

Peacekeeping Requires Tools to Adapt to Dangerous Environments: UN

UNITED NATIONS - Marking International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres Monday said that peacekeeping must have the tools and rules it needs to adapt to the dangerous and challenging environments nowadays. In an opinion piece in the Boston Globe, the secretary-general wrote that "too often, United Nations peace operations face a gap between our goals and the means we have to achieve them."

He noted that peacekeepers, known also as the "blue helmets" for their iconic headgear, are themselves increasingly target-



ed by parties in conflicts and violent extremism. "Dealing with this new reality requires a serious strategic reform on our part, based on an analysis of the mandates and capacities of our missions and our partnerships with governments and others," he said. Guterres noted that significant reforms in peacekeeping have already reduced costs and made deployments faster and more flexible. Peacekeeping is already "cost-effective," he said, noting that its budget is less than half of 1 percent of global military spending and shared by the 193 UN member states. (Xinhua)

Almost 600,000 Flee West Mosul Amid Ongoing Military Operations: UN Data

GENEVA - The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said Tuesday that nearly 600,000 civilians have fled their homes since the Iraqi government started its second wave of military operations to recapture western Mosul from Islamic State (IS) in February. According to the UN office's latest figures, some 118,000 civilians remain trapped in IS-controlled areas, including the old city and neighborhoods bordering its northern fringes.

Baghdad has requested that civilians flee using "safe passages" along which specific areas have been set up to facilitate the delivery of critical aid, including water, food and medical supplies, to those escaping the war-ravaged city.

This request was given after the Iraqi armed forces began last week to concentrate efforts on recapturing Mosul's old city and nearby neighbor-



hoods from entrenched IS militants. OCHA warned that the humanitarian needs of the displaced families and resi-

dents in newly recaptured areas remain severe, and that the shortage of clean drinking water is of "significant concern." (Xinhua)

Opening Chapters will form Main Point of Turkish-EU Relations: Turkey Official

ANKARA - The central issue in relations between Ankara and the EU is opening various chapters for Turkey's possible accession to the bloc, Turkish deputy prime minister and government spokesperson Numan Kurtulmus said on Monday. "Opening the chapters will form the main point of Turkish-EU relations," he told reporters after a cabinet meeting quoting as the state-run Anadolu Agency. "Turkey's main goal is to

maintain relations with the EU under the framework of full future membership," he added. Consensus was reached to revive ties between Ankara and Brussels at a meeting of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and EU leaders on the sidelines of a NATO summit in Brussels on May 25. Following the meeting in Brussels, Erdogan said the EU had presented Turkey with a new 12-month timetable for renewing relations. (Xinhua)

Turkey's Ruling Party Announces Newly-Elected Executive Body

ANKARA - Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) announced its newly-elected Central Executive Board list on Monday, local daily Hurriyet reported. AKP's 50-seat Central Decision Making and Executive Council held its first meeting in Ankara under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's leadership as the party's new chairman after less than three years. Three new names were introduced to new central executive

body, the 15-seat Central Executive Board, which members will assist Erdogan as party's deputy chairmen. Binali Yildirim, the Prime Minister and the former party Chairman, will serve as the Deputy Chairman of the party. Mahir Unal has been appointed as the spokesman of the party. According to local daily Hurriyet, Erdogan is expected to reshuffle his cabinet after he completes renewing his A-team in the party. (Xinhua)

Terrorism, Ukraine and Syria Conflicts at Heart of Macron, Putin Meeting

PARIS - French President Emmanuel Macron met Monday with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Versailles, wherein they discussed the fight against terrorism, as well as the Ukrainian and Syrian conflicts, the two leaders said during a joint press conference held at the end of their exchange. "On Syria, I remind you... our priority is the fight against terrorism, in particular Daesh or the Islamic State (IS)," Macron said, underlining that France must "reinforce" its partnership with Rus-

sia in order to "assure stability, democratic transition with a red line: the use of chemical weapons by whoever it may be." For his part, Putin affirmed that where Syria was concerned "we have judged that we cannot fight against the terrorist threat in destroying the (Syrian) state." "What is more important is the fight against terrorism. The French president proposed to put in place a working group that the



experts can go to Moscow as they can to Paris," he added. Concerning the conflict in Ukraine, Macron reassured his will to reach a de-escalation of the conflict.

"Our wish is that an exchange with Germany and Ukraine can be held as soon as possible, and that a full report can be established," he indicated. (Xinhua)

May Blasts Opponent on Brexit as Poll Lead Narrows

LONDON - British Prime Minister Theresa May attacked opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn on Tuesday for being unprepared for Brexit, as her Conservative party's poll lead narrowed further ahead of next week's election. May said that while she was ready for negotiations set to start 11 days after the June 8 vote, the Labour leader would "find himself alone and naked in the negotiating chamber of the European Union". Both politicians endured a bruising television grilling on Monday, with May coming under fire from audience members over cuts to public services, including police - an emotive issue following last week's Manchester bombing. In a speech on Tuesday in Wolverhampton in central England, home to one of the Conservatives' target seats, the prime minister sought to pivot the debate back to Brexit. (AFP)

Trump Views Germany as Political Opponent: Senior SPD Lawmaker

BERLIN - U.S. President Donald Trump has made clear with his latest tweet that he views Germany as a political opponent, said a senior German lawmaker from the Social Democrats, junior partner in Chancellor Angela Merkel's ruling coalition. "Donald Trump makes clear with his tweet that he views Germany as a political opponent," Thomas Oppermann, head of the Social Democrats' (SPD) parliamentary group, told reporters on Tuesday. Trump criticised Germany earlier on Tuesday for its trade surplus and military spending levels, a day after Merkel rapped home her doubts about the reliability of the United States as an ally. (Reuters)

Europe must Step up as Diplomatic Player: Merkel

BERLIN - Europe must step up as a player in world affairs, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Tuesday, signalling that the EU needs to take control of its destiny in the era of US President Donald Trump. "Transatlantic ties are of paramount importance to us... but the current situation gives more reasons for... us to take our destiny in our own hands," said Merkel, stressing that "Europe must become a player active in international affairs". Merkel had made waves on Sunday when she told a



rally in southern Germany that the United States and Britain may no longer be completely reliable partners. A day later, Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel

also lashed out at Washington, saying the Trump administration's "short-sighted policies... stand against the interest of the European Union". (AFP)

Trump's Policies have Weakened the West: German FM

BERLIN - Germany's top diplomat Sigmar Gabriel on Monday released harsh words on the United States, saying U.S. President Donald Trump's policies have weakened the West. "The short-sighted policies of the American government stand against the interests of the European Union. The West has become smaller, at least it has become weaker," Gabriel said. The German foreign minister referred to the G7 meeting and the NATO summit last week, noting that Trump's performance were unsatisfactory since he refused to endorse NATO's collective de-

fense principles or the Paris agreement on climate change. "Anyone who speeds up climate change by weakening environmental protection, who sells more weapons in conflict areas and who does not want to politically resolve religious conflicts is putting Europe's peace at risk," Gabriel said. Gabriel made the remarks on the sidelines of a round-table discussion on migrant crisis in Berlin. His words also echoed German Chancellor Angela Merkel's "beer tent speech" a day before, when Merkel also cast doubts on Europe's alignment with the United States and Britain. (Xinhua)

China, Japan Hold Fourth Round of High-Level Political Dialogue

TOKYO - Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi and Japanese National Security Advisor Shotaro Yachi co-chaired the fourth round of high-level political dialogue between the two countries on Monday. Yang said at the meeting that China-Japan relations are currently at an important juncture with both new opportunities and outstanding challenges as this year marks the 45th anniversary of the normalization of China-Japan diplomatic relations. The two sides should remind themselves of their original intention for normalizing ties, take history as a mirror while facing to the future, and push for the continuous enhancement of bilateral relations based on the spirit of four important political documents between China and Japan and the four-point principled agreement reached in November 2014, Yang said.

Yang also said that China attaches importance to developing its relationship with Japan and this stance has not changed. He called on the Japanese side to conform to the trend of times and implement, with specific policies and concrete actions, the consensus that the two countries are each other's cooperative partner rather than threats, and that China's development is an opportunity for Japan. Yang also urged Japan to honor its words and abide by relevant rules regarding the historical and Taiwan issues and make joint efforts with China to safeguard the peace and stability in the East China Sea. (Xinhua)

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China-EU Summit Aims to Raise Global Growth

BEIJING - In recent years, it's become something of a cliché to say that we are living at a turning point in human history and that action on many fronts is desperately needed in order to avoid disaster. Yet the fact that such statements have been repeated over and over again does not make them false. In fact, just the opposite is true. Climate change, pollution, over-population, and the unchecked destruction of the natural environment mean that it is imperative that homo sapiens consciously constructs an escape route out of the hole into which he has plunged himself. The question of how to balance economic expansion with environmental sustainability now sits at the centre of the next phase of global development. Ensuring that the game of economics

versus the environment is not zero-sum is the pressing task for all of humanity. In particular, the ability of Europe and China to not only get along, but to actively cooperate on seeking solutions is going to be key to long-term outcomes in the 21st century. These two players reside at opposite ends of the Eurasian super-continent. One of them occupies the geographical zone where the industrial revolution was initiated, while the other represents the new centre of global economic gravity. As the world enters what Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum, calls the "Fourth Industrial Revolution," ensuring that Europeans and Asians work together to mitigate the impacts of trade on the biosphere is key to development. (Agencies)

Rouhani to be Sworn in on August 6

TEHRAN - The swearing-in ceremony for Iranian President Hassan Rouhani who won a second term by a landslide will be held in the parliament on August 6, a lawmaker said. Ahmad Amirabadi Farahani, a member of the parliament's presiding board, told reporters on Tuesday that President Rouhani will take the oath of office at an open session of the parliament on August 6. Rouhani, who won a second term by a landslide, secured 38.5% of the votes. According to the lawmaker, the inaugural ceremony will be held four or five days after endorsement of Rouhani's presidency by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei. Following the swearing-in ceremony, Amirabadi added, the president will have two weeks to submit his new cabinet

to the parliament for a vote of confidence. The lawmakers will then assess the programs of the proposed ministerial picks for a week, before an open session for the vote of confidence, he added. In Iran's presidential election on May 19, Rouhani garnered 23,549,616 votes from a total of 41,220,131 ballots. The runner-up, Ebrahim Raisi, secured 38.5% of the votes. No sitting president in Iran has failed to win a second term since 1981. During the previous presidential election in June 2013, Rouhani had emerged victorious by winning 50.7 percent of a total of over 36 million votes. He had won more than three times as many votes as his closest challenger. (Tasnim)

Pakistan Keen to Enhance Political, Economic Relations with Southeast Asia: President

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain Tuesday said Pakistan accorded great importance to its relations with Thailand and was keen to enhance political and economic relations with Southeast Asian region. He was talking to Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Thailand Asim Iftikhar Ahmad here at the presidential palace, Islamabad. The president asked the ambassador-designate to establish close contacts with regional countries to garner support for attaining Full Dialogue Partner status for Pakistan at ASEAN. He expressed optimism

that ambassador-designate would play a proactive role in promoting bilateral relations between the two countries. President Mamnoon Hussain emphasized the need on further enhancing bilateral relations in the fields of trade, defense and education. He stressed that ambassador-designate would make efforts to complete the negotiation process of the Free Trade Agreement and its signing by the end of 2017. He asked the ambassador-designate to establish close contacts with Pakistani diaspora in Thailand and provide them all necessary facilities. (APP)

Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan Hold Talks on Delimitation and Demarcation of Border in Jalal-Abad

TASHKENT - Issues of delimitation and demarcation of the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border were discussed in Jalal-Abad town (Kyrgyzstan) on May 21-26, the press service of the Uzbek Foreign Ministry reported. During the talks, the governmental delegations of the two countries held a

field data analysis on the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border areas. The delegations also reviewed the issues of preparation of the interim agreement on delimitation of the Uzbek-Kyrgyz borders. The meeting was held in a friendly atmosphere, the statement said. (AKI)