

# World Humanitarian Summit Opens with Calls for Improving Response to Crisis

ISTANBUL - The first world humanitarian summit opened here Monday with United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urging governments, aid groups, the private sector and other stakeholders to act to improve the global humanitarian system.

In his opening remarks to the two-day summit, Ban called on the participants to make concrete commitments in five areas -- conflict prevention and resolution, strengthening the protection of civilians, leaving no one behind, ending humanitarian need and ensuring



funding for humanitarian actions. He put a particular emphasis on the issue of displaced populations, calling on the world to significantly reduce the number of the displaced in the years to come. "I urge you to commit to halving the number of internally displaced people by 2030, and to find better long-term solutions for refugees and displaced people based on more equal sharing of responsibilities," he said. "We are here to shape a different future." Also addressing the opening ceremony, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan cited the heavy burden on Turkey in tackling the Syrian refugee crisis and stressed the need to revamp the global humanitarian system. "The current system fails to meet the demands in the face of emergency problems and fails to develop solutions. Only certain countries take the ... (More on P4)...(18)

## Global Health Development Entering New Era: WHO

GENEVA - World Health Organization (WHO) Director General Margaret Chan outlined Monday the challenges faced by the global community in light of current health issues while stressing the importance of meeting targets set by the UN Sustainable Development Goals agenda.

"The profile of health changed from a drain on resources to an investment that builds stable, prosperous and equitable societies," she said in her address to the 69th World Health Assembly (WHA) held in Geneva.

"Health holds a prominent and central place that benefits the entire agenda. It aims to do nothing less than transform the way the world, and the international systems that govern it, work," she added. Against the backdrop of past achievements, Chan said that more needs to be done to address myriad health scourges still affecting global communities in an increasingly interconnected world.

"Very few health threats



are local anymore. And few health threats can be managed by the health sector acting alone," she said. Drawing parallels with the Ebola crisis which resulted in over 11,000 deaths in West Africa, Chan cautioned that Zika is also testing concerted efforts to abate the spread of the mosquito-borne virus. "For Zika, we are again taken by surprise, with no vaccines and no reliable and widely available diagnostics tests. To protect women of childbearing age, all we can offer is advice," she said. (Xinhua)

## UK Drugs Watchdog Warns it will Struggle if Britain Leaves EU

LONDON - A British vote to leave the European Union would disrupt and could well delay the approval of new drugs, leaving UK regulators struggling to cope, the chairman of the country's medicines watchdog said on Monday.

Michael Rawlins, who chairs the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, said the UK watchdog would need to hire hundreds more staff to handle drug applications. "We'd have to enlarge ourselves hugely

because we'd have to evaluate all new drugs. Not only that, I don't know how it would be paid for," he told reporters. Currently, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) approves new drugs for all EU countries. While Britain could continue to take part in the EMA system if it remains in the European Economic Area, like Norway, many advocates of a so-called Brexit oppose that option. "That would leave us entirely on our own," Rawlins said. ... (More on P4)...(19)

## At Least 145 Dead As Series of Explosions Rock Syrian Govt Strongholds

BEIRUT - Bomb blasts killed scores of people in Jableh and Tartous on Syria's Mediterranean coast on Monday and wounded many others in the government-controlled territory that hosts Russian military bases, monitors and state media said.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attacks in the cities that have up to now escaped the worst of the violence in the five-year-old conflict, saying it was targeting members of President Bashar al-Assad's Alawite minority.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 145 people were killed in attacks by at least five suicide bombers and two devices planted in cars. State media said 78 people had been killed in what is Assad's coastal heartland.

The attacks were the first of their kind in Tartous, capital of Tartous province and home to a Russian naval facility, and Jableh in Latakia province, near a Russian-operated air base. The Kremlin said ... (More on P4)...(20)

## Erdogan, Merkel Agreed on Need to Keep Migration Deal on Track

ANKARA - Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and German Chancellor Angela Merkel agreed on Monday that Turkey needs talks with EU institutions on its sensitivities in the fight against terrorism as they try to keep a landmark migration deal on track.

Erdogan's office said in a statement that he and Merkel had also agreed, during a meeting on the sidelines of a humanitarian summit in Istanbul, on the need to continue



cooperation against illegal migration.

The EU has promised visa-free travel for Turks as part of the migration

deal, provided Ankara meets criteria including changes to its broad anti-terrorism laws. Erdogan has said Turkey cannot

change such laws at a time when it is fighting the threat from both Islamic State and Kurdish militants. (Reuters)

## Russia Unfazed By U.S. Lifting Embargo on Arms Sales to Vietnam: Official

MOSCOW - The lifting of a decades-old U.S. arms embargo on Vietnam will not affect Russia's weapons sale to the Southeast Asian country, a senior Russian military official said on Monday. "Our relations with Vietnam are of a strategic nature, and their further development will depend on the Vietnamese leadership," said Anatoly Panchuk, deputy head of Russia's Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, the country's body supervising military exports. The lifting of the embargo will



not affect the export of Russian weapons, Panchuk said. During his ongoing three-day visit to Vietnam, U.S. President Barack Obama announced on Monday Washington's decision to completely remove its ban on sales of lethal weapons to Hanoi,

one of the last major vestiges of the Vietnam War era. Vietnam is one of the largest buyers of Russian weapons, and imports a broad range of Russian armaments ranging from submarines and frigates to multi-functional warplanes. (Xinhua)

## Singapore to Contribute \$150,000 to Aid Relief Efforts in Sri Lanka

SINGAPORE - Singapore Red Cross (SRC) will distribute relief items such as food, household and health kits and clothes worth of 150,000 U.S. dollars to communities affected by severe floods and landslides in Sri Lanka, announced the humanitarian organization on Monday.

SRC said the contribution includes 100,000 U.S. dollars from the government of Singapore in support of immediate relief efforts in Sri Lanka. "Singapore government extends its condolences to the government and people of Sri Lanka over the loss of lives and unprecedented destruction caused by the floods and landslides over the past week, ... (More on P4)...(21)

## India Tests Home-Made Reusable Space Launch Vehicle

NEW DELHI - India Monday successfully tested its home-grown winged reusable launch vehicle (RLV) at a space launching center in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, in a step to economize the cost for launching satellites into outer space.

The RLV lifted off at 07:00 a.m. for the first launch in the Sriharikota space center, which officials said showcased India's space technology. The aircraft-shaped 1.7-ton vehicle returned intact and landed on a virtual runway, plunging into the Bay of Bengal, about 500 km away from the east coast, after a 10-minute guided flight in the atmosphere at an altitude of about 70 km above the Earth. The space agency's telemetry, tracking and command network (Istrac) centre in Bengaluru recorded the data of the vehicle's hypersonic speed, autonomous landing and powered cruise flight ... (More on P4)...(22)

## Israeli PM Reject Talks for Broad Gov't Hit Dead End

JERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected on Monday the claim that the coalition talks hit a dead end.

He made the remarks at the Knesset or the parliament, where his Likud party is holding a faction meeting.

Netanyahu told reporters at the meeting the talks with Yisrael Beytenu party have not collapsed, and the process takes time.

"Nothing is collapsing, it takes time... my goal is a broad government," he added.

Earlier in the day, Israeli media outlets reported that negotiations between Netanyahu's Likud party and Yisrael Beytenu party of hawkish lawmaker Avigdor Lieberman hit a snag over the latter's request to increase pensions only for migrants from the former Soviet Union. Lieberman said ... (More on P4)...(25)

## Britain Grants Political Refugee Status to Maldives Former President

COLOMBO - Britain has granted a political refugee status to Maldives former President Mohamed Nasheed, his lawyer Hassen-Latheef told Xinhua on Monday. Nasheed, who was sentenced to 13 years in jail last year on charges of terrorism, left for Britain in January to undergo an urgent back surgery. The Maldives government said the former president had signed an undertaking to return after his treatment and had left his brother to ... (More on P4)...(23)

## 2 Terrorist Attacks Leave 49 Killed in Southern Yemen

ADEN - The death toll of two terrorist attacks that targeted army recruits and a military brigade on Monday morning in Yemen's southern port city of Aden reached 49 killed and several others injured, Yemeni officials told Xinhua.

The suicide attack targeted the newly-trained soldiers inside the 39th Armored Brigade in Aden's district of KhorMaksar, leaving about 25 soldiers killed and 23 others at the scene.

The official spokesman for Aden's local government told Xinhua that "a suicide bomber sneaked into the army brigade and detonated his explosive belt among dozens of soldiers."

At the same time, a car bomb exploded as recruits lined up for meeting a military committee in KhorMaksar district in order to enlist for military service. It is not yet clear how many people killed and injured in the car bomb explosion.

The car bomb explosion left about 24 killed and a number of others injured at the bombing site, according to the local military sources.

After the two separate bombings, security authorities in Aden received intelligence information about a car filled with explosives in Aden prepared to launch a fresh attack in the city.

No group has yet claimed ... (More on P4)...(24)

## Neighbor News

### Ayatollah Khamenei Grants Clemency to 669 Inmates

TEHRAN - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has annulled or commuted the sentences handed down to a number of Iranian prisoners. Ayatollah Khamenei on Monday agreed to pardon or reduce the sentences of 669 inmates convicted by the Judicial Organization of the Armed Forces. The Leader's decision came in response to a letter from Iran's Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larjani asking for clemency for a group of prisoners selected by the judiciary remission committee on the occasion of

the birthday of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the third Shia Imam and the grandson of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH); Imam Mahdi (PBUH), the twelfth Imam of Shias; and the anniversary of the liberation of the southwestern Iranian city of Khorramshahr. On May 24, 1982, Iranian soldiers, through a landmark operation codenamed Beit-ul-Moqaddas, put an end to 575 days of Iraqi occupation of the strategic Iranian city of Khorramshahr.

In retaking the city, the Iranians captured some 19,000 soldiers from the Iraqi army. (PressTV)

### Chinese VP Urges Poverty Relief Via Industrial Development

BEIJING - Chinese Vice Premier (VP) Wang Yang said Monday that China aims to lift more than 30 million rural residents out of poverty from 2016 to 2020 through industrial development.

In a national poverty reduction teleconference, Wang asked officials to develop industries according to local conditions and engage the poor people in these industries so that they can share the benefits.

Local governments should spend more on

poverty relief-related industrial development, improve financial support, and create an enabling market environment for these industries.

At the end of 2014, China had 70 million people living below the nation's poverty line of 2,300 yuan (about 354 U.S. dollars) in annual income, almost all of whom live in the countryside.

China aims to eliminate poverty by 2020 when its 13th Five-Year Plan is completed. (Xinhua)

### RSF Condemns Continuing Harassment of Independent Media in Tajikistan

DUSHANBE - Reporters Without Border (RSF) notes that the government of Tajikistan has continued the repressive policies that prompted Tajikistan's spectacular fall in the latest World Press Freedom Index, including blocking the main independent news websites, intimidating media outlets and threatening journalists.

"The main independent websites such as Asia-Plus, Radio Ozodi and Ozodagon were blocked on May 11 after posting articles about the referendum. This practice has become habitual in recent years in the run-up to major events such as this referendum. "The most controversial constitutional amendments would scrap the

limit on the number of presidential terms, restrict the activities of opposition parties and lower the minimum age for being a presidential candidate. The goal is to allow President Emomali Rahmon to stay in power for as long as possible and then hand over to his son. "On May 14, Asia-Plus published a letter it received from the Ministry of Culture describing some of its articles as "terrorist propaganda." The cited articles mentioned the Financial Times' revelations about the wages paid to Islamic State fighters, the government's response to radicalization in Central Asia and the crackdown on the Islamist opposition in Tajikistan. (Asia-Plus)

### Pakistan PM Inaugurates Fibre-Optic Cable Project

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has officially launched the Pakistan-China fibre-optic cable project in Gilgit-Baltistan, its total cost estimated to be \$44 million and be completed in two years.

Addressing an inaugural ceremony for the 820km long cable, which is to be built from Rawalpindi to Khunjerab, Sharif said Pakistan was "completing another milestone" as the cable will provide an alternative telecommunication route between Pakistan and China.

"This will be a key project in the coming days. The journey of development continues in Gilgit-Baltistan," added

Sharif speaking in the region which is set to benefit from the cable as it will boost 3G and 4G connectivity.

The backhaul fibre-optic project, which is part of the \$46 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), will be completed by the Special Communication Organisation (SCO) over the next two years and will provide the country with its fifth route to transmit telecommunication traffic. Sharif also inaugurated the CPECT patrolling police headquarters in the region, where 300 personnel and 25 vehicles, gifted by China, will regulate traffic along a 439km chunk of the 3,000km CPEC in the area. (Agencies)