

# UN Envoy Launches New Round of Syria Talks Amid Cease-Fire

GENEVA — The U.N.'s envoy for Syria on Monday opened a new round of indirect talks, the seventh so far, between Syrian government representatives and opposition leaders to try to wind down the battered country's civil war. The start of the talks in Geneva coincided with the first full day of a cease-fire for southern Syria that was brokered last week by the United States, Russia and Jordan. Opposition activist Ahmad al-Masalmeh said it was quiet in the city of Daraa, near the Jordanian border. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human



Rights monitoring group reported light shelling and bombardment in the city overnight. The agreed-on cease-fire covers three war-torn provinces in southern Syria. It's the first tangible outcome following months of strategy and diplomacy between the new Trump administration and Russian President Vladimir Putin's Moscow. The Geneva talks are expected to last through the week. U.N. envoy Staffan de Mistura declined to comment on his expectations but was due to hold a news conference later in the day. (AP)

## Neighbor News

### President Xi Urges Efforts to Advance Judicial Reform

GUIYANG - Chinese President Xi Jinping has urged efforts to unswervingly advance reform of the country's judicial system and follow the path of socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics. Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks in a written instruction conveyed to a national conference on judicial system reform, which was held Monday in the city of Guiyang in southwest China's Guizhou Province. Noting that judicial system reform is important to the cause of comprehensively deepening reform, effectively implementing the rule of law, and to the country's governance system, Xi called on judicial and law enforcement authorities to follow the requirements of the CPC Central Committee in advancing the reform. In the instruction, Xi praised the efforts of authorities in cracking difficult issues and making achievements in the reform, noting that the progress has promoted public trust in the judiciary and safeguarded social fairness and justice. Xi also stressed that rules in the judicial sector should be respected and modern technology should be introduced in judicial reform. He called for further efforts to advance the trial-centered reform of criminal procedures as well as reforms in the fields of public security, state security, and judicial administration. Meng Jianzhu, head of the Commission for Political and Legal Affairs of the CPC Central Committee, conveyed Xi's instruction and made a speech at the conference. (Xinhua)

### President Urges Youth to Promote Culture of Research

ISLAMABAD - President Mamnoon Hussain Monday emphasized that as no nation in the world could progress without focusing on research, the youth should promote culture of research in all walks of life. The president was talking to a delegation of students of Habib Public School, Karachi who called on him here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, a press release issued by the President's Media Office here. He said information and digital technologies were the future technologies in which the new generation of Pakistan should acquire special expertise to enable them to serve the country to cope with the challenges of modern era. On this occasion, he was also presented a memento of Habib Public School. The president said as the world was going through rapid changes, Pakistani students should work hard to keep in line with these changing circumstances so that the country could progress and earn a rightful place in the comity of nations. He underlined that healthy and pro-active youth were true assets of any nation and for this reason promotion of sports was a must. He noted that in the past Habib Public School and other educational institutions of Karachi earned great good-will and produced big names in different fields including sports. But during the last two years Karachi had not been able to maintain its distinct position therefore it was imperative that educational institutes of Karachi should promote curricular as well as extracurricular activities, he said, adding that Habib Public School should take lead in this regard. (APP)

## Tillerson Aims to Ease Qatar Crisis with Shuttle Diplomacy

ISTANBUL — The Trump administration tossed aside its aversion to mediating a weeks-long Persian Gulf dispute Monday, as the top U.S. diplomat flew to the region hoping to corral Qatar and its neighbors into negotiation. The new approach isn't without diplomatic risk, thrusting America into the middle of an Arab squabble at a time President Donald Trump had hoped the U.S. allies would be uniting against terrorism. On his first foray into shuttle diplomacy since

becoming secretary of state, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will hop between Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia from Monday until Thursday, testing ways to break an impasse that has persisted despite Kuwaiti mediation efforts. The crisis has badly damaged ties between several key American partners, including hosts of two major U.S. military bases, threatening counterterrorism efforts. Washington is worried the dispute is hampering Trump's bid to combat



international terrorist financing, U.S. officials said Tillerson doesn't expect an immediate breakthrough, which they warned could be months away. Rather, they said, he wants to explore possibilities for sparking negotiations. "We've had one round of exchanges and dialogue and didn't advance the ball," senior Tillerson adviser R.C. Hammond said. (AP)

## Qatar Seeks Compensation for Damages from Arab Blockade Amid Continuing Crisis

BEIJING - The Qatari government, in efforts to deal with the diplomatic row triggered by severance of relations by four Arab states, announced Sunday that it is taking steps to set up a committee to pursue compensation for damages therefrom. British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson arrived in the Middle East over the weekend to mediate the disputes. He said on Saturday that the diplomatic rift cannot be healed in short time. PURSUING COMPENSATION Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE),

Egypt and Bahrain last month cut off diplomatic relations, severed air, land and sea links with Qatar and ordered Qatari citizens to leave their countries within two weeks, accusing it of backing terrorism and extremism. Qatar has denied the allegations. Qatari Public Prosecutor Ali Al-Marri told reporters Sunday in Doha, Qatar's capital, that the committee to be established will deal with claims made by private companies, public institutions and individuals. (Xinhua)

## Merkel Challenger Says Anti-G20 Protesters Acted Like Terrorists

INGOLSTADT, Germany - The Social Democrat (SPD) challenger to Chancellor Angela Merkel in Germany's national election in September said on Monday the anti-capitalist militants who protested against the G20 summit in Hamburg at the weekend had acted like terrorists. About 20,000 police struggled to contain several hundred demonstrators who torched cars, looted shops and hurled Molotov cocktails and stones during the July 7-8 summit.

Tens of thousands more people demonstrated peacefully. SPD leader Martin Schulz said the "marauding gangs" could not claim to have any political legitimacy for their actions, adding: "It had the characteristics of terrorism." "Such small-minded skirmishes are the business of people who took a whole city hostage for their dimwittedness in an almost terrorist manner," said Schulz, whose party is trailing Merkel's conservatives in the opinion polls. (Reuters)

## OPEC Secretary-General Says OPEC Members Support Paris Agreement

ISTANBUL - Secretary-General Mohammed Barkindo of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) said Sunday that the member states of the bloc support the stance of the G20 leaders who have pledged to fully implement the Paris Agreement. Despite U.S. withdrawal, the other 19 members of the G20 unanimously said the climate change deal is "irreversible" and OPEC supports this position, Barkindo said on the sidelines of the World Petroleum Congress. All OPEC member

countries have signed the agreement, he said. The 22nd World Petroleum Congress, the largest gathering for the oil and gas industry, kicked off Sunday in Istanbul with a view to addressing the challenges facing the sector. "The challenges in the petroleum sector have been growing as the world population has been increasing," Jozsef Laszlo Toth, president of the World Petroleum Council, said at the opening ceremony. In a declaration issued after the conclusion of the



G20 summit in Hamburg, world leaders said that they remain "collectively committed" to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions but "take note of" the decision of the United States to withdraw from the agreement. The Paris Agreement aims to tackle climate change by cutting greenhouse gas emissions and sets a global target of keeping the rise in the average temperature no higher than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. (Xinhua)

## AL Leader Congratulates Iraq on Liberating Mosul from IS Rule

CAIRO - Arab League (AL) Secretary General Ahmed Abul Gheit on Monday congratulated Iraq on liberating Mosul from the terror group Islamic State (IS). Gheit also congratulated Iraqi Armed Forces on the "key achievement," AL spokesman Mahmoud Afifi was quoted by Egypt's official MENA news agency as saying. Gheit said Iraqi people's support for the army had a great role in defeating terrorists. At the same time, Gheit said he is looking forward to congratulating the Syrians on getting rid of IS. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who visited the army in Mosul on Sunday, declared victory in liberating Mosul from IS after a nine-month tough battle. (Xinhua)

## Macedonia to Combat Violence against Women under EU, UN Initiative

SKOPJE - Macedonia has become part of a European Union (EU) and United Nations initiative aimed at combating violence against women, Macedonian News Agency (MIA) reported Monday citing official sources. The program initiated by the EU and UN will last for three years and has a total value of 5 million euros (5.7 million U.S. dollars), Elena Grozdanova from the Macedonian Labor and Social Policy Ministry told the news agency from Brussels. The program will include activities to change opinions and steps to raise awareness on the need to protect women and girls from violence, according to local media reports. She added that Macedonian government was preparing a law against gender-based violence. (Xinhua)

## UN, Partner Agencies Issue Roadmap for Helping Unaccompanied Migrant Children

GENEVA - A group of UN and partner agencies on Monday issued a roadmap for action to improve the situation of refugee and migrant children arriving and staying in Europe without their parents or care givers. The roadmap, jointly issued by the UN refugee agency UNHCR, the United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), highlights the need to identify children, register



them through child-friendly procedures, and build a relationship of trust with them as early as possible. The roadmap also provides recommendations developed in a broad consultative process led by the three organizations, with input from 100 practitioners. (Xinhua)

## Hamburg Mayor Rejects Calls to Resign after Violent G20 Protests

BERLIN - Mayor of Hamburg Olaf Scholz has rejected calls for his resignation after the German city was rocked by a series of violent protests surrounding the G20 summit over the weekend. Speaking on a German television show Sunday night, Scholz told viewers that he had no intention of stepping down. On Monday, Hamburg residents were still clearing the debris of the most violent demonstrations which Germany has experienced in decades. Hundreds were injured in a series of escalating clashes between protesters and police which lasted from Thurs-

day until Sunday. Masked demonstrators threw Molotov cocktails, set dozens of cars ablaze and ransacked local shops. Residents, many of whom were already skeptical of the city's original intentions to host the event, reacted with fury at the inability of more than 20,000 deployed police officers to prevent protests from spinning out of control. At a G20 demonstration with the title "welcome to hell" on Thursday night, violent protesters had been left free to roam and loot in Hamburg's Schanze district for three hours until police finally intervened. (Xinhua)

## EU Parliament Threatens Veto on Brexit over Citizens' Rights

BRUSSELS — The European Parliament on Monday set itself on a collision course with Britain, making a damning assessment of British proposals on EU citizens' rights after the U.K. leaves the European Union. The legislature indicated it would be using its power of veto on the negotiations if Britain did not become more lenient on the rights of EU citizens living in the country, a further indication of how tough the two-year negotiations are expected to become. In a letter Monday to EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier, the group said EU citizens in Britain would be looking at "nothing less than relegation to second-class status," adding that the U.K. proposals made on June 26 do not "respect the principles of reciprocity, symmetry and non-discrimination." Citizens' rights in each other's nations are considered the first issue that both sides must settle. "It is clear we will not approve any deal which diminishes the rights of EU citizens in the U.K. or U.K. citizens in the EU," Guy Verhofstadt, the EU Parliament's chief Brexit official, told the AP. Even though Barnier is leading the negotiations for the EU as a whole, the European Parliament still has a veto right on any deal. So Verhofstadt's words carry power and should boost the standing of Barnier when he meets with his British counterpart David Davis next week. British Prime Minister Theresa May had first floated her ideas on protecting the rights of each other's citizens at an EU summit in late June. (AP)

## Iran Ready to Deal with 'Any Misguided US Step': Ministry

TEHRAN - Iran says it is ready to deal with any "unsavory" and "misguided" step by the US, including a possible violation of a nuclear accord which President Donald Trump has described as "one of the worst ever made". Both on his campaign trail and after election in early 2017, Trump threatened to "scrap" the agreement known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) but he has markedly toned down his rhetoric since taking office. "Given the dimensions that the JCPOA can have, Mr. Trump and the American leadership do not appear to be capable of unilaterally violating it," Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi told reporters in Tehran on Monday. "That is why the United States has focused on political, economic, and psychological measures in other anti-Iranian bills, and is keen to counteract the positive effects of the JCPOA," he added. Qassemi cited US "psychological" campaign to dissuade financial institutions as well as economic, industrial and commercial enterprises of the world from engaging in any trade with Iran. "In this way, they want to diminish or neutralize the positive and fruitful effects that the JCPOA could have in the economic sphere for Iran," the official said. "At the same time, there have been serious and positive signs in the events of the past couple of weeks that should be dealt with more thoughtfully and for any judgment about the future, we should wait a bit and see what kind of a policy America would follow," Qassemi added without explanation. (Presstv)

## Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan to Visit Uzbekistan

ASHGABAT - meredovDeputy Prime Minister - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov will visit Uzbekistan July 11-12, Uzbek foreign ministry said. Meredov is expected to meet with President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The program of the visit of the Turkmen delegation includes meetings and negotiations in the Government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan. (AKI)