

# Coalition Prepared to Do More to Train Iraqi Forces: Obama

KRUEN, Germany - U.S. President Barack Obama said on Monday more progress was needed to stem the flow of foreign fighters into Syria and Iraq, and that all countries in the international coalition were ready to do more to train Iraqi security forces if that would help.

"We want to get more Iraqi security forces trained, fresh, well-equipped and focused and (Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-) Abadi wants the



same thing so we're reviewing a range of plans for how we might do that," Obama said after meeting Abadi on the sidelines of a Group of Seven industrial nations' summit.

He told a news conference that Washington did not yet have a "complete strategy" for helping Baghdad regain control of territory captured by Islamic State fighters since that required Iraq to make commitments on how to carry out recruitment and training. (Reuters)

## Nothing New in Tough G7 Line on Russia: Kremlin

MOSCOW - Russia said on Monday it saw nothing new in the tough line taken by leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) on Moscow over sanctions and suggested there were differences among its member states. British Prime Minister David Cameron and European Council President Donald Tusk said they hoped the G7, meeting in Germany, would present a united front on sanctions towards Russia over the Ukraine crisis. "Yes, we paid attention to the latest declarations on sanctions. These are not new theses," Krem-



lin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. "We also drew attention to the fact that among the participants of this meeting there are nuances in their approaches. Some talk about the need for dialogue with Russia and the impossibility of solving serious problems without this dialogue, so we contin-

ue watching closely." European Union leaders agreed in March that its sanctions on Moscow over its role in Ukraine would stay until a ceasefire agreement reached in the Belarussian capital of Minsk on Feb. 12 is fully implemented, but a formal decision has yet to be taken. (Reuters)

## G7 Ready to Strengthen Sanctions Vs Russia if Needed: Merkel

KRUEN, Germany - German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Monday the leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) countries were ready, if necessary, to strengthen sanctions against Russia over its involvement in the Ukraine conflict. Merkel said the

leaders want Russia and Ukraine to comply with a Feb. 12 ceasefire agreed in the Belarus capital Minsk that largely halted fighting in eastern Ukraine between pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian government forces. "We are also ready, should the situation esca-

late, which we don't want, to strengthen sanctions if the situation makes that necessary but we believe we should do everything to move forward the political process of Minsk," she told the final news conference of a two-day G7 summit in Bavaria. (Reuters)

## Russian Troops Operating in Ukraine, Sanctions Biting: Obama

KRUEN, Germany - U.S. President Barack Obama said on Monday that Russian forces continue to operate in eastern Ukraine despite Moscow's denials and the world's major industrial democracies stood ready to impose significantly tougher sanctions

if necessary. Obama told a news conference after a Group of Seven industrial nations' summit in Germany that existing sanctions would remain in place until Moscow and Russian-backed rebels in eastern Ukraine fully respected a ceasefire agreement nego-

tiated in Minsk in February. "As we've seen again in recent days, Russian forces continue to operate in eastern Ukraine, violating Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said. "Russia is in deep recession. So Russia's ac ... (More on P4)...(18)

## UN Atomic Watchdog Wants More Cooperation from Iran

VIENNA - The UN atomic watchdog chief called Monday on Iran to cooperate more in a probe into alleged nuclear weapons activity, a key part in a hoped-for historic deal with world powers. The International Atomic Energy Agency "remains ready to accelerate the resolution of all outstanding issues," agency head Yukiya Amano told a regular meeting of the IAEA's board of governors in Vienna. "This can be realised by increased cooperation by Iran and by timely provision of access to all relevant information, documentation, sites material and personnel in Iran," Amano said

according to the text of his speech. The IAEA, which conducts regular inspections of Iran's declared nuclear facilities, will have a beefed-up role if negotiators can finalise a framework deal by a June 30 deadline. The framework deal was struck by Iran and the "P5+1" -- the US, China, Russia, France, Britain and Germany -- on April 2 in Lausanne, Switzerland. But the IAEA also wants Iran to answer claims that before 2003, and possibly since, its nuclear programme had "possible military dimensions" -- which in other words means conducting research into making a nuclear weap ... (More on P4)...(19)

## Rebels Have Army of 'Mid-Sized European State': Ukraine

KIEV - Ukraine's defence minister on Monday accused pro-Russian rebels backed up by Moscow's forces of assembling a 40,000-strong army sufficient for a "mid-sized European state". Stepan Poltorak's estimates fly in the face of Russia's denials that it either backs the separatist fighters or covertly sneaks troops across its southwestern border into the Ukrainian warzone. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko last week put the number of active Russian soldiers in his former Soviet republic's industrial east at more than 9,000. But President Vladimir Putin describes Russians fighting against Ukraine's pro-Western

government troops as patriotic volunteers and off-duty soldiers who are answering "a call of the heart." Moscow has also distanced itself from two Russians captured last month who have told Ukrainian interrogators and Western reporters that they were active members of the Kremlin's special military reconnaissance force. The Ukrainian defence minister said the insurgent army -- in control of parts of the Russian-speaking Lugansk and Donetsk regions that are home to about four million people -- could muster more than 550 tanks and an arsenal of other heavy weapons. "The ... (More on P4)...(20)

## Yemen's Exiled President Plays Down Coming Peace Talks

DUBAI - Yemen's exiled President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi has played down next week's talks in Geneva between his country's warring parties, saying they will only address ways to implement a Security Council resolution demanding his enemies retreat. Hadi and his government's host, Saudi Arabia, have insisted that any talks center on resolution 2216, which demands that the Iranian-backed Houthis and forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh quit cities they seized since last Septem-

ber and surrender heavy weapons. But with the Houthis still entrenched across populated parts of western Yemen despite 11 weeks of Saudi-led airstrikes, international pressure has grown for Hadi to accept a compromise and negotiate with the Houthis and Saleh's representatives. "These are not talks, it is only a discussion to implement U.N. Security Council resolution 2216, how to implement it on the ground," Hadi said in an interview with the Saudi-owned al-Arabiya television. (Reuters)

## Boko Haram Fight HQ Shifting to Maiduguri: Nigeria Military

ABUJA - Nigeria's military on Monday said it had begun shifting the command centre for its battle against Boko Haram from the capital to Maiduguri in the northeast, following a directive from President Muhammadu Buhari.

Buhari announced the move in his inaugural speech on May 29, saying the Islamist insurgents would not be defeated until military command and control was transferred to the city at the heart of the uprising. "A reconnaissance and advance team for the establishment of

Military Command and Control Centre (MCCC) for OPERATION ZAMAN LAFIYA for the fight against terrorism and insurgency has moved to Maiduguri," an army statement said. "Zaman Lafiya" means "peace" in the Hausa language widely spoken in northern Nigeria. Army spokesman Sani Usman said the advance team was working to set up a fully functioning "forward command base" to coordinate the offensive against the Islamist rebels, who are blamed for more than 15,000 deaths since 2009. (AFP)

## Ukraine Military Blames Rebel Bomb for Patrol Boat Explosion

KIEV - An explosion which sank a border patrol boat off Ukraine's strategically important port city of Mariupol was caused by a separatist-made bomb, the Ukrainian military said on Monday. The boat exploded on Sunday, killing one crew member and wounding five others, as it left its mooring station in Mariupol, which is on the Sea of Azov and on the edge of the conflict between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists. "The explosion of the pa-

trol boat in the Azov Sea was caused by a rebel homemade bomb," the military said in a statement. The border guards on the boat spotted the device floating in the water and it exploded as they attempted to pull it on board, the statement said. Mariupol has been under threat from rebel attacks for months as control of the industrial hub would help the rebels to build a seaboard corridor to the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine last year. (Reuters)

## Warring Libya Factions in 'Decisive' UN Talks

SKHIRAT (Morocco) - Libya's warring factions geared up for crunch talks Monday as world leaders called for "bold political decisions" to prevent the oil-rich nation crumbling into a failed state. Amid warnings that chaos in Libya has allowed the Islamic State group to make inroads on Europe's doorstep, United Nations envoy Bernardino Leon is pushing for an agreement before the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan on June 17. "The timing for fighting has passed, the moment for bold political decisions has come," G7 leaders said in a closing statement after a summit in Germany.

"Libyan leaders must now grasp the opportunity to conclude these negotiations and form a Government of National Accord accountable to the Libyan people." Libya plunged into chaos after a 2011 NATO-backed uprising toppled and killed veteran dictator Moamer Kadhafi, with heavily armed former rebels carving out fiefdoms across the country. Jihadist groups have exploited the lawlessness, which has also prompted a huge influx of migrants trying to make the dangerous crossing to Europe, with shipwrecks leaving hundreds dead and the European Union straining to respond. (AFP)

## Concerned about Tensions in the East and South China Seas: G7

KRUEN, Germany - The leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) nations said on Monday they were concerned about tensions in the East and South China Seas and called for countries to abide by international law. "We underline the importance of peaceful dispute settlement as well as free and unimpeded lawful use of the world's oceans," they said

in a communique. China claims most of the South China Sea, while the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam also have overlapping claims. "We strongly oppose the use of intimidation, coercion or force, as well as any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo, such as large-scale land reclamation," the G7 lead ... (More on P4)...(21)

## US-Led Coalition Airstrike Kills 7 in Syria: Activists

BEIRUT - An airstrike by the U.S.-led coalition in the northern Syrian province of Aleppo has killed seven family members, including a couple and their five children, activists and the Islamic State group said Monday. The airstrike on the Islamic State-held village of Dali Hassan, south of the Kurdish town of Kobani, was reported by the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human

## US-Led Coalition Airstrike Kills 7 in Syria: Activists

Rights, which said that an entire civilian family was killed. Abu al-Hassan Marea, an activist who is currently in Turkey near the Syrian border, also said he was told by other activists in the area that seven members of the same civilian family were killed. The Islamic State-affiliated Amaq news agency reported that a man, his wife and five children were ... (More on P4)...(22)

## Neighbour News

### Senior China Military Officer Leaves for U.S. Amid Tensions

BEIJING - One of China's top military officers left for an official visit to the United States on Monday, the Defense Ministry said, amid tension between the two countries over the South China Sea and cybersecurity. Fan Changlong, who is a deputy head of the powerful Central Military Commission, is on a "friendly" visit at the invitation of U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter, and will also visit Cuba, China's Defense Ministry said in a brief statement. The world's two largest economies have been trying to develop military-to-mili-

tary ties as a way of improving mutual trust, but relations have long been overshadowed by political arguments between the two governments. Last week, hackers broke into U.S. government computers, possibly compromising the personal data of four million current and former federal employees, with investigators probing whether the culprits were based in China, something China angrily denies. China and the United States are also at loggerheads over the disputed South China Sea, some 90 percent of which is claimed by China. (Reuters)

### Muslims Must Continue Anti-Israel Resistance: Larijani

TEHRAN - Iran's Parliament (Majlis) Speaker Ali Larijani has warned of hegemonic powers' plots against Muslims, urging the continuation of resistance against the Israeli regime. "The only secure way to save the region from the scourge of sedition and hegemonic conspiracies is the awakening of Muslim countries, maintenance of unity and continuation of resistance against the Zionist regime," Larijani said in a meeting in Tehran on Monday with Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian scholars and officials in charge of Palestinian affairs. He added that the late founder of the Islam-

ic Republic, Imam Khomeini, intended to create unity among Muslim nations and support oppressed people, particularly the Palestinians, against the Israeli regime's atrocities. He said hegemonic powers created and strengthened Takfiri terrorist groups in different Muslim countries in the region, including Iraq, Syria and Yemen, to sap the energy and power of Muslim nations. This objective has been in accordance with hegemonic policies implemented by the Israeli regime, the Majlis speaker added. Larijani reaffirmed Iran's backing for the Palestinian people's resistance against the occupying regime of Israel. (Agencies)

### Pakistani Taliban Call for Jihad in Myanmar

ISLAMABAD - The Pakistani Taliban on Monday urged Muslims in Myanmar to rise up and fight against the country's rulers, saying the militants' resources and training facilities were available to help them "take up the sword". Ehsanullah Ehsan, spokesman for the headline Jamaat-ul-Ahrar faction of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) movement said they "shared the grief" of Myanmar's beleaguered Rohingya Muslim minority. Myanmar refuses to recognise the majority of its 1.3 million Rohingya as citizens and places a raft of restrictions on movements and access to

jobs. The country's impoverished western state of Rakhine has become a tinderbox of tension between the Buddhist majority and the Rohingya, many of whom live in displacement camps after deadly unrest erupted in 2012. "I address Burma's youth: take up the sword and kill in the path of God. No doubt, God is with us," Ehsan said in an audio message sent to media. "Our (training) centres, our resources, training, people, everything is available to provide comfort to you." The TTP has killed thousands of people in its bloody fight against the Pakistani state since 2007 but has rarely shown much interest in taking its struggle beyond the country's borders. (AFP)

### Pakistani PM to Visit Tajikistan on June 9-10

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will leave for Dushanbe on Tuesday on a two-day official visit to Tajikistan, Xinhua news agency reported on Monday. He is visiting Tajikistan at the invitation of Tajik Prime Minister Qohir Rasulzoda, Foreign Ministry was cited as saying. The Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will also meet President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon. The two leaders will hold tete-a-tete and delegation-level talks. According to the Xinhua, the whole range of bilateral co-operation, including the energy, power and connectivity sectors, will be discussed during the talks, with a view to further im-

proving fraternal ties between the two countries. They will also exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual concern. The prime minister will also lead Pakistan's delegation to the International Conference on the Implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life" 2005-2015. The Conference is being hosted by Tajikistan in pursuance of the UN General Assembly resolution which was co-sponsored by Pakistan, and is expected to attract high-level participation from a large number of countries, as well as the UN Secretary-General and representatives of other relevant international and regional bodies. (Xinhua)