

Hiroshima Visit to Emphasize Current U.S. Ties with Japan: Obama

TOKYO - U.S. President Barack Obama said on Sunday his visit to Hiroshima, the first city to suffer an atomic bombing, would emphasize friendly ties between former enemies, and reiterated he would not apologize for the devastating attack. Obama will become the first sitting U.S. president to tour the site of the world's first nuclear bombing this Friday, accompanied by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

In an interview with Japanese national broadcaster NHK, Obama - who em-



phasized decentralization early in his term - said the reality is that leaders

often have to make hard choices during times of conflict and no apologies

would be included in brief remarks he is expected to make in the western Japa-

nese city. "It's important to recognize that in the midst of war, leaders make all

kinds of decisions, it's a job of historians to ask questions and examine them," Obama said.

"But I know, as somebody who's now sat in this position for the last seven and half years, that every leader makes very difficult decisions, particularly during wartime."

The bomb dropped on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, killed thousands instantly and about 140,000 by the end of the year. Nagasaki was hit on Aug. 9 and Japan surrendered six days later. A majority of Americans see the bombings as ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

Neighbor News

Iran Army Prepared to Repel Enemies: Commander



TEHRAN - A senior Iranian military commander says the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic are fully prepared to counter any act of aggression by enemies.

"The enemies are bent on dealing a blow to the [Islamic] establishment and we will never let this happen through our full military and defensive preparedness," Iranian Army's Ground Forces Commander Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Pourdastan said in a Sunday address to Iranian units attending a major maneuver in the central province of Isfahan. The commander said

the Iranian forces' high capabilities made the United States change its strategies and pursue its objectives by strengthening Takfiri groups which are financially supported by certain regional countries.

Pourdastan said the Iranian Army's Ground Forces stand by the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) not only inside the country but in its advisory mission in Syria. "Daesh and Takfiri groups are our small enemies and the US and the Israeli regime are our main enemies," Pourdastan said. *(PressTV)*

Syria's Refugee Crisis Shows World Lack of Sufficient Solidarity

ANKARA - An ex-UN refugee official said recently that "Syrian crisis has shown that there is not sufficient international solidarity. World should not lay burden on neighbors of the country in crisis."

MetinCorabatur, vice Chairman of Asylum and Migration Research Center, believes that the upcoming first World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul can be a venue to discuss bringing new norms, code of conducts to put global humanitarian system in order.

By the end of this year, some 4.7 million Syrian refugees are expected to be registered in the Middle East, while he said that the surge in refugee populations should be a wake-up call for the world community to better cooperate to host nations such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

According to the 2016 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan by the UN, there are 13.5 million people in need, of whom 6 million are children and 6.5 million are internally displaced persons.



"Syrian crisis has shown that there is not sufficient international solidarity. World should not lay burden on neighbors of the country in crisis," he said. Corabatur also noted that

the safety and security of humanitarian aid workers are deteriorating, saying that in recent years, aid workers are being kidnapped and killed.

...*(More on P4)...(21)*

Progress Being Made in Yemen Peace Talks: UN Envoy

DOHA - Fragile peace talks aimed at ending fighting in Yemen are making progress as a truce largely holds, the U.N. envoy for the country asserted Sunday after the impoverished Arab nation's government agreed to return to the negotiating table.

Yemen's government last week announced it was suspending talks being held in Kuwait with Shiite rebels, accusing them of refusing to accept the legitimacy of the country's internationally recognized

president. During a Saturday meeting in the Qatari capital, Doha, with U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the emir of Qatar, Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi agreed to send the government delegation back to the talks, according to a U.N. statement.

A truce between the warring parties that began April 10 has largely held despite violations by both sides. Speaking at the Doha Forum conference on Sunday, U.N. envoy ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

New Turkish PM Backs Constitution to Strengthen Erdogan

ANKARA - Turkey's incoming prime minister said on Sunday his top priority was to deliver a new constitution to create an executive presidency, giving President Tayyip Erdogan the broad powers he has long sought.

As delegates from the ruling AK Party unanimously elected Transport Minister Binali Yildirim as their new party leader, and therefore the next premier, Yildirim left no doubt that he would prioritize the policies closest

to Erdogan's heart. An ally of Erdogan for two decades, the 60-year-old was the sole candidate at the special congress, called after Ahmet Davutoglu said he would step down this month, following weeks of public tension with Erdogan.

Yildirim said in a speech a new constitution was necessary to legitimize the existing situation, in what appeared to be a tacit acknowledgment that Erdogan has been gone beyond the presidency's ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

Ankara Ready to Slam West for Inaction on Refugee Crisis At Humanitarian Summit

ANKARA - As the first UN-backed World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) is about to open on Monday in Istanbul, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is expected to criticize western inaction in handling refugee crisis at the meeting.

"We ask for a support for Syrian and Iraqi refugees who stay here. However, the West has still not understood the gravity of the situation," he lamented in a speech last week. Erdogan noted that the funds provided by the UN and others to Turkey have

amounted to only 450 million U.S. dollars so far. Turkey provides shelter, free health care, employment benefits, schooling and vocational training for refugees largely on its own.

According to the government data, only 325,000 out of 757,000 refugee children at the school age are currently enrolled in some sort of educational facilities in Turkey. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said recently that the WHS will provide a vital platform to address the challenges



burdening the humanitarian system. "There are simply too many lives at stake and inaction is not an option," he added. "Now we are facing with the world biggest refugee crisis since World War

II. Turkey is the major country suffering from it as there are 2.7 million registered Syrian refugee populations here," said Aysen Ustubic, an expert with Migration Research Center in Koc University. ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

Intense Airstrikes Target Main Rebel-Held Supply Road into Aleppo

DAMASCUS - Intense airstrikes have been targeting a rebel-held road into Syria's northern city of Aleppo since midnight, a monitor group reported on Sunday. At least 65 air raids have been carried out over the past hours against the Castello road, a main supply route into rebel-held areas in Aleppo city, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The London-based watchdog group said the shelling on the road at the outskirts of Aleppo is the most violent since last February. The airstrikes were coupled with fierce battles between the Syrian army and the rebels in towns of



Handarat and Hraitan in northern Aleppo as well as areas in the southern countryside of that city, Syria's second largest and once an economic hub.

Cutting the Castello road sever the last remaining rebel supply line into rebel-held areas in the east-

ern part of Aleppo city, as the road is deemed as the gate between the northern countryside of Aleppo and the city itself. Battles have been raging near the road over the past week, with the opposition announcing the opening of the road on Friday. *(Xinhua)*

U.S. to Keep Sanctions on Some of Myanmar's Sectors: Kerry

NAY PYI TAW - The United States will keep sanctions on some sectors of Myanmar based on the country's democracy development, visiting U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry told a joint press conference on Sunday with his Myanmar counterpart Aung San Suu Kyi. He said the U.S. has eased some sanctions on Myanmar recently to mark U.S. support for the new government, however, sanctions are to be maintained on some sectors as "some persons' undertakings need to be changed."

Expressing willingness to help Myanmar in democracy and foreign investment, the U.S. official said in 2012, the U.S. government has ...*(More on P4)...(25)*

Merkel Expresses Concern About Situation of Kurds in Turkey

BERLIN - Ahead of her visit to Turkey, German Chancellor Angela Merkel says "some developments in Turkey fill us with big worries." The chancellor expressed concern over the Kurdish conflict in an interview with weekly Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung on Sunday saying "we want that the Kurdish people have an equal place and a good future in Turkey." Merkel left for Turkey on Sunday afternoon to attend the first World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul and also meet with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Several high-ranking German lawmakers called on Merkel to be outspoken during her trip and express concern about what the speaker of Germany's Parliament, Norbert Lammert, has called Erdogan's "autocratic ambitions" including his push to strip legislators in Turkey of their immunity from prosecution. *(AP)*

Yemeni Army Raids Al-Qaida Hideouts, 10 Militants Killed

ADEN - About 10 militants of the Yemen-based al-Qaida offshoot were killed when army units launched two overnight raids on their hideouts in Yemen's southeastern province of Hadramout, a military official told Xinhua on Sunday. "Hideouts of the al-Qaida militants near Hadramout's provincial capital of Mukalla were attacked by special army units supported by helicopters of the Saudi-led coalition after receiving intelligence tip-offs," the Yemeni military source said on condition of anonymity. He said that about two soldiers were killed and seven others injured during their participation in the same anti-terror military campaign in Hadramout. Some of the al-Qaida militants immediately surrendered themselves to the army after short armed confrontations, he added. Last week, a suicide ...*(More on P4)...(28)*

UNEA to be Held in Kenya

NAIROBI - The second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), the world's Parliament of the environment, will take place in Kenyan capital Nairobi from May 23rd to 27th. The Assembly, representing the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment, will culminate in resolutions and a global call to action to address the critical environmental challenges facing the world.

The second session of the UNEA will be held under the theme of delivering on the environmental dimension ...*(More on P4)...(26)*

Iraqi Forces Call on Residents of IS-Held Fallujah to Prepare for Withdrawal

BAGHDAD - Iraqi security forces on Sunday told the residents remaining in the Islamic State (IS)-held city of Fallujah to prepare to leave, as a sign an imminent offensive, a military statement said. "We ask all the citizens who are still in Fallujah to be prepared to leave the city through safe corridors that will be declared later," the statement said. It also called on the citizens of Fallujah to raise white flags on their places, and to stay away from the

headquarters and positions of IS militants, which will be targeted by the aircraft. During the past few months, the security forces and allied Shiite and Sunni paramilitary units, known as Hashd Shaabi, have been carrying out operations around the IS stronghold of Fallujah to tighten the troops' grip on the besieged city and the nearby small town of Garma in order to clear them from IS militants. The Sunni Arab city of Fallujah, some 50

km west of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, has been under IS control since early 2014. There is no reliable information about how many civilians remained in the city, which originally was home to about 300,000 people. But non-official figures said several thousands of families have been stuck inside with acute shortage of food and medicine. Previously, the Iraqi security forces announced safe corridors to ...*(More on P4)...(27)*

CPEC to Strengthen Pakistan's Defence: Minister

ISLAMABAD - Felicitating the nation on 65th anniversary of Pak-China diplomatic relations, Pakistani Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal says China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework would not only improve Pakistan's economy but strengthen its defence as well.

In an interview to APP, he said that the entire nation will have to play its role in the implementation of this vital initiative by exhibiting a complete unity and soli-

arity. Ahsan Iqbal invited the foreign businessmen to come and invest as there is a complete political stability and contributive environment for the foreign investment in Pakistan. He said that Pak-China friendship had become a model for the world and China had been supporting Pakistan unconditionally in the last 65 years while Pakistan responded positively to its time-tested friend at all the international forum. *(Agencies)*

Constitution Referendum in Tajikistan Declared Valid

BAKU - 66.6 percent of voters have cast ballots in the constitution referendum in Tajikistan, Interfax reported citing Bakhtiyor Khudoyorzo-da, head of Tajikistan's Central Commission for Elections and Referenda.

"Such a voter turnout allows us to declare the referendum valid," he said.

The amendments and changes to Tajikistan's constitution are deemed to be accepted if over 50 percent of the country's

citizens participating in the referendum vote for those amendments.

The results of the referendum are made public no later than ten days after the end of the voting.

The voting in the referendum in Tajikistan started at 06:00 (UTC/GMT + 5 hours) and will last till 20:00.

There is one question on the ballots: "Do you accept the changes and amendments to the country's constitution?" *(Agencies)*

Armenia, China Vow to Deepen Security, Anti-Terror Cooperation

YEREVAN - Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and China's top security official Meng Jianzhu on Saturday discussed how to promote bilateral ties and cooperation in the field of law enforcement and security. Meng, head of the Commission for Political and Legal Affairs of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and a special envoy of Chinese President Xi Jinping, said since the two countries established their diplomatic relations, their ties have seen a stable and robust development. Sargsyan said China is an important political and trading partner and that Armenia-China ties are a priority of his country's foreign policy. *(Xinhua)*

giving a vigorous impetus to bilateral relations. Meng said China is glad to see the consensus is now being translated into tangible results.

Given the complicated and rapidly changing situation both in the region and in the world, China and Armenia should cooperate more closely so as to deal with the challenges they are facing, Meng said, adding that China stands ready to strengthen anti-terror as well as law enforcement and security cooperation with Armenia. Sargsyan said China is an important political and trading partner and that Armenia-China ties are a priority of his country's foreign policy. *(Xinhua)*