

EU Urges Early Signature, Ratification of COP21 Agreement

BRUSSELS - The European Union (EU) on Tuesday urged the early signature, ratification and entry into force of the COP21 Paris agreements on climate change.

The Paris agreement was adopted in December 2015 by the 196 parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) during the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) hosted by France.

The agreement will enter into force when at least 55 parties representing at least 55 percent of global emissions have ratified it.



The European Commission looked at the next steps in the process and

how the Paris agreement would be implemented in the EU. They called for

a European Council decision on the signing of the agreement on behalf of

the EU. Moreover, the EU would need to be ready to participate in the re-

view processes under the Paris agreement that is designed to keep climate change well below 2 degrees Celsius and work towards a 1.5 degrees Celsius cap, said the Commission.

It urged that "by 2020, all countries should communicate their mid-century, long-term de-carbonization strategies."

To facilitate the preparation of the EU's strategy, the Commission said it would prepare an in-depth analysis of the economic and social transformations in order to feed the political debate in the ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

Neighbor News

Iran Foresees 'Tangible' Rise in Oil Exports in March

TEHRAN - Iran sees a "tangible" rise in oil shipments to international markets this month as the country is stepping up production and traditional buyers are reviving trade.

South Korea said on Wednesday it is boosting imports of Iranian oil, especially condensate, to meet growing demand after sanctions on Tehran were lifted.

The major Asian importer has tripled crude purchases from Iran since the lifting of sanctions in January but shipments are still far below pre-sanction levels.

"We will increase oil

and natural gas liquids imports from Iran, especially Iranian condensate," Reuters quoted South Korea's Trade and Energy Ministry as saying. On Monday, Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zangeneh said Iran hopes to double oil exports to South Korea which is currently buying 100,000 barrels of oil a day from the Middle Eastern country.

Zangeneh hosted South Korean Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy JooHyung-hwan in his office in Tehran where they signed new documents for cooperation. *(PressTV)*

Supporters Rally After Clinton, Cruz Win Texas Presidential Primary

HOUSTON - Hillary Clinton won Texas' Democratic presidential primary while Senator Ted Cruz won the Lone Star State on the Republican side on what is known as Super Tuesday.

Supporters of the major contenders for both parties rallied through the state of Texas after casting their votes.

In the primaries, a component of U.S. presidential elections, party representatives of each state vote separately. Super Tuesday is often a deciding point in

the primaries, producing a clear favorite to clinch party nomination. Republican contender Donald Trump and Clinton came out as winners of this year's mega contest.

In Houston, Clinton supporters met with state officials at a bar featuring 13 large-screen televisions airing Super Tuesday coverage. When Clinton was announced the winner, more than 100 people applauded, chanting "Hillary" and "USA."

"Hillary was a teacher and I'm a teacher, and it



doesn't make any sense at all that the Republicans want to do away with the Department of Education

and the Environmental Protection Agency. So, should we just be un...*(More on P4)...(23)*

Pro-Kurdish Lawmakers Seek to Drag Turkey into Chaos: Davutoglu

ANKARA - Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said on Wednesday lawmakers from the opposition Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), which has Kurdish origins, had sought to collaborate with "terrorists" and drag Turkey into chaos.

President Tayyip Erdogan backs legal action against members of the HDP, parliament's third-biggest party, whom he accuses of being an extension of the Kurdistan

Workers Party (PKK), which the government lists as a terrorist organization. The HDP denies this.

Davutoglu also told a news conference there are plans to make it easier for civilians to leave areas under curfew in the mainly Kurdish southeast, where hundreds have died since PKK militants and the state resumed hostilities after the collapse of a ceasefire in July, and for militants to surrender. *(Reuters)*

Pakistan, US Yet to Remove Differences over N-Arsenal

WASHINGTON - US and Pakistani officials are still deliberating on the contents of a joint statement that was supposed to be issued after the sixth meeting of their strategic dialogue on Monday afternoon.

Neither side is willing to talk about the differences that have reportedly delayed the statement, but in their opening remarks on Monday, leaders of the US and Pakistani delegations highlighted some pressing issues.

US Secretary of State John Kerry emphasised the need for Pakistan to reduce its nuclear arsenal, urging it to "process that reality (of reduction) and

put that front and centre in its policy." On the other hand, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz, asked the United States to show a "greater understanding of Pakistan's security concerns and its desire to contribute actively as a mainstream nuclear power."

The two statements clearly underline major differences between their positions on the nuclear issue. Pakistan insists that its nuclear programme is designed only to deal with a possible threat from India and that it will not accept any unilateral reduction in nuclear weapons. *(Agencies)*

EU wants Migrant Flow from Turkey to Drop Below 1,000 A Day: Officials

BRUSSELS - The European Union is pressing Ankara to cut the number of migrants reaching Greece by sea to less than 1,000 a day in return for taking refugees directly from Turkey, EU officials said, desperate to see results from a deal agreed last year.

Facing a humanitarian crisis in Greece, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has pushed for an emergency EU summit with Turkey on March 7 in Brussels that will follow days of intense diplomacy with Ankara to save

a Nov. 29 deal meant to stem migrant flows.

"There is no good alternative to an effective cooperation with Turkey," said European Council President Donald Tusk before heading to Ankara to hold talks with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday.

Three months since Ankara agreed to help tackle Europe's worst migration crisis since World War Two, more than 2,000 people a day are still crossing the Aegean Sea in dinghies and fishing trawlers ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

Iraq Signs Deal to Repair and Maintain its Key Mosul Dam

BAGHDAD -Iraq has signed a deal with an Italian company to repair and maintain the country's largest dam near the northern, Islamic State-held city of Mosul. The Mosul dam is in danger of a possibly catastrophic collapse.

Government spokesman, Saad al-Hadithi, says the contract worth € 275-million, or about \$296 million, was signed with Italy's Trevi group on Wednesday.

He wouldn't give a specific timeframe for when the work would start, but



says it needs to be "as quickly as possible." The dam outside the Islamic State-held city of Mosul grabbed headlines

recently amid fears it could collapse due to neglect and lack of needed maintenance because of the ongoing fighting.

It was built in the early 1980s on highly unstable ground with the underlying bedrock easily dissolvable in water. *(AP)*

Urgent Way-Out Needed from Current Political Crisis: Mogherini

BRUSSELS - European Union (EU) foreign affairs chief Federica Mogherini on Wednesday met with Chairperson of the Ukrainian Parliament Volodymyr Groysman to discuss the situation in Ukraine as well as the ongoing work on the reform agenda.

According to a press release issued by the European External Action Service, they agreed in the discussion that urgent way out is needed from the current political crisis, to maintain the clear and strong focus on economic and political reform pro-



cess. Mogherini highlighted the important role Verkhovna Rada, which is the Ukrainian Parliament, is playing in the country's reform drive, including through the adoption of several important laws related to the implementa-

tion of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan.

"The broader reform efforts -- including on constitutional amendments on judiciary and on decentralization -- need to continue to deliver results for ...*(More on P4)...(25)*

U.S. Targets Islamic State with 21 Strikes in Iraq, Syria: Statement

WASHINGTON - The United States and its allies staged 21 strikes on Tuesday against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the coalition leading the operations said in a statement released on Wednesday.

Fourteen strikes in Iraq concentrated on Mosul and Falluja where they hit two tactical units, an improvised explosive device facility and three vehicles used by the militant group, among other targets, the coalition said. Other strikes were conducted near Ramadi, Sinjar, Al Qaim, Albu Hayat, Baiji and Habbaniya, the statement said.

In Syria, seven strikes near four cities - Al Hawl, Ar Raqqa, Manbij and Mar'a - hit numerous targets, including an Islamic State headquarters, five tactical units and two buildings, the Combined Joint Task Force said. *(Reuters)*

Syrian Government Forces Open New Battle with Rebels in Northwest

BEIRUT - Syrian government forces launched an attack on Wednesday to capture a rebel-held hill in north-western Syria, a rebel official and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported, an expansion of operations that have continued in that area despite a deal to cease fighting. Rebels said the assault on Kabani hill in the province of Latakia was supported by Russian air strikes. Both the government and rebels have accused each other of violating the truce, which came into effect on Saturday. The agreement does not include Islamic State or the Nusra Front, an al Qaeda-linked group that has a wide presence in northwestern Syria. The ...*(More on P4)...(26)*

Residents Return to Turkish Town of Cizre, Find it Destroyed

CIZRE - The stench of death and the smell of gunpowder rose from mounds of rubble Wednesday as residents of the Turkish town of Cizre returned to find many of their homes obliterated amid Turkey's efforts to crush Kurdish militants. At least one body was still lying inside a ruined house. Cizre is one of a handful of mainly southeastern Kurdish districts where Turkey's security forces, backed by tanks, have conducted extensive operations against militants linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. The militants want autonomy for Kurds in Turkey's southeast, and had raised barricades, dug trenches and planted explosives to protect areas where they had aspired for self-rule. On ...*(More on P4)...(29)*

EU Launches Emergency Refugee Aid Scheme for Greece

BRUSSELS - The European Union, faced with a burgeoning refugee crisis in Greece, launched a new aid program on Wednesday worth an initial 700 million euros that mirrors the kind of disaster relief it offers developing nations. As European states have closed borders following the arrival of nearly a million migrants by sea from

Turkey last year, the Athens government has appealed for help to house and care for tens of thousands still arriving and now stranded in Greece. The European Commission's proposal will, if approved, switch 300 million euros (\$325 million) this year from its 155-billion euro annual budget to the ...*(More on P4)...(27)*

Netanyahu Seeks to Expel Families of Palestinian Attackers

JERUSALEM - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday he hopes to curb a wave of Palestinian assaults by expelling to Gaza families of assailants found to have encouraged them to attack Israelis. Netanyahu, in a letter to Attorney-General Avichai Mandelblit released to the media, asked for a legal opinion on such a move, which he said would "lead to significant reduction in terrorist

activities against the state and its citizens". Mandelblit, who assumed his post last month, and his predecessor have rejected similar expulsion proposals floated by right-wing cabinet ministers, political sources said. But with pressure growing on Netanyahu to take tougher action against violence now in its sixth month, he appeared to have ...*(More on P4)...(28)*

Chinese, Russian FMs Discuss Coordination on DPRK-Related Resolution over Phone

BEIJING - Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov Wednesday discussed over the phone strategic bilateral coordination on the passing of a new UN Security Council resolution regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Wang said China and Russia, as comprehensive strategic partners, have closely cooperated on important international and regional issues in the past.

The communication between China and Russia on the passing of the new resolution at the UN Security Council in

relation to the DPRK has been efficient recently.

The two countries have achieved important consensus on preventing the DPRK from further advancing its nuclear missile program, preventing war and chaos on the Korean Peninsula and safeguarding the legitimate interests of China and Russia, Wang said.

This shows the high level of coordination between China and Russia, he added. Wang stressed that a return to dialogue and negotiation is needed to ultimately resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula. China ...*(More on P4)...(30)*