

# UN Envoy Blasts EU's 'Lack of Vision' on Migration

ATHENS - A U.N. envoy for human rights on Monday said the European Union's response to the refugee crisis showed a "lack of vision" and that the bloc's deal with Turkey was legally questionable. The envoy, Francois Crepeau, said the March agreement between the EU and Turkey to send back migrants reaching Europe required "much stronger legal instruments to ensure legal accountability." "The legal nature of the document is uncertain," Crepeau told reporters in Athens after a five-



day visit to Greece that included trips to detention sites and migrant camps.

He added that Greek and European courts would need to determine whether

the agreement has any "legal value." The EU didn't immediately

comment on Crepeau's remarks. The aim of the deal be-

tween the EU and Turkey is to stop the flow of hundreds of thousands of people from Turkey to nearby Greek islands, which had become by far the most popular route for refugees and migrants into Europe. Under the agreement, those arriving on Greek islands on or after March 20 face detention and deportation back to Turkey unless they are granted asylum in often reluctant EU countries. The process has strained financially stricken Greece where about a quarter of the workforce is unemployed. (AP)

## Libya's Presidency Council Tells Ministers to Start Working

BENGHAZI - Libya's U.N.-established presidency council on Monday effectively gave the go-ahead for 18 government ministers to start work, even though they have not received backing from the parliament based in the country's east. The development, announced in a council statement, is an effort to bypass political deadlock that continues to grip this North African country, five years after the ouster and killing of Libyan dictator Moammar

Gadhafi. Since 2014, Libya has been torn among rival militias, tribes, governments and parliaments. The council was created under a U.N.-brokered unity deal struck in December to reconcile Libya's many political divisions. It won the support of a former powerbase in the country's capital, Tripoli, but failed to secure a vote of confidence by the country's internationally-recognized parliament, based in Tobruk, a city in eastern Libya. The U.N. deal also



created a de facto Cabinet to administer the country under Prime Minister-designate Fayez Serraj and the 18 ministers will answer to him. Divisions in the To-

bruk parliament between boycotters and supporters of the new government have prevented the house from reaching a quorum to endorse the council. (AP)

## India Successfully Tests Interceptor Missile

BALASORE - In its efforts to have a full-fledged and multi-layered Ballistic Missile Defence system, India on Sunday successfully test-fired indignously developed super-sonic interceptor missile, capable of destroying any incoming ballistic missile, from a test range off Odisha coast.

"The test conducted to validate various parameters of the interceptor in flight mode has been successful," Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) sources said. The interceptor

engaged a target which was a naval version of Prithvi missile launched from a ship anchored inside Bay of Bengal, taking up the trajectory of the "hostile ballistic missile". The target missile was launched at about 11:15am and the interceptor, an Advanced Air Defence missile positioned on the Abdul Kalam island (Wheeler Island), roared through its trajectory to destroy the "hostile missile" in mid-air after getting signals from tracking radars, the sources said. (Odisha)

## Death Toll of Indonesia's Flash Floods Rises to 14, 7 Missing

JAKARTA - Fourteen bodies have been recovered and seven people are still missing after flash floods struck a tourist resort in Deli Serdang district of North Sumatra province, top official of local disaster agency said on Monday. Head of provincial disaster management agency, Saleh Ridwan Siregar, said six people suffered from injury. "We have recovered 15 persons, one of them still alive, but the rest are dead," he told Xinhua by phone from the

province. "Search for the missing is halted this evening and we will resume it tomorrow (Tuesday)," he added. The flash floods affected 78 people and 56 of them survived, Siregar said. All of the casualties and the missing are university students, and two of the affected persons are tour guides, he added. The disaster occurred on Sunday afternoon when the affected persons were visiting a waterfall ... (More on P4)... (13)

## Major Powers Try to End Internal Conflicts in Libya: German FM

VIENNA - German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said Monday that major powers would try to find ways to end internal conflicts and create stability in Libya as they gather here for a ministerial meeting. Leading foreign ministers from Europe and the Middle East meet in the Austrian capital on Monday under the joint chairmanship of the United States and Italy to discuss how to bolster support for Libya's unity government in the face of deepening splits in

the country over political legitimacy and growing threats by the Islamic State (IS). The Libya's unity government, said Steinmeier ahead of the meeting, has started its work towards stabilizing the country. It, however, is still facing challenges in the facing of instability and terrorism. The key question of Monday's talks, the minister added, is to seek ways out of the internal conflicts in Libya and to create "more stability and statehood" in the country. Since March,



a national unity government has been gradually exerting its influence in Libya following years of unrest in the country. However, the government

led by Fayez Sarraj and backed by much of the international community - faces political opposition from within Libya and the ... (More on P4)... (14)

## Russia Prefers G20 to G8: Kremlin

MOSCOW - Russia believes the Group of Twenty (G20), composed of major advanced and emerging economies, is more influential than the Group of Eight (G8) which involves world leading industrial nations, the Kremlin said Monday. "The G20 format appears to be more representative and more capable in today's international situation. This format has a much wider potential," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted as say-



ing by the RIA Novosti news agency. He added that Russia is beginning to lose interest in the G8. Russia's membership in

the G8 was suspended in March 2014 by the other seven member states over Moscow's role in the Ukraine crisis. (Xinhua)

## Iraq Launches Operation to Retake Anbar Town



BAGHDAD - Iraqi security forces and allied fighters launched an operation on Monday to retake the town of Rutba from the Islamic State jihadist group, the military said. Special forces, soldiers, police, border guards and pro-government paramilitaries are involved in the operation to retake the Anbar province town, Iraq's Joint Operations Command said in a statement. Tanks and artillery are taking part in the operation, which is also backed by air support from Iraqi forces and the US-led coalition against IS, it said. Rutba, located in western Anbar province along the main road to Jordan, has been held by the jihadist group since 2014. "Rutba's important to the enemy because it's another support zone for them," said Colonel Steve Warren, the spokesman for the US-led operation against IS. IS uses it "to stage and prepare forces for operations in... the main battle area," Warren told journalists in Baghdad last week. "It's not heavily defended as is Fallujah or as was Ramadi," he said, referring to the capital of Anbar, which has been retaken, and its second city, which IS still holds. (AFP)

## Russia Delivers Humanitarian Aid to Syrian Children

MOSCOW - Russia sent three tons of humanitarian aid to a girls' boarding school in Damascus, the Russian news agency TASS reported on Monday.

The aid, including sweets and biscuits, was sent to the girls' boarding school where live some girls who have lost their parents in the Syrian conflict, said Colonel Sergey Istomin, a Russian representative in Syria.

Before the Syrian conflict, there were 54 orphan girls living and studying in the boarding school, now the number has risen to 730, according to Shahid Fallyuh, a children's welfare director. A cease-fire brokered by Russia and the United States, which came into force on Feb. 27, has brought relative calm to the war-ravaged country. (Xinhua)

## Turkey and US-Led Coalition Hit IS Group in Syria

ISTANBUL - A Turkish news agency says Turkish shelling and air strikes by the U.S.-led military coalition killed 27 Islamic State militants in Syria. Citing military sources, the state-run Anadolu agency said the militants were killed on Sunday as they were about to fire rockets toward Turkey. The Turkish border town of Kilis has been pummeled in recent months by rocket fire from IS-held territory in Syria. International coalition war planes began hitting IS targets inside Syria in September 2014. Turkey allows coalition jets to use its Incirlik air base, but doesn't regularly participate in coalition air strikes. Turkey has suffered multiple bombings in recent months linked to IS or Kurdish militants. The military has cracked down on Kurdish rebels in the southeast and its jets periodically bomb Kurdish militiamen in Iraq. (AP)

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### Iran FM to Attend Syria Meeting in Vienna

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is set to attend the meeting of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG), which will be convened in the Austrian capital of Vienna to discuss the latest developments in Syria. Heading a political delegation, Zarif is scheduled to leave Tehran for Vienna later on Monday. On the sidelines of the ISSG meeting, the Iranian team might hold talks with European and US officials about ways to remove obstacles in the way of implementing last year's nuclear agreement reached between Iran and the P5+1 group

of countries, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - the United States, France, Britain, China and Russia - plus Germany started implementing the JCPOA on January 16. The two sides signed the agreement on July 14, 2015 following two and a half years of intensive talks. Under the JCPOA, all nuclear-related sanctions imposed on Iran by the European Union, the Security Council and the US were lifted. Iran has, in return, put some limitations on its nuclear activities. (PressTV)

### Xi Urges Local Authorities to Advance Supply-Side Reform

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for "unswerving efforts" to advance supply-side structural reform, commanding local authorities and various departments to come up with policies to support the campaign.

There may be difficulties and risks in the process, but local authorities should not shy away from the task, Xi said at a meeting of the Central Leading Group for Financial and Economic Affairs on Monday. After hearing reports on reform efforts from Jiangsu, Chongqing, Hebei and Shenzhen, Xi acknowledged that some of the plans are bearing fruit and contributing to growth. "But some policies need to be studied further, and some regions have not yet taken effective actions," he noted. China's local govern-

ments are busy making and releasing detailed measures to implement supply-side structural reform as authorities count on the move to counter ongoing economic headwinds and address outstanding issues such as excess capacity, housing overhang, and "zombie" state-owned enterprises (SOEs) with poor profitability. Xi reiterated that the focus should be put on measures to cut excessive industrial capacity, destock, de-leverage, lower corporate costs and improve weak links. The ultimate aim of the reform is to improve supply quality and reduce "ineffective" supply, which is essentially about deepening reforms in SOEs, transforming government functions and carrying out overhauls of areas such as pricing, taxation, finance and social security, he said. (Xinhua)

### Nawaz Suggests Forming Joint Committee to Probe Panama Leaks

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, while addressing the National Assembly on Monday, suggested to form a joint committee to draft the terms of reference (ToRs) for establishing the judicial commission to probe allegations related to Panama Papers revelations. The Pakistani lawmakers present in the National Assembly welcomed the prime minister when he arrived to address the lower house over the Panama issue. "A report was published in media in April, called Panama papers, which named a number of Pakistanis involved in

forming offshore companies. My two sons were also named in it, who are living abroad and are doing legal business," Nawaz said as he started his much-awaited speech. "Some of my fellow party members advised me not to explain my position, since I am not directly named," the premier told the lower house. "They advised me to form an impartial commission to investigate the issue." During the speech, members of the ruling party kept applauding every sentence said by the prime minister by thumping their desks. (Agencies)

### Tajikistan Launches \$1.2B Cross-Border Transmission Project

DUSHANBE - Tajikistan has launched construction of the \$1.2 billion Central Asia-South Asia (CASA)-1000 cross-border electricity transmission project, Kallanish Energy learns. The project involves construction of a transmission line to supply of hydroelectricity from the Central Asian countries of Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic, to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Tajikistan President Emomali Rakhmonov alongside Kyrgyzstan Prime Minister Sooronbai Zheenbekov, Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Afghanistan Chief Executive Abdullah

Abdullah launched the project at a ceremony held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. "This project will allow over 5 billion kilowatt-hours of environmentally clean power to be supplied to Pakistan and Afghanistan from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan annually," Tajikistan President Imomali Rakhmonov said, Reuters reported. Scheduled to be completed by 2018, the project is backed by funding from the U.S. and the World Bank. The project also secured financing from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. (Agencies)

## Trump Says Unlikely to have Good Relationship with Cameron

LONDON - Donald Trump said he was unlikely to have a good relationship with David Cameron because the British prime minister cast the U.S. presidential candidate as "divisive, stupid and wrong"

for proposing a temporary ban on Muslims entering the United States. Cameron criticized Trump in the British parliament over his call for the ban on Muslims and suggested that the New York

billionaire, who is now the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, would unite Britain against him if he visited. "It looks like we're not going to have a very good ... (More on P4)... (15)

## Jolie 'Disheartened' By US Response to Migrant Crisis

LONDON - Angelina Jolie says she is "very disheartened" by the U.S. response to the global migration crisis, and fears countries will adopt increasingly isola-

tionist policies instead of acting together to tackle the challenge. The special envoy for the United Nations refugee agency said Monday that worries about uncontrolled immi-

gration has given a "false air of legitimacy to those who promote politics of fear and separation." "It has created the risk of a race to the bottom, ... (More on P4)... (16)