

# New Syrian Government Sworn in Before Assad

DAMASCUS - The newly-formed Syrian government was sworn in before President Bashar al-Assad on Monday, state news agency SANA reported. Earlier this month, al-Assad endorsed the new government, which maintained many of the original ministers.

On June 22, al-Assad issued a decree naming then minister of electricity Imad Khamis as new prime minister, replacing Wael al-Halqi.

The new 32-seat cabinet headed by Khamis has 14



new ministers and four ministers of state, including Information Minister

Ramez Tarjaman, the former head of the national Syrian TV.

Ministers at the Electricity Ministry, the Industry Ministry, the Economy

Ministry, the Oil Ministry, and the Ministry of Finance have all been replaced.

Defense Minister Fahed Jassem al-Fraj, Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem, Interior Minister Muhammad al-Sha'ar, and Justice Minister Najm al-Ahmad as its minister retained their old positions in the new cabinet.

The new government didn't include any of the home-based opposition figures. Formation of the new government came weeks after the Syrian parliament was elected. The opposition boycotted the elections. The...*(More on P4)...(15)*

## Carter Arrives in Baghdad for Talks with Iraqi Leaders: TV

BAGHDAD - U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter on Monday arrived in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad on an unannounced visit to meet with Iraqi leaders, Iraqi official television reported.

Carter's visit came as Iraqi forces are fighting against the Islamic State (IS) militant group and advancing to free Iraq's last major IS stronghold in Mosul, some 400 km north of Baghdad.

Carter is expected to meet with Iraqi leaders

and top U.S. military officials to discuss coordination of military campaign against the IS in the country, and means to enhance U.S. support by the international coalition to Iraqi forces fighting to free Mosul, the state-run Iraqiya channel said.

The visit came in less than three months after Carter's previous one in April when he discussed with Iraqi leaders America's offer to deploy extra troops to Iraq as advisors to Iraqi forces. Hundreds of U.S. marines



are already in Iraq, serving as trainers and advisers, in an attempt to help the country win the battle against IS extremists in Iraq's western province of Anbar as well as in northern Iraq. Iraq's security situation has drastically deteriorated since June 2014, when bloody clashes broke out between Iraqi security forces...*(More on P4)...(16)*

## French FM Arrives in Beirut for Official Visit

BEIRUT - French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault arrived in Lebanon on Monday for a two-day official visit, during which he is scheduled to meet with the country's top leaders, National News Agency (NNA) reported. After his arrival at Beirut's Rafik Hariri International Airport, Ayrault boarded a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) helicopter that carried him to Naqoura to inspect French peacekeepers stationed there, the NNA said.

Ayrault will return to Beirut and meet with Lebanese officials on Tuesday, it added.

The French minister is scheduled to hold talks with Speaker Nabih Berri, Prime Minister Tammam Salam, Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil and Maronite Patriarch Bechara al-Rahi.

He will also meet with leaders of some political parties, including al-Mustaqbal Movement, Marada Movement, Free Patriotic Movement, Kataeb Party, Lebanese Forces, Hezbollah's Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc, and Progressive Socialist Party...*(More on P4)...(17)*

## Russia Slams NATO for Anti-Missile Deployment in Europe

MOSCOW - Russia's Foreign Ministry on Sunday slammed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for its anti-missile deployment in Europe, saying the bloc continued to deliberately ignore the action's negative consequences and risks for the entire Euro-Atlantic security system.

The ministry's spokeswoman Maria Zakharova accused the United States and NATO in a statement of "deliberate actions to change the existing balance of force, including the

forced implementation of the U.S./NATO anti-missile plans in Europe."

"Contrary to the objective interests of maintaining peace and stability in Europe, as well as the need for uniting all responsible international players to fight real and not contrived modern challenges, the alliance focuses on the containment of a non-existent 'threat from the East,'" Zakharova said, commenting on the NATO summit held in Warsaw on July 8-9.

There...*(More on P4)...(18)*

## NATO Air Force Drill Kicks off in Bulgaria

SOFIA - The joint air force drill Thracian Star 2016, involving units from Bulgaria, the United States, Greece and Romania, kicked off in the Bulgarian airspace on Monday, officials said.

During the 12-day exercise, 12 jets F-15 from California's 144th Fighter Wing will train together with Romanian MiG-21s, Greek F-16s, and Bulgarian jets and helicopters such as MiG-29, Su-25, AS 532 AL Cougar, Mi-24 and Mi-17, Bulgarian Air Force said in a statement on its website.

The main objectives were to achieve greater interoperability of the Bulgarian Air Force to participate in operations under the auspices of NATO, and enhance the theoretical, tactical-special and flight preparation of the staff, the statement said.



The drill is a part of the plan for joint Bulgarian-American training and exercises for 2016, the statement added. According to data from the country's Defense Ministry, in 2015 the Bulgarian Armed Forces conducted 264 national and 25 international exercises. In addition, military units of the Bulgarian army participated in 82 joint trainings and drills with the U.S. Army. (Xinhua)

## IS Territory Shrinks by 12 Percent in first Half of 2016

DAMASCUS - Territory controlled by the Islamic State extremist group shrunk by 12 percent in the first six months of 2016, according to an analysis released by the research group IHS on Sunday.

The analysis said that "in 2015, the Islamic State's caliphate shrunk by 12,800 square kilometers to 78,000 square kilometers, a net loss of 14 percent."

"In the first six months of 2016, that territory shrunk



again by 12 percent. As of July 4, 2016, the Islamic State controls roughly 68,300 square kilometers

in Iraq and Syria," it said. IHS senior analyst Columb Strack said the losses were likely to mean the

IS would redouble its attempts at "mass casualty attacks." "As...*(More on P4)...(19)*

## Egypt Endeavors on Thorny Task to Push for Mideast Peace

JERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu surprised his cabinet on Sunday in Jerusalem by announcing that Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry would be visiting the country within hours of the announcement.

Egypt was the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979 and thus recognize the Jewish state. But the relations can often be defined as cold and correct at best.

It was the first such visit since 2007 as relations between the two countries have been rocky.

Recently, however, Israel and Egypt have become allies -- a merging of interests between the two countries has brought them closer together.

According to Eran Singer, an Arab Affairs correspondent for Israeli Radio station Reshet Bet, ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

## Obama Stresses Close U.S.-Spain Ties during Brief Visit to Madrid



MADRID - President of the United States Barack Obama met King Felipe VI of Spain and acting Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy on Sunday during his brief visit to Spain.

Obama, who landed in Madrid late on Saturday night, visited the King for a reception at the Royal Palace in the center of Madrid at 10:30 a.m. local time.

The pair made a short appearance for the press, with Felipe stressing that the United States was "a friend and a decisive nation on the world," and that Spain and the U.S. shared "principals, values and interests."

In response Obama said that America and Spain "were not just allies, but countries which had the...*(More on P4)...(22)*

## DPRK Threatens to Cut Official Contact with U.S.

PYONGYANG - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Monday threatened to cut off one of its official contact channels with the United States, the first of its countermeasures against new sanctions imposed on the country's senior officials.

The DPRK on Sunday sent a message to the United States denouncing recent U.S. sanctions against Pyongyang, which "impaired the dignity of the supreme leadership" of the country, the state-run news agency KCNA re-

ported. Currently, the DPRK Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York acts as one of the few communication channels between Pyongyang and Washington, which the DPRK is threatening to close down.

On Wednesday, the U.S. Treasury Department imposed sanctions on DPRK top leader Kim Jong Un and other senior officials over alleged human rights abuses. It also slapped sanctions on 10 other individuals and five entities for...*(More on P4)...(20)*

## 40 Abu Sayyaf Militants Killed in Southern Philippines Clashes

MANILA - The military on Monday claimed to have killed around 40 members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in skirmishes in the southern Philippines since last week as part of the military's efforts to end the terrorist group.

Maj. Filemon Tan, spokesman of the military's Western Mindanao Command, said 25 other Abu Sayyaf men were also wounded based on intelligence information gathered by government troops.

"Focused military operations are intensified, in coordination with the police and the local governments of the provinces of Basilan and Sulu Province, to neutralize the Abu Sayyaf Group," said Tan.

The fighting in Basilan, particularly in the towns of Unkayan Pukan and Albarka, broke out last Wednesday, the military said.

In Sulu, the fighting erupted last Thursday in Patikul town. Artillery rounds were delivered to known positions of the Abu Sayyaf in the process. The...*(More on P4)...(23)*

## Neighbor News

### GM Uzbekistan's Car Sales in Russia Down

TASHKENT - The Uzbek-American joint venture GM Uzbekistan (formerly UzDaewooAuto) sold 8,574 cars in Russia, or 17.2 percent less than in the same period 2015, the Automobile Manufacturers Committee of the Association of European Businesses (AEB) said in a message Monday.

Russia is the main export market for GM Uzbekistan. According to the message, GM Uzbekistan sold 1,136 cars in Russia in June, or 34.5 percent less as compared to 1,735 cars sold in June 2015.

GM Uzbekistan's share in Russian car market

remained unchanged in January-June 2016 standing at 1.3 percent as compared to the same period 2015, said the message. UzDaewooAuto JSC was established in 1996 by the Uzbek government and South Korea's Daewoo Motors.

Uzbekistan acquired Daewoo's shares in UzDaewooAuto in 2005. Uzavtoprom (Uzbek Association of Automotive Industry Enterprises) and the US-based General Motors signed an agreement to establish GM Uzbekistan with an authorized capital of \$266.7 million in 2007. (Trend)

### China's Industrial Exhibition Expected to Take Place in Tajikistan Soon

DUSHANBE - An exhibition of industrial goods of China's Gansu Province is expected to take place in the Tajik capital of Dushanbe soon.

An agreement on holding the exhibition in Dushanbe was reached during a meeting of Head of Tajikistan's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), Sharif Said, with Li Chong Tsan (phonetically spelled, Vice-Governor of Gansu Province, which took place in Lanzhou, the capital of Gansu Province on July 9 on the sidelines of the 22nd Lanzhou Investment and Trade Fair.

According to the Tajik CCI press center, the two sides also discussed issues related to increase in a two-way trade between Tajikistan and China, holding of the exhibition of industrial goods of Gansu and a conference of representatives of Tajik and Chinese business communities in Dushanbe in the autumn.

Gansu Province is located in the northwest of China. It lies between the Tibetan and Huangtu plateaus, and borders Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, and Ningxia to the north, Xinjiang and Qinghai to the west, Sichuan to the south, and Shaanxi to the east. The Yellow River passes through the southern part of the province.

Most of Gansu's economy is based on mining and the extraction of minerals, especially rare earth elements. The province has significant deposits of antimony, chromium, coal, cobalt, copper, fluorite, gypsum, iridium, iron, lead, limestone, mercury, mirabilite, nickel, crude oil, platinum, troilite, tungsten, and zinc among others.

The oil fields at Yumen and Changqing are considered significant. Gansu has China's largest nickel deposits accounting for over 90% of China's total nickel reserves. (Asia-Plus)

### Iran Rejects West's Concerns over Missile Program

TEHRAN - The Iranian Foreign Ministry on Monday dismissed concerns raised recently by NATO members over its missile program.

"The concerns posed in the latest meeting of the NATO is the repetition of the baseless allegations and is rejected," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qasemi said.

He was referring to a NATO statement released on July 9 that expressed "serious concern over the development of Iran's ballistic missile

program and continuing missile tests."

"As it has been announced repetitively, our country's missile capabilities are within the framework of legitimate defense program of the Islamic republic and have not been developed to carry nuclear warheads," Qasemi said.

Iran's missile program has nothing to do with the country's nuclear deal with major powers and does not violate any United Nations resolution, he added. (Xinhua)

### Flooding Caused by Dyke Breaches Washes away Villages, Crops in Pakistan

SUKKUR/BADIN - Scores of thatched houses in seven villages and standing crops over several hundred acres were washed away when breaches in the dykes of two canals caused flooding in certain areas of Ghotki and Badin districts on Sunday.

In Ghotki district, three villages -- Jaffar Gadani, Kashmir Gadani and Haji Mashool Gadani -- were hit by strong currents following flooding caused by a 40-foot-wide breach in a dyke of the Imam Wah (irrigation channel) at RD-16 near Khanpur Mahar town. district Ghotki on Sunday. Affected villagers and growers said that standing crops, scores of houses along with valuables, as

well as stocks of grains were washed away by the flooding that also rendered them homeless. They said they had suffered a collective loss of millions of rupees.

They complained that the irrigation officials concerned did not respond when they were informed of the breach and requested to help plug it. They claimed that the RD-16 point of the dyke was weak and the officials had long been informed of it but no strengthening work was carried out. They alleged that Rs140 million had been released to carry out the dyke strengthening, lining and channel cleaning work but no works were undertaken and the funds were misappropriated. (Dawn)