

UN Begins first Review of Progress on 2030 SDGs

UNITED NATIONS - The High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) kicked off here Monday to review the work of countries' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and SDGs, UN officials said.

"There are 22 volunteering countries for the review of their national implementation of the SDGs," said Ambassador Oh Joon of South Korea, this year's president of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

"Luckily they are from all



regions of the world and varying levels of development. So, in other words, a

good mix of 22 volunteering countries."

"Someone described this

as hitting the ground running because we started implementation only on

the first day of this year that is to go on for the next 15 years," he said. "We al-

ready are reviewing how we are doing only after six months after the start of the implementation."

The SDGs, which were agreed by world leaders in September to fight inequality and extreme poverty, were designed to serve as the blueprint for the global development efforts for the next 15 years.

Oh said the initial sessions, leading up to the ministerial meetings on July 18-20, are important to show "We are trying to set the stage for the next 15 years, ... (More on P4)...(24)

Syrian Army Extends Ceasefire for Additional 72 Hrs

DAMASCUS - The Syrian army announced Monday evening extending a regime of calm for additional 72 hours, the third consecutive extension to take place recently, state news agency SANA said. The new extension will enter into effect on July 12 and will end on July 14, said the report.

The first recent 72-hour ceasefire went into effect last Tuesday, and was extended for a similar duration for the second time on Saturday.

The regime of silence was

planned to be nationwide, but the northern city of Aleppo has seen one of the most violent situations during the last week, when the rebels went on retaliatory offensives on government-controlled areas, to revenge the government troops' control over the last supply line for the rebels in the northern countryside of Aleppo.

Over 60 people were killed and hundreds of others wounded over the past few days, when the rebels of the al-Qai-



da-linked Nusra Front and likeminded groups rained down Aleppo with hundreds of mortar shells.

On Monday morning, the Nusra and allied militants

unleashed simultaneous attacks on government-controlled districts in western Aleppo.

Opposition activists said the rebels advanced near the ... (More on P4)...(25)

U.S. Announces Additional 560 U.S. Troops to Iraq



WASHINGTON - The Pentagon announced on Monday it would deploy an additional 560 troops to Iraq to fight the extremist group the Islamic State (IS).

"The additional troops will provide a range of support for Iraqi Security Forces, including infrastructure and logistical capabilities at the airfield near Qayyarah," said a Pentagon statement, adding that announcement

was made by U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter during his visit to Iraq.

"As the campaign shifts toward Mosul, more than 250 miles from the Iraqi capital, the airfield will become a vital springboard for the ISF offensive into Mosul," said the statement.

The latest increase of U.S. troops in Iraq brings the total U.S. troops there to 4,647. (Xinhua)

Modi Appeals for Calm in Simmering Indian-Controlled Kashmir

NEW DELHI - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday appealed for calm in Indian-controlled Kashmir where clashes between government forces and protesters have left at least 30 people dead.

Modi's appeal came immediately after he chaired an emergency meeting in New Delhi after returning from a five-day tour of four African nations.

The meeting was attended by senior federal ministers including Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Finance

Minister Arun Jaitley and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, among others, to take stock of the prevailing situation in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

Violent clashes broke out in the region Saturday, a day after killing of top commander of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) Burhan Muzaffar Wani, along with two associates.

Life in Muslim majority areas of the region including the capital city Srinagar remains paralyzed for the fourth straight day due to ... (More on P4)...(26)

US Figures Urge more Iran Engagement

TEHRAN - More than 75 high-profile current and former US political and military personalities have written to US President Barack Obama, advising that he pursue deeper engagement with Iran.

Politico reported the development on Monday, saying the letter was penned by bipartisan signatories.

"Given the stakes, the US will need more, not less, engagement with Iran," they wrote.

The figures include retired Sens. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), Mark Udall (D-Colo.), Carl Levin (D-Mich.), J. Bennett Johnston (D-La.), and Nancy Kassebaum



(R-Kan.), as well as former Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), it revealed.

Also among the signatories are former Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Merrill McPeak and Nobel Prize winners Leon Cooper and

Burton Richter. "The US should develop policies that increase the chances of cooperation with Iran, minimize confrontation," the letter read. "We acknowledge that opportunities will be

limited for testing Iran's willingness to work directly with the US due to the political uncertainties in both countries in the coming year, but engagement should be the US ... (More on P4)...(27)

Turkey Keen to Improve Relations with Neighbors: Yildirim

ANKARA - Turkey will continue to improve relations with its neighbors, including Syria and Egypt, Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said on Tuesday.

"There are not many reasons for us to fight with Iraq, Syria, Egypt and countries in all regions. But there are many reasons to carry relations forward," Yildirim was quoted by Hurriyet News as saying at a meeting of his Justice and Development Party's

(AKP) in Ankara. Yildirim stressed that Turkey has recently moved to normalize strained ties with Russia and Israel, and that Ankara "regards all countries as friends."

"We will increase our friendships and decrease enmities. We will also increase our friendships within the country. We will refrain from meaningless and empty discourse. From now on, we will improve our friendships with



all countries surrounding the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. We will keep our disagreements at

a minimum," he vowed. However, the premier maintained that Turkey was ... (More on P4)...(28)

At Least 20 Dead, Dozens Injured in Italy's Head-on Train Collision

ROME - At least 20 people were killed and dozens injured as two trains collided and clashed head-on in southern Italy on Tuesday, local media reported.

According to the latest reports of ANSA news agency and Rai state television, the collision happened on a single-track railway around 11:30 a.m. local time in the southern Puglia region.

Firefighters were at work to extract survivors from the twisted metal of the first two cars on each train, but there could be more victims, according to ANSA sources.

Rai said all hospitals in the region were involved in the emergency operations. Three helicopters ... (More on P4)...(30)

France Urges Dialogue Among Lebanese Parties to Ease Stalemate

BEIRUT - Visiting French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault urged Tuesday all Lebanese parties to engage in dialogue to "find a solution" to the political stalemate the country has been going through.

Ayrault said that Lebanon must overcome the crisis to confront the economic, security and social challenges, including the Syrian refugee crisis.

He made the remarks following his meeting with Lebanon's Prime Minister Tammam Salam on the second day of his official visit to the country. "This is a call for everyone to shoulder their responsibilities in order to find a solution through dialogue," he added.

The French minister had voiced the same call on Monday evening during a dinner banquet in honor of the presidential candidates and heads of the political parties. Lebanon has been without a president since May 25th, 2014 when the tenure of former President Michel Suleiman ended and the parliament failed to elect an incumbent due to the sharp political division among the Iranian and Syrian backed March 8 camp and the Saudi and western backed March 14 camp. After talks with Salam, Ayrault said he will soon resume his international contacts "so that we cooperate for the sake of finding a solution for Lebanon." Ayrault's arrived in Lebanon on Monday and inspected his country's battalion working within the frame of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and held talks with al-Mustaqbal Movement leader ex-PM Saad Hariri. (Xinhua)

UNHCR Calls for Open Borders for Possible South Sudan Refugee Outflows

KAMPALA - The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on Tuesday appealed to armed parties in South Sudan to ensure safe passage for people fleeing the fighting that erupted late last week in the capital, Juba.

The UN refugee agency in a statement called on the rival troops loyal to President Salva Kiir and First Vice-President Riek Machar to keep borders open to people fleeing and seeking asylum in the neighboring countries.

"UNHCR is calling on all armed parties to ensure safe passage for people

fleeing the fighting that erupted late last week in Juba and we urge neighboring countries to keep borders open to people seeking asylum," said the statement.

UNHCR noted that some borders have been affected such as the Uganda-South Sudan crossing, where security is tightened on the South Sudan side. "This has led to a significant decrease in the number of new arrivals coming into Uganda over the weekend," it said.

Just 95 people crossed on Saturday, dropping to 36 on Sunday, compared with ... (More on P4)...(29)

Infectious Diseases Kill 1,564 in China in June

BEIJING - A total of 1,564 people died of infectious diseases on the Chinese mainland in June, the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) said Tuesday.

A total of 869,281 cases were reported last month, according to the commission. Among them, one case of cholera and one case of plague were reported, with no death. Plague and cholera are categorized as Class A infectious dis-

eases, the most serious category.

A total of 300,051 cases of Class B infectious diseases resulted in 1,518 deaths. Hepatitis, tuberculosis, syphilis, dysentery and gonorrhoea accounted for 91 percent of the cases in this category, according to the NHFPC. It added that Class C infectious diseases claimed 46 lives in June, with foot-and-mouth disease, infectious diarrhoea and mumps reported most frequently. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

Nawaz Goes Back Looking for Consensus on Panama

LAHORE - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has instructed Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar to make another effort - while showing "maximum flexibility" - to develop a consensus on terms of reference (ToR) with opposition parties so that an inquiry commission could be constituted to probe the leads provided by the Panama Papers.

Also, the prime minister asked Dar to finalise the names for membership of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), keeping in mind Opposition Leader Khurshid

Shah's recommendations. The prime minister gave these instructions in a meeting with Ishaq Dar and Federal Information Minister Pervaiz Rasheed at his Jatti Umra residence on Monday, confirmed Mr Rasheed while talking to Dawn.

The prime minister's instructions for showing the maximum flexibility for the consensus with opposition parties on the ToR have come soon after Mr Dar announced that he would make public the ToR framed by both the government and the opposition. (Dawn)

Saddam Fate Awaits Faisal and his Like: Iran FM

TEHRAN - Iran says former Saudi intelligence chief, Prince Turki al-Faisal, and his ilk face a fate similar to that of the former Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein.

Speaking to IRIB upon his arrival in the Kazakh capital of Astana on Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif criticized the former Saudi intelligence chief for taking part in a rally held by the Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) terrorist group in the French capital of Paris.

"He [Faisal] has created both al-Qaeda and Taliban and played a very

disgraceful role in the past record of Al-Saud regime," he said.

Zarif added that the former Saudi official's presence in the MKO rally shows the "incompetence and lack of insight" of Faisal and his ilk who, like Saddam, tie their future to terrorists.

The top Iranian diplomat noted that it was not the first time that the MKO terrorists played such a "political game" in France. The former Saudi spy chief attended an annual meeting of the MKO in Paris on Saturday and gave a 30-minute address to the gathering. (Presstv)

China Statement on Ruling on South China Sea Arbitration

Following is the full text of the Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China on the Award of 12 July 2016 of the Arbitral Tribunal in the South China Sea Arbitration Established at the Request of the Republic of the Philippines issued on Tuesday.

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China on the Award of 12 July 2016 of the Arbitral Tribunal in the South China Sea Arbitration Established at the Request of the Republic of the Philippines

With regard to the award rendered on 12 July 2016 by the Arbitral Tribunal in the South China Sea arbitration established at the unilateral request of the Republic of the Philippines (hereinafter referred to as the "Arbitral Tribunal"), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China solemnly declares that the award is null and void and has no binding

force. China neither accepts nor recognizes it.

1. On 22 January 2013, the then government of the Republic of the Philippines unilaterally initiated arbitration on the relevant disputes in the South China Sea between China and the Philippines. On 19 February 2013, the Chinese government solemnly declared that it neither accepts nor participates in that arbitration and has since repeatedly reiterated that position. On 7 December 2014, the Chinese government released the Position Paper of the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Matter of Jurisdiction in the South China Sea Arbitration Initiated by the Republic of the Philippines, pointing out that the Philippines' initiation of arbitration breaches the agreement between the two states, violates the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and goes against the general ... (More on P4)...(31)

Turkmenistan Eyes Possibility of Exporting Electricity to Pakistan, Tajikistan

ASHGABAT - Prospective routes are becoming much more concrete for the Turkmen electricity export, in particular to Pakistan and Tajikistan, says the Turkmen government in a message.

The message also said export opportunities can be expanded thanks to the commissioning of the gas-turbine power plant with annual capacity of 254 megawatts in the Beyik Turkmenbashi district of Turkmenistan's Lebap region.

The project was implemented by Turkey's Calik Enerji. Thus, the country's eastern region becomes a base

for the export of Turkmen electricity, primarily to Afghanistan, the territory of which can be used as a transit territory in the future.

It was reported in late June that Turkmenistan supplies electricity to Afghanistan on easy terms and makes efforts to increase the volume of its exports to the neighboring country. It was also reported that there is an opportunity to increase the electricity volume exported to Afghanistan in the direction of Serhetabat-Herat-Turgundi from 200 million kilowatt hours to 400 million kilowatt hours. (Trend)