

Yet to Hear Good Argument Against Iran Nuclear Deal: Obama

ADDIS ABABA - U.S. President Barack Obama on Monday said he was yet to hear a strong factual argument against a nuclear deal with Iran and criticized rhetoric about the agreement from some leading members of the Republican party. Obama, speaking in Ethiopia during a tour of African nations, said the majority of the world's nuclear scientists and non-proliferation experts backed the July 14 accord, indicating it was the best way to stop Iran acquiring nuclear weapons.



"There is a reason why 99 percent of the world thinks it's a good deal -- it's because it's a good

deal," Obama said during a joint press conference with Ethiopian prime minister Hailemariam Desalegn in the capital Addis Ababa. "The good news is that I've not yet heard a factual argument on other side that holds up to scrutiny," he added. Obama said rhetoric on the Iran deal from Mike Huckabee, who is bidding to be the Republican party's candidate in the next presidential election, was part of a pattern of comments that were ridiculous and sad. Obama also ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

British PM Starts Asia Trip with big Loan Offer to Indonesia

AKARTA - British Prime Minister David Cameron said on Monday his government would make available loans of up to 1 billion pounds to Indonesia to help finance infrastructure projects. Indonesia is Cameron's first stop on a four-day trade mission to Southeast Asia to spur lucrative business deals and to forge new political alliances to counter Islamist extremism. The British government said the financing for



Southeast Asia's largest economy could pave the way for 200 million pounds worth of Indonesian exports to Britain. Possible projects include a 400 million pound sewage treatment system in

the capital, Jakarta, and geothermal power projects worth 66 million pounds. Cameron, who met Indonesian President Joko Widodo, wants to expand British trade links with the rest of the world to compensate for its dependence on trade with Europe, parts of which remain mired in an economic funk. "There's a great opportunity for a free trade agreement but we shouldn't wait for that," Cameron told reporters before meeting Widodo. (Reuters)

Obama Challenges Ethiopia on Democracy

ADDIS ABABA - US President Barack Obama on Monday praised key African ally Ethiopia for its fight against Shebab militants in Somalia, but also challenged Addis Ababa on its democratic record. Obama is on the first-ever trip by a US president to Africa's second most populous nation, a close strategic partner for Washington credited for beating back the Al-Qaeda-affiliated Islamists but a country also much criticised for its rights record.

"Part of the reasons we've seen this shrinkage of Shebab in East Africa is that we've had our regional teams," Obama said, referring to African Union and Somali government troops. "We don't need to send our own Marines in to do the fighting; the Ethiopians are tough fighters," Obama said, adding: "We've got more work to do we have to now keep the pressure on." The Shebab has in recent days lost two of ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

Turkey has no Plans for Ground Troops into Syria: PM

ANKARA - Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has said that Turkey does not have any plans to send ground troops into Syria where the military has been bombing Islamic State (IS) positions since last week, local Hurriyet Daily News reported on Monday.

But the United States and Turkey have agreed on "air cover" that will be provided for moderate Syrian rebels fighting against the IS elements there, the prime minister told a group of journalists on Sunday. "The agreement we reached (with the U.S.) has covered our concerns

and expectations up to a certain level... The air cover for the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and other moderate elements fighting against Daesh (IS)... If we are not going to send land units to the ground (in Syria), and we will not, then those forces acting as ground forces co ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

Saudi-Led Coalition Suspends Yemen Strikes to Allow Aid

SANAA - The Saudi-led coalition fighting rebels in Yemen suspended its air war Monday to allow desperately needed aid deliveries, although clashes broke out in several areas despite UN calls for a truce. The Arab regional coalition, which has waged four months of air strikes in support of

exiled President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, announced the five-day truce to allow emergency supplies to flow into the impoverished nation. It reserved the right to respond to "military activity or movement" but there were no reports of new air raids by dawn despite several new at-

tacks by the rebels. The Huthis bombarded areas overnight in the southern provinces of Taz, Lahj and Dhaleh, according to witnesses and military sources. Rebel tanks fired on residential areas in Jebel Sabr in Taz, witnesses said, sparking clashes with loyalist ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

Syrian Warplanes Conduct 20 Strikes on Rebels East of Damascus



DAMASCUS - The Syrian warplanes on Monday carried out 20 strikes against the rebels in the eastern countryside of the capital Damascus, amid escalating violence in that part of the capital, a monitor group said.

The clashes flared Monday morning between the Syrian troops backed by the Lebanese Hezbollah against rebels entrenched in Damascus' eastern district of Jobar, a main hotbed in the violence threatening the capital. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said surface-to-surface missiles were believed to have also been fired by the government troops on that restive neighborhood in the Eastern Ghouta countryside. The rebels in Jobar also fired many mortar shells that slammed into several residential

districts inside Damascus, leaving unknown losses. Meanwhile, Syrian journalist, Thaeer Al-Ajlani, was killed Monday by one of the mortar shells that slammed the frontline near Jobar. Al-Ajlani is known of being a "war reporter" who accompanied the Syrian army on field missions and reported for several Syrian local TVs and radios.

Other media reports suggested that the Syrian army took a preemptive strike against the rebels in Jobar, a place that has witnessed several intensive battles between both warring sides. The Syrian army has yet to recapture that district due to the heavy fortification of the rebels inside and the wide network of underground tunnels dug in that place. (Xinhua)

Kurdish Fighters Drive IS out of Key Syrian Town

DAMASCUS - The Kurdish fighters on Monday captured a key town in northern Syria from the Islamic State (IS) militants, a monitor group reported. The town of Sarin in the countryside of the northern province of Aleppo has been used by the IS militants as a launching pad for their attacks against the predominantly-Kurdish city of Ayn al-Arab, also known as Kobane, in the northern countryside of Aleppo, close to the Turkish borders, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The Britain-based watchdog group said Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) succeeded in capturing the

town after 20 days of intensive battles against the IS. With the capture of the town, the eastern bank of the Euphrates River has become clear of the IS militants all the way to the Turkish borders, said the Observatory, which relies on a network of activists on ground.

The U.S.-led anti-terror coalition has backed the Kurds in their recent push against the IS in Sarin, the Observatory added. The Kurds have been making notable gains recently, stripping the IS of key areas in northern Syria along the borderline with Turkey. In an earlier report, the Observatory said the IS presence on the Turkish borders is diminishing. (Xinhua)

UN Chief Welcomes Humanitarian Pause in Yemen

UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Sunday welcomed the announcement by the Saudi-led Coalition of a unilateral five-day, renewable humanitarian pause in Yemen. The pause was set to start on Sunday at 23:59 local time. In a statement released by his spokesperson, Ban urged the Houthis, the General People's Congress and all other parties to agree to and maintain the humanitarian pause "for the sake of all the Yemeni people," calling on all to

act in good faith throughout the pause. He also called on all parties to the conflict to suspend military operations during the pause and refrain from exploiting the pause to move weapons or seize territory. "The Secretary-General urges all parties to facilitate the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance to all parts of Yemen, as well as rapid, safe, and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to reach people in need of humanitarian assistance, including medical assistance," said the statement. (Xinhua)

Aligning Belt and Road with EAEU to Synergize Eurasia: Russian Expert

MOSCOW - The alignment of the China-proposed Belt and Road initiative and the Russia-led construction of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) will synergize all related parties across the Eurasian continent, a Russian expert said. "Actually, these blocs move along the same road. The principal economic space consisting of Russia, China and Kazakhstan will be the nucleus of the future Eurasia-wide structure," said Denis Tyurin, director of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

Business Club. Countries outside of the EAEU and the SCO also have shown great interest in them, he said in a recent interview with Xinhua. The Belt and Road initiative refer to the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, a key development strategy proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013 with the goal of re-viving the ancient trade routes. The network covers more than 60 countries and regions, with a total population of 4.4 billion. (Xinhua)

Blast Damages Pro-Immigrant German Councilor's car

BERLIN - German police said Monday they were investigating an early-morning explosion that damaged the car of a left-wing politician who had been working in support of refugees in a Dresden suburb that has seen anti-immigrant demonstrations. The incident comes amid increasing tensions in the area and elsewhere in Germany following a growing influx of refugees from the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, and also from the Balkans. The number of asylum applications is expected to at least double this year from around 200,000 in 2014. Police said it wasn't yet clear what caused the explosion that damaged the

car of the opposition Left Party's Michael Richter, a town councilor in the Dresden suburb of Freital, but that detectives were treating it as intentional. No one was hurt. In the first half of 2015, Germany has seen almost as many far-right crimes against refugee accommodation as in all of 2014, according to the Interior Ministry. Of the 173 crimes recorded, 19 were violent. Incidents have been reported in recent weeks in several regions, primarily vandalism against new refugee homes being built. In Freital, there were protest recently against a new asylum home and clashes with pro-refugee activists. (AP)

Neighbour News

Iranian FM in Baghdad for Talks with Iraqi Leaders

BAGHDAD - Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif arrived in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad on an official visit to meet with the Iraqi leaders following a landmark nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers, the official television reported on Monday.

The state-run Iraqiya channel said that Zarif is expected to meet his Iraqi counterpart Ibrahim al-Jaafari and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi as well as the Iraqi President Fuad Masoum, and other Iraqi top officials. Earlier in the day, Zarif visited the holy Shiite city of Najaf, some 160 km south of Baghdad, and met with Iraq's most revered Shiite cleric of Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, during which Zarif pre-

sented details about the nuclear talks as well as the threats that endanger the region.

"We make the tour in the Gulf region immediately after the end of the nuclear talks to discuss the dangers that threaten all of us," Zarif told reporters after his meeting with Sistani.

He said that Sistani has called for a joint coordination among all countries in the region to combat extremism and terrorism.

Zarif's visit to Iraq came as part of his tour that started on Sunday to Kuwait, Qatar and Iraq with the aim of briefing the high ranking officials of the three countries on the latest result of the nuclear talks, in addition to exchanging views on bilateral relations and recent regional developments. (Xinhua)

Tajikistan; MoI Informed of Areas of Natural Disaster in Vanj District

BISHKEK - Minister of Internal Affairs of Tajikistan, Rakhimzoda Ramazon, in the framework of his working trip to Badakhshan Mountainous Autonomous Region, visited the Vanj district police department and held a meeting with the employees of department. The Minister was informed of the process of service, activity of employees and their living condition, and gave particular instructions to improve service. The policemen have to be with the population and provide them sup-

port and assistance in construction works for elimination of consequences of natural disasters and in other problems, added the source.

In addition, Rakhimzoda Ramazon has visited the areas of natural disaster and met with the local residents suffered from natural disasters. During the meeting, he said that the government of Tajikistan will take all measures to eliminate the damage and in this regard the law enforcement officers will provide support and assistance to the population. (AKIpress)

China's Contribution to Peacekeeping Shows its Commitment to World Peace

UNITED NATIONS - China's contribution to the UN's peacekeeping operations shows its commitment to peace, security and stability around the world, said Edmond Mulet, assistant secretary-general for UN peacekeeping operations.

"There are so many conflicts now around the world, so many people in need, so many people suffering, children and women especially," Mulet told Xinhua in a recent interview. "And when you see that engagement from China, that means China is really concerned because of the plight and the problems these people are suffering."

Since 1948, UN peacekeeping operations have been helping to maintain international

peace and security -- the main purpose of the organization, which is enshrined in the UN's Charter. There are currently more than 100,000 peacekeepers in 16 peacekeeping missions deployed in war-torn countries like Mali, Lebanon and Afghanistan to help build lasting peace. China began its participation in UN peacekeeping operations in 1990. It has contributed more than 3,000 military and police personnel in UN peacekeeping missions worldwide as of June 30, 2015, according to the UN. This year, China has concluded the deployment of its infantry battalion, the first-ever combat troops China has sent, to the UN Mission in South Sudan. (Xinhua)

Pakistani PM Urges Infrastructure Building of Economic Corridor

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Monday called for the completion of the infrastructure projects, planned as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), by the end of 2017. The prime minister issued the instruction while chairing a high-level meeting of CPEC to review the progress of infrastructure and energy projects. Sharif, during the meeting, urged to complete the

work on the new Gwadar International Airport that will be a key part of the CPEC. The Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, briefed the prime minister on various projects under the CPEC and said the major infrastructure projects including a motorway that links the northwestern Peshawar city with the country's commercial hub Karachi is ready for groundbreaking. (Xinhua)