

# Support for Merkel's Bloc Hits 2-1/2 Year Low on Refugee Angst

BERLIN - Support for Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives has fallen to its lowest since May 2013, hurt by grassroots concerns about the ability of her government to handle a record inflow of refugees, a poll showed on Sunday. Germany, a favored destination for migrants, expects 800,000 to a million refugees to arrive this year. Many Germans feel the country cannot cope with the record influx. Last week, Merkel faced calls from some of her own conservatives to tighten Germany's border controls and turn away refugees arriving



from Austria - pressure she has resisted. But popular concerns are eroding support for her conservatives, who saw their support slip by one percentage point to 37 percent in a weekly survey by

Emnid. As recently as mid-September, the conservative bloc enjoyed 41-percent support. "Merkel fights for her power," ran a headline in the Bildam Sonntag mass-selling weekly newspaper. The chancellor has favored an open-door policy, which she has pursued with the catchphrase: "We can do this!" But she has faced pressure from Horst Seehofer, leader of the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU), sister party to Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU), to take a harder line. (Reuters)

## Angela Merkel in Turkey to Promote EU Migrant Plan

ANKARA - German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday held talks with Turkish leaders in Istanbul to promote a European Union plan that would offer aid and concessions to Turkey in exchange for measures to stem the mass movement of migrants across Europe's borders. Her discussions with Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan come at a time when thousands of new arrivals a day are stretching Germany's capacity to house refugees and other migrants. Officials said the EU incentives offered to Turkey would involve an aid package of at least 3 billion euros (\$3.4 billion) to help Turkey host the more than 2 million refugees who are currently in the country, as well as easier access to EU visas for Turkish citizens and re-energized EU membership talks. The EU plan would see Turkey improve its asylum and documentation procedures and beef up border and coast guard numbers. The idea is to help stop people entering Turkey in search of work there or in the EU, and then prevent both them and refugees already in the country from moving on to Europe. Turkish officials said this week that the plan was still a "draft" and nothing had been agreed yet. Erdogan ... (More on P4)...(21)

## Yemeni Govt. Says to Attend U.N. Sponsored talks with Houthis

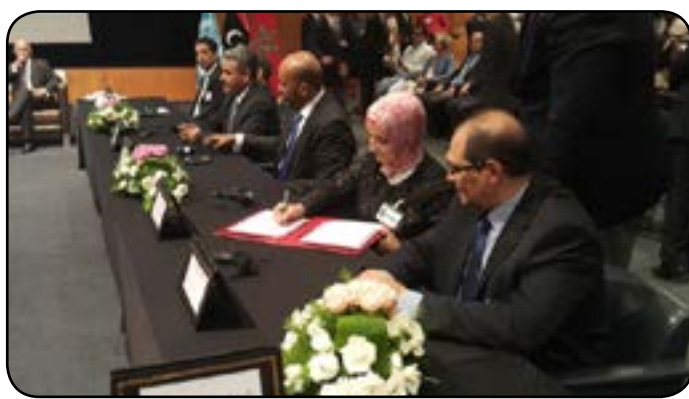
DUBAI - Yemen's government will attend U.N.-sponsored talks with the Houthis and their allies, a government spokesperson said on Sunday, in a fresh bid to end months of fighting that has killed more than 5,000 people. The Saudi-backed government said on Saturday it had been studying an invitation from the United Nations to attend a new round of talks in an undisclosed location. "The decision has been taken to attend (the talks) and a letter will be sent to the U.N. secretary-general (about that)," Rajeh Badi, the government spokesman, told Reuters. U.N. special envoy to Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed has been in Saudi Arabia for discussions with Yemeni President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and other senior Yemeni officials over the talks. A previous round of U.N.-sponsored talks in Geneva between the Yemeni government and the Houthis in June failed to achieve a breakthrough. At least 5,400 people have been killed in the fighting in the poorest country on the Arabian Peninsula, and the United Nations says the humanitarian situation, exacerbated by a Saudi blockade of Yemen's ports, is "critical". Saudi Arabia has been leading an Arab military intervention since March to try to restore Hadi's government, now based in Aden, and fend off what it sees as creeping Iranian influence. (Reuters)

## U.S., Allies Conduct 18 Air Strikes in Iraq, Five in Syria: U.S. Military

WASHINGTON - The U.S.-led coalition conducted 18 air strikes against Islamic State in Iraq and five in Syria on Saturday, according to the task force organizing the military operation. In Iraq, the strikes hit near nine cities including Sinjar, Ramadi, Mosul and Kisik, and destroyed heavy machine guns, fighting positions and vehicles belonging to Islamic State militants, the Combined Joint Task Force said in a statement. The strikes in Syria hit near Abu Kamal, Aleppo and the militant stronghold of Raqqa, where two strikes damaged an artillery piece, the statement said. (Reuters)

## UNSC Urges Swift Formation of Govt. of National Accord in Libya

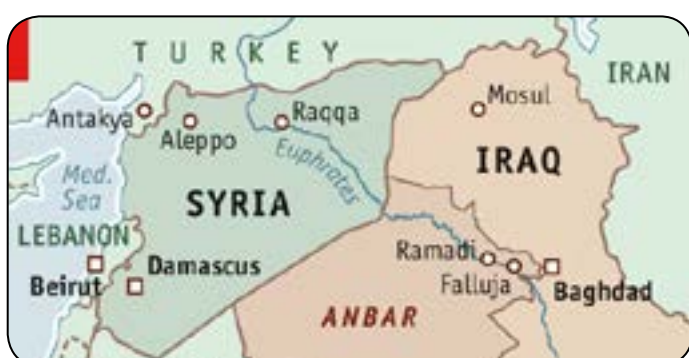
UNITED NATIONS - The UN Security Council (UNSC) on Saturday called for a swift formation of a Government of National Accord in Libya. "The members of the Security Council urged all Libyan parties to endorse and sign the Political Agreement, as presented on October 8, and to work towards the formation of a Government of National Accord," the 15-nation council said in a statement issued here to the press. "The members of the Security Council stressed that the Agreement offers a real prospect for resolving Libya's political, security, and institutional crises," the statement said. "The members of the Security Council reaffirmed their strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of



Libya," said the statement. In early October, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged participants in the Libyan political dialogue to urgently conclude the process and sign an agreement leading to the formation of the new government. Ban's appeal was also previous made by UN member states and regional organizations during a high-level meeting convened by the secretary-general on Oct. 2 at UN Headquarters in New York on the sidelines of the annual high-level debate of the UN General Assembly. Libya has been witness to a frayed political process after the 2011 turmoil in the North African country which toppled its leader Muammar Gaddafi. The country is now juggling two rival parliaments and governments. The United Nations has brokered ... (More on P4)...(22)

## 500 Belgian Residents Recruited for Syria and Iraq Conflict: UN Report

BRUSSELS - Belgium has been urged to develop a new national plan to bring down the number of Belgian residents who leave to fight in Syria and Iraq, local media reported on Sunday, quoting a UN report. Flemish newspaper Het Nieuwsblad said a group of international specialists from a UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries spent five days in Belgium last week, meeting representatives from government, police and families of those who have joined the conflict, to build up a portrait of the typical fighter. According to the preliminary findings, the average age for a fighter heading to Syria from Belgium is "around 23 and decreasing" - and the study found



that women "are also leaving in more and more significant numbers". Human rights expert Elzbieta Karska, who heads the expert group, said in a news release: "The number of Belgian foreign fighters is reportedly the highest in Europe per capita among those travelling to join conflicts abroad such as in Syria and Iraq. The need to tackle this problem through robust collective efforts which engages all sectors of Belgian society is critical in finding solutions to this phenomenon." The preliminary report found that an estimated 500 Belgians have travelled to Iraq or Syria to fight. At least 207 are in active conflict, 77 ... (More on P4)...(23)

## Kerry Pleads for US Re-Election to UNESCO Board Despite Owed Dues

PARIS - US Secretary of State John Kerry pleaded Sunday for the United States to be re-elected to UNESCO's executive board, pledging to do his utmost to restore US funding to the UN cultural body "in full." The United States and Israel in 2013 lost their UNESCO voting rights in the Paris-based UN agency's 195-member assembly, two years after suspending their financial contributions to the organization over Palestinian membership. But Washington is still a member of the executive board that oversees the general management of the UN body and in his speech, Kerry pleaded that the United States be re-elected in November despite owing tens of millions of dollars in unpaid dues. "The United States has a great deal to contribute to UNESCO's work, and I assure you - our commitment to this organization has never been stronger," Kerry said at the headquarters in the French capital. "I know some of you have concerns - particularly related to our funding limitations - but it's important to note that even with these restrictions in place, the US plays a critical role in advancing ... (More on P4)...(25)

## Israeli PM Vows Crackdown on Islamic Movement

JERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Sunday that his government is going to crack down on the Islamic Movement in Israel, a group he blames for inciting the recent wave of violence. Netanyahu said his government is "systematically operating" against a wave of Palestinian attacks and will now start tackling its roots. He said the cabinet will take measures against the Islamic Movement, especially against its sources of funding. The announcement followed a decision by the cabinet last week to prepare a case to outlaw the northern branch of the movement, the more hardliner group of the movement. According to Israel's Ha'aretz newspaper, Netanyahu instructed the Shin Bet security service to give the prosecution any intelligence it has about the movement, so the prosecu-



tion can start a formal procedure to ban the movement. Arab leaders in Israel have warned in the past that such move against the movement, which has hundreds of thousands of sympathizers among the Arab citizens of Israel, will be perceived as an assault on the entire Arab society. The movement, which was originally founded in 1971, has been involved in Islamic education and charities among Israeli Arabs. Its northern branch is headed by hardliner Sheikh Raed Salah, who served time in Israeli prisons for his involvement in raising funds for Hamas and leading a violent rally. The month-long violence was triggered by an increasing visits of Israeli far-right activists to al-Aqsa Mosque, as part of their struggle to cancel a long-held ban on Jewish prayers there. The Palestinian Health Ministry said that Israel killed 43 Palestinians - 29 from the West Bank and 14 from the Gaza Strip - since the beginning of October. More than 2,000 Palestinians were injured with live ammunition and rubber-coated bullets. (Xinhua)

## Nieghbor News

### US Should Refrain from Fanning S. Asian Instability: Sartaj

ISLAMABAD - Advisor to the Pakistan's Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz while speaking to BBC Urdu on Saturday said the United States (US) should refrain from fanning instability in South Asia. The National Security Advisor's (NSA) statement follows international media reports which claim the US is ready to help Pakistan join the Nuclear Suppliers Group if it accepts certain restrictions on its nuclear programme. Additionally, a US media report last Thursday claimed that American special operations analysts - just days

before the Oct 3 US air attack on a Doctors Without Borders (MSF) hospital in Kunduz - were gathering intelligence on the facility because they believed it was being used by a Pakistani operative to coordinate Taliban activity. The reports have surfaced just days before Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's October 20 visit to Washington, where he is expected to discuss the nuclear issue with US President Barack Obama. Sartaj Aziz rejected the notion that allegations regarding the Pakistani operative's presence in the hospital would impact talks with the super power. (Agencies)

### EU, U.S. Should Announce Lift of Sanctions "Legally": Iran

TEHRAN - Iran's senior nuclear negotiator Abbas Araçchi said Sunday that European Union and the United States should officially and "legally" announce the lift of sanctions against the Islamic republic before the adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), according to state IRIB TV. Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad-Javad Zarif and EU foreign affairs chief Federica Mogherini will issue a joint statement on the adoption of the nuclear deal, if the law of lifting sanctions against the country is approved by Europe and the United States, Araçchi was quoted as saying. According to the nuclear agreement between Iran and the world powers reached on July 14 in the Austrian capital of Vienna, the pro-

cess of removal of sanctions against Iran should be carried out in two stages, Araçchi said. In the first stage, the removal of sanctions by the United States and Europe takes legal dimension, and in the second stage, the law will come into effect after the measures are completed by Iran and the other party predicted in JCPOA. According to the agreement, Iran would downsize its capacity for uranium enrichment and do changes in the structure of its heavy water reactor. The country's measures should be confirmed by the UN nuclear watchdog before the removal of western and international sanctions. "We are waiting for the Europe and the United States to take legal measures of removing ... (More on P4)...(26)

### China Welcomes Implementation of Comprehensive Iran Nuclear Agreement

BEIJING - China on Sunday welcomed the implementation of the comprehensive agreement on the Iran nuclear issue and vowed to continue efforts to carry out the agreement. Calling the Sunday start date an important milestone, Spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry Hua Chunying said in a press release that all relevant parties should cherish the hard-won deal and push forward preparations for full implementation. The historic agreement was reached in Vienna in July by Iran and the P5+1 group, namely the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany. The deal was scheduled to take effect 90 days after it was endorsed by the UN

Security Council on July 20. "Iran and the six parties have given strong political support for the agreement through practical actions since it was reached three months ago. This strengthens the confidence of the international community for a comprehensive, long-term and proper solution of the Iran nuclear issue, and provides favorable conditions for a smooth beginning for implementation," Hua said. She added that China had always held a constructive attitude and actively prepared for implementation of the agreement. China communicated effectively with the United States and Iran on the redesign of Iran's Arak heavy water reactor and helped the ... (More on P4)...(27)

### Uzbekistan to Produce 18m Tonnes of Fruits, Vegetables in 2015

TASHKENT - Uzbekistan is planning to produce over 18 million tonnes of fruits and vegetables in 2015, including vegetables (53% from total volume), fruits (15%), potatoes (14%), melons and gourds (10%) and grapes (8%). About 80% of products are directed to meet demand of population, 14% - to industrial processing, 3% - exported and 3% - for seeds. Uzbekistan annually increases the volume of exports of raw and processed fruits and vegetables. The

country exports products for US\$1.3 billion - US\$1.5 billion to over 40 countries. In 2014, Uzbekistan started to export products to Italy (apricot kernels), Czech Republic (dried apricots, peanuts), Malaysia (mung bean), Vietnam (mung bean), Singapore (cherry and fresh apricots) and Lebanon (walnut). It is worth to mention that fruits and vegetables account over 9% of exports of Uzbekistan and 50% of exports of small and private busi ... (More on P4)...(28)