

EU Top Diplomat to Visit Kuwait as Part of Mediation Efforts to End Gulf Crisis

KUWAIT - European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini will visit Kuwait on Sunday as part of the intensified mediation efforts to end the Gulf standoff, the official news agency KUNA reported Monday.

"I will be visiting Kuwait, the mediator that we support and accompany and with whom we are constantly in touch. So I will visit Kuwait next Sunday," Mogherini, high representative of EU foreign affairs and security policy, told a press conference in Brussels after a meeting of EU foreign ministers. Mogherini will express EU's support to the mediation ef-



orts made by Kuwait to find solution to the crisis between Qatar and four Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia, the report said.

Kuwait has been playing the role of mediator since the Qatari crisis started early last month, seeking a political solution to the dispute. The Saudi-led bloc cut their diplomatic ties with Qatar and imposed an economic blockade on the tiny rich Gulf nation, accusing it of supporting terrorism while interfering in their internal affairs. Doha has denied all the charges, rejecting the 13 demands put forward by the Saudi-led alliance for resuming diplomatic ties. (Xinhua)

Italy May Issue Temporary Visas for Migrants, in 'Tug of War' with EU

ROME - Italy is considering issuing temporary visas that would allow migrants to travel around the European Union, its deputy foreign minister said on Tuesday, a move intended to pressure its EU neighbors to do more to help ease the migration crisis.

With the huge number of people crossing the Mediterranean from North Africa increasing, Italy complains that its European partners are not sharing the load. Asked whether migrants

could be given the temporary permits, Deputy Foreign Minister Mario Giro told left-wing newspaper Il Manifesto the government was looking at all possibilities.

"We are in a tug of war," Giro said in the interview which was posted on the Foreign Ministry's website.

He said Italy wanted to avoid unilateral gestures, but is against the strict application of EU law which keeps migrants in their first country of arrival.

"We don't accept being



turned into a European hotspot, or feeling guilty because we rescue people, so deciding what to do with the migrants who arrive is everyone's responsibility," Giro said. More than 93,000 mainly

sub-Saharan African and Bangladeshi migrants have arrived by boat in southern Italy so far in 2017, a 17 percent increase on the same period last year, according to the interior ministry. (Reuters)

Meeting Arab Qatar Demands is 'Condition to Resume Ties': Egypt FM

CAIRO - Egyptian foreign minister Sameh Shokri stressed on Tuesday that Qatar sticking to Saudi-led bloc's demands is "condition for resuming stalled relations." "The Arab demands were issued based on Qatar violations of the international laws and accords by intervention in the Arab countries domestic affairs, and sheltering terrorist leaders and members," spokesperson of the foreign ministry, Ahmad Abu Zeid said in a press statement. Last month, the Saudi-led bloc, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and

Bahrain severed diplomatic ties with Qatar, accusing Doha of supporting terrorism, interfering in their internal affairs and seeking closer ties with Iran, a Saudi rival.

Qatar has strongly denied the charges against it, while rejecting a list of 13 demands announced by the bloc for resuming diplomatic ties.

Shokri's remarks came during his meeting with Jean Paul Laborde, Executive Director of the U.N. Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED). (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

China's Xi Pledges 'Unremitting' Efforts for Middle East Peace

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged on Tuesday to make "unremitting" efforts toward promoting peace in the Middle East following a meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, as China steps up its diplomatic engagement with the region.

Palestinian officials have urged China, which supports an independent Palestinian state, to do more in the Middle East peace process.

Chinese envoys occasionally visit Israel and the Palestinian Territories, though China has traditionally played little role in Middle East conflicts or diplomacy despite its reliance on the region for oil.

Speaking to reporters after meeting Abbas in

Beijing's Great Hall of the People, Xi said the international community paid close attention to the Middle East peace process.

"As the Palestinian people's good friend, partner and brother, China hopes Palestine and Israel can achieve peace as soon as possible and live and work in peace. China will make unremitting efforts for this," Xi said, after receiving a Palestinian medal of honor from Abbas. China has historically had a good relationship with the Palestinians.

The Middle East, however, is fraught with risk for China, which has little experience navigating the religious and political tensions that frequently rack the region. (Reuters)

Action being Taken against all Terrorists Groups Including Haqqani Network: Sartaj

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister's Advisor on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz Tuesday informed the Senate that Pakistan was taking action against all the terrorist groups without any discrimination, including Haqqani network.

"Our policy towards all militants and their networks, including the Haqqani network is quite clear. We will fight them wherever they are and will never tolerate their presence on our soil," he said while giving policy statement on a motion

moved by Taj Haider and others about the implications of the statement of Chairman US armed services committee in Kabul soon after his visit to Pakistan. He said, all this was being done in our national interest and this policy was not depend-

ent on attitudinal change of any country.

The advisor said, "We remain convinced that Pak-US cooperation is a pre-requisite to achieve lasting peace in the region and we have conveyed that the end-state for both US and Pakistan is a stable and peaceful Afghanistan that has no ungoverned spaces from where terrorists plan and carry out attacks on a third country. McCain is also of the view that Pak-US relations was more important than ever before."

On the issue of Haqqani network, the visiting US delegation was told that since 2013, the present government through operation 'Zarb-e-Azb' had destroyed terrorist networks across the country including the tribal areas, he said. (APP)

US Recertifies Iran's Compliance with Nuclear Deal

TEHRAN - The United States has for a second time certified Iran's compliance with a 2015 nuclear agreement between the Islamic Republic and six other countries, including the US itself.

The US President Donald Trump's administration notified the Congress of continued Iranian compliance on Monday.

The US administration is bound by US law to notify the Congress of Iran's compliance with the deal every 90 days. The Congress would then have to continue to withhold certain nuclear sanctions against Iran.

The Trump administration has been skeptical of the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Trump has called the JCPOA "a very

bad" deal, and, as a presidential candidate, he had threatened that he would rip it up. But he has not done so, partly because his aides have advised him against doing that.

The New York Times reported on Monday that Trump had agreed to certify Iranian compliance after an hour-long heated debate with his top aides and after he received "the consensus recommendation of his national security team." The Trump administration notified the Congress of Iran's compliance for the first time in April. Also on Monday, White House Spokesman Sean Spicer said US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson would make an announcement on the nuclear agreement "very shortly." (Presstv)

Belarus General Prosecutor's Office Signs Cooperation Agreement with Tajikistan

DUSHANBE - The General Prosecutor's Offices of Belarus and Tajikistan signed a cooperation agreement in Dushanbe, BelTA learned from the website of the General Prosecutor's Office of Belarus. The agreement provides for interaction, within the scope of competence of the public prosecution bodies of Belarus and Tajikistan and the exchange of information to prevent, detect and solve crimes. (Agencies)

combating crime, including its organized forms such as terrorism, corruption, trafficking in arms, drugs and psychotropic substances, illegal migration, trafficking in human beings. The agreement will contribute to further deepening cooperation between the public prosecution bodies of Belarus and Tajikistan and the exchange of information to prevent, detect and solve crimes. (Agencies)

Turkish President to Visit Gulf Region Amid Diplomatic Crisis

ANKARA - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will visit Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar, which have vital roles in current diplomatic crisis, the Turkish presidency said on Tuesday.

Erdogan's visit, scheduled on July 23 and 24, comes after Qatar rejected to implement a 13-article list of demands from Saudi-led Arab powers to end isolation of the oil rich Gulf country.

Ankara has been backing Qatar after several Gulf countries cut eco-

nomics and diplomatic ties with the gas-rich country since early June. Last month, Turkey ratified two deals allowing its troops deploying to Qatar and training its gendarmerie, showing strong diplomatic support for Qatar.

Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt imposed a set of sanctions on June 5 to Qatar on accusations that the Qatari government supported "terrorism and extremism," which was denied by Qatar. (Xinhua)

Australia to Form New Home Affairs "Super Ministry" in Response to Growing Threat of Terror

CANBERRA - The Australian government announced Tuesday it will form an all-encompassing "Home Affairs" portfolio to deal with the growing threat of terror.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull described the move as the "most significant reform of Australia's national intelligence and domestic security arrangements in more than 40 years." In response to the ever-changing threat of global and domestic terrorism, Turnbull said the

government drew inspiration from Great Britain's Home Office instead of the United States' Department of Homeland Security in forming the new portfolio. Turnbull said while Australians had been "well served" by its separated agencies, the government "must stay ahead of the threats," adding that the new super ministry would coordinate intelligence gathering as well as responses to domestic terror threats. "The new Home Affairs portfolio will be



similar to the Home Office of the United Kingdom: a central department providing strategic planning, coordination and other support to a 'federation' of independent security and law enforcement agencies including the Australian

Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), the Australian Federal Police (AFP), the Australian Border Force (ABF) and the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC)," Turnbull said. (Xinhua)

Russia Ready to Retaliate if U.S. Continues Diplomatic Hostility

MOSCOW - Moscow reserves the right to impose tit-for-tat measures if Washington does not remove obstacles to activities of Russian diplomatic institutions, the Foreign Ministry said Tuesday. On Monday, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov held consultations with U.S. Under Secretary of State Thomas Shannon in Washington on bilateral relations, including burning issues regarding the illegal seizure of Russian property in the United States by the administration of Barack Obama, the former president. "The Russian side stressed that if Washington did not eliminate this and other irritants, including the continued efforts to hinder the functioning of Russian diplomatic missions, it had the right to respond on the basis of the principle of reciprocity," the ministry said in a statement. (Xinhua)

North Korea does not Have Capacity to Hit U.S. 'With any Degree of Accuracy': U.S. General

WASHINGTON - North Korea does not have the ability to strike the United States with "any degree of accuracy" and while its missiles have the range, they do not have missile guidance capability needed, Vice Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff General Paul Selva said on Tuesday. "I... am not sanguine that the test on the 4th of July demonstrates that they have the capacity to strike the United States with any degree of accuracy or reasonable confidence or success," Selva said while appearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee. (Reuters)

Trump Blames Democrats for Failure of Bill to Replace Obamacare

WASHINGTON - President Donald Trump blamed Democrats and a few holdouts in his own party Tuesday for the collapse of the latest Republican effort to repeal and replace Obamacare - one of Trump's key campaign pledges.

A Republican drive in the Senate to come up with a plan to replace the Affordable Care Act fell apart Monday when two more Republican senators came out against their party's legislation. That made for a total of four holdouts - the party has 52 seats in the 100-member legislature



- and effectively doomed the legislation. The collapse is a stinging blow to Trump and Republicans who have vowed for seven years that they would quickly dump former president Barack Obama's signature health care

reform as soon as they could. "We were let down by all of the Democrats and a few Republicans. Most Republicans were loyal, terrific & worked really hard. We will return!" Trump said in a tweet Tuesday morning. (AFP)

Show 'Strength and Unity', British PM May Tells Ministers

LONDON - Prime Minister Theresa May told her ministers on Tuesday to show the "strength and unity" Britain needs, and to keep discussions private, blaming hostile briefings to journalists on colleagues who are "not taking their responsibilities seriously".

Since losing the Conservatives' majority in parliament at an election she did not need to call, May has been increasingly unable to dictate to her ministers, who have begun to air their disagreements in public. Much of the criticism, briefed by anonymous sources in the

British media, has centered on finance minister Philip Hammond, who has been attacked on his stance on government spending and his approach to Britain's departure from the European Union. "There is a need to show strength and unity as a country and that starts around the cabinet table," May told her top team of ministers, according to her spokesman. "She said the government would make better decisions if colleagues were able to hold open discussions but it was vital that discussions in cabinet must remain private," he told reporters. (Reuters)

Media Blasts Trump over Russia, but Some Call it Hysteria

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has been under media fire over the Russia scandal, but some say the intense scrutiny amounts to media hysteria. In the latest chapter of this ongoing controversy earlier this month, e-mails surfaced between Trump's son and a Russian lawyer who allegedly had access to compromising information on then Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

Critics say this is evidence of collusion of the Trump campaign with Russia, although the lawyer denied having worked for the Russian government. "The media has gone absolutely insane on this.

They are seeing crimes that don't even exist," Republican strategist Ford O'Connell told Xinhua.

"It's pretty reckless and dangerous, the way that this is being covered," he said. "As much as the... media wants this to be a crime, it's certainly not treason, and it doesn't appear to be a crime of any type, at least based on the facts as we know them," he said. Trump's critics say it is illegal for campaign officials to receive anything of value - such as compromising information on an opposing candidate - from a foreign government, or from someone representing a foreign government. But others say there is no evidence that the administration has broken any law. Among them, White House lawyer Jay Sekulow appeared on all five major Sunday news talk shows, saying nothing in the meeting was illegal. (Xinhua)