

UN, Israeli Leaders meet on Regional Issues

UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Thursday met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and the two discussed regional situation, including the risks posed by incitement, violent extremism and terrorism.

The meeting took place at UN Headquarters in New York on the sidelines of the annual high-level debate of the UN General Assembly, which entered its fourth day here Thursday.

"The secretary-general noted the tensions on the ground in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem,



and reiterated his call on both sides to prevent any escalation," Ban's spokes-

man told reporters after the meeting. "In this regard, he referred to the

prime minister's public commitment to maintain the status quo on the

Holy Sites." Meanwhile, the secretary-general condemned the brutal kill-

ing of two Israeli citizens in the West Bank earlier Thursday evening, the spokesman said.

"The secretary-general also underscored the dangers that violence and provocations pose to both Israeli and Palestinian civilians," the statement said.

"He welcomed Israel's easing of some restrictions on the movement of people and goods and urged the prime minister to make significant policy changes that will have a concrete impact on the lives of Palestinians," said the spokesman. (Xinhua)

UN Development Goals Turn Focus on New Zealand Inequality

WELLINGTON - The United Nations' new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should serve as a wake-up call to the New Zealand government to address a shameful level of inequality, development experts said Friday. The goals were endorsed last week at the UN General Assembly in New York. "To New Zealand's shame, any economic growth we have experienced in the past 20 years has been concentrated in the hands of those in the upper echelons of society, while inequality continues to rise, leaving the poor and the lower-middle classes in

a continuous struggle to make ends meet," Professor Regina Scheyvens, of Massey University, said in a statement. She suggested the government would have to expand its focus beyond a reliance on dairy exports and soaring property prices as indicators of economic growth. "The goals will require us to look beyond dairy pay-outs and mortgage interest rates and consider social wellbeing and the environment alongside the notion of inclusive economic growth, which presumably means all should benefit from any growth which occurs... (More on P4)... (24)

Six Months of Conflict in Yemen Leaves over 500 Children Dead

GENEVA - Six months of unremitting war in Yemen have left at least 505 children dead and injured a further 702, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) indicated on Friday. UNICEF also reported that over 1.7 million children are presently at risk of malnutrition while 10 million children are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. "With every day that passes, children see their hopes and dreams for the future shattered," said UNICEF Representative in Yemen Julien Harneis, adding "their homes, schools and communities are being destroyed, and their own lives are increas-



ingly threatened by disease and malnutrition." Figures show that 537,000 children under five are at risk of severe acute malnutrition, more than tripling the pre-conflict number of 160,000. Endemic food shortages together with reduced access to health facilities and

sanitation have further been compounded by the lack of fuel, electricity, gas and water. Key infrastructure has also been affected by attacks, with as many as 41 schools and 61 hospitals either targeted or damaged. UNICEF indicated that it has provided three

million people with access to safe water, and that over five million children have received measles and polio vaccinations. Some 93,500 children have also been treated for severe acute malnutrition while 520,000 were able to sit delayed school exams. (Xinhua)

Russia Denies Hitting Wrong Targets in Syria

MOSCOW - The Russian Defense Ministry Friday denied allegations that Russia's air force failed to target positions of the Islamic State (IS) terrorist group in its airstrikes campaign in war-torn Syria. "The allegations are complete nonsense and have no factual basis," Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov told reporters. On Thursday, the

Turkish Foreign Ministry issued a joint statement with the United States, Germany, Britain, France, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, saying that Russian airstrikes did not target the IS and caused civilian casualties. Konashenkov said the ministry was monitoring various sources of false information and intended to provide the

public with its own reports accompanied by maps and videos twice a day. Russian air force aircraft, including Su-34, Su-24M and Su-25, carried out 18 sorties against 12 IS targets in Syria over the last 24 hours, the ministry said in a separate statement. Among others, three command posts, a communications center, two training camps, vari-

ous bunkers, as well as weapons and fuel depots were destroyed in the air attacks, the statement said. Su-34 fighter bombers carried out precision strikes from heights of over 5,000 meters, the statement said, adding that this type of aircraft can carry out strikes against terrorist targets in the whole territory of Syria. (Xinhua)

Germany Sending Infantrymen, Military Equipment to Latvia

RIGA - The German armed forces are sending an infantry unit along with armoured vehicles and other military equipment to Latvia this weekend, the Latvian Defence Ministry informed. The servicemen from the 37th Mechanized Infantry Brigade "Saxony" are scheduled to stay in Latvia until mid-November. During that time they will be taking part in military training exercises alongside

Latvian and other allied forces, the ministry said. In addition to the troops, Germany is also deploying over 35 armoured vehicles and other military equipment which is being delivered to Latvia by train. In the first drill, slated for this Sunday, Oct. 4, the German infantrymen will be moving the equipment from a railway station to a military base in Adazi just outside Riga. (Xinhua)

Russia-US Compromise on Syrian Crisis Sends Positive Signal: Experts

MOSCOW - Focused mainly on the Syrian crisis, Monday's meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama seemed to give a green light to the airstrikes carried out by Russian air forces in Syria, which started Wednesday and are expected to last for a period of time, Russian experts said. In spite of distinct disputes on such issues as the Ukraine crisis and the

Syrian conflict, the two countries managed to coordinate, sending a positive signal regarding the improvement of bilateral relations and their readiness to cooperate more on solving international issues, the experts said. "The start of a dialogue between the two leaders, even if the conversation is of technical nature, can serve as a basis for the future unlocking of relations, although the conditions for such are not yet ripe currently," Andrei

Kolesnikov, a senior expert at the Carnegie Moscow Center, told Xinhua. Andrei Kortunov, director-general of the Russian Council for International Affairs, said the Putin-Obama meeting suggested progress have been made through other channels, and "signals would be given to relevant departments and officials on both sides to resume consultations on the most pressing issues such as the Syrian crisis." The situation in the Mid-

dle East is replacing the Ukraine crisis as the new point of serious disagreement between Moscow and Washington, Kolesnikov said, adding that under the new circumstances, "some cooperation, even (if it is) only technical, is necessary." Both experts expected the top leaders' meeting to push either cooperation on the Syrian crisis or coordination on the Ukraine crisis toward greater policy convergence. (Xinhua)

Deadly Russian Rocket System Spotted in Ukraine for First Time

MOSCOW - International monitors say they have spotted a new kind of Russian weapons system in rebel-held Ukraine this week, possible evidence of Moscow's continued interest in Ukraine even as it focuses on Syria. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which is monitoring a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine, reported that its monitors had seen a mobile TOS-1 'Buratino' weapons system for the

first time. The Buratino is equipped with thermobaric warheads which spread a flammable liquid around a target and then ignite it. It can destroy several city blocks in one strike and cause indiscriminate damage. Only Russia produces the system and it was not exported to Ukraine before the conflict broke out, according to IHS Jane's Group and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which

Australian Anti-IS Fighter's Return a Hoax

SYDNEY - An Australian man fighting against Islamic State in Syria who posted to his Facebook page he was returning to Australia said it was a hoax. Australian man Ashley Dyball posted on social media under the alias Michel Scott on Friday that he had boarded a plane and was due to arrive in Brisbane on Saturday night following a brief stay in Sweden. Dyball even requested a large Hungry Jacks - aka Burger King - Whop-

per meal and some party poppers for his "welcome home interrogation" by Australian authorities upon his return, according to local media. Australian government has repeatedly warned those who become involved in the conflicts in Iraq and Syria would face prosecution upon their return. However, several hours after local media first reported Dyball's decision, he revealed it was all a hoax. "To all my friends that weren't in on this I ... (More on P4)... (26)

Neighbour News

China-Mexico Ties Hold Great Potential : Envoy

MEXICO CITY - Profound changes have taken place in China in the past decades and relations between the Asian country and Mexico have great potential, China's ambassador to Mexico Qiu Xiaochi has said.

Qiu made the remarks on Wednesday when delivering a speech at a reception marking the 66th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, which was attended by diplomats, academics, business leaders and politicians. Speaking highly of the landmark achievements made by China and its undergoing transformations, Qiu noted that China, the world's second largest economy, is progressing toward ambitious objectives since it adopted reform and opening-up policies more than 30 years ago.

China has also pushed for progress outside its borders, through its efforts to establish new international relations based on mutual benefits, such as the Belt and Road initiative to boost trade and growth along and beyond the ancient Silk Road, promotion of greater connectivity with neighboring countries, and a new model of productive cooperation with Latin America, Qiu pointed out.

The bilateral relationship between China and Mexico, lifted to a comprehensive strategic partnership level during Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Mexico in June 2013, is solid as evidenced by frequent meetings between the leaders and senior officials of the two countries, said Qiu. (Xinhua)

Tajikistan, ADB Discuss Cooperation Prospect

AVESTA - Senior representatives from Tajikistan's Ministry of Transport and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) representatives met here on Wednesday to discuss prospects of cooperation between the two sides in the transport sector, the Tajik ministry said Thursday. The sides talked about issues related to technical support provided by the ADB to Tajikistan for development of a private-public partnership in the country's transportation sector.

ADB is Tajikistan's largest multilateral development partner, and plays an invaluable role in aligning the country's

aid with ongoing necessary reforms. Since Tajikistan joined the ADB in 1998, the bank has approved a total assistance of around 1.3 billion U.S. dollars in concessional loans, grants and technical support to the country. ADB has agreed to boost its assistance to Tajikistan by around 20 million U.S. dollars in 2015, raising its full year planned assistance program to 79 million dollars. The 2015 assistance program is aimed at supporting development of the private sector, railways and water resources, and improvement of the investment climate. (Agencies)

Iran Fights US Appropriation of \$1.7 Billion

TEHRAN - The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has filed an appeal against a US court ruling to turn over Iranian funds worth \$1.75 billion to alleged families of the victims of the 1983 bombing in Beirut.

The US Supreme Court says it has agreed to consider the appeal by the CBI which contends the ruling violates a 1955 US-Iran treaty.

The money, currently held in a trust account in New York, was ruled by the city's court of appeals in 2014 to be handed over to the families of the victims. They accuse Iran of providing material support to carry out the attack which killed 241 US troops.

Iran denies the accusa-

tions. The country also says the ruling violates a treaty between the US and Iran which bans expropriation of one country's properties in the territory of the other.

The legal battle comes at a delicate time as Iran and the United States seek to implement an accord signed in July to put their nuclear differences to rest. The Obama government has urged the high court not to take up the case.

The US Congress has waded into the dispute, passing a law in 2012 to implement the court ruling. The tribunal must now decide whether the chambers have violated the US Constitution by dictating the outcome of a court case. (Agencies)

All Efforts will Be Made for CPEC's Success : Gen. Raheel



LONDON - Pakistani Chief of Army Staff Gen Raheel Sharif said on Thursday that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project would be a game-changer and usher in an era of prosperity in the region.

"We will do everything to make it a success," he said during interactions at the International Institute for Strategic Studies and House of Commons in London, according to tweets by

Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations Lt Gen Asim Saleem Bajwa.

General Sharif said the success of the Zarb-i-Azb military operation had made discernible effects and it would continue pursuing 'sleeper cells' across Pakistan.

"Our environment and context need to be understood," he said. "We want to finish terrorists and their nurseries." (Agencies)

Sweden Puts Crisis Agency in Charge of Refugee Admissions



STOCKHOLM - The Swedish government on Thursday ordered the country's crisis authority to coordinate the influx of refugees into the country, local media reported.

The government ordered the police to begin checking foreigners' identification more frequently inside the country and said the Civil Contingencies Agency would organize its response to the refugee crisis, daily newspaper Dagens Nyheter reported. "We face a serious situation," Interior Minister Anders Ygeman said at a press conference.

"Those who are in Sweden but are not applying for asylum or have had their application rejected risk having to leave the country," he added. Ygeman ruled out temporary border controls such as those imposed in other EU countries in recent weeks but said the government is "monitoring the situation closely."

EU rules state that countries can only introduce stricter border checks within the free-movement zone if their safety is threatened, the newspaper reported. Sweden received the highest number of asylum applications per capita out of any EU country in 2014.

The number of lone refugee children entering the country every week reached record levels in August, the country's migration agency reported. (Xinhua)