

# Ukraine Peace Plan Creaks as Russia and Ukraine Row

KIEV - A peace plan to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine came under renewed strain on Wednesday, with Ukraine and Russia rowing publicly over the next steps and further Ukrainian military casualties from rebel attacks testing a fragile ceasefire.

Moscow reacted sharply after Ukraine agreed on Tuesday to confer special status on rebel-controlled eastern regions and grant them limited self-rule - but only once local elections had been held under Ukrainian law, something unpalatable for rebel leaders who have proclaimed



their own "people's republics". Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the Ukrainian parliament

had sought to "re-write" the agreement reached in Minsk, Belarus, last month. The Kremlin said the Minsk deal was now

further away from being realised than it was a few days ago. In Kiev, Prime Minister Arseny Yatseniuk responded that no

one on the Ukrainian side had much optimism that Russia "and the terrorists" would readily fulfil the Minsk plan. "First and

foremost: to comply with the Minsk agreements, the Russian bandits must clear out of the territory of Ukraine and give the possibility to Ukraine of carrying out honest and transparent elections in line with international standards," he said in televised comments at a government meeting. The row, which could lead the deal into a dead-end, starkly highlighted the different strategies towards the issue of self-rule in the east. Kiev is pushing a decentralisation agenda in which it makes concessions aimed at blunting a drive for independence, ... (More on P4)... (20)

## WHO Urges Tough Tobacco Control to Improve Peoples' Health

ABU DHABI - The ongoing 16th world conference on tobacco or health discussed on Wednesday the methods of reducing global cigarette consumption as well as cigars and pipes amid rising smoking habits in emerging markets.

According to the Dubai-based daily Khaleej Times, despite various official and private



measures against tobacco consumption, smoking and its impact on peoples' health remains

a significant global challenge, experts said at the conference held under the theme "tobacco and

non-communicable diseases."

Khaleej Times quoted Eduardo D'Espaignet, tobacco control department coordinator at the World Health Organization (WHO) as saying that the latest statistics showed that six million people die annually from smoking-related causes with most cases affiliated to diseases such as cancer. (Xinhua)

## Turkey, Russia to Agree on Gas Supply: Matthew Bryza

BAKU - Turkey and Russia will agree on the gas supply issue, Matthew Bryza, the former deputy assistant of the US secretary of state for Europe and Eurasia, former US ambassador to Azerbaijan and director of International Centre for Defence and Security in Tallinn told

Trend on Mar.18. He was commenting on the refusal of Turkey's BOTAS company to sign an agreement with Russia's Gazprom company on 10.25-percent discount for the gas supplied to Turkey. Bryza said refusal is an ordinary part of the negotiation process that will by no means affect

the further implementation of the Turkish Stream project. It is not necessary to implement the project in accordance with the conditions proposed by the Russian side, he said, adding that however, eventually, Russia and Turkey will reach a mutually beneficial agreement on gas supply.

Turkish BOTAS declined to sign an agreement with Russia's Gazprom on Mar.17 on a 10.25-percent discount on the Russian gas supplied to Turkey. The refusal to sign the agreement came due to that the discount rate proposed by Russia doesn't suit Turkey. (Agencies)

### Official

## Iran Asked to Help Iraqi Assyrians

TERHAN - A senior Iranian official says the Assyrians have appealed to the Islamic Republic to help provide security for the minority community in Iraq who are facing threats from militants.

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani said in an

interview on Wednesday that the representative of the Assyrians in the world has called on Iran to provide training and weapons to help ensure security for the Iraqi Assyrians.

"This indicates that the Islamic Republic of Iran's assistance is not limited to a certain group or belief,



and that when it comes to fighting terrorism it (Iran) is considered a supporter

and pioneer to confront this scourge," Shamkhani said. (Press TV)

## Syria Claims Downing of US Drone

DEMASCUS - Syria's military shot down a US drone over the coastal province of Latakia, a stronghold of President Bashar al-Assad, state media said on Tuesday. The US military confirmed that it had lost communication with an unarmed Predator drone over northwest Syria on Tuesday and was looking into the claims it was brought down.

If confirmed, it would be the first time that Syrian forces have attacked a US aircraft since the coalition fighting the Islamic State began raids against the jihadist group in Syria in September. The claim came as activists

said Syrian regime forces had carried out an attack using chlorine gas that killed six people, including three children.

Syrian state news agency SANA reported the apparent downing of a US drone in a breaking news alert.

"Syrian air defences brought down a hostile US surveillance aircraft over north Latakia," it said, without providing further details.

While Syria is not participating in the air strikes against the IS, it has so far refrained from taking action against aircraft involved in the US-led coalition's operations to take out the extremist group. (AFP)

## Kazakhstan to Ensure Full Security at EXPO-2017

BAKU - Kazakhstan will take all necessary measures to ensure full security during the exhibition EXPO-2017, Chairman of the Board of National Company Astana EXPO-2017 JSC Talgat Yermegiyev told Trend. "The principle of security of the participants, visitors of the exhibition, the press and service staff dominates at such events," said Yermegiyev. He said that the concept of ensuring security, law and order

during the preparation and holding of EXPO-2017 in Astana and the corresponding plan of its implementation have been developed to date.

An operative headquarters of representatives of all law enforcement and special bodies has been created, specific activities have been outlined, the whole area of EXPO has been All visitors of the exhibition will undergo identification and examination in order to ensure the safety. (Agencies)

## EU Urges Pakistan to Reinstate Moratorium on Death Penalty

ISLAMABAD - A spokesperson of the European Union (EU) said on Wednesday that the government of Pakistan should halt all executions as capital punishment violates international law and basic human rights.

The spokesperson referred to the death penalty as an unjust and cruel punishment and said capital punishment should be eliminated globally. The government has executed 48 convicts since the moratorium on the death penalty was lifted following the horrific terrorist attacks on the Army Public School in Peshawar last year.

The condemnation of the death penalty by the EU comes at a time when the government is set to hang underage convict, Shafqat Hussain on Mar 19, 2015.

Read more: Court order for Shafqat's execution has shattered our hopes, says family

Hussain's case has triggered outrage from rights campaigners, who complain he did not get a fair trial and was only 15 at the time of the killing.

The EU is only one of many international organisations urging the government to halt executions of convicts all over the country. Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch have also called for a stop to the hangings. The EU had opposed the removal of the moratorium in December last year, and again expressed concerns during the First Pakistan-EU Local Human Rights Dialogue where the delegation met to discuss Pakistan's GSP Plus status. (Agency)

## Nieghbor News

### China Calls on Countries Interested in AIIB to Join by March 31

BEIJING - China has called on all countries interested in joining the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to make their decisions before the deadline on March 31.

"March 31 is the deadline for countries to apply to join the bank as founding members, but the door will always be open for interested countries," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told a daily news briefing on Wednesday.

The China-proposed AIIB, with an expected initial subscribed capital of 50 billion U.S. dollars, will be an international financial institution to fund infrastructure projects in Asia. It is expected to be formally established by the end of 2015. Twenty-one countries including China, India and Singapore signed a Memorandum of Understanding last October in Bei-

jing on creating the bank. China's Finance Minister Lou Jiwei said on March 6 that 27 countries had applied to join as founding members.

Germany, France and Italy on Tuesday confirmed their respective intentions to join the AIIB, in the wake of Britain's application last week to be a founding member.

The bank has drawn concern from the United States that the new institution should incorporate the high standards of the World Bank while Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) have yet to express interest in joining.

"China, Japan and the ROK will surely exchange views on issues of mutual interest during the three-way foreign ministers' meeting on March 21, with the possibility of discussing (AIIB)-related issue," Hong said. (Xinhua)

### Zarif, Kerry Resume Nuclear Talks in Lausanne

SWISS CITY - Foreign ministers of Iran and the United States have resumed talks in the Swiss city of Lausanne in an attempt to bridge their differences on the outstanding issues surrounding Tehran's nuclear program. The talks headed by Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and US Secretary of State John Kerry resumed in Lausanne on Wednesday.

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), Ali Akbar Salehi, US Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz and US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman are also present in the meeting. On Tuesday, Salehi said that

Tehran and Washington have resolved their differences over 90 percent of the issues in the talks. "We have reached mutual understanding on 90 percent of technical issues," Salehi told IRIB news, adding that "there remains only a single sticking point, which is very important."

Iran and the P5+1 countries - the United States, Britain, France, China, and Russia plus Germany - are seeking to seal a comprehensive nuclear deal by July 1. The two sides have already missed two self-imposed deadlines for inking a final agreement since they signed an interim one in the Swiss city of Geneva in November 2013. (Press TV)

### 34 Militants Killed in 'Precise' Strikes in Northwest Pakistan

PESHAWAR - Pakistani air strikes on Wednesday killed 34 militants in the country's lawless northwest, near the mountainous border with Afghanistan, security officials said, but residents put the toll at 20.

Fighter jets pounded positions in the Tirah Valley in the Khyber region, west of the city of Peshawar, in "precise" strikes," the military said in a statement.

"The local population had fled their homes and villages when the operation was launched against the terrorists," an official told Reuters.

Another security official said those killed belonged to the outlawed militant group Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan and an allied group, Lashkar-e-Islam. "In precise aerial strikes in Tirah, Khyber Agency, 34 terrorists were killed to-

day," the military said in a statement.

The Pakistani Taliban are allied with the Afghan militants of the same name and share a similar jihadist ideology. But they operate as a separate entity, focused on toppling the Pakistani state and establishing strict Islamic rule in the nuclear-armed nation.

In a statement, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the killing in Peshawar on Wednesday of a district president of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), headed by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Taliban spokesman Muhammad Khurassani said the group had targeted members of the small Awami National Party, the former ruling party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. (Reuters)

### Turkmenistan Intensifies Polypropylene Production Unit Construction

ASHGABAT - A polypropylene film production unit is being intensively constructed at a refinery in the city of Turkmenbashi, the Turkmen Ministry of Oil & Gas Industry and Mineral Resources said March 17.

"This big investment project will increase the production capacity of the leading domestic petrochemical enterprise, expand the range of products in Turkmenistan, which are in high demand on the world markets,"

the statement said. Earlier it was reported that a bi-axially oriented polypropylene film production unit is being built at this refinery with a capacity of 20,000 metric tons. French DMT company is a contractor.

This project will significantly increase the income from the sale of finished products. Such a film is almost threefold expensive than granular polypropylene on the world markets. (Agencies)

د افغانستان اسلامي جمهوریت  
د اقتصاد وزارت  
د افغانستان د بیارغونې او پرمختیایي خدماتو دفتر



جمهوری اسلامی افغانستان  
وزارت اقتصاد  
دفتر خدمات بازرگانی و انکشافی افغانستان

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan  
Ministry of Economy  
Afghanistan Reconstruction & Development Services

**ARDS**

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Procurement Entities	AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL STANDARD AUTHORITY/ANSA		
Funded By	Government		
Item Description	Lot 1: Laboratory equipment for PVC testing Lot 2: Laboratory equipment for Food testing Lot 3: Calibration of the existing Food testing laboratory equipment & training of laboratory technicians		
Ref. No	ANSA-1993-ICB		
Bid Security as per lot wise:	1	4,500	4 September 2015
	2	3,000	
	3	1,500	
Deadline for Bid Submission	<b>4 May 2015 at 10:00 Hrs (Local Kabul Time), Electronic submission of Bid is not allowed. Late bid will be rejected.</b>		
Address for Bid Submission	Afghanistan Reconstruction & Development Services (ARDS) 4th Floor, Ministry of Economy Building Malik Asghar Square, Kabul - Afghanistan. Telephone: + 00-93 - 782651020.		
Bid Document available at	A complete set of Bidding documents in English may be obtained by interested bidders free of cost by downloading from the ARDS website <a href="http://www.ards.gov.af">www.ards.gov.af</a> or may obtain in CD from the ARDS Office (Address given above). In case of any difficulty in downloading from website, interested bidders may contact at e-mail address <a href="mailto:ards.procurement@ards.org.af">ards.procurement@ards.org.af</a> copied to <a href="mailto:Abdullah.khalid@ards.org.af">Abdullah.khalid@ards.org.af</a>		