these missiles would... come down on the heart of the Zionist regime and be the prelude for a big collapse in the modern era," Brigadier General Hossein Salami, the second-in-command of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), said on the occasion of

the International Quds Day in the pre-sermon address to worshippers at the weekly Friday Prayers in Tehran.

He added that tens of thousands of other long-range missiles with a range of destructive power and great precision are based in different parts of the Muslim world and are ready to "wipe out one malevolent and black spot from the political geography forever."

The Iranian commander said that the Israeli regime's military planning doctrine has no "strategic depth", adding that grounds have been prepared in the Muslim world to wrest back the occupied Palestinian territories from the Israeli regime.

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