

Yemen's President orders Militias Merged into his Forces

SANAA -Yemen's exiled president has ordered that militias battling Shiite rebels in Yemen be merged with his national army, in an apparent attempt to unify ground forces.

According to his adviser, Maj. Gen. Jafaar Mohammed Saad, the order from President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi came on Wednesday and the authorities are "working on implementing the decision in the fastest time possible."

The militias go under the name of "Popular Resistance" units - a



vague term used for a wide specter of groups opposed to Shiite

Houthi rebels. However, security and military officials say they fear

the decision could provide a path for extremists such as al-Qaida to

infiltrate military ranks. The officials spoke on condition of anonym-

ity because they are not authorized to speak to journalists.(AP)

India Has Potential to Become Multi-Trillion Dollar Economy: WB

NEW YORK - India has the potential to become a multi-trillion dollar economy with a per capita income of about USD 40,000 by 2050 if it manages to grow at seven per cent annually for the next 30-35 years, a top World Bank (WB) official has said.

"If we can manage to grow at seven per cent for next 35 years, we will not only be the second largest economy in the world at that time but we will be prosperous and people will be rich enough,"



World Bank Executive Director for Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka Subhash Chandra Garg said. India has the potential to become a multi-trillion dollar economy with a per capita income of about USD 40,000 by 2050, a top World Bank official has said. Address-

ing the Indian-American community at the Indian Consulate, Garg said India has the potential to become a multi-trillion dollar economy with a per capita income of about USD 40,000 by 2050 as against the current USD 2,000 but to achieve that it will have to grow at seven per cent annually for the next 30-35 years. However, he said that achieving and sustaining a seven per cent growth rate for 35 years is "very ... (More on P4)...(21)

China to Improve Urban Underground Infrastructure

BEIJING - China will enact several new measures to improve urban underground infrastructure in an effort to upgrade urbanization and economic development, according to a decision by the State Council, China's cabinet, on Wednesday.

Better urban underground infrastructure will stimulate investment, increase the supply of public goods, and improve modern urbanization, which serves as China's new growth engine, according to a statement released after an execu-

tive meeting of the State Council presided over by Premier Li Keqiang. The meeting urged more effective steps to develop urban underground infrastructure, utilize underground space, improve urban carrying capacity and satisfy people's needs.

It urged demonstration pipe networks to be built throughout the country and overhead power lines of existing urban electric power and communication networks to be replaced by underground cables. (Xinhua)

Neighbour News

China Pledges more Reform on Tourism Development

BEIJING - China will carry out more reforms to boost investment and consumption in tourism industry, the State Council, or China's cabinet, decided on Wednesday.

Tourism development is significant in fostering the country's modern service sector, increasing employment and income, as well as improving people's livelihoods, according to a statement released after an executive meeting of the State Council presided over by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang. The meeting urged improving tourism consumption. Construction of regional airports, roads to scenic spots, parking lots and washrooms in destinations, especially in less-developed central and western China, should be supported, the statement said. Personalized tourism products focusing on rural areas will be supported, the meeting decided. The government will encourage

college graduates and migrant workers who have returned to home villages to start their own rural tourism businesses, as a way to alleviate rural poverty, the statement said.

New popular tourism consumption choices should be discovered and well utilized, the cabinet said. Internet-related business mode such as online vacation rentals and transport rentals, should be easier to enter. Various tourism products such as for the elders, and for studying purposes, should be developed. Governments at all levels should further implement the paid-leave, the cabinet said.

The meeting agreed to promote public-private-partnerships (PPP) in developing tourism projects, with more government investment and individual capital participation. It also urged to widen financing channels for tourism enterprises, and encourage financial institutions to increase credit support for those enterprises. (Xinhua)

Iran, France Agree to Boost Political Dialogue: Zarif

TEHRAN - Iran and France agreed Wednesday to commence discourse on varied realms of potential cooperation, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad-Javad Zarif said following a meeting with his visiting French counterpart Laurent Fabius. Fabius arrived in Tehran Wednesday at Zarif's invitation for talks regarding bilateral and regional issues.

This is the first visit by a French Minister of Foreign Affairs to Tehran in over a decade. The visit was facilitated once Tehran opened its doors to the West in the wake of the recent nuclear deal between Iran and the world.

This visit is "a fresh start" for bilateral relations. Both Iran and France share the responsibility of restoring regional peace and stability, Fabius told state IRIB TV upon arriving in Tehran.

"Iran and France's po-

litical discussions were limited to the Iran's recent nuclear issue. Currently, we want to advance them and hold regular talks on various political levels," Zarif said in a joint press conference with Fabius.

Priorities for potential cooperation include fighting terrorism, campaigning against drugs and cooperating on environmental issues, he said.

Iran and France may additionally cooperate on nuclear programs, since both countries previously cooperated in this field, he said.

Additionally, both countries may further cooperate in economic sectors, such as energy, transportation and the auto industry, he added.

Zarif expressed hope that enhancement of bilateral relations will steer the world towards peace and security in the future.(Xinhua)

Pakistani Militant Leader Killed in Police Convoy Attack

MUZAFFARGARH -One of Pakistan's most-feared Islamic militant leaders, believed to be behind the killing of scores of minority Shiites, was gunned down along with 13 other militants during an assault on a police convoy that was transporting him from prison on Wednesday. Malik Ishaq, who directed the operations of the Taliban- and al-Qaida-linked Lashkar-e-Jhangvi group, was so feared in Pakistan that frightened judges hid their faces from

him and even offered him tea and cookies in court.

Ishaq, believed to be either 55 or 56, operated freely for years in Pakistan as the country's intelligence services helped nurture Islamic militant groups in the 1980s and 1990s to maintain influence in Afghanistan and counter archrival India.

Ishaq had been detained by police two days earlier on suspicion of being involved in the slaying of two Shiites, police officer Bakhtiar Ahmed said.(AP)

Tajikistan FM meets with Assistant UN Secretary-General

BISHKEK -Tajik Foreign Minister (FM) Sirojiddin Aslov and UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Kyung-wha Kang met in Dushanbe on July 28 to discuss ties.

The sides exchanged views on the ongoing regional consultations for South and Central Asia on the World

Humanitarian Summit held in Dushanbe on July 28-30, which is scheduled for May 2016.

In addition, issues of bilateral cooperation between Tajikistan and the United Nations Office for the coordination of humanitarian cooperation were discussed at the meeting. (AKIpress)

U.S. Stocks open Higher Ahead of Fed.Statement

NEW YORK - U.S. stocks opened mostly higher on Wednesday, as Wall Street eyed U.S. Federal Reserve's statement that could give clues on the timing of a rate hike. The Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) will conclude its two-day meeting later on Wednesday, the last one before September.

Investors are not expecting any major decisions this week, but they awaited the release of the Fed statement for hints on the timing for possible interest rate hike. Investors have anticipated September or December is the most likely date for a "liftoff" this year.

On the economic front, weekly mortgage applications increased 0.8 percent,

according to the Mortgage Bankers Association's (MBA) Wednesday. In corporate news, shares of Twitter fell over 11 percent in the early trading one day after the company announced financial results for the second quarter in 2015.

"Our Q2 results show good progress in monetization ... (More on P4)...(22)

Western Sanctions against Russia Concern us:Tajikistan

BISHKEK - Aslov Tajikistan is worried about the negative impact of Western sanctions against Russia to its economy, said Tajik Foreign Minister Sirojiddin Aslov in Dushanbe on Tuesday.

"Western sanctions against Russia worry us. These sanctions are directed against all CIS countries. We have earlier said

that we are against these sanctions," said Aslov. Western sanctions against Russia led to the deterioration of various areas of Russian economy, which affected negatively to the volume of remittances to Tajikistan. In addition, Russia is the main trade and economic partner of Tajikistan and any sanctions impact negatively

to our positions," added the Foreign Minister. He noted that Tajikistan will declare its position at the diplomatic level and oppose these sanctions in order "its voice to be heard". Aslov added that bilateral relations with Russia were held "on the basis of the principle of strategic partnership" in the first half of the year. (Aikpress)

Japanese Former PM Criticizes Abe for Stirring Concerns, Suspicions from



TOKYO - Former Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama criticized Wednesday that incumbent Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's flip-flopping remarks on historical issues have stirred concerns and suspicions from neighboring countries. Murayama, who is famous for his 1995 landmark statement offering an apology to victims of Japan's wartime atrocities, said that Abe's controversial remarks such as his denial of Japan's past aggression by questioning aggression's definition have raised concerns and doubts about whether Japan would repeat its past wrongdoings, especially at a time when the Abe's government is pushing forward a series of unpopular security bills.

The former prime minister told a press conference at the Japan's Foreign Correspondents' Club that the 1995 Murayama Statement, to some extent, removed mistrust and doubts among Japan and its neighboring

countries and helped Japan return to Asian nations' community. "It was the time to say that things we did in the past were bad. We had to admit that aggression was wrong. If there were areas that we should apologize for, we should offer an apology and we should never repeat the mistakes of the past," said Murayama, adding that it is the only way for Japan to regain trust from its closest neighbors, or Japan would be completely isolated.

However, incumbent Abe is going to issue his own statement to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II to downplay the world-recognized Murayama Statement by diluting Japan's responsibility for its wartime barbarities. Local reports said that Abe is expected to issue the statement in an unofficial form -- prime minister's personal opinion -- so that he could be unnecessarily subject to the Cabinet's approval for the statement's content. (Xinhua)

Thailand's Tier-3 Trafficking Status Irrelevant to Political Factor: Premier

BANGKOK - The sustained relegation of Thailand on the United States' list of reported human trafficking countries had nothing to do with the Southeast Asian state being currently run by a non-elected government, said Thai leader Prayut Chan-o-cha on Wednesday.

The non-elected Thai premier said the political factor did by no means affect the sustained ranking of Thailand at Tier 3 on the U.S. government's Trafficking In Persons list

and pledged to continue to combat human trafficking rackets anywhere in the country to avoid such lowest rankings in the future.

"As Thailand has been kept at Tier 3, some people quickly blamed me and my government for not being an elected one. But what had a previous elected government ever done to avoid the Tier 3 relegation at all? The problems had been unresolved until the time of the current government." ... (More on P4)...(23)

workshop on trade facilitation conclude in Tajikistan

DUSHANBE - A two-day workshop on trade facilitation concluded in Dushanbe on Wednesday.

Organized by the International Trade Center (ITC) in the framework of the Government of Switzerland funded Trade Cooperation Program in Tajikistan, the workshop reportedly brought together representatives of the related Tajikistan governmental structures, private sector, business associations, and expert community to discuss the importance of trade facilitation, and to learn about the provisions of the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and Tajikistan's WTO commitments on trade facilitation.

According to ITC Tajik-

istan, the workshop is part of the joint efforts of Tajikistan and the ITC to establish and launch the Tajikistan Trade Facilitation Committee (TTFC). The TTFC is expected to play the role of a state coordination body to simplify and harmonize international trade procedures. Establishment of this mechanism is required by the WTO as part of the implementation of the TFA's provisions. A report on "Establishing the National Trade Facilitation Committee in Tajikistan: From Definition to Validation" was prepared and disseminated among the stakeholders by the ITC and is available for the wider audience in English and Russian.(Asia-Plus)

Activists Warn of Refugee Housing Crisis in German Capital

BERLIN - A thousand refugees may be sleeping outside in Berlin each night because authorities in the German capital are overwhelmed with the sharp rise in asylum-seekers this year, an activist group said Wednesday.

The problem is compounded by bureaucratic rules that prevent more refugees from being placed in private apartments, the Berlin Refugee Council said, urging authorities to increase the housing allowance for refugees.

Because the city's refugee centers are full, authorities have giv-

en about 1,800 people vouchers for private hostels in recent months, though only about 600 hostel places are available, the group said.

More than 3,400 refugees have arrived in the city so far in July, three times as many as during the same month last year, authorities said.

"Accommodating these people poses a huge challenge for Berlin," the city's Department for Social Affairs and Health said in a statement, adding that every effort was being made to ensure that all new arrivals get a place to stay.(AP)

Counter-Terrorism to top Agenda of Nigerian President's Visit to Cameroon

ABUJA - Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari on Wednesday jettied out to hold consultative talks with his Cameroonian counterpart, Paul Biya, in a continued effort to create a more robust regional effort against Boko Haram.

In a statement, presidential spokesman, Femi Adesina, said the Nigerian leader and the president of Cameroon will, during the meeting in Yaounde, focus on the full activation and deployment of the multinational joint task force against Boko Haram, established under the auspices of the Lake Chad Basin Commission. Buhari was accompanied on the trip by Nigeria's top defense offi-

cials and six governors who are expected to discuss further joint measures to curb cross-border crimes, violent extremism and terrorism, with the Cameroonian president and government officials. The two-day visit to Yaounde will also afford Buhari the opportunity to meet with Nigerians living in Cameroon, the presidential spokesman said.

En route Abuja, after his two-day visit to Cameroon, the Nigerian leader will undertake a day trip to Benin Republic on Saturday for talks with President Boni Yayi, to strengthen regional cooperation against terrorism and make it much harder for Boko Haram to ... (More on P4)...(24)