

# EU Leaders Agreed on Further Steps to Tackle Refugee Crisis

BRUSSELS - The European Union (EU) leaders agreed on further steps to tackle the "pressing" migration and refugee crisis, following a one-day summit which ended early Friday. "Tackling the migration and refugee crisis is a common obligation which requires a comprehensive strategy and a determined effort over time in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility," the EU leaders said in a statement released after the summit. The EU leaders welcomed the EU-Turkey joint Action Plan for tackling the current refugee crisis, saying its "successful implementation will contribute to ac-



accelerating the fulfillment of the visa liberalization road- map towards all participating member states and the full implementation of the readmission agreement." They stressed that the EU and its member states

"stand ready to increase cooperation with Turkey and step up their political and financial engagement substantially within the established framework." The EU leaders called for strengthening the protection of the EU's external borders, including the establishment of an integrated management system for external borders. The development of a European Border and Coast Guard System in cooperation with relevant member states was under discussion. Concerning response to the influx of refugees in Europe, the leaders agreed to ensure the identifica- ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

## Turkey downs Drone as Syria Launches Aleppo Offensive

BEIRUT - Turkey shot down a drone on Friday in an incident highlighting the dangers of the multiple air combat operations over Syria, where government troops and their allies launched an offensive against rebels near Aleppo, backed by Russian jets. The army offensive south of the city, backed by Hezbollah and Iranian fighters, further expands its 10-day-old counter-attack in western Syria against insurgents battling to overthrow President Bashar al-Assad.

The army campaign has been coordinated with Russian jets, which launched air strikes in support of Assad on Sept. 30, and Syria's own air force.

A U.S.-led coalition of Western and Arab forces has been flying combat missions over Syria for more than a year, while Israeli jets have also struck targets in Syria during the four-year-old civil war.

That has left Syria's airspace crowded with warplanes from rival, or even hostile powers, pursuing competing military strategies, heightening the risk of aerial confrontation. Turkey's military said its jets shot down an unidentified drone in Turkish air space near Syria on Friday. A U.S. official said Washington believed it was of ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

## Iraqi Forces Retake Key Oil Refinery from IS Militants

BAGHDAD - The Iraqi government says its forces have driven out Islamic State group militants from a key oil refinery north of Baghdad in a wide-scale military operation. The Joint Military Command said Friday that government troops and paramilitary forces, made up mainly of Shiite militias, retook Beiji refinery and nearby Siniya town. It did not provide additional details on the operation at the sprawling refinery. There was also no word on the fate of the nearby town of Beiji. Beiji, some 250 kilometers (155 miles) north of Baghdad, fell to IS during its blitz across northern Iraq a year ago, but the refinery facility remained contested. The town is strategically significant as it lies on the road to IS-held Mosul, Iraq's second largest city. (AP)

## Obama, Nawaz to have Nuclear talks but no Deal Next Week: White House

WASHINGTON - The White House has said that Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and US President Barack Obama are not going to sign a nuclear deal next week but they will discuss the nuclear issue in their meeting.

The prime minister arrives in the US capital on Oct 20 for a White House meeting with President Obama on Oct 22.

Reports in the US media have claimed that during the visit the United States may offer a deal to Sharif that may pave the way for Pakistan's acceptance in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), as a similar deal did for India. "A deal like the one that's been discussed publicly is not something that's likely to come to fruition next week," said White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest when asked to comment on these speculations.

"But the United States and Pakistan are regularly engaged in a dialogue about the importance of nuclear security. And I would anticipate that dialogue would include conversations between the leaders of our two countries," he added. (Agencies)

## Russia's Parliament Allows Arrest of Opposition Lawmaker



MOSCOW - The Russian parliament has voted to sanction an arrest in absentia of the sole lawmaker who voted against the annexation of Crimea last year.

The State Duma voted Friday to let law enforcement officials arrest Ilya Ponomarev, who is suspected

of embezzlement related to his work for a state-funded technological foundation. Ponomarev, one of the leaders behind the 2011-2012 anti-government protests, will lose his seat if a court finds him guilty.

The politician, who is currently in the United States, says the motion is a politi-

cally motivated attempt to kick him out of parliament. The Russian parliament has a history of expelling opposition lawmakers. The Duma in 2012 kicked out Gennady Gudkov, who helped stage the 2011-2012 protests, and removed his immunity from prosecution. (AP)

## Russia's Novak Due in Iran for Important Visit

TEHRAN - Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak will visit Iran on Oct. 21 at the head of a large economic delegation to discuss expansion of bilateral trade. In Tehran, Novak will meet Iran's Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zangeneh and other officials as the two countries seek to increase bilateral trade to \$10 billion a year from \$2 billion at present.

According to Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Mehdi Sanaei, the two sides will pay special attention to Iran's energy resources in their talks.

Lukoil, Russia's second largest oil producer, is in advanced talks with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) to return to Iran. The company seeks to revive its stake in the Anaran



project from which it pulled out in 2011. Lukoil Chief Executive Vagit Alekperov is to meet Zangeneh in Vienna in December when OPEC gathers for a meeting.

Iran also wants Russia to build more nuclear power plants in the country similar to the Bushehr facility. They signed an

agreement in November 2014 to build two more 1,000-megawatt units in Bushehr. After the international nuclear accord with Tehran in July, Russia has acted quickly to cement ties with Iran but the two countries' plan to barter oil for goods is apparently facing hurdles. (PressTV)

## Australian PM Faces Confrontation in NZ During First Overseas Trip

CANBERRA - Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull was bound for New Zealand on Friday for his first overseas mission since becoming Australia's 29th prime minister, with the trip's focal point a potentially tense meeting with his NZ counterpart. Turnbull will meet with NZ Prime Minister John Key on Saturday to discuss a range of issues relevant to their trans-Tasman relationship but the talks won't be all friendly and convivial: Key has vowed to confront Turnbull on a particularly touchy issue. The Guardian Australia reported on Friday Key was planning to send Turnbull an "extremely direct" message regarding the recent wave of New Zealand citizens deported from Australia under changes to the Migration Act late last year. The Greens, a left-leaning party that supports social justice, from both Australia and New Zealand filed a joint complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission on Friday regarding the matter. The changes to the Act allow long-term residents to be deported, if they have been jailed for one year or more. ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

## German Parliament Adapts Data Retention Law

BERLIN - The German parliament approved a revised law on Friday to collect and retain information about phone calls and Internet use.

While 404 lawmakers voted in favor of the new data retention law, 148 voted against it.

Under the legislation, telephone and Internet connection data would be stored by telecommunications companies for ten weeks. This includes telephone numbers, time and duration of calls as well as computer IP addresses.

Location information resulting from mobile phone conversations would be retained for a shortened period of four weeks.

Investigators would have to ask a judge for access to the data stored by providers. Germany's Consti-



tutional Court ruled against data retention in March 2010, and the storage of information was suspended in Germany. Before that, communications data had to be retained for six months in accordance with a European Union directive.

In a parliamentary debate on Friday, German Justice Minister Heiko Maas defended the re-

introduction of data retention, saying the "intrusion into the privacy of personal data takes place at a reasonable level." However, opposition parties and many data protection campaigners claimed the new legislation would also be unconstitutional. They said they were considering filing a constitutional suit against it. (Xinhua)

## Nieghbor News

### Pakistan, Russia Sign Agreement to Build Gas Pipeline

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and Russia on Friday signed an inter-governmental agreement for the construction of a gas pipeline from the southern port city of Karachi to Lahore, the capital of Punjab province, officials said.

Russia will make an investment of 2 billion U.S. dollars in the project, the first phase of which will be completed by December 2017.

The 1,100 km pipeline with a capacity of 12.4 bcm per annum will connect Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals of Karachi with those of Lahore.

Pakistan Petroleum Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak signed the agreement in Islamabad. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif also attended the signing

ceremony. The deal was finalized earlier this year during the visit to Moscow by the Pakistani petroleum minister.

Reports suggested Pakistan is working on two pipelines to transport regasified LNG from Karachi to the northern parts of the country. The first pipeline will connect Gwadar Port in southwestern Balochistan to the main natural gas pipeline hub in Nawabshah in southern Sindh province, while the second will connect Karachi to Lahore.

Officials in Pakistan said the agreement marks the Russian involvement in a first major project in Pakistan in nearly 40 years.

A subsidiary of the Russian state corporation Rostech will be the partner of the Pakistan-owned Inter State Gas Systems (ISGS). (Xinhua)

### China, Mongolia Pledge to Advance Parliamentary Exchanges

BEIJING - Parliamentary leaders of China and Mongolia met on Friday and pledged to enhance parliamentary exchanges between the two countries. China and Mongolia should fulfill the consensus reached by state leaders, strengthen mutual trust, enhance exchanges between political parties and parliaments, and implement big cooperation projects and people-to-people exchange plans to promote bilateral friendship, said China's top legislator Zhang Dejiang.

Zhang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), told Chairman of the State Great Hural of Mongolia Zandaakhuu Enkhbold that the NPC will strengthen its relationship with the Great Hural and prepare the first meeting of the bilateral parliamentary exchange mechanism.

Enkhbold said Mongolia's State Great Hural attaches great importance to exchanges with the NPC, and is ready to enhance their cooperation through regular meetings and exchanges.

Enkhbold was in Beijing to attend the Asian Political Parties' Special Conference on the Silk Road. (Xinhua)

### US Report on Religious Freedom in Iran Invalid: Foreign Min.



TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Ministry has rejected as "invalid" a report by the US Department of State on religious freedom in Iran. "The clichéd report" by the US Department of State is the repetition of the accusations which the Islamic Republic of Iran has on different occasions rejected as "totally false," Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Marziyeh Afkham said on Thursday. She added that such reports are "invalid and have no legal basis" because they "are prepared with the aim of achieving political goals and objectives." On October 14, US

Secretary of State John Kerry submitted the 2014 International Religious Freedom Report to the US Congress. The report, comprising almost 200 distinct reports on countries and territories, alleges that "Iran executed, detained, harassed, and discriminated against members of religious minority groups."

The US report on religious rights is in line with Washington's policies to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and is viewed as an attempt to create religious and sectarian division in Iran. (PressTV)

### Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan FMs Discuss Delimitation and Demarcation of State Border

BISHKEK - Foreign Ministers (FMs) of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan Erlan Abdyldayev and Sirodiddin Aslov discussed the issues of delimitation and demarcation of the Kyrgyz-Tajik state border on the sidelines of the meeting of Council of CIS Foreign Ministers, which was held in Asta-

na on Thursday, reports the Foreign Ministry of Kyrgyzstan.

The sides also discussed issues of bilateral cooperation in the fields of trade, economic, water and energy, transport and communication and exchanged views on the international agenda during the meeting. (AKIpress)