

EU FMs Gather to Discuss Iran, Libya Issues

BRUSSELS - The European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini here on Monday said the ongoing Foreign Affairs Council meeting will discuss the agreement with Iran and the Libya issue.

"It has been a quite positive week when it comes to foreign policy. We have achieved a historic agreement with Iran on its nuclear program that opens also the way for a different framework in the region and hopefully also



U.S., Israeli Defense Chiefs Meet after Iran Nuclear Deal

JERUSALEM - U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter on Monday met with Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, in the first visit to Israel by a senior U.S. official since the nuclear agreement with Iran was announced.

"We need to work together to preserve security in the region," Carter told Ya'alon, according to a report in the Israeli Ma'ariv news site. "Israel

is a source of stability of the U.S. strategy in the Middle East," he added. Carter, whose visit was scheduled before the announcement of the nuclear agreement last Tuesday, arrived overnight amidst evident tensions between Israel and the United States over Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's staunch opposition to the agreement.

Carter pledged the U.S.

commitment to Israel's security, noting that his visit marks "80 years of close friendship" between the two countries. "We worked together for years ... it is a sign of close relations," he said. Ya'alon said that "Israel appreciates the relationship" with the United States, and that he believes that "despite all of the differences, we share common interest and common values,"

according to a statement released on his behalf.

Ya'alon also said he intends to discuss with Carter the "changing realities in the Middle East."

Although tensions between the two allies have been on the rise over Netanyahu's staunch opposition to the nuclear agreement, the U.S.-Israel defense ties have deepened in recent years. (Xinhua)

UN Resolution 'Clear Message' Iran Deal is Path Forward: Obama

WASHINGTON - US President Barack Obama on Monday hailed the passage of a UN Security Council resolution backing his nuclear deal with Iran, saying he expected a skeptical Congress to take note.

Obama said he hoped the passage earlier Monday would "send a clear message that the overwhelming number of countries" recognize that diplomacy

for international relations," said Mogherini upon her arrival at the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council of EU. "This week tells us that diplomacy in the long run can deliver. This is the approach that we will discuss with the ministers when it comes to the Middle East Peace Process. A difficult process, it seems an endless process, but we have learnt this week that diplomacy and perseverance can pay," she added. (Xinhua)

is "by far our strongest approach to ensuring that Iran does not get a nuclear weapon."

"There is broad international consensus around this issue," Obama added. "My working assumption is that Congress will pay attention to that broad basic consensus."

The UN Security Council earlier unanimously ... (More on P4)... (23)

India to Move Forward in Cooperating with Pakistan to Fight Terrorism: Official

NEW DELHI - India Monday said it hoped to take forward steps agreed by the Indian and Pakistani prime ministers recently to fight terrorism and strengthen peace along the border, said local media.

The Press Trust of India quoted Indian Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar as saying that Pakistan

is part of the neighborhood diplomacy of India, which he said was symbolized by the invitation extended to the leaders of South Asian nations when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was sworn in in May last year. "To India's west, the relationship with Pakistan

has its share of challenges but is part of the neighborhood agenda that I mentioned earlier. Our Prime Ministers met a week ago and agreed on steps to counter terrorism and strengthen peace and tranquillity on the border. We hope to take that forward," he was quoted as saying at ... (More on P4)... (24)

UNSC Endorses Iran Nuclear Deal

UNITED NATIONS - The UN Security Council (UNSC) on Monday endorsed the newly-reached agreement between Iran and major world powers on Iranian nuclear issues, kicking off a process to lift UN sanctions on Iran.

In a unanimously adopted resolution, the 15-member body endorsed the deal and called for its full implementation on the timetable established in the agreement.

The agreement, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), clinched on July 14 between Iran and the P5+1 -- Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States plus Germany, is expected to put Iran on the path of sanctions relief but more strict limits on its nuclear program after two weeks of tough negotiations in Vienna, Austria.

According to the resolution, the council will terminate its sanctions on Iran upon receiving a report from the International Atomic Energy Agency that verifies Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA. The commitments include Iran's redesigning its Arak heavy-water reactor, converting its Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant into a technology center, removing centrifuges and uranium-enrichment-related infra ... (More on P4)... (25)

Iraqi PM Pledges Punishment for IS Killing of Civilians



BALAD, Iraq - Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on Monday pledged to punish the Islamic State (IS) militants for killing civilians, urging the international community to further support the country's war against terrorism.

Abadi's comments came during an official ceremony at Balad air base, some 80 km north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, to celebrate the first delivery of four F-16 fighter jets which arrived in Iraq last week.

Abadi, who is also the commander-in-chief of Iraq's armed forces, was accompanied by Defense Minister Khalid al-Obaidi in meeting with the Iraqi air force leaders and the pilots of F-16 warplanes. "The enemy (IS group) is cowardly targeting unarmed civilians, including the bombing of Khan Bani Saad ... Those terrorists will not get away without punishment," Abadi said.

On Friday, a suicide bomber detonated his truck that was loaded with three tons of ex-

plodesives at a busy marketplace in the town of Khan Bani Saad in Diyala province, killing 100 people and wounding more than 133, while some 23 others went missing.

The casualties included many women and children who were shopping to prepare for Eid al-Fitr feast that marks the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. The IS militant group on Saturday claimed responsibility for the huge suicide truck bomb explosion, saying it's in revenge to earlier attacks by Shiite-dominated forces and air strikes on the IS-held town of Hawijh in the western part of the oil-rich province of Kirkuk in northern Iraq.

Abadi also called on the international community to offer "more support to Iraq, prevent the flow of terrorists, stop their smuggling of Iraqi oil and antiquities which contribute in funding terrorism." "Iraq is ready to cooperate with the world states in the field of intelligence," Abadi added. (Xinhua)

Europe Backs Iran Nuclear Deal in Signal to U.S. Congress

BRUSSELS - The European Union approved the Iran nuclear deal with world powers on Monday, a first step toward lifting Europe's economic sanctions against Tehran that the bloc hopes will send a signal that the U.S. Congress will follow. In a message mainly aimed at skeptical voices in the U.S. Congress and strong resistance from Israel, EU foreign ministers meeting in Brussels stressed that there was no better option available.

"It is a balanced deal that means Iran won't get an atomic bomb," said French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius. "It is a major political deal." Ministers left the details of their endorsement until after a U.N. Security Council vote scheduled

for 9 a.m. EDT (1300 GMT), but have formally committed to a gradual lifting of sanctions along with the United States and the United Nations. Following the deal in Vienna, Iran has agreed to long-term curbs on a nuclear program that the West suspected was aimed at creating an atomic bomb, but which Tehran says is peaceful. The European Union will retain its ban on the supply of ballistic missile technology and sanctions related to human rights, EU diplomats said. A senior Western official involved in the accord said a combination of limitations and verification was enough to ensure Iran would not obtain a nuclear bomb. (Reuters)

Iran FM Criticizes US, Israel over Threat of Military Action

TEHRAN, Iran - Iran's foreign minister on Monday criticized the United States and Israel for not taking the threat of military action against Tehran off the table following the landmark nuclear deal between Iran and world powers. The official IRNA news agency quoted Iran's top diplomat, Mohammad Javad Zarif, as saying the military option remains a very hazardous idea. "Applying force ... is not an option but an unwise and dangerous temptation," he said. Yet,

Zarif added, "there are people who talk about illegal and illegitimate application of force" for their own purposes. He called the nuclear deal reached last week a "victory of diplomacy over war and violence." Zarif did not single out any specific country but his remarks came a day after U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter said during a visit to Israel that the accord imposes no limits on what Washington can do to ensure the security of Israel and U.S. Arab allies. Carter ... (More on P4)... (26)

Loyalists Battle Rebel Holdouts in Yemen's Aden



ADEN - Yemeni loyalist forces said they advanced Monday into the last district of the southern port city of Aden still held by Iran-backed rebels, seeking to flush out the remaining insurgents.

Fighters from the pro-government Popular Resistance "have regained control of most of Al-Tawahhi district," including the presidential residence, said spokesman Ali al-Ahmedi.

The southern fighters also pushed the Shiite

Huthi rebels and allied forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh out of the region's military headquarters and the naval base, he told AFP.

"A wide combing operation is under way to flush out" rebel holdouts, he said, adding that remaining insurgents had taken positions on several rooftops. At least 17 rebels and 11 pro-government fighters have been killed in clashes since Sunday, military sources said. (AFP)

Former Kyrgyz MP Detained for Aiding IS Terrorists

BISHKEK - A former member of the Kyrgyz parliament was arrested Monday morning on suspicion of aiding terrorists who were planning attacks in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, the country's security service said Monday.

The National Security State Committee (NSSC) said that a former "Ak Zhol" party MP was arrested at the Manas International Airport near Bishkek when trying to

leave the country. The name of the detainee has not been disclosed. Last week, the NSSC stopped a series of terrorist attacks against those conducting prayers during the celebration of last Friday's Eid al-Fitr, a Muslim holiday marking the end of Ramadan, and a Russian air force base in Kant near Bishkek. At least four extremists were killed and seven arrested in the counter-terrorist mission. (Xinhua)

Neighbour News

China Poses no Threat to World: Envoy

CANBERRA - Chinese Ambassador to Australia Ma Zhaoxu "delivered a strong assurance" that China poses no security threat to Australia and the world, a top Australian newspaper said in a report. After an exclusive interview with Ma by its defense editor Brendan Nicholson, The Australian, one of the country's most influential newspaper, published a report on Saturday in which the Chinese ambassador expounded China's stances on a range of issues including the Sino-Australian relationship and the South China Sea. Ambassador Ma told Nicholson that China is willing to develop a stronger, deeper military-to-military rela-

tionship with Australia. "I can say very clearly, China is not a strategic threat to Australia but a comprehensive strategic partner," Ma said. "We enjoy tremendous common interests between our two countries." Addressing the concerns about the situation in the South China Sea, Ma said other countries had illegally occupied islands which belong to China and built military facilities on them. Beijing's recent construction work in the South China Sea is mainly for civil purposes but also include defensive facilities. "China's construction on re-claimed land in the South China Sea included building lighthouses and facilities to collect meteorological data to ... (More on P4)... (27)

Iran Dismisses German Official's Call for Recognizing Israel

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Ministry on Monday dismissed visiting German Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel's call for Iran to recognize Israel, Iranian media reported. "For some issues in the Middle East, we have quite different policies from those of Germany, and we have made it clear over the past 35 years," Afkham said in response to recent remarks of Gabriel. If Iran wants to establish closer economic ties with Germany and other western powers, it should improve its relationship with the Jewish state, Gabriel, also Germany's economy minister, said at the start of his three-day visit to Iran's capital of Tehran on Sunday. During Gabriel's stay in Tehran, Iran will

explain its concerns about ongoing situation in the region and will discuss Israel's threats, Afkham said. Gabriel is the first western economic official to visit Iran following the nuclear agreement between Iran and the world powers last week to curb Iran's sensitive nuclear program in return for the removal of international and western economic sanctions.

Gabriel arrived in Tehran on Sunday to discuss his country's economic relations with post-sanctions Iran. He met Iran's Oil Minister, Bijan Zangeneh, on Monday and is also scheduled to meet Iran's President Hassan Rouhani and some other Iranian senior officials. (Xinhua)

EU, Uzbekistan and UN to Cooperate in Minimizing Risks of Nuclear Materials

BISHKEK - UZ Top officials from the European Union, United Nations and the Republic of Uzbekistan launched the Central Asia Regional Secretariat of Chemical, Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) risk mitigation Centre of Excellence in Tashkent July 17, EU delegation in Uzbekistan said. The event is a part of a global initiative funded by the European Union and implemented by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). The Initiative aims to mitigate chemical, biological,

radiological and nuclear (CBRN) risks of criminal, accidental or natural origin by promoting improved and coordinated policies. It does so by sharing good practices, capabilities and guidelines and responding to the member states' specific needs. The Initiative involves more than 51 countries and has been launched in 8 different regions of the world: African Atlantic Façade; Central Asia; Eastern and Central Africa; Gulf Cooperation Council Countries; Middle East; North Africa and Sahel; South East Asia; South East and Eastern Europe. (AKIpress)

Pakistan Starts Work on 700km Pipeline to Import LNG from China

ISLAMABAD - Energy-starved Pakistan has started construction work on its 700km pipeline to import liquefied natural gas from China. Minister of Petroleum and Natural Resources Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said the project will be jointly funded by Pakistan and China. Chinese funds will benefit Pakistan and allow it to complete its Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project, Abbasi said. Pakistan has been trying to overcome its energy crisis by importing gas from Iran, Abbasi said, adding that

sanctions on Iran over its nuclear programme had hampered the work on the project, Radio Pakistan reported on Monday. He said Gwadar port will be the central hub for China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), allowing western China to gain access to the sea. The CPEC, with a planned portfolio of projects totalling around \$46 billion, will link Gwadar, Khuzdar and other areas on way to Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan and Peshawar along its central route. (Agencies)