

Migrants Play Key Role in Asia-Pacific Countries' Development: UN Report

BANGKOK - Migrants from countries across Asia and the Pacific play a key role as development actors, but the benefits of migration remain under-acknowledged, according to a new United Nations report launched Monday. Migrants help drive GDP growth in their countries of destination while also supporting families and communities in their countries of origin, according to the Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2015: Migrants' Contributions to Development, launched



by HongjooHahm, deputy executive secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission

for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Drawing on evidence gathered from across the

region, the report finds that over 95 million people from Asia and Pacific countries lived outside

their countries of birth, and that the region hosted over 59 million migrants. While there are many

reasons to migrate, the majority of these migrants are temporary migrant workers. The Asia-Pacific region also hosts over 5.5 million refugees. Top three entities of migration origin in Asia-Pacific region are India, Russia and China. Just in 2013, more than 9 million Chinese people migrated to other countries, according to the UN report. Meanwhile, China hosted more than 2 million migrants from the Asia-Pacific region, making it the No. 7 destination country in the region. While the report shows that many migrant workers not only benefit ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

Syrian Opposition Says Government Wrecking Truce Deal

BEIRUT/GENEVA - A senior official from Syria's main opposition group said on Monday that the first major attempt to halt the fighting after nearly five years of war was in danger of total collapse because of attacks by government forces. The cessation of hostilities drawn up by the United States and Russia, faced "complete nullification" because Syrian government attacks were violating the agreement, the official of the Saudi-backed

opposition High Negotiations Committee (HNC) said. France said there were reports of attacks on opposition forces in breach of the deal, which came into force on Saturday, and countries backing the Syria peace process would meet later on Monday to try to clarify the situation. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the pause in the fighting was largely holding, despite some incidents that he hoped would be con-



tained. The Kremlin said the process was under way, although it had always been clear it would

not be easy. The British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

ASEAN Economic Ministers Retreat to be Held in Thailand

BANGKOK - The 22nd ASEAN Economic Ministers Retreat will be held in Chiang Mai province on Wednesday and Thursday. Thai Commerce Minister Apiradee Tantraporn said on Monday that the AEM Retreat will focus on plans for the ASEAN bloc's Free Trade Area dealings with several trading partners, namely China, India, South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Such international dealings

under the theme of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership were meant to be implemented within this year to meet a joint resolution earlier reached between the ASEAN leaders, Apiradee said. Also at issue during the AEM Retreat are concerted moves toward regional logistics and transport development plans and electronic data link plans, among others, she said. The Chiang Mai ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

Danish PM Makes Minor Cabinet Reshuffle

COPENHAGEN - Danish Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen on Monday made a minor cabinet reshuffle after Eva Kjer Hansen's resignation as minister for Environment and Food. Esben Lunde Larsen was transferred from being minister for higher education and science to head the ministry of environment and food, and Ulla Toernaes, who has since 2014 been a member of the European Parliament, became the new minister for higher education and science. Larsen, 37, replaces Hansen who stepped down on Saturday to

avoid a possible withdrawal of support by the Conservatives to the ruling party of the Liberals. The Conservatives accused Hansen of misleading parliament over the environmental impact of the government's agricultural reform package, and repeated that it had lost confidence in the minister. Meanwhile, Denmark's opposition parties submitted a motion of censure against the minister with the backing of the Conservatives, who threatened to withdraw its backing if the prime minister does not sack Hansen. *(Xinhua)*

More than 900,000 Shop Jobs in Britain at Risk, Report Warns

LONDON - Around 74,000 shops, employing more than 900,000 workers in Britain's retail sector, are under threat, the British Retail Consortium (BRC) warned Monday. The consortium, which represent high street stores, says the introduction by Chancellor George Osborne of a new compulsory national minimum wage, as well as a new apprenticeship levy, will deliver the blow for the retail sector which currently employs three million workers.

The BRC says the rate of change in retail is set to quicken as the digital revolution reshapes the industry, more property leases come up for renewal and the cost of labor goes up, while the cost of technology goes down. "These effects could mean there are as many as 900,000 fewer jobs in retail by 2025 but those that remain will be more productive and higher earning," says the study. Businessman Theo Paphitis, one of the stars of the popular television pro-



gram Dragon's Den, who is also chairman of Ryman Stationery, said: "This report shows that without a major rethink by the government around the

business rates system and the apprenticeship levy, together with careful consideration of the National Living Wage, the trading ...*(More on P4)...(25)*

Joint Israel-Palestinian Orchestra Designated as UN Global Advocate for Tolerance

GENEVA - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Monday designated the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra as a UN Global Advocate for Cultural Understanding to promote tolerance, understanding and unity among peoples of different cultural and religious identities. The designation took place at an event at the UN Office at Geneva, attended by the secretary-general and the world-renowned conductor and pianist Daniel Barenboim, the orchestra's co-founder and a UN messenger of peace. "The work of the orches-



tra is testimony to the power of music to break down barriers and to build bridges between communities. I am delighted that the orchestra has committed to help us in our work towards creating a more peaceful, inclusive and

united world," said Ban. Co-founded by Barenboim and the late Palestinian scholar Edward Said in 1999, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra unites young musicians from Israel, Palestine and several ...*(More on P4)...(26)*

U.S. Warns Citizens to be Ready to Leave Iraq if Mosul Dam Collapses

BAGHDAD - The United States warned its citizens to be ready to leave Iraq in the event of what it has said could be a catastrophic collapse of the country's largest hydro-electric dam near Mosul. Iraqi officials have sought to play down the risk but Washington urged its citizens to make contingency plans now. A U.S. security message cited estimates that Mosul, which is northern Iraq's largest city and under control of Islamic State insurgents, could be inundated by as much as 70 feet (21 meters) of water within hours of the breach. Cities downstream on the Tigris River such as Tikrit, Samarra and the Iraqi capital Baghdad could be inundated with smaller, but still significant levels within 24-72 hours. "We have no specific information that indicates when a breach might occur, but out of an abundance of ...*(More on P4)...(27)*

Syria Ceasefire Task Force Meets, France wants Answers on Violations

GENEVA - Countries sponsoring the Syria peace process met in Geneva on Monday amid complaints that a new cessation of hostilities deal was quickly unraveling, with France demanding information about reports of persisting attacks on rebel positions. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that the cessation arrangement was holding by and large but the peace group, meeting for the first time since the pact took force early on Saturday, was trying to ensure fresh clashes did not spread. "We have received indications that attacks, ...*(More on P4)...(28)*

At Least 7 Killed in Suicide Bombing at Funeral in Iraq

BAQUBA - At least seven people were killed and 15 others wounded on Monday in a suicide bomb attack at a funeral tent in a village in Iraq's eastern province of Diyala, a provincial security source told Xinhua. The attack occurred in the afternoon when a suicide bomber wearing an explosive vest detonated himself at a funeral tent in the Shiite village of Brishtah, some 100 km northeast of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, the source said on condition of anonymity. The huge blast caused heavy devastation to the scene and destroyed several nearby buildings and civilian cars, the source said, adding that the toll could rise as civilian ambulances and civilian cars were evacuating the victims Maqadiah hospital ...*(More on P4)...(31)*

Hungary's PM Dismisses Threats of Losing EU Funds

BUDAPEST - Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban on Monday rejected warnings that his policies could lead to cuts in European Union funding, calling the threat of withholding funds "unacceptable." Addressing the annual meeting of Hungarian ambassadors in Budapest, Orban argued that while he was not opposed to receiv-

ing such funds, it was the businesses of other countries with facilities in Hungary that were making money on the EU grants. "We're even," he said. "Neither of us owes the other anything." He stressed that the threats of withdrawing funds was unacceptable. The prime minister's re ...*(More on P4)...(29)*

Indian PM to Embark on Three-Nation Visit March End

NEW DELHI - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will embark on a three-nation tour of Belgium, the United States and Saudi Arabia next month, sources said Monday. "Modi's first stop is Brussels on March 30, where he will hold the bilateral India-European Union Summit. From Belgium, he will head to the U.S. to attend the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington," the sources said.

Heads of states and governments of nearly 50 countries are expected to attend the Nuclear Security Summit in the United States and there is much speculation that Modi will meet his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif on the sidelines of the summit. On his way back home, Modi will make a stopover in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, ...*(More on P4)...(30)*

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Turkmenistan Appoints Ambassador in Tajikistan

ASHGABAT - Chary Atayev has been appointed Turkmenistan's extraordinary and plenipotentiary ambassador in Tajikistan according to a decree of the Turkmen president. The diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on Jan. 27, 1993. The two countries of Central Asia cooperate closely in the fuel and energy, transportation and communication spheres. In particular, the two

countries practically implement large-scale projects on the construction of Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan-China gas pipeline, as well as the construction of Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan railway. Tajikistan buys oil products, refined cottonseed oil and cement from Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan, in turn, imports consumer goods, aluminum, agricultural products. *(Agencies)*

China Voices Opposition to THAAD Deployment in ROK

BEIJING - China has reiterated its opposition to deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), an advanced U.S. missile defense system, in the Republic of Korea (ROK) as a special envoy visited the ROK. Wu Dawei, China's special representative on Korean Peninsula affairs, started a visit to the ROK on Sunday and met with Hwang Joon-kook, ROK special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, who is also Seoul's top envoy to the six-party talks. Wu also met with Cho Tae-yong, Deputy Chief of the ROK Presidential National Security Office,

and first vice Foreign Minister Lim Sung-nam, according to Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei on Monday. "The two sides have agreed to support the UN Security Council to pass a new resolution on DPRK's nuclear test and satellite launch, and make joint efforts to safeguard peace and stability on the peninsula and advance Sino-ROK strategic partnership," said Hong. Wu stressed that China is opposed to deployment of the U.S. THAAD in the ROK, and hopes the ROK would take China's concern seriously, said Hong. *(Xinhua)*

Tehran Sends Influential Moderates to Assembly of Experts

TEHRAN - Influential moderate clerics from Tehran province have won seats in Iran's next Assembly of Experts that is tasked with discussing and deciding on the leadership of the country, according to the results issued by Iran's Interior Ministry on Monday. Vote counts on the election of the incoming assembly members was over and the name of 16 representatives of Tehran in the body were specified. Out of the 16 elected candidates for the assembly in Tehran province, 15 were supported by reformists and moderates. From about 4.5 million votes counted in Tehran, Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, former president, is at the top with 2,301 million votes, and the moderate Presi-

dent Hassan Rouhani is in the third position with 2,238 million votes. Iranian Interior Minister, Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli, announced that the nationwide vote count of the election for the Assembly of Experts ended on Monday. Based on the cross-country vote results for the assembly, the composition of the body will not undergo a significant change, save for two prominent and powerful conservative clerics who failed to secure seats in Iran's next Assembly of Experts. Ayatollah Mohammad Taghi Mesbah-Yazdi and Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, members of the outgoing assembly, could not win enough votes to secure their places among the 16 required in Tehran province. *(Xinhua)*

Imran Asks KP Cabinet to Withdraw Amendments Made to Ehtesab Commission Act

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Monday said he had asked the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet to "withdraw amendments" made to the KP Ehtesab Commission Act after chairing a meeting to review the situation. The commission was established through an Act of the KP Assembly in 2014 as an independent and autonomous body to combat corruption in the province. However, a recent amendment to the ordinance - promulgated on

Feb 9 - makes approval of the five-member commission mandatory for arresting a suspect and reduces the maximum period of physical custody of a suspect from 45 to 15 days. The ordinance further provides that no legislator will be arrested by the commission without prior intimation to the Senate's chairman or the speaker of the national or provincial assembly, as the case may be. Similarly the chief secretary will have to be informed before the arrest of a civil servant. *(Agencies)*