

G7 Unable to Tackle Global Issues: Russian Lawmaker

MOSCOW - The Group of Seven (G7) framework that groups the world's leading developed countries is not capable enough to tackle the most pressing issues facing the international community, a committee chief of the Russian parliament said Wednesday. "The G7 is increasingly working in the format of a close circle rather than making any important decisions," Konstantin Kosachyov, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Federation Council, or the upper house of the Russian parliament, said when commenting on the recent G7 summit held in Bavaria, Germany. The real challenges confronting the international community are



clearly not resolved by the bloc, from the global financial crisis over the conflict of civilizations to the threat of the Islamic State, he added. The world needs a broader mechanism to deal with those thorny issues, he said. Earlier this week, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that neither the G7 nor the G8, which is the G7 plus the participation of Russia, is enough to solve the world's problems, and that Russia would like to work in a more effective mechanism. The G7 is an association of the world's major industrialized economies, namely Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Japan, the United States and Canada. (Xinhua)

European Parliament: EU Must Do More to Counter Russia

STRASBOURG, France - European Parliament members say Russia is no longer acting like a strategic partner of the European Union, and the EU must do more to oppose Russia's "aggressive and divisive policies." By a 494-to-135 vote, the parliament called Wednesday on the EU's executive arm to spend more to counter what it called Russian misinformation and propaganda,

and to help independent citizens' groups inside Russia. Parliament member Gabriellus Landsbergis said Russia's annexation of Crimea and continued "aggression" against Ukraine have brought relations with Europe to a crossroads. Landsbergis said, "It is up to the Kremlin to decide now which way it will go - cooperation or deepening alienation."



EU heads of state and government will discuss the bloc's policy toward Russia when they hold a summit meeting in Brussels on June 25-26. (AP)

Turkish Legislator: Erdogan Open to all Coalition Options

ANKARA, Turkey - An opposition legislator says Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan "is open to" all possible coalition options, including a partnership which would exclude the ruling party that he founded. Deniz Baykal, of the main opposition Republican People's

Party, was speaking to reporters Wednesday after a meeting with Erdogan. As the oldest elected legislator, Baykal is expected to head the new parliament until a new speaker is elected. The ruling Justice and Development Party lost its parliamentary majority in Sunday's elections, forcing it to seek a coalition part-

nership or a fragile minority government with other parties' support. Early elections loom if no deal is reached. Baykal says that Erdogan hoped that the political uncertainty is quickly overcome. The result was a rebuke to Erdogan who had campaigned for a ruling party victory. (AP)

Russia's Views Not Needed any More By World Powers: Putin

MILAN, Italy - Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday during a visit to Italy that Russia had represented an alternative view when it was a member of the G8 but other powers felt they no longer needed Russia's view. At a news conference with Italian Prime Minister Matteo



Renzi in Milan, Putin said Russia currently had "no relations" with the G7 which groups Italy, France, Germany, Britain, the United States, Japan and Canada. Russia was expelled in 2014 from the Group of Eight industrialized nations over Moscow's role in the Ukraine crisis. (Reuters)

Italy PM Renzi Says Differences with Russia over Ukraine

MILAN - Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi on Wednesday called for the Minsk accord on Ukraine to be fully implemented, but said that differences remained with Moscow over the regional crisis.

On the Ukraine, "as everyone knows, there are anxieties and hopes and naturally elements of division in judgment," he said at a joint news conference with visiting Russian President Vladimir Putin.

He said the Minsk accord was the "compass, the point of reference for all our efforts" and that "all women and men of goodwill are working for the Minsk protocol to be fully implemented." (Reuters)

EU Lawmakers Demand Rights Monitoring for Hungary

BRUSSELS - European Union lawmakers have called for the strict monitoring of human rights, the rule of law and democracy in EU member Hungary after its prime minister raised questions about whether the death penalty should be reintroduced.

The lawmakers called Wednesday on the EU's executive commission to "immediately initiate an in-depth monitoring process" in Hungary and to report back before September. The resolution passed 362 votes to 247, with 88 abstentions. Hungarian Prime

Minister Viktor Orban sparked controversy recently by saying the death penalty should be "kept on the agenda" even if Hungary had no plans to try to reintroduce it. Capital punishment is banned in the 28-nation EU. (AP)

S. Korea Reports 13 More Mers Infections, 2 Deaths

SEOUL - South Korea reported 13 more infections with the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), raising the total number to 108 while two deaths were added, the health ministry said on Wednesday. Among the new cases, 10 people contracted the virus at the Samsung Medical Center in Seoul, according to the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The total case confirmed positive for the MERS at the Samsung hospital surged to 47, followed by 36 cases in the Pyeongtaek St. Mary's Hospital, 60 km south of Seoul, where the first cases were identified on May 20. The other three cases came from the Konyang Uni ... (More on P4)...(22)

US Envoy Meets Poroshenko as Concerns for Ukraine Grow

KIEV - Washington's UN ambassador was set Wednesday to meet Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko at a time of renewed hostilities with pro-Russian fighters and fears of the Western-backed state's imminent debt default. Samantha Power's show of support for Poroshenko's embattled team will also see her speak to Foreign

Minister Pavlo Klimkin and senior cabinet members. The avowed critic of Russia and promoter of the ex-Soviet state's budding alliance with Europe has scheduled a public appearance in Kiev Thursday. Power's visit comes one year into a presidency Poroshenko has used to try to wipe out more than two decades of crippling corrup-

tion and anaemic economic performance that left successive administrations reliant on Russian help. But his efforts have been both stuttering and increasingly unpopular. The 14-month war against eastern insurgents has waxed and waned depending on both sides' abidance by a series of broad truce and ... (More on P4)...(21)

Romania wants Ally Turkey to Join EU

BUCHAREST, Romania - Romania's foreign minister says his country supports Turkey's future membership in the 28-nation European Union (EU). Bogdan Aurescu met with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu in Bucharest on Wednesday and says he told him that "new negotiations" with the EU should be "opened as soon as possible, something we think Turkey is ready for." Romania

and Turkey traditionally have good trade, political and military relations. More than 400,000 Romanian tourists visited Turkey last year. Turkey and Romania are both NATO members. Romania joined the EU in 2007. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Romania in April, saying he wanted to increase joint trade, currently at \$6.3 billion a year, to \$10 billion. (AP)

Jeb Bush Welcomes U.S. Plan for New Military Base in Iraq

BERLIN - Likely Republican presidential candidate Jeb Bush said on Wednesday that he welcomed a plan to establish a new military base in Iraq's Anbar province, which a U.S. official has said the United States will announce later in the day. Washington is also expected to announce plans to deploy around 400 extra U.S. trainers to help Iraqi forces fight Islamic State (IS). The move would mark a shift in strategy for President Barack Obama, who has come under fire for not being tougher in combating IS. "I believe that the efforts to date haven't been strategic, that we don't

have a strategy - this may be the beginning of the strategy," Jeb Bush said in Berlin during a five-day European tour that seeks to establish his foreign policy credentials. The former Florida governor, who is expected to formally launch his bid for the Republican presidential nomination next week, has previously called Obama's handling of IS a failure. Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, he said it was unclear whether the plans meant putting troops in direct combat or whether they meant training the Iraqi military. Bush has previously suggested ... (More on P4)...(23)

At Least 43 Killed in Yemen Clashes as Parties Prepare for Talks

ADEN - At least 43 people were killed in heavy fighting in Yemen overnight and on Wednesday between supporters of exiled President Abdullah Mansour Hadi and the country's dominant Houthi group, residents, tribal and medical sources said. The clashes erupted ahead of U.N.-sponsored talks in Geneva next week aimed at ending a conflict that has drawn in Saudi Arabia and some of its allies on one side and the Iranian-backed Houthis and

former president Ali Abdullah Saleh on the other. Residents and fighters said fighters opposed to the Houthis advanced from a district of Aden known as 'workers' island' toward the port city's Houthi-held international airport. They said five local fighters and 11 Houthis had died in clashes. Eight fighters from an anti-Houthi force called the Southern Resistance were also wounded in the clashes, they said. Residents said warplanes from ... (More on P4)...(24)

Lebanon Army Conducts Live-Fire Demonstration of US Missiles

BEIRUT - The Lebanese army on Wednesday conducted a live-fire demonstration of advanced missiles supplied by the United States to help combat Islamic extremists along the country's volatile border with Syria. U.S. Ambassador David Hale said the demonstration at a Lebanese army base in the eastern Baalbek region comes after the delivery in late May of over 200 TOW-II missiles and dozens of launchers valued at over \$10 million. The equipment is jointly financed by Saudi Arabia and the U.S., he said. Islamic ex-

tremists have launched several attacks on Lebanese troops over the past two years, particularly in areas near the Syrian border, killing and wounding scores of soldiers. The most serious attack occurred in August, when members of the al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front and the Islamic State group captured two dozen Lebanese soldiers. They have killed four of them and still hold the rest. The Shiite Lebanese Hezbollah group - labelled as terrorist by the U.S. government - also is fighting the Sunni extremists the border region. (AP)

Neighbour News

Iran Denies Troops Deployed in Syria

TEHRAN - Iran on Wednesday insisted it has not deployed troops in Syria to strengthen regime forces, denying reports that thousands of foreign fighters have been flown in to help defend Damascus. Reports on "the military presence of countries friendly to Syria" are "unfounded", foreign ministry spokeswoman Marziyeh Afkham said at her weekly press briefing. "The Syrian government and people have the capacity to resist and will continue to do so", said Afkham, whose country provides Damascus with political

and financial support as well as military advisers for the armed forces. Tehran has always denied having troops on the ground in Syria's four-year-old conflict. On June 3, a Syrian security source told AFP that thousands of Iranian and Iraqi fighters have been deployed in Syria to bolster the defences of Damascus and its surroundings. "Around 7,000 Iranian and Iraqi fighters have arrived in Syria over the past few weeks and their first priority is the defence of the capital. The larger contingent is Iraqi," the source said on condition of anonymity. (AFP)

Tajikistan, Pakistan Pledge to Further Ties

DUSHANBE - Tajik President Emomali Rahmon and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif have pledged here on Tuesday to deepen relations and conduct all-round cooperation between their countries. When meeting Sharif, Rahmon said comprehensive cooperation with Pakistan is one of the main directions of Tajikistan's foreign policy, according to the presidential press service. Both sides expressed satisfaction with the current level of trade and economic cooperation, stressing that trade between the two countries has increased from 100,000 U.S. dollars to 100 million dollars over the past decade. The two leaders said they are confident that

bilateral trade will increase to 500 million dollars in three years. Rahmon and Sharif highlighted that the intensification of activities of the intergovernmental commission for trade and economic cooperation, the promotion of ties between the business communities of the two countries, and the expansion of cooperation in energy, agriculture and industry will boost bilateral trade. They added that the wide use of Tajikistan's free economic zones and Pakistan's seaports of Karachi and Gwadar would also encourage bilateral trade. The leaders also showed interest in signing a trilateral transit trade agreement with Afghanistan at an early date. (Xinhua)

Chinese Navy Conducts Drill in Western Pacific Ocean

BEIJING - Chinese naval aircraft joined a military fleet for a military drill in the western Pacific Ocean east of the Bashi Channel on Wednesday, a military spokesperson of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy said. Chinese navy spokesperson Liang Yang said the ships and aircraft carried out several exercises that imitated real combat conditions in waters east of the Bashi Channel, south of Taiwan.

The spokesperson stressed that the drill was a routine exercise scheduled as part of the navy's annual training plans and was "in line with international laws and practices." "The drill is not directed at any specific country, regions or targets," Liang said, adding it also did not affect the freedom of navigation or flight in the related airspace and waters. Liang said similar drills would be conducted in the future. (Xinhua)

China to Build Patrol Vessels for Pakistan Maritime Agency

ISLAMABAD - China will construct six patrol vessels for Pakistan's Maritime Security Agency under an agreement signed here on Wednesday. Four vessels will be built in China and the remaining two in Karachi under a technology transfer agreement signed at the Defence Production Ministry in Rawalpindi. The documents were signed by M/s China Ship Trading Company and the Pakistani government. The Chinese vice-minister met on Wednesday with Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif. Matters related to security of the \$46 billion (Dh168 billion) China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project were also discussed during the meeting, according to a military statement. (Gulf News)