

# Syrian Monitor Group Confirms Death of IS Leader Al-Baghdadi

DAMASCUS - The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitor group, on Tuesday confirmed the death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of Islamic State (IS).

"There is confirmed information" that al-Baghdadi has been killed, said the group, which has emerged as the main opposition source of information throughout Syria's long-running conflict.

However, it did not provide more details about the death of the IS leader, who made only one public appearance in 2014 when he declared in Mosul, Iraq the establishment of Islamic State.



Quoting a brief statement issued by IS media, Iraqi news agency al-Sumaria News on Tuesday also reported that the militant group has confirmed the death of al-Baghdadi.

"Daesh organization (IS group) circulated a brief statement through its media in the (IS-held) town of Tal Afar in the west of Mosul, confirming the killing of its leader al-Baghdadi without giving further details," the report said. The IS statement also said that it will name a new caliph (Islamic top leader) soon. Rumors of al-Baghdadi's death have appeared several times recently. (Xinhua)

## Weakened UK Leader Theresa May Vows to Win 'Battle of Ideas'

LONDON - Attempting to regain political momentum after an election left her atop a fragile minority government, British Prime Minister Theresa May said Tuesday that she has to win a "battle of ideas" in Parliament and the country. In a speech both conciliatory and defiant, May urged her political opponents to contribute their "views and ideas" to help shape policy during "a period of great national change" as Britain leaves the European Union. "My commitment

to changing Britain is undimmed," May said, nearly a year after taking office - and just over a month after she suffered a rebuff from voters in a snap election.

May became prime minister on July 13, 2016, through a Conservative Party leadership contest after predecessor David Cameron resigned when voters decided, against his advice, to quit the EU. She called an early election in an attempt to bolster her majority and strengthen her authority



during Brexit talks.

The gamble backfired when voters stripped the Conservatives of their majority in Parliament and boosted the number of seats held by the left-of-center, opposition La-

bour Party.

The result means May must rely on deal-making and compromises to pass legislation, and is struggling to persuade her party that she isn't a lame duck. (AP)

## White House Admits Trump, Putin Discuss Sanctions in G20 Meeting

WASHINGTON - The White House said on Monday that U.S. President Donald Trump talked about sanctions related to Russian meddling in the U.S. election, contradicting an earlier comment made by Trump.

"There were sanctions specific to election meddling that I believe were discussed, but not beyond that," White House Spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders told reporters at a daily briefing. Just one day earlier,

Trump said on Twitter that "sanctions were not discussed at my meeting with President Putin."

The U.S. and Russian leaders held their first in-person meeting at the Group of 20 Summit on Friday in Hamburg, Germany.

Their high-profile encounter came amid a U.S. federal investigation into Russian meddling in the U.S. general elections in 2016, as well as tensions between the two powers in conflicts of Syria and Ukraine. (Xinhua)

## UN Chief Welcomes Announcement of De-Escalation Zone in Syria

UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday welcomed the announcement of a de-escalation zone in Syria. "This is a significant step towards reducing violence and increasing humanitarian access across Syria, in line with the pursuit of the goal of a comprehensive, nationwide ceasefire, as endorsed by multiple Security Council resolutions," Guterres said in a statement. The announcement about the de-escalation zone and arrangements to support a ceasefire and delivery of

humanitarian assistance in southwest Syria was made by Jordan, Russia and the United States. The secretary-general urged all countries to preserve the right for all Syrians to seek asylum and enjoy refugee protection until conditions are conducive for return in safety and dignity. As the United Nations reconvened the intra-Syrian talks on a political settlement based on Security Council resolution 2254, the secretary-general urged all parties to redouble efforts for a political solution. (Xinhua)

## Qatar Threatens to Withdraw from GCC if Conditions not Met

CAIRO - Qatar threatens Monday to withdraw from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) by setting conditions for the Saudi-led bloc, state news agency MENA reported. Qatari Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al Thani on Monday sent a letter to Secretary General of the GCC Abdul Latif Bin Rashid Al Zayani, setting his country's conditions so as not to withdraw from the GCC.

Al Thani said Qatar is committed to international laws and conventions,

especially with regard to fighting terrorism and its financing, adding that Qatar will not negotiate on its sovereignty.

He added that his country would give a three-day notice to the Gulf countries to lift the "siege" imposed on Qatar and compensate it for the political and economic losses.

Following the deadline, Qatar will officially announce its withdrawal from the GCC, according to the letter. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt is-



sued a list of 13 demands to Qatar later last month, including closing Al-Jazeera TV station, stopping financing and supporting terrorism, and downgrading its ties with Iran, as major preconditions for

ending their boycott.

The four countries vowed to take further political, economic and legal steps to tighten the screws on Doha after the latter refused to accept demands. (Xinhua)

## China, U.S. to Hold 1st Round of Comprehensive Economic Dialogue

BEIJING - The first round of a comprehensive economic dialogue between China and the United States will be held on July 19 in Washington D.C., the Chinese Foreign Ministry confirmed Tuesday. The consensus was reached by Chinese President Xi Jinping and his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump on the sidelines of the Group of 20 (G20) summit in Hamburg, spokesperson Geng Shuang said at a routine press briefing.

During the upcoming dialogue, co-chaired by Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, and Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, the two sides will exchange views on economic and trade issues of common concern, Geng said. (Xinhua)

## Russian FM Says to Continue Cooperation with U.S. in Syria

MOSCOW - Russia and the United States will continue cooperation in Syria on the basis of a trilateral agreement with Jordan on setting up a de-escalation zone in the war-torn country, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Monday.

"Although yesterday, from 12 p.m. Syrian time, the regime of ceasefire became effective, it has to be strengthened, so there will be plenty of work to be done there," Lavrov told a press conference.

On Friday, Russia, the United States and Jordan reached a deal to support a ceasefire in southwest Syria, setting up a de-escalation zone to create appropriate environment for reaching a political solution to the situation in the Middle East country. (Xinhua)

## UN Hails Recovery of Mosul as Major Step in Fight against Terrorism

UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday hailed the recovery of Iraq's northern city of Mosul as a significant step in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

In a statement, Guterres paid tribute to the people and government of Iraq for their courage, determination and perseverance.

"The United Nations will stand by the government of Iraq in the tasks



ahead of creating the necessary conditions for the voluntary, safe and dignified return of displaced communities, restoring the rule of law in freed

up areas, preventing a return to violence and fostering accountability for all violations committed," said the statement. (Xinhua)

## Germany Asks EU Partners for Help in Probing into G20 Violent Clashes

BERLIN - German Minister of Justice Heiko Maas has pleaded for help from EU partners in the investigation of the violence that rocked Hamburg during the recent G20 summit.

"Many photos and images are currently being assessed to identify the perpetrators. We also rely on assistance from our international partners towards this end," Maas wrote to his European colleagues on Tuesday, the Funke Medien-gruppe reported.

Masked protestors had clashed with authorities at a series of demonstrations against the G20 summit between Thursday and Sunday last week, throw-

ing Molotov cocktails, setting cars on fire and looting local shops. More than 20,000 police officers were deployed to ensure safety in the northern German city, hundreds of which were injured.

According to the report, Maas asked other EU justice ministers to treat German requests for legal assistance in connection with the clashes with priority. He also requested that related European arrest warrants issued by Germany would be enforced promptly.

A total of 51 suspects, from Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Russia, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Austria, remain in custody in Hamburg. (Xinhua)

## Kuwait, U.S., Britain Call for Rapid Solution of Qatari Crisis through Dialogue

KUWAIT - Kuwait, the U.S. and Britain have called for "a rapid end" to the crisis between Qatar and its Arab neighbors through dialogue, the official KUNA news agency reported Tuesday.

The call was issued at a meeting held late Monday by Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah with visiting U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Britain's National Security Advisor Mark Sedwill. They "expressed deep concern" over the continuation of the current crisis in the region, the report said.

They urged all parties to "contain this crisis rapidly, and to find a solution through dialogue as soon as possible." Tillerson and Sedwill reaffirmed their support to the mediation efforts made by Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to solve the crisis. Tillerson arrived in Kuwait Monday to discuss the ways to broker an end to the crisis in the Gulf, which Washington fears could damage its counterterrorism operations in the region. The U.S. has a huge military base in Qatar, from where its military carries out airstrikes at terrorists in Syria and Iraq. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt severed diplomatic ties with Qatar early last month and cut off sea, land and air links to the tiny rich Gulf nation, accusing Doha of supporting terrorism, interfering in their internal affairs and seeking closer ties with Iran, a Saudi rival. (Xinhua)

## Nieghbor News

### Two Decades after Crisis, China Rises as Global Financial Power

BEIJING - Two decades after the Asian financial crisis which tipped nations into economic and political turmoil, China now finds itself a major financial power capable of better global contribution.

Latest progress in the financial sector includes global recognition of Chinese shares. Only two weeks ago, equity index provider MSCI finally included a number of Shanghai and Shenzhen listed stocks in one of its most traded indices, after three years of stalling.

The path has been neither smooth nor straight. When the crisis quickly enveloped most of the Asian economies including China's Hong Kong, the nation's GDP and export growth slowed down markedly. China, however, made great efforts to protect its cur-

rency renminbi from devaluating, which contributed to stabilizing the regional and, in fact, the global economy.

Lessons have been learned. The crisis could be traced to the premature opening up of capital accounts before domestic financial systems and regulations were ready.

China has been steadfast on pursuing sound economic and financial policies as well as effective regulation and supervision over the past two decades, aiming to build a more open and competent financial system and fulfill its WTO commitments.

From the banking sector reshuffle years ago to the current tight financial regulation, reforms never stop despite emerging problems especially in recent years. (Xinhua)

### Pakistan PM Faces Pressure after Damning Corruption Probe Report

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was fighting for his political future on Tuesday after judicial investigators ruled his family had accumulated unusual wealth, with his allies denouncing the findings and vowing he would clear his name. A Joint Investigation Team (JIT), set up by the Supreme Court to investigate corruption allegations that surfaced following the Panama Papers leak, spent two months looking into the family's wealth and gave its finding to the court on Monday. In their report, which has been leaked to media, the team alleges Sharif's family accumulated wealth far above its earnings, and says his children, including heir-apparent Maryam Sharif,

signed falsified documents designed to mask the truth.

Opposition leader Imran Khan said Sharif had "lost all moral authority" and must resign immediately. But Sharif's allies dismissed all the allegations against him and the report. "It's trash," said Defence Minister Asif Khawaja, adding that the report was "full of flaws". Sharif, the son of an industrialist, has denied wrongdoing and said his family's wealth was acquired legally.

In April, the Supreme Court ruled that there was sufficient evidence to remove Sharif from office - by a split 2-3 verdict - but it ordered further investigations, which the JIT was set up to carry out. (Reuters)

### Nuclear-Related Sanctions Hurt Iranian People, not Government: Rouhani

TEHRAN - Iran's President Hassan Rouhani says the sanctions that had been imposed on the country over its nuclear program impacted the Iranian nation rather than government, contrary to what the enforcers of the sanctions claimed.

"In spite of what the Western world would claim, the sanctions didn't bite the government, they bit the people. When sanctions are imposed on [the sales of] our oil, and the country's revenues dwindle [as a result], all government services [to the public] are affected," President Rouhani said on Tuesday. The Iranian president, who was speaking at a health conference in Tehran, said the "cruel" sanctions had even

caused trouble in the procurement of medical equipment, medication, and pharmaceutical raw material.

He referred to his administration's efforts to engage more deeply in negotiations with a group of world powers over the bans and said, "The first thing that had to be resolved was the issue of the sanctions." He said Iranian diplomacy, supported by the people, proved how it can succeed against the machinations of big world powers.

The Iranian nuclear program had been the subject of a global dispute for well over a decade, during much of which Iran engaged in negotiations to resolve the matter diplomatically. (Presstv)

### Uzbekistan, European Investment Bank Discuss Cooperation

TASHKENT - Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan hosted a teleconference with the representatives of the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Uzbek Foreign Ministry said.

Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Trade, State Investment Committee, Prosecutor-Gen-

eral's Office, Center for coordination and development of the securities market, Department for combating tax, currency crimes and legalization of criminal incomes under the Prosecutor-General's Office took part in the event.

During the event, the experts considered a draft framework agreement on the EIB activities in Uzbekistan. (AKI)