

UK Should Join Strikes in Syria to Defeat IS: Cameron

PARIS - British Prime Minister David Cameron on Monday said Britain should join the U.S.-led coalition fighting the Islamic State (IS) in Syria, stressing the necessity to carry out air strikes to uproot the Islamist cell.

"I firmly support the action that President Hollande has taken to strike ISIL (Islamic State) in Syria and it is my firm conviction that Britain should do so too," he said. "Later this week, I will set out in parliament our comprehensive strategy for tackling ISIL," he added during a joint press conference with French President



Francois Hollande. It's up to parliament to take a decision on whether to send

British warplanes to Syria, noted Cameron, who previously failed to convince

parliament to vote in favor of air strikes against Syrian President Bashar al-As-

sad in 2013. Hollande said: "We have to act in Syria. France has taken this de-

cision in September. It's up to the United Kingdom to see how it can also engage." The president called for the creation of a global and strong coalition to fight Islamist insurgents in Iraq and Syria. "We are convinced that we must continue to hit Daesh (Arab acronym of IS) in Syria. We will intensify our strikes, choose targets that will inflict the greatest possible damage on this terrorist army," he told reporters. To this end, the French head of state said the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle was gearing up to strengthen strikes. (Xinhua)

Nieghbor News

Putin in Tehran for talks on Energy, Syria



TEHRAN - Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived here Monday on a visit expected to focus on the Syria crisis and energy cooperation between Moscow and Tehran.

During his stay, Putin will attend the 3rd summit of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) and meet with Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and his Iranian counterpart, Hassan Rouhani. Syria is expected to top the agenda in Putin's talks with Iranian officials. The GECF is a gath-

ering of the world's leading gas producers aimed at strengthening coordination and collaboration. The first summit was held in Qatar's capital Doha in 2011. Algeria, Bolivia, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Russia, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela are the member countries of the forum.

Iraq, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Norway, Oman, Peru and Azerbaijan have the status of observer members. (Xinhua)

1/5 of Bulgarians not Worried about Terrorist Threat: Survey

SOFIA - A fifth of Bulgarians are not worried about a possible terrorist attack, and two-thirds do not intend to change their way of life based on a terrorist threat, according to a survey released on Monday. The nationally-representative survey, conducted by the Alpha Research agency, shows that 52 percent of Bulgarians are of the opinion that the danger for Bulgaria is the same as for France and other European countries. Meanwhile, 28 percent of respondents, mainly older people and those

that live in border areas, think that the threat to their country is even higher, because Bulgaria is an external border of the European Union, the survey shows. The remaining 20 percent, mostly young and middle-aged people, believe that Bulgaria is relatively more protected because the country is not a priority target for terrorists, the survey said. "In spite of the concerns, the majority of people, 67 percent, do not intend to change anything in their daily behavior and habits," ... (More on P4)... (16)

Iraq Suspends some Domestic Flights over Russian Air Operations on Syria

BAGHDAD - Iraqi authorities on Monday ordered the suspension of all flights between Baghdad and the northern cities of Arbil and Sulaimaniyah for two days due to Russian missiles and bombers crossing to neighboring Syria. The decision was made to "protect the travellers because of the crossing of cruise missiles and bombers in the northern part of Iraq launched from Caspian Sea," the Iraqi Civil

Aviation Authority said in an online statement. The measure does not include the other airports in Baghdad, Najaf and Basra in central and southern Iraq, the statement said. Russian airstrikes on positions inside Syria has been going on since late September, helping government troops there to advance against the Islamic State (IS) and other militant groups in key areas like Latakia, Aleppo and Homs. (Xinhua)

Europe Needs Access to Swift Payments Data to Combat Militants: France

PARIS - European authorities need to be able to tap into data from the SWIFT bank payments network under a push to clamp down on the financing of militant groups, French Finance Minister Michel Sapin said on Monday. Sapin said SWIFT - the world's biggest electronic payments system - had two computer servers, one in Europe and the other in the United States. However, Europe currently relied on U.S. authorities to collect and analyze the vast amounts of data flowing through

the system to detect security issues. "We Europeans don't have the capacity to exploit our own data. I don't think this can carry on this way," Sapin told a news conference. "Since we do not have the means to analyze the data located in Europe, we transfer all of this data to the Americans, who have the capacity to analyze it." Efforts to curb financing of militant groups have intensified since the attacks in Paris on Nov. 13 by Islamic State-backed gunmen and bombers.



France will raise the SWIFT data issue at a meeting of euro zone finance ministers in Brussels on Monday, and has asked for questions re-

lated to the financing of terrorism to be discussed at the next meeting of finance ministers from all 28 European Union countries. (Reuters)

Russia Intensifies Strikes Against IS Oil Facilities in Syria

MOSCOW - Russian armed forces have intensified strikes against oil-producing and refining facilities of the Islamic State (IS) in Syria, the Russian Defense Ministry said Monday. In the last two days, Russian warplanes launched 141 attacks, which have hit 474 targets, including oil refineries, storage facilities and trains carrying fuel tanks, said the ministry in a statement. Main efforts were concentrated on undermining the finance and economic capacity of the IS,

which would prevent daily supplies of 60,000 tons of oil worth 1.5 million U.S. dollars flowing to the black market, the statement added. The Russian air force and navy have ratcheted up raids against IS targets in Syria since last Tuesday after Moscow identified the Oct. 31 Russian plane crash over Egypt's Sinai Peninsula a terrorist attack. According to the ministry, the number of aircraft deployed in Syria has been doubled to 69 units and the campaign has been enhanced



by strategic bombers taking off from Russian territory. Russian naval forces participating in the operation consisted of 10 ships, with six in the Mediterranean Sea

and the other four in the Caspian Sea. The ministry also said that Russian forces in Syria has started cooperation with the French armed forces. (Xinhua)

Soldiers Patrol Brussels, Guard EU Buildings, as Five Held in Raids

BRUSSELS - Soldiers patrolled the streets of Brussels and police detained five more people on the third day of a security lockdown on Monday, as Belgium hunted a suspected Islamist militant who has been on the run since the attacks in Paris. Authorities are still warning of possible imminent attacks like those in the French capital this month, in which 130 people were killed, and hunting Brussels barkeeper Salah Abdeslam, who returned to the city from Paris hours after the Nov. 13 attacks. Police did not find Abdeslam, whose brother blew himself up in Paris, in 22 raids late on Sunday when 16 people were detained. Five



more people were arrested during searches of seven houses in the Brussels and Liege regions early on Monday. Police have given no details of those held. No weapons were found on Sunday but 26,000 euros in cash, found at a single site, was seized by

prosecutors. The metro, museums, most cinemas and many shops will stay shut on Monday in the usually bustling EU capital where many staff have opted to work from home. There was also no school or university for almost 300,000 students. (Reuters)

S.Korea Stages Firing Exercises



SEOUL - South Korea's military on Monday staged its maritime firing exercises in northwestern islands near the sea boundary with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Yonhap news agency reported citing a military official. The official was quoted as saying that the military began the live-fire exercises from 4 p.m. local time (0700GMT) with its K-9 self-propelled artilleries in islands of Yeonpyeong and Baengnyeong. Whether the firing drill is finished has yet to be confirmed. The South Korean artilleries faced south for the firing exercises, with only K-9 self-propelled guns mobilized. The military originally planned to mobilize Spike missiles and 130-mm multiple rocket launchers for the firing drill, but the worsening weather conditions from a heavy sea fog led to the reduced mobilization. The firing drill was carried out to mark the fifth anniversary of the DPRK's shelling of the South Korean island of Yeonpyeong. Five years ago, the DPRK shelled the Yeonpyeong, one of the five South Korean border islands near the west sea boundary, killing two civilians and two marines. (Xinhua)

China Tops Global List of Clean Energy Investment

BEIJING - China invested 89 billion U.S. dollars in clean energy in 2014, the largest among 55 nations surveyed in a global report, representing the country's commitment to a low-carbon future. China scored the highest at 2.29 on a 0-5 scale on the list of clean energy investment and deployment after topping the list last year with a score of 2.23, according to Climatescope 2015, an independent industry report. The annual report, sponsored by Britain's Department for International Development and the U.S. Agency for International Development, surveyed 55 of the world's most important developing nations on their performance with clean energy investment and deployment. In addition, China added 35 GW of new renewable power capacity on its own last year, more than the entire operating capacity in sub-Saharan Africa's 49 nations combined, excluding South Africa and Nigeria, said the report. "China continues to play a critical role in clean energy's evolution, not just in emerging markets but in all countries," said the report. Besides China, Brazil, Chile, South Africa and India rounded out the top five of the list. (Xinhua)

US Military Helicopter Crashes in South Korea, Killing 2

SEOUL - A U.S. military helicopter crashed in South Korea on Monday, killing two people on board, police said. The AH-64 Apache helicopter crashed on a road in Wonju, about 130 kilometers (80 miles) east of Seoul, a Wonju police officer said on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak to media about the accident. Two bodies recovered from the helicopter were severely damaged and ... (More on P4)... (18)

UAE Blames Islamists for Delay Against Rebels in Yemen Province

ADEN - A key member of a Saudi-led Arab coalition has blamed Islamists for delays in its military operations to expel Shiite Huthi rebels from the key southwestern province of Ta'ez. The coalition on Monday intensified air strikes against the Iran-backed rebels in Ta'ez as an Emirati minister blamed an influential Sunni Islamist party's for the delays. Coalition jets carried out several strikes against re-

bel positions on the outskirts of Rahida, the province's second-largest city, military sources said. On the ground, loyalist troops and allied Popular Resistance fighters fired Katyusha rockets and mortar rounds at rebel positions, said Fadhil Hasan, commander of the operations to retake Rahida. Breaking the siege of the government-held provincial capital of the same ... (More on P4)... (17)

Bomb Hoax Delayed Dubai-Bound Flight in Peshawar

PESHAWAR - A bomb hoax delayed a Dubai-bound flight, which was cleared to resume its journey after it was cleared by security personnel. The flight took off at 5pm for its original destination. An emergency was declared on the Shaheen Air International flight NL-786 which was scheduled to depart from Peshawar at 2:30 pm. (Agencies)

passengers and their luggage by BDS officials. Earlier, security at Peshawar's Bacha Khan International Airport was ramped up following a bomb threat aboard a Dubai-bound flight. An emergency was declared on the Shaheen Air International flight NL-786 which was scheduled to depart from Peshawar at 2:30 pm. (Agencies)

Tajikistan to Elevate President to Leader of the Nation

DUSHANBE - Almost inevitably, a group of deputies in Tajikistan has proposed a draft bill to designate President Emomali Rahmon the "leader of the nation." Nothing is known yet about what specific additional powers the honorific might endow on Rahmon, but the proposal fits into a broader pattern of state-sponsored adulation of the president. Asia-Plus reported that the legislation to create the title - the full name of which is "Founder of Peace and Harmony: Leader

of the Nation" - is being studied at committee stage in parliament. Since 51 out of the 63 seats in parliament are held by the ruling People's Democratic Party, there can be little doubt how that is going to pan out. Perhaps the only surprising aspect of this proposal is that is has not come earlier. Rahmon's portraits are a ubiquitous sight across the country and power has been increasingly consolidated in his hands with the elimination of all political opponents. (Agencies)

Conference opens in Beijing as China Embraces Robotics Revolution

BEIJING - They can help with the housework and even kick around a football, but robots aren't coming for your jobs just yet. That was the reassurance from robot experts gathered at an international conference that kicked off in Beijing on Monday. The three-day event includes a forum, an exhibition and a robot contest for youth. Decades after the first working robot was invented in 1961, "we are now in a new era of robotics," said Arturo Barancelli, president of the International Federation of Robotics (IFR). According to Barancelli's estimation, some 1.5 million robots are in use in factories worldwide, with the total number poised to reach 2.3 million in the next three

years. Most robots are designed to replace workers in especially hard conditions and won't reduce job opportunities or threaten employment, according to Xu Xiaolan, vice president of the Chinese Institute of Electronics. In a congratulatory letter, Chinese President Xi Jinping said China is willing to cooperate with other nations in promoting robotics research and development. Premier Li Keqiang said the conference is important for promoting robot technology as China promotes innovation-driven development and entrepreneurship to transform the country from the "world's factory" to a technological powerhouse. (Xinhua)