

# U.S., Turkish Officials Hold Talks against IS Threat in Syria

ANKARA - Turkish and U.S. delegates are discussing since Tuesday the threat posed by the Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq, local Daily News reported on Wednesday. Turkey reinforced its military presence at the Turkish-Syrian border last week, accompanied by local media reports of a possible Turkish intervention in Syria. The U.S. delegation, including President Obama's special envoys in the fight against IS, Gen. John Allen and Christine Wormuth, undersecretary of



defense policy, are holding talks with Turkish officials headed by Turkey's Foreign Ministry

Undersecretary Feridun Sinirlioglu, according to the report. Washington urged Ankara to take strong action against IS militants, including the use of Incirlik Airbase for the coalition forces' military operations. Turkey is hesitant to allow U.S. military aircraft's use of its Incirlik Airbase to launch airstrikes into Syria, before an agreement is declared and a no-fly zone and safe havens are available in Syria so that Syrian rebels would be protected from regime forces. (Xinhua)

## Xi, Putin Meet Ahead of BRICS, SCO Summits

UFA, Russia - Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, met on Wednesday ahead of this year's BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summits.

It is their second meeting in the past two months alone. They held talks in Moscow on May 8 before they joined other leaders at the celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Great Patriotic War, Russia's term for WWII.

Putin is set to travel to Beijing in September to at-



tend the commemorative activities for the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression.

Putin is the foreign head of state with whom Xi has met most frequently since he took over the Chinese presidency in March 2013. By Wednesday's meeting,

the two have sat down for bilateral talks as heads of state for 10 times, highlighting the distinctiveness of China-Russia relations. (Xinhua)

## NATO's "Agile Spirit 2015" Drill Kicks off in Georgia

TBILISI - Georgia joined five NATO member states in launching a two-week long military drill named "Agile Spirit 2015" at the Vaziani base near its capital Tbilisi on Wednesday.

Troops from the United States, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania will participate in various military exercises in peacekeeping and support operations, according to a Georgian Defense Ministry's statement released on Wednesday.

Representatives from the Armenian and Moldovan armies are attending the exercises as observers, the statement added. "Agile Spirit Exercise" was an annual bilateral military drill held by Georgia and the United States, which began in 2011. But this year the United States and Georgia launched another bilateral military exercise called Noble Partner in May, and "Agile Spirit" has now become a multinational exercise. (Xinhua)

## European Commission Decides to Loan 600 Mln Euros to Ukraine

BRUSSELS - The European Commission here on Wednesday said that it adopted on Tuesday a decision to initiate a process towards disbursing 600 million euros to Ukraine in the form of a loan. According to a Commission press release, this move corresponded to the first instalment under EU's new macrofinancial assistance (MFA) program for

Ukraine, which amounts to a total of 1.8 billion euros in medium-term loans. The decision builds on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Loan Facility Agreement (LFA), which Ukraine and the EU agreed in May in Riga. The MoU came into force last Friday. According to the press release, through this program, the EU contributes to cover the urgent

financing needs faced by Ukraine, while supporting the country's economic stabilization. In addition, the EU's MFA package will assist the Ukrainian authorities in implementing important reforms in the areas of public finance management, governance and transparency, the energy sector, social safety nets, the business environment. (Xinhua)

## UN Reports Civilian Deaths Toll in Yemen Tops 1,500

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations Human Rights Office voiced its deep concern over the worsening human rights and humanitarian situation in Yemen, where more than 1,500 civilians were reportedly killed, 3,600 others injured and one million displaced in three months of violence, a UN spokes-

man told reporters here Tuesday. Civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. Over the past few weeks, the Human Rights Office's team on the ground has been able to document human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict,

said UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric at a daily news briefing. "These include violations of the right to life, abduction, ill-treatment, restrictions on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, attacks against humanitarian workers, medical staff and facilities, as well as journalists and ... (More on P4)...(24)

## SCO Not to Become Military Bloc Ever: Secretary General

BISHKEK - The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) will never be transformed into a military bloc, said Secretary General Dmitry Mezentsev in an interview for TASS.

"The SCO is not going to become a military-political alliance, and will never be a military bloc," stressed Mezentsev thus commenting fears voiced by international observers following the large-scale anti-terrorist exercises Peace Mission 2014 held last year in China.

"It is important to note that the exercise scenario remains virtually unchanged. Throughout the years of cooperation among the military agencies of the founders of the SCO, it has always been an anti-terrorist cooperation component development," he went on.

The Secretary General added that the SCO is ready to solve the problems of regional security but its all participants consider the "ability to rely on the potential of political and diplomatic measures" as one of the tasks in the area. "The SCO... is ready to meet the challenges that arise in the field of security," said Mezentsev and mentioned the threat of cyberterrorism.

In addition, the SCO continues to focus on the threat of drug trafficking: "Law enforcement agencies cooperate exemplarily. But I emphasize once again - the SCO has no military formations; it is impossible to go beyond the space [of the organization] to address any issues within the military scenario," Dmitry Mezentsev concluded. (AKIpress)

## Ukrainian Minister Hails Agricultural Cooperation with China

KIEV - Ukrainian Agriculture Minister Olexiy Pavlenko on Wednesday spoke highly of his country's agricultural cooperation with China and voiced hope that the collaboration would further be deepened.

"A steady increase in agricultural trade between the countries confirms the success of bilateral cooperation. Over the first five

months of 2015, our trade turnover has increased to 644.8 million U.S. dollars," Pavlenko was quoted as saying by the government's press service. Kiev and Beijing have a great cooperative potential in agricultural trade and investment, the minister said, expressing his confidence that an upcoming meeting of the Ukraine... (More on P4)...(25)

## Syria Ratifies Fresh \$1 Billion Credit Line from Iran

BEIRUT - Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has signed a law ratifying a \$1 billion credit line from top regional ally Iran, Syria's state news agency SANA said in a newsflash on Wednesday, funds which will help ease economic strains from the costly war.

The agreement was between two state-owned banks, the Syrian Commercial Bank and Export Development Bank of Iran, it said. Iran signed a previous \$3.6 billion credit line with Iran in July 2013 which has been used up mostly for oil imports, bankers have said.

The new deal was signed on May 19 and approved by the Syrian parliament

on Tuesday, SANA said. The money would be used for funding imports of goods and commodities and implementing projects, it said, without giving details.

Tehran's financial aid has been seen as pivotal to the Syrian government and the economy, which has more than halved in the four years since the conflict erupted, researchers say.

Iran is believed to have sent dozens of military advisers and President Hassan Rouhani has said Tehran will back Assad "until the end of the road". Several senior Iranian military figures have been killed in recent months. (Reuters)

## Russian Lawmakers Issue 'Patriotic Stop-List' of NGOs

MOSCOW - The upper house of Russia's parliament is calling on authorities to investigate whether some prominent foreign organizations, including the MacArthur Foundation and Freedom House, are a threat to Russia.

The so-called "patriotic stop-list" that was sent Wednesday to the prosecutor-general and the justice and foreign ministries also names the United States' International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute and the Open

Society Foundation of liberal billionaire George Soros. Two Ukrainian ethnic organizations are also on the list of a dozen groups.

The upper chamber, the Federation Council, asked the authorities to investigate the groups' activities in Russia with a view to possibly declaring them undesirable under a recently passed law and shutting them down. The law says organizations can be declared undesirable if they threaten Russia's defense or constitutional order. (AP)

## S. Sudan Parliament Extends President's Term in Office for 3 Years

KHARTOUM - South Sudan's parliament on Wednesday officially extended for three years the term of office for President Salva Kiir Mayardit, a spokesman said.

The parliament has decided to extend the term of President Salva Kiir Mayardit for three years after lawmakers voted on that matter last March, Thomas Wani, South Sudan's parliament spokesman, told Xinhua.

"The president will not need to take constitution-

al oath as he is actually assuming the presidential post," he noted. President Kiir vowed before the parliament members to work to end the war and achieve peace and stability in South Sudan, the spokesman added.

In February, the South Sudanese government requested the parliament to postpone the general elections, slated for last June, for two years, and extend the term in office of Kiir for three years. (Xinhua)

## 43 Killed in Clashes, Airstrikes against IS Militants in Iraq's Anbar



RAMADI, Iraq - A total of 43 people were killed on Wednesday in clashes with Islamic State (IS) militants and airstrikes by Iraqi and U.S.-led coalition aircraft in Iraq's western province of Anbar, a government statement and a provincial security source said. The security forces and allied militias known as Hashd Shaabi, or popular mobilization, carried out an offensive against

the positions of IS militants in areas located in northwest of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad and near the IS-held town of Garma, some 40 km west of Baghdad, said a statement from Baghdad Operations Command (B.O.C.). The troops clashed with IS militants and killed at least 17 militants along with destroying some of their positions and a vehicle carrying ... (More on P4)...(26)

## Neighbour News

### Iran Makes New Proposal in Nuclear Talks

VIENNA - Iran has offered "constructive solutions" to resolve disputes in nuclear talks with six major powers, the Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA) reported on Wednesday, but Western officials suggested they had heard nothing new from Tehran. Iran and the powers are in the last stretch of talks to reach a final agreement to end a more than 12-year standoff over Iran's nuclear program. The aim is to lift sanctions in exchange for at least a decade of curbs on the program. "Iran has presented constructive solutions to overcome the remaining differ-

ences. We will not show flexibility regarding our red lines," an Iranian diplomat, who was not identified, told ISNA. But Western officials indicated they had yet to see substantive new proposals. The biggest sticking points include issues such as a United Nations arms embargo, U.N. missile sanctions, the speed of sanctions relief, and research and development on advanced nuclear centrifuges. "I haven't seen anything new from Iran," a Western diplomat close to the talks told Reuters on condition of anonymity. Another Western official echoed the remarks. (Reuters)

### Sharif to Meet Modi in Russia

UFA, Russia - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif will meet on the sidelines of the SCO Summit on Friday. According to sources, the two leaders, who will attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit, will be meeting on the sidelines of it. However, the details of the meeting were not officially confirmed. Modi and Sharif had last met in Kathmandu in November at the SAARC Summit where they did not, however, hold any bilateral meeting. Earlier at the beginning of the holy month of Ramzan, the

Prime Minister had called Sharif and extended his best wishes while stressing the need for having peaceful and bilateral ties. During his telephonic conversation, Modi had also conveyed to his Pakistani counterpart India's decision to release detained Pakistani fishermen on the occasion of Ramzan. The call was seen by many as an attempt to reach out to Pakistan after leaders from both sides exchanged sharp comments after Modi's critical remarks about Pakistan during his Bangladesh visit and in the wake of India's military action in Myanmar. (Agencies)

### Day of Uzbekistan in Ural kicks off in Yekaterinburg

BISHKEK - Yekaterinburg hosted a "Day of Uzbekistan in Ural" held in the framework of annual International Folklore Festival "Malachite Box". The idea of the event was to present the residents of Sverdlovsk region about a rich history, culture, and heritage of the Uzbek people, reports Jahon news agency.

The event was attended by the political authorities of the Sverdlovsk region, the foreign consulates, the staff of travel agencies, and the media.

Presentations about the monuments in the ancient cities of Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva took place after the official opening ceremony. The tents were installed at the site of the festival which exhibited products of national crafts, crafts and arts and crafts made by Uzbek masters. The participants were able to enjoy the performances of rope-walkers from Namangan and musicians who performed the Uzbek folk songs. All guests were given a pilaf. (AKI)

### China Pavilion Opens at Industrial Trade Fair in Russia



YEKATERINBURG, Russia - Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang on Wednesday declared the opening of the China Pavilion at the sixth International Industrial Trade Fair held in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg. Wang encouraged Chinese enterprises to make the best use of the event to show their latest achievements in industrial production as well as scientific and technological innovation, and carry out communication and exchanges with enterprises from Russia and

other countries to facilitate win-win cooperation. China is attending the four-day trade fair as the guest of honor with more than 130 Chinese enterprises in such sectors as high-speed trains, astronautics, ship-building, electric power, car-making, machinery, nuclear power and satellite navigation. The sixth International Industrial Trade Fair, an annual event held in Yekaterinburg since 2010, has attracted business delegates from more than 70 countries. (Xinhua)