

Putin Urges End to Geopolitical Games, Suggests Collective Fight against Terrorism

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin urged all countries Wednesday to abandon outdated geopolitical games and create a global security system to curb the rising threat of terrorism.

"We need to create a modern, nonaligned collective security system. Russia is open to discuss this important issue and has repeatedly declared its readiness for dialogue," Putin said in an address to the State Duma, Russia's lower parliament house, on Russia's Day of Remembrance and Grief, marking Nazi Germany's



invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941.

Today all countries should abandon "old and worn-out ideological differences and geopolitical

games," and unite in the fight against international

terrorism, Putin said.

Warning that the risk of propagation of terrorism is rising, Putin lamented that Russia did not see any positive response from its partners on the suggestion of a joint anti-terror fight.

"The major lesson (of World War II) is well-known: It could have been prevented, and there could have been a timely and firm suppression of the rampaging Nazis and their accomplices," Putin said.

On the contrary, NATO is intensifying its aggressive rhetoric and actions ... (More on P4)...(22)

19 Out of 22 Governorates in Yemen Haunted By Food Insecurity: UN

UNITED NATIONS - Vast swathes of war-torn Yemen -- 19 out of 22 governorates -- are facing severe food insecurity, and the situation within affected areas is likely to deteriorate if conflict persists in the Middle East country, UN agencies said on Tuesday.

The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis confirmed that over half the country's population is living in "emergency" or "crisis" levels of food

insecurity, with some governorates seeing as much as 70 percent of their population struggling to feed themselves. At least seven million people, a quarter of the population, are living under "emergency" levels of food insecurity, or phase 4 on the five-tier IPC scale. This reflects a 15 percent increase since June 2015.

Another 7.1 million people are in a state of "crisis," or phase 3. "The IPC results clearly



show the huge magnitude of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen," said Jamie McGoldrick, the UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen. "This is

one of the worst crises in the world and is continuing to get worse." Fuel shortages and import restrictions have ... (More on P4)...(23)

At Least 100 Killed in Lightning, Rain Related Incidents in India

NEW DELHI - At least 100 people were killed and scores injured due to overnight lightning in three Indian states of Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh, India's state-run broadcaster All India Radio (AIR) said Wednesday.

Officials said the deaths have been caused due to lightning and rain related incidents.

"In Bihar, the death toll has rose up to 56," the broadcaster said. "In Uttar Pradesh, 40 such

deaths have been reported while as four deaths have also been reported from Jharkhand."

Reports said lightning struck in several places of Bihar including Patna, Rohtash, Kaimur, Aurangabad and Buxar districts.

"The Bihar state disaster management department has instructed district officials of the affected areas to assess the extent of damage," an official posted in Bihar said. ... (More on P4)...(24)

Turkey Says it Depends on Israel to Normalize Bilateral Ties

ANKARA - Reaching normalized relations with Israel will depend on steps taken by Tel Aviv, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Wednesday, adding that talks between both countries are ongoing.

"Our conditions are simple. The deal in the first upcoming meeting depends on Israel's attitude," Cavusoglu told reporters during a joint press conference with his Turkish Cypriot Administration counterpart Tahsin Ertugruloglu in

Ankara, without giving a date for that meeting. Cavusoglu stressed that Ankara's talks with Hamas were no secret, adding that Turkey will continue talking with Hamas and that it was not a precondition for normalizing relations with Israel.

He also said Ankara did not believe in permanent peace without Hamas. Relations between Turkey and Israel were severely damaged following the raid of the Gaza-bound Mavi Marmara vessel by ... (More on P4)...(25)

Syria's Assad Orders Formation of new Government

DAMASCUS - Syria's President Bashar al-Assad on Wednesday ordered the current minister of electricity, Emad Khamis, to form a new government, state news agency SANA reported.

Assad appointed Khamis to be the prime minister of the new government, replacing former prime minister Waerl al-Halqi. The formation of a new government came weeks after the Syrian parliament was elected. According to the law, a new government should be formed



within 40 days following the parliament elections. The new government will be the sixth to be formed under the presidency of

al-Assad. The last government was formed in August 2014, following the re-election of al-Assad, and was headed by

al-Halqi. The names of the new ministers are expected to be announced within the next two days. (Xinhua)

South Sudan Victims of Sexual Violence Reach 32,000: UN

JUBA - The number of sexual violence victims in South Sudan in the aftermath of the more than two years of civil war has reached 32,000 excluding death-related cases, the UN said on Wednesday. The spokesman for the UN Mission in South Sudan, Ariane Quentier, said that despite measures put in place to mitigate the scale of sexual violence in the country, nothing will be achieved unless victims are free to speak out and report about it to relevant authorities. "We shall not be able to address sexual violence unless people who have been victimised speak out and report it,"



Ariane told journalists in Juba. Several UN reports on the South Sudan civil war have accused both former warring parties -- the government troops (SPLA) and the rebels (SPLA-IO) -- of raping women, girls and abducting children. "Some 32,000

have been victimised since conflict broke out in December 2013 and it has been used as a weapon of war to destabilise communities," said Naweza Muderhwa, the UNMISS Women Protection Officer. ... (More on P4)...(26)

Iran Arrests 10 in Major Terrorist Plot

TEHRAN - Iran's Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi said on Tuesday the intelligence services of the country arrested 10 Takfiri terrorists who intended to target the capital and other cities in the country, official IRNA news agency reported. The terrorists were arrested in Tehran and three other provinces of Iran over the past six days, from June 15 to 20, Alavi was quoted as saying.

Iran said on Monday its intelligence services thwarted "one of the biggest" terrorist plots targeting Tehran and other cities.

"In this criminal plot, the anti-Islamist Takfiri terrorist ... (More on P4)...(29)

Four Dead in Central China Aluminum Plant Accident

ZHENGZHOU - Four people died and nine others were injured in an accident at an aluminum plant on Wednesday in central China's Henan Province, local authorities said. The accident occurred at 4:50 p.m. due to a piece of falling equipment, according to the provincial administration of work safety.

Among the injured, two were seriously wounded. The plant is owned by the the Henan branch of the Aluminum Corp. of China. (Xinhua)

EU Helps Improve Vietnamese Nuclear Safety Agency

HO CHI MINH CITY - The European Commission on Wednesday launched a new cooperation project worth 1.6 million euro with Vietnam to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of the Vietnam Agency for Radiation and Nuclear Safety

(VARANS). The European Commission will assist Vietnam to establish a sound legal and regulatory framework before it embarks on a nuclear power program, the European Union (EU) delegation to the country said Wednesday.

Moreover, the technical capabilities of VARANS' staff will be enhanced, helping them cope with the anticipated introduction and use of nuclear energy in Vietnam. The EU has been supporting Vietnam since 2012 under its ... (More on P4)...(27)

Israeli PM Due to Meet Kerry in Rome for Resuming Peace Talks

JERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will meet U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry next week amid international efforts to restart peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, his office said on Wednesday.

Netanyahu will visit

Rome on June 26 and 27, where he is set to meet with Kerry as well as with Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

The scheduled meeting will take place as France is advocating for its international peace initiative,

which Israel opposes. Israeli officials instead suggested a regional move to restart peace talks, with Egypt and other Arab states being involved in the process.

According to the Israeli Channel 2 news, Netanyahu prefers a potential ... (More on P4)...(28)

Iraqi Forces Repel Fierce Attacks by IS Militants in Salahudin

TIKRIT - Iraqi security forces repelled an attack by Islamic State (IS) militants in the province of Salahudin Wednesday, a provincial security source said.

Furthermore, in the same province, four people were killed in separate bomb and gunfire attacks. Dozens of IS militants

attacked security forces posts along with those of allied paramilitary Shiite units, known as Hashd Shaabi, in the area of Zargah, 50 km east of the provincial capital city of Tikrit, seizing some of the military posts following heavy clashes, the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity. The troops

regained control of the military posts following four hours of fierce clashes however, driving out the extremist militants towards the nearby Himreen Mountain, after additional troops arrived and launched a counter-attack covered by Iraqi aircraft, the source said. The ... (More on P4)...(30)

Neighbor News

Infringement on Bahrainis' Rights Unacceptable: Zarif

TEHRAN - In the wake of a recent move by the Manama regime to strip Bahrain's top Shia cleric of citizenship, Iran's foreign minister says infringement on the rights of Bahraini people by a certain group is unacceptable. Mohammad Javad Zarif was speaking during a meeting with members of the committees of foreign affairs, national defense and armed forces of the French parliament in Paris on Wednesday.

"We want logical relations (with other countries). We cannot accept the fact that the rights of Bahraini people are infringed on by a certain group and that they are deprived of their rights," Zarif said, adding, "Iran, nevertheless, considers having good neighborly relations (with other countries) as its unwavering policy."

Stressing the need for all countries to abide by such principles as showing respect for other countries' borders and not interfering in other countries' internal affairs, Zarif said that a few years ago, Iran offered a proposal to promote dialogue among countries. On June 20, the Bahraini regime revoked the citizenship of

Sheikh Isa Qassim. "Isa Ahmed Qassim has been stripped of his Bahraini citizenship," state news agency BNA said in a short message on its Twitter account.

The cleric has been seen as the spiritual leader of the uprising against the ruling Al Khalifah regime in Bahrain over the past few years.

Senior Iranian officials reacted to the controversial decision, with Major General Qassem Suleimani, the commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, warning Manama that it should refrain from overstepping the redlines as it will leave Bahraini people with no choice but "armed resistance."

In March 2011, Saudi Arabia dispatched troops to Bahrain to assist the Manama regime in its crackdown on protests. Scores of people have been killed in the clampdown by the Bahraini security forces. Zarif arrived in Paris on Tuesday at the head of a high-ranking delegation on the first leg of his two-nation European tour which will also take him to the Netherlands. (Presstv)

Mamnoon Leaves for Uzbekistan to Attend SCO

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain Wednesday left for Tashkent, Uzbekistan, to participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit.

The delegation accompanying the President includes Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz,

Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry and other senior officials.

The President will represent Pakistan at the Meeting of the Heads of the SCO Member States.

Pakistan will be accorded permanent membership of SCO during the Summit, said a press release. (APP)

Tajikistan: Cabinet to Swear Oath to President

DOSHANBEH - Governments in Tajikistan will under new rules now have to swear an oath of office to the president before they can begin doing their jobs.

Although the requirement is largely symbolic, it will serve to further elevate the office of the president and the status of its current occupant, Emomali Rahmon, to a quasi-regal level. As such, the change is in keeping with Tajikistan's devolution into an autocracy underpinned by a cult of personality.

Member of parliament Mazvuna Sharofiddinova told RFE/RL's Tajik service, Radio Ozodi, that the oath to the president would make the government more effective and improve its performance. Parliament, however, will continue to swear fealty to the people rather than the president himself.

In another episode of toadying, parliament on June 22 also approved the creation of a new holiday with a symbolic date. Diplomat's Day will be ob-

served on September 29, which falls on the anniversary of Rahmon's first ever address before the UN General Assembly in 1993.

On point of fact though, the first address by a Tajik official to the UN was actually in 1992 by the then foreign minister, Hudoiberdi Holiknazar.

In the hope of earning such lavish adulation, Rahmon has been making some lofty promises this week.

In a speech on June 21, he promised that average life expectancy would in the next 15 years be raised to 80, up from around 69 at the moment. Child mortality rates will be lowered to "international standards" over that same span, he pledged.

Rahmon also vowed the level of formal employment will be increased from 40 percent to 70 percent of the work-able population and that preschool places will be made available to 50 percent of eligible children, up from 12 percent at the moment. (Agencies)