

60 Mln People in Africa at Risk of Hunger

NAIROBI - About 60 million people across Sub-Saharan Africa are at risk of acute hunger as food production situation is set to further worsen with the looming El Nino, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said on Monday. The IFRC is warning that increased support is needed now to alleviate hunger, and to prepare for worsening conditions for farmers. Michael Charles, IFRC acting regional representative in southern Africa, said erratic rainfall, failed crops and violence in the Sahel and eastern Africa have com-



promised the livelihoods of many farming communities. "The regularity with

which we see food insecurity in Africa has left many people apathetic. But the

crisis currently facing millions of families is not inevitable and should not be

acceptable," Charles said in a statement issued in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

"There are many things that we can do to stop this food crisis in its tracks and alleviate the impact on vulnerable people, but we need international support to make this happen," he added. According to the relief agency, a series of climatic shocks in 2014 and 2015 decimated harvests, leaving many people dependent on food aid to survive. Floods and drought in southern Africa resulted in significant declines in the production of maize - the regional staple. The El Nino phenomenon, characterized by a warming in the Pacific Ocean, is set to ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

US not Serious about Fighting IS: Iraq Militia Boss

NAJAF - A top leader of Iraq's Popular Mobilisation paramilitary organisation said Monday that Baghdad had turned to Russia because the US-led coalition was not serious about fighting the Islamic State group. "To this day, we have not seen a really serious effort to fight Daesh," Hadi al-Ameri said in the holy city of Najaf, using an Arab acronym for the jihadist organisation. "There are some who try to contain Daesh but not really eliminate them and prevent those fighters from returning to Europe, which is where they came from," he said. Ameri is a key MP of the Badr movement, a

Tehran-backed Shiite party which also has a powerful military wing. He was speaking at a conference organised by Badr's TV channel Al-Ghadeer. "This lack of seriousness of the international coalition made us change tack. Russia is moving in a very serious way against Daesh," he said. Russia's airforce began air strikes in Syria last week. Moscow says it has been targeting IS but Washington and its allies say Russia does not distinguish between IS and other groups and accuses the Kremlin of being focused on protecting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his regime. (AFP)

Turkey Says Jets Harassed by Unidentified MIG-29 Near Syrian Border

ANKARA - Two Turkish F-16 jets patrolling the border with Syria were harassed Sunday by an unidentified MIG-29, the Turkish army said on Monday. "Two F-16s were harassed for a total of five minutes by an MIG-29 aircraft whose nationality cannot be determined," the Turkish army said in a statement on its website. At the time, 10 F-16 jets were patrolling along the Turkish-Syrian border line, the statement said. It added that the Turkish



jets were under a radar lock for 40 seconds. Earlier Monday, Turkey

said a Russian warplane violated its airspace on Saturday in the southern

Yayladagi town of Hatay province near the Syrian border. (Xinhua)

Russian Airstrikes in Syria Destroy 9 IS Posts: Defense Ministry

MOSCOW - Russian air force stationed in Syria has conducted 25 new missions in the last 24 hours hitting nine facilities of Islamic State (IS) terrorist group, the Russian Defense ministry said Monday. One command center was destroyed in Syria's central province of Hama and another near Syria's main coastal city of Latakia, according to an online ministry state-

ment accompanied by a video footage. Also two ammunition depots and a communications center were blown up in the central province of Homs, as well as a terrorist training camp in the northwestern province of Idlib. Three artillery pieces, around 30 automobiles and armored vehicles including T-55 tanks earlier seized by the IS from

the Syrian Army, were demolished in the operation, the statement said. Russian Su-34, Su-24M and Su-25 aircraft deployed at the Hmairim airbase near Latakia participated in the missions, the statement said. "All strikes are directed at the disorganization of the command and the destruction of the system of material and technical support of the terrorists," the ministry said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Monday noted that Moscow and Washington have maintained high-level contacts for military operations in Syria. Lavrov added that the IS is the enemy of all states and nations including the Islamic world, stressing that the problem of terrorism and extremism should be addressed "in a comprehensive way." (Xinhua)

India Pitches for Bolstering Ties with Central Europe

NEW DELHI - India Monday pitched for bolstering ties with central European countries in various fields, particularly in trade and economy. "There is a great scope to take things forward between our two areas in various fields," Indian Minister of State for External Affairs V.K. Singh addressed the second edition of India-Central Europe Business Forum in the southern city of Bengaluru, attended by 120 delegates from 18 nations.

"Last few years have proved to be defining in the way India and central European economies have worked to re-energise and redefine the trade and economic ties," he added. Singh also said that India is looking for greater cooperation with central Europe in the areas of information technology, pharmaceuticals, clean and green renewable energy as well as cleaning of rivers. "The stability of economy in ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

Greek, Austrian Leaders to Visit Lesbos over Refugee Crisis



ATHENS - Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann will become the first European Union leader on Tuesday to visit the Greek island of Lesbos to see the impact of Europe's migrant crisis on one of the refugees' preferred entry points into the EU. Lesbos, just 4.4 km (2.8 miles) off the Turkish coast, is struggling to cope with tens of thousands of migrants fleeing war, persecution and poverty in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere and seeking a better life in Europe.

Austria and Germany have committed to backing Greek efforts to secure more EU funds to cope with the influx and to boost staff on the ground. Many of the almost 400,000 migrants who have arrived in Greece this year have later passed through Austria on their way to Germany. Faymann and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras will visit registration and first-reception facilities on the island and discuss further cooperation between the two countries on managing migration flows, Tsipras's office said. The two men held a three-way telephone conference on Saturday with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on managing the refugee flow. Greece, which has been struggling through its deepest economic crisis in generations, lacks the infrastructure to deal with the huge number of arrivals in Lesbos and other eastern Aegean islands such as Kos and Chios. (Reuters)

Ukraine Insists Russia must Cede Border by end of Year

KIEV - President Petro Poroshenko has stressed that Ukraine must regain control of its eastern border by the end of December even if full implementation of a February peace deal with Russia is delayed until 2016. The Western-backed leader was seeking to clarify his stance in view of remarks by French President Francois Hollande at a media event held after a summit meeting on the crisis in Paris on Friday. Poroshenko told Ukrainian

television late Sunday: "The border is a key component of our sovereignty and we are not going to compromise over it." Hollande had said after talks that also included Russian President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel that he saw no way the February deal could conceivably be implemented by its end-of-year-deadline. The main sticking point is the date of local elections in Ukraine's eastern separa-



tist provinces of Lugansk and Donetsk. The shaky truce deal says Russia must cede the entire 400-kilometre (250-mile) stretch of Ukraine's porous eastern frontier the

day after those polls are held. But Hollande told reporters there was insufficient time "to draw up a law, an electoral law that perfectly conforms" to international norms. (AFP)

Israeli War Jets Strike on Gaza

GAZA - Israeli war jets carried out an airstrike early Monday on the Gaza Strip, eyewitnesses and security officials said. No injuries were reported. The security officials and eyewitnesses said that Israeli fighter jets fired missiles on a training post belonging to al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas movement in Gaza. The airstrike came after a rocket, fired by jihadist Salafi group, landed into southern Israel. The

group, which claimed responsibility for the rocket firing, said the attack was in response to what was happening in the West Bank and Jerusalem from Israeli military operations. Israel Radio said the rocket hit southern Israel, but caused no injuries or damage. In another development signifying rising tension in the region, a Palestinian man was killed early Monday by Israeli soldiers during violent clashes in the ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

Attacks in Jerusalem Undermine Prospects for Peace: EU

BRUSSELS - The European External Action Service on Sunday said that the latest attacks in Jerusalem were not only intended to cause human suffering, but also to undermine the prospects for peace. "The political solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, through negotiations, is urgently needed to end the human suffering on all sides," said the statement by the spokesperson of the European External Action Ser-

vice. "It is of utmost importance that all sides use all means at their disposal to condemn acts of violence, cooperate to bring perpetrators to justice, de-escalate the situation and contribute to calm and stability," it said. It added that Jerusalem is a city sacred to three religions and all should be working for dignity and justice for people of all faiths. Two Israeli men were killed, two others injured on Saturday. ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

Neighbour News

Pakistani PM to Visit Washington this Month

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will visit Washington this month at the invitation of the U.S. President Barack Obama, state radio reported on Sunday. During his visit, the prime minister will meet President Obama, his cabinet members and foreign policy makers, Radio Pakistan reported. The exact dates of the visit are being discussed by the two sides, officials said. The U.S. National Security Adviser Susan Rice had formally extended the invitation during her visit to Pakistan in August. Sharif led the Pakistani delegation at the UN General Assembly last month.

Pakistan's ambassador to the United States Jalil Abbas Jilani has said in reported remarks that relations between Pakistan and the United States are now much stable as compared to the past. "These relations would grow further by the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to the United States," he told Convention of Pakistani-American Community in Washington. Jilani said the United States is helping Pakistan in war on terror by providing necessary precision strike technology as well as in the rehabilitation of displaced people from the tribal regions. (Xinhua)

Tajikistan Participates in Innovation Day Fair in Moscow

DUSHANBE - Tajikistan is participating in a two-day Russian Defense Ministry's fair, dubbed Innovation Day. 22 countries have reportedly been invited to attend the fair that kicked off on October 5 and is concluding on October 6. Russia's Radio Station Ekho Moskvy quoted Colonel Roman Kordyukov, the acting head of the Russian Defense Ministry Main Directorate for Scientific Research and Engineering Support for Advanced Technologies, as saying that Belarus, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, China, Venezuela, and some other friendly countries are par-

ticipating in the fair. A number of briefings and roundtables are taking place on the sidelines of the fair. The first Russian Defense Ministry's Innovation Day fair took place in Moscow in 2013 and cutting-edge military equipment and hardware - some of it too secret for the public eye - were put on display at that fair. Androids, drone prototypes, and thin impenetrable armor were revealed to visitors in 2013. More than 260 design bureaus, research institutes, and student labs presented their pet projects at the 2013 fair. (Asia-Plus)

China's Peacekeeping Force Helps Meet "Critical" Gaps: Ladsous

UNITED NATIONS - China's pledge to establish an 8,000-strong peacekeeping force will help meet critical gaps in UN peacekeeping, UN under-secretary-general for peacekeeping operations has said. In a recent email interview with Xinhua, Herve Ladsous said "the announcement of China to establish an 8,000-member standby force is a robust contribution that has the potential to address critical gaps and better prepare our blue helmets to achieve their mandates." At a peacekeeping summit held in the UN headquarters on Sept. 28, Chinese President Xi Jinping said China will take the lead to set up a permanent peacekeeping police squad and will build a peacekeeping standby force of 8,000 troops. Chi-

na is also to actively consider the UN's request of sending more engineering, transportation and medical personnel to join peacekeeping missions, and will train 2,000 foreign peacekeepers and carry out 10 mine-sweeping assistance programs in the next five years, Xi said. China is also to deploy its first helicopter detachment in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa, said the president. "We are deeply grateful for China's new pledges to UN peacekeeping announced by President Xi," Ladsous said. "China is a consistent contributor and partner to UN peacekeeping and these new commitments demonstrate once more China's leading role in supporting UN peacekeeping." (Xinhua)

US Targets in Mideast within Iran's Striking Distance: Iran Cmdr

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian commander says US targets in the Middle East region are within the striking distance of Iran's missiles. "We don't feel the need to increase the range of [our] missiles; and targets are fully within the range of our missiles," said Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh, the commander of the Aerospace Division of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). In reaction to anti-Iran verbal threats by some US authorities that the military option is still on the table, and recalling that the US has

bases in the region, the commander said, "The US can never wage war against us; and in case of any mistake, by God's grace, it is us who will be the winner in the [battle]field." "We have been identifying all their strong and weak points for 30 years, and have been planning for that," he said. Hajizadeh said Iran takes the threats by the enemy seriously and remains on the watch. He said, however, that "A part of the Americans' threats comes to please Zionists; and a part of them is for domestic consumption; ...*(More on P4)...(24)*