

Germany's Balanced Budget not at Risk Due to Refugees: Weidmann

BERLIN - Germany can handle the costs of the refugee crisis without risking its balanced budget, the chief of Germany's Bundesbank Jens Weidmann said on Sunday. "In spite of all the uncertainties, I don't see at the moment any reason to write off the 'schwarze Null'," Weidmann told the Tagesspiegel newspaper, referring to the black zero or balanced budget that Germany achieved in 2014 for the first time since 1969. Germany is shouldering most of the burden of the continent's biggest refugee crisis since World War Two and expects between



800,000 and one million asylum seekers this year alone. But its generosity

comes at a cost and local authorities are clamoring for cash to house, care for

and integrate asylum seekers fleeing wars in the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

Last week, Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble said Germany would bal-

ance the budget again in 2015, but was more cautious for next year, pointing to "high uncertainties" about how many refugees would continue to come to Germany. Weidmann also warned against softening European Union budget rules due to the refugee crisis, saying the European Stability and Growth Pact already accommodated for extreme and surprising burdens on individual countries. He said the refugee crisis could only be mastered if Germany succeeded in integrating those who stayed, including by getting them into the labor market.(Reuters)

Palestine Slams U.S. Positions Ahead of Obama-Netanyahu Meeting

RAMALLAH - Top Palestinian official slams the U.S. efforts in dealing with the current tension between Palestinians and Israelis, as violent confrontations still continue to flare up in different areas in the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Ahead of a meeting between the U.S. President Barack Obama and the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington on Monday, spokesperson of the Palestinian Presidency Nabil Abu Rdeineh considered American remarks regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as "discouraging

and in-conducive to calm the situation." In a statement published by the official Palestinian news agency WAFA, Abu Rdeineh said that the conflict currently stands at an alarming crossroads which could have dangerous consequences on the whole region, calling upon all parties to assume their responsibilities in solving it. The presidency's statement warned against the continuing Israeli policy of arresting and shooting Palestinians "without a reason" in light of a wave of violence that flared up in ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

Israel's Netanyahu to Meet Obama, Discussing Security Aid

JERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday he hopes to lay out the grounds for U.S. military support to Israel for the next decade when he meets with U.S. President Barack Obama on Monday. His four-day-long visit to Washington D.C. will mark the first meeting between the two leaders since Netanyahu's controversial address on Iran to the U.S. Congress on March strained the relationships between them. The two have not met since October 2014, as profound disagreements over July's nuclear deal



with Iran have soured relations between these allies. Netanyahu told his cabinet that his visit would focus on recent developments in the Middle East, including in Syria, and his country's security

needs. "I believe that this meeting is important to clarify the continuation of American aid to Israel in the coming decade," he said, according to a statement released by his office.

"It will be another step toward realizing an understanding in this direction," he said. Noting the U.S. decades-long security support to Israel, he said the visit was aimed at "strength...*(More on P4)...(11)*

UK 'Letting Down' Allies by not Joining IS Strikes: Defence Chief

LONDON - The head of Britain's armed forces on Sunday said the country was "letting down" allies by not participating in air strikes against Islamic State group jihadists in Syria. Britain is part of a coalition hitting IS targets in Iraq, but its parliament has yet to be convinced of the need to join air strikes in neighbouring Syria and an influential committee of MPs recently advised against action. "To an extent yes, we are letting our allies down by not being a full play-

er," General Nicholas Houghton, the chief of the defence staff, told Sky News on Sunday. "The source of their power, their command and control, their logistics, their organisation, the place from which they issue orders to international terrorists is from within Syria. "In the most simplistic way it's like being asked to win a football match but not being able to go into the opponents' half," he added. However, the defence chief stressed that Britain could make only "make



a contribution to the international effort. View gallery Syrian government forces walk past a building marked“hellip; Syrian government forces walk past a building

marked "Islamic State" in the village of Jab ... "In the end the military dimension is done by regional players, by Muslim countries," he later told the BBC. "I ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

Russian Soldiers Geolocated in Multiple Syria Locations by Bloggers

MOSCOW - Small numbers of serving or former Russian soldiers have been geolocated in Syria, including locations near Hama, Aleppo and Homs, Russian bloggers said on Sunday, suggesting that the Kremlin's operation stretches well beyond its air campaign. Russia first launched air strikes to support President Bashar al-Assad in Syria's four-year civil war on Sept. 30 but has repeatedly stated that it has no intention of mounting a ground op-

eration. It has instead said it will limit its help to military trainers, advisers and deliveries of military equipment. U.S. security officials and independent experts told Reuters last week that Moscow had increased its forces in Syria to 4,000 personnel, from an estimated 2,000, and a U.S. defense official said that multiple rocket-launcher crews and long-range artillery batteries were deployed outside four bases the Russians were using. ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

UNICEF Warns of new Humanitarian Crisis for Children in Nepal

KATHMANDU - UNICEF has expressed its serious concern over the children of Nepal as the possibility of humanitarian crisis looms over. Issuing a press statement on Saturday, Anthony Lake, executive director of UNICEF, expressed worry over the condition of children who were blown by the April 25 massive earthquake earlier and now are reeling under national crisis. "The declining stocks of gas, food and medicines, together with the closure of schools due to political strife in the Terai plains and shortages of fuel throughout the country, are inflicting damage to the lives of the children", Lake said in the statement. Lake, who was in Nepal for a two-day trip, added "The temporary shelters built after the earthquake can provide even minimal protection from the coming winter. The current harvest is weak because of light rains. Cooking gas and other fuels are in short supply. Shortages of medicines could severely impact the capacity to deal with diseases like pneumonia over the coming cold months. A new humanitarian crisis may loom". UNICEF has urgently appealed to all involved to think not only of the coming winter, but of the longer term future as well. UNICEF has also expressed its concern over the closure of schools in Nepal's southern plains where more than an estimated one and a half million children are out of school due to strike and protests.(Xinhua)

EU Turns to African Leaders to Stem Migrant Crisis

BRUSSELS - EU leaders will push their wary African counterparts to help tackle the migration crisis at a summit in Malta this week, offering them billions of euros in aid in exchange for cooperation. Having recently pressed Turkey to stem the flow of Syrian refugees, Europe is turning its attention to the other main source of an unprecedented number of people fleeing across the Mediterranean. The gathering of more than 50 leaders from both continents on Tuesday and Wednesday will see an overwhelmed Europe call on Africa to take back more people classed as economic migrants and not refugees from war. In return, Europe will offer development funds in a fresh thrust by the wealthy EU to tackle the wars and poverty in Africa that are the root cause of nearly a quarter of the nearly 800,00 migrant arrivals in Europe this year. "It's a new impetus we want to give," a European diplomat told AFP. The summit was first called months ago when the Mediterranean route from a lawless Libya was still the main springboard for migrants travelling to the EU in battered fishing boats and flimsy dinghies. Since then the journey from Turkey over the hazardous Aegean Sea to the Greek islands, and then up through...*(More on P4)...(14)*

India's Ruling BJP Concedes Defeat in Local Election in Key Eastern State

NEW DELHI - India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday conceded defeat in the local legislative election in the eastern state Bihar, an apparently setback for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Election Commission of India said that the Grand Alliance was way ahead with leads in 91 constituencies, out of 243 seats in the Bihar assembly. The BJP-led alliance was leading in 52 seats. The Grand Alliance was



decisively ahead of BJP-led National Democratic Alliance as was showed trends in 150 constituencies put out by the Election Commission at 11:30 local time. BJP's

setback in the election could impact the party's efforts to expand power across the country as some other key local elections are due next year.(Xinhua)

Election Result by People's Vote Shall be Accepted: Myanmar Presidential Spokesman

NAY PYI TAW - Election result yielded from people's vote in accordance with the electoral process shall be accepted by all, Myanmar Presidential Spokesman U Ye Htut told Xinhua Sunday evening following the end of the historic general election. In a telephone interview with Xinhua, U Ye Htut, who is also Information Minister, said the decision through voting shall be implemented. He expressed delight over people's active voting in the election. Polling closed at 16:00 p.m. local time and was followed by open counting of votes shortly in the presence of contesting candidates, local and

international observers and the public. The Union Election Commission said it will officially release the election results starting Monday stage by stage. In Sunday's election, 33.5 million eligible voters cast votes at more than 46,000 polling stations nationwide. Government leaders, parliament speakers, military leaders and party leaders were among those who enthusiastically cast their votes at respective polling booths scattered in constituencies across the nation. A total of 6,038 candidates involving 91 political parties and 310 independent runners competed for more than 1,000 seats at...*(More on P4)...(15)*

Neighbor News

Iran Plans to Attend Next Round of Syria Peace talks



DUBAI - Iran will attend the next round of Syria peace talks, a top advisor to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was quoted as saying on Saturday, a week after Tehran threatened to withdraw from the process. World and regional powers including Iran met in Vienna on Oct. 30 to discuss a political solution to Syria's civil war. Days later, Iran threatened to pull out of the next round of talks, blaming the "negative role" played by regional rival Saudi Arabia. "Iran will be actively present in (Syria peace) talks, while announcing its standards and preserving its red lines," Ali Akbar Velayati, Khamenei's top foreign policy advisor, was quoted as saying by the Tasnim news agency. "We will support our ally, Syria, not only in

defense field, but also in political arena," he added. Iran supports Syria's President Bashar al-Assad against rebels backed by regional powers including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey. Diplomats have said the next round of international talks is likely to begin later this week. The Oct. 30 talks, which failed to reach a solution, marked the first time Iran and Saudi Arabia were at the same table to discuss Syria's civil war, which has killed more than 250,000 people and displaced millions over nearly five years. The war has evolved into a wider proxy struggle between global powers, as Russia has joined the Assad-Iran axis and Western powers have stepped up support for Gulf Arab-backed rebels.(Reuters)

Police Identify Localities Infested with 'Militants' in Sindh

KARACHI - In a detailed survey of each district of Sindh, specific areas 'with militants' concentration' have been identified amid reports of a looming threat of sectarian attacks in Karachi, Shikarpur and Khairpur from splinter militant groups and banned organisations, it emerged on Saturday. The district of Karachi West is infested with alarming prevalence of such elements, followed by the city's central and east districts, according to a list of the specific localities across the province recently sent to the home ministry by the Sindh police. At least 12 such areas, infested with militants, in West district are It-

tehad Town, M. Khan Colony, Mominabad, Mowachh Goth, Orangi Town, Kati Pahari, Banaras, Metroville, Machchar Colony, Musharraf Colony, Mauripur and Keamari. In Central district, 10 such neighbourhoods are Afghan Basti, Nusrat Bhutto Colony, Sohrab Goth, Peoples Colony, Federal B Industrial Area, Mujahid Colony, Moosa Colony, Bandhani Colony, Khamosh Colony and Gulbahar. Eight similar areas have been spotted in East district. They are Rajput Colony, Safoora Goth, Mosamiyat, Pehalwan Goth, Natha Khan Goth, Karnal Basti, Lasbella and Patel Para. (Agencies)

Xi's Visits to Vietnam, Singapore Construct new Consensus on Regional Cooperation

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping's just concluded state visits to Vietnam and Singapore from Thursday to Saturday have constructed new consensus on bilateral and regional cooperation between China and Southeast Asian nations and promoted understanding about China's domestic and foreign policies in the region, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said. Xi's state visits came as this year marks the 65th anniversary of the establishment of China-Vietnam diplomatic relations as well as the 25th anniversary of the establishment of China-Singapore diplomatic ties. Chinese and Vietnamese leaders reached wide consensus on common interests, challenges, needs and tasks facing the two countries, Wang said after Xi wrapped

up his visits. During his talks with Vietnamese leaders, Xi reiterated that China and Vietnam constitute a community of common destiny with strategic significance, and the futures of the socialism cause of the two countries are highly intertwined, Wang said. Xi urged the two sides to inherit and maintain the "comradely and brotherly" traditional friendship built and carefully cultivated by Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh and other leaders of the older generation. The two countries also reached consensus on expanding cooperation within the framework of China's Belt and Road Initiative and Vietnam's "Two Corridors and One Economic Circle" plan, as well as on enhancing production capacity cooperation.(Xinhua)