

UNSC Urges all Syrian Parties to Attend Geneva Peace Talks

UNITED NATIONS - The UN Security Council on Monday urged all Syrian parties to actively participate in the Geneva political process without preconditions and to support efforts to ensure its success.

Sebastiano Cardi, president of the Security Council, told reporters after closed-door consultations on Syria that the council reiterated that a political solution must be forged through the Geneva process. The council members also stressed respect for Syria's sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity, Cardi said.

Although the Syrian opposition has formed a unified group for Geneva talks follow-



ing negotiations among them in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian government has not confirmed its attendance at the new round of Geneva talks.

"The meeting will start tomorrow and we really hope that all parties, including the Syrian government, will be present," Cardi said.

"The (Syrian) government did not yet confirm its participation in Geneva, but indicated that we would be hearing from them soon," said UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, when briefing the UN Security Council via a video conference from Geneva as he was preparing for round eight of the UN-convened Syrian talks on Nov. 28. (Xinhua)

Trump Talks with French President on Syria

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump spoke over phone with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron on Monday, discussing Syrian situation and other issues, said the White House.

The two leaders agreed on the importance of the UN-based Geneva process as the only forum for achieving a political solution in Syria, the White House said in a statement.

In the phone call, Trump and Macron also discussed the denuclearization of the Korean penin-

sula, it said.

The UN Security Council on Monday urged all Syrian parties to participate actively in the Geneva political process without preconditions. The Geneva peace talks is scheduled for Tuesday but the Syrian government is yet to confirm its participation in the talks. The Syrian armed conflict broke out in 2011 and quickly turned into a full-fledged civil war. UN figures show that the war has killed more than 330,000 people and displaced millions in the country. (Xinhua)

Not Worried about EU's Moves on Defense Pact: Russian Official

BERLIN - A senior Russia's foreign ministry official on Tuesday said he was not worried by the European Union's move to integrate European defenses, saying the initiative was "just words" and did not appear to be aimed at Moscow.

Kirill Logvinov, head of the Russian foreign ministry, called at the annual Berlin Security Conference for renewed efforts to rebuild trust between European countries and Russia through dialogue and military cooperation.

He said the trans-Atlantic NATO alliance had revived Cold War tensions through an enlargement that threatened Russia's national security. Moscow was open to resuming dialogue and rebuilding trust, he said, and remained committed to implementing the Minsk agreements aimed at ending violence in eastern Ukraine - as long as Kiev also made good its promises under the deal.

"Just to sit down at a table would be an important



step back toward building trust," Logvinov told reporters. Asked whether Russia was concerned about an agreement by 23 EU members to cooper-

ate on funding joint military projects and commands, he said Moscow welcomed any steps that would help unify Europe. (Reuters)

British Government Pressed to Release Full Brexit Dossier



LONDON - British lawmakers are taking the government to task over its reluctance to dis-

close a series of studies it commissioned on the likely economic impact of Brexit.

Earlier this month the House of Commons passed a motion by the opposition Labour Party

calling for the 58 reviews to be released. Commons Speaker John Bercow said the government could be found in contempt of Parliament if it refused to comply. On Tuesday the government said it had sent the documents to Parliament's Exiting the EU Committee, but with "commercially, market and negotiation sensitive information" withheld. The committee says that is not good enough, and has summoned Brexit Secretary David Davis to explain himself. (AP)

Qatar Ranks Among World's Lowest in Terms of Crime Rates

DOHA - Qatar ranks among the world's lowest in terms of crime rates, and is considered as the best place for security and safety, Qatar News Agency (QNA) reported Tuesday.

Qatar's Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics showed Qatar is a very safe country, compared with other parts of the world, which reflects Qatar's global security status.

Qatar has become an outstanding centre in the world security indicators, and has the seventh-low-

est crime rate globally according to the latest annual Global Crime Index by Numbeo.

During 2016 and 2017, Qatar ranked first in the Gulf and Arab countries in the World Peace Index, based on the high level of security and security prevailing in the country, as well as the low crime rates. Qatar is suffering from an ongoing blockade imposed on it by its gulf neighbors since June 5, accusing it of funding terrorism, but Doha denied all the allegations. (Xinhua)

Japan Detects Radio Signals Pointing to Possible North Korea Missile Test: Source

TOKYO/WASHINGTON - Japan has detected radio signals suggesting North Korea may be preparing another ballistic missile launch, although such signals are not unusual and satellite images did not show fresh activity, a Japanese government source said on Tuesday.

After firing missiles at a pace of about two or three a month since April, North Korean missile launches paused in September, after it fired a rocket that passed over Japan's northern Hokkaido island.

"This is not enough to determine (if a launch is likely soon)," the source told Reuters. Japan's Kyodo news agency reported late on Monday that the Japanese government was on alert after catching such radio signals, suggesting a launch could come in a few days. The report also said the signals might be related to winter military training by the North Korean military.

North Korea is pursuing its nuclear weapons and missile programmes in defiance of U.N. Security Council sanctions and has made no secret of its plans to develop a missile capable of hitting the U.S. mainland. It has fired two missiles over Japan.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency, citing a South Korean government source, also reported that intelligence officials of the United States, South Korea and Japan had recently detected signs of a possible missile launch and have been on higher alert.

South Korean Unification Minister Cho Myoung-gyon told reporters on Tuesday there have been "noteworthy" movements from the North since its last missile launch in mid-September, but there was no hard evidence of another nuclear or missile test. (Reuters)

Redacted Brexit Reports Spark New Row in UK Parliament

LONDON - Prime Minister Theresa May's attempts to keep her Brexit plans secret provoked a new row on Tuesday when lawmakers criticized her for failing to hand over complete studies on the economic impact of Britain's leaving the European Union. The government had promised to share more than 50 studies on how Brexit would impact different economic sectors, but late on Monday, it gave them some of the reports with parts redacted because of what it called their sensitivity. The lawmakers hit back, saying the government



was riding roughshod over a democratically elected parliament.

"In my experience ... the best decisions in life are the ones which are held up to the light and tested," Keir Starmer, Brexit policy chief for the opposition Labour Party, told Sky News.

But with the economy struggling with lower growth since the vote, some of those who argue that Britain should reverse its decision or at least strive for a softer Brexit that maintains close ties say knowledge of the impact could change minds. (Reuters)

French President Calls for Migrant Smuggling Crackdown

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso - French President Emmanuel Macron called the trafficking of African migrants a "crime against humanity" on Tuesday as he made his first major address on the continent before a crowd of university students in Burkina Faso.

In a wide-ranging speech that lasted nearly two hours, Macron proposed a crackdown on human smuggling networks between Africa and Europe. The 39-year-old French leader also emphasized his youth, referring to himself as the child of "a generation that has never

known Africa as a colonized continent." He engaged in a lively series of questions with students afterward. Migrants from throughout West Africa journey to Libya in hopes of making the perilous voyage across the Mediterranean to Europe.

Video footage broadcast on CNN this month showed the auction and sale of migrant men as slaves in the North African nation, prompting widespread outrage. Macron said he wants "Africa and Europe to help populations trapped in Libya by providing massive support to the evacuation of endangered people." (AP)

German Cities Call on Merkel to Release Diesel Pollution Funds

BERLIN - German cities will call on the government to immediately release 1 billion euros (\$1.2 billion) of promised funding to cut diesel pollution and help them avert a potential ban on diesel vehicles.

Pressure is growing on Germany to enforce Clean Air limits introduced in the European Union in 2010. Ninety cities, including Berlin and Munich, could face penalties for having nitrogen dioxide (NO2) levels in excess of the permitted limits, according to the DUH environmental lobby.

German municipalities and states are meeting Chancellor Angela Merkel and cabinet ministers for second "diesel summit" on Tuesday.

Just before a September election, Merkel's government announced it would double funding allocated to curbing excess NO2 levels, but nearly three months later the intended recipients are still waiting.

"I hope we will today agree on an immediate-action program," Gerd Landsberg, head of Germany's association of municipalities (DSIGB), told ARD television. "The funds have to be released now. We cannot wait on and on," he said. Environmentalists have criticized the meeting for including neither the DUH nor carmakers.

Auto manufacturers including VW, Daimler and BMW pledged in August to overhaul the emissions-control software on 5.3 million diesel cars and to contribute about 250 million euros toward the 1 billion euros, steps dismissed as insufficient by the DUH. (Reuters)

Nieghbor News

Chinese Vice Premier Calls for Closer China-ASEAN Cooperation

JAKARTA - China and the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) should boost strategic integration and create a closer community of shared future, Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong said.

Liu, who is in Indonesia to attend the Third Meeting of China-Indonesia High-Level People to People Dialogue, made the remarks on Monday during her visit to the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. She also met with Secretary-General of ASEAN Le Luong Minh and the permanent representatives of the 10 ASEAN countries.

Noting that this year marks the 50th anniversary of ASEAN, Liu said the China-ASEAN ties have developed into the most dynamic and enriched ones among ASEAN's relations with its dialogue partners.

China has been ASEAN's largest trading partner for eight consecutive years, while ASEAN being China's third largest trading partner for six consecutive years, Liu said.

Both sides have upgraded the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area, and carried out hundreds of cooperation projects in various fields, which have yielded fruitful results, she added.

China has always considered ASEAN as a priority in its neighborly diplomacy and an important participant of the Belt and Road Initiative, Liu said, adding that China will firmly support the building of ASEAN Community and the bloc's central status in regional cooperation, and support a bigger role played by ASEAN in international and regional affairs. (Xinhua)

Iran, China Hold 8th Meeting of Friendship Society Forum in Beijing

TEHRAN - The 8th Meeting of Iran-China Friendship Society was held in Beijing at the presence of Chinese businessmen and enthusiasts. Iran's Ambassador to China Ali Asghar Khaji, President of the Iran-China Friendship Society Aqa Mohammadi, Vice President of Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) Lin Yi and Deputy Culture Minister for Art Affairs Ali Moradkhani attended the forum, entitled 'Iran-China cooperation to establish joint silk road'.

Hassan Tavana, a member of the Iran-China Friendship Society, said the association has been established as one of the oldest Iranian friendship groups 17 years ago. "As a private sector, the association is one wing of Foreign Ministry, and it has been instrumental in developing relations between Iran and China," Tavana said. He also noted that the association, in addition to the development of political and economic relations between the two countries, has been active in cultural affairs, including the sisterhood of various cities over the past few years. (FNA)

Pakistan Strongly Believes in Regional Global Peace

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan placed its bilateral relationship with France in high esteem and desired to further expand cooperation in different fields for mutual benefit of people of two sides, Senator Lt. Gen. (R) Abdul Qayyum, Convener Pakistan-France Parliamentary Friendship Group Tuesday said in a meeting with newly deputed French Ambassador, Marc Barety who called on him here.

According to a press release, Lt Gen. (R) Abdul Qayyum said that Pakistan and France shared a history of bilateral cooperation and both the countries shared a vision to promote regional and global peace.

"Pakistan wants peace in the region believes a peaceful and dialogue oriented solution to all the issues including Kashmir" he observed. The Senator apprised the envoy of the overall dynamics of Asia and more specifically the South Asian region. He also underscored the need for enhanced parliamentary exchanges to bring people of the two sides closer and boost mutual linkages in various sectors.

He called for making the parliamentary friendship groups more vibrant so that both the countries could benefit from the expertise of parliamentarians and give parliamentary diplomacy a chance to take the bilateral relations to new altitudes. (Monitoring Desk)

Kazakhstan, China, Turkmenistan and Iran Agree to Increase Railway Traffic

ASTANA - Four Asian countries have agreed to increase railway traffic on the China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran (CKTI) route, Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ) press release reads. KTZ's Vice-president for Logistics Sanzhar Elyubayev noted the need to create conditions for the development of container service, formation of stable container traffic, development of the client and freight base, and application of approved tariff rates for container service along the CKTI. (IRNA)