

Foreign Ministers to Discuss Ukraine By Mid-Sept: Kremlin

MOSCOW - Foreign ministers of Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France will meet by the middle of September to discuss the conflict in Ukraine, Kremlin adviser Yuri Ushakov told reporters on Monday.

Over the weekend, Moscow, Berlin and Paris have backed a bid for a new ceasefire in east Ukraine, where fighting between Kiev forces and Russia-backed rebels killed more than 6,500 people since unrest erupted in the industrial region in April, 2014. The West accuses Russia of driving the rebellion and slapped sanctions on Moscow, aggravating an



economic crisis caused by negligence in economic reforms and low oil prices.

Leaders of France, Germany and Russia discussed holding a new meeting of

the Normandy format. For now they have agreed that sometime by mid-September

the foreign ministers will hold another meeting in this format," Ushakov

said. "Then we expect leaders of the four countries to hold a phone call and we will see what they agree as to where and how to meet in person," he said.

Fighting intensified in east Ukraine in recent weeks, with Kiev blaming the separatist rebels and Moscow saying the Ukrainian authorities were at fault. Russia accuses Kiev of not delivering on the provisions of a peace deal brokered by Germany and France in the Belarusian capital Minsk, including on a constitutional reform that would give the rebel-held areas wide autonomy. (Reuters)

Canadians, Pakistani, Nigerian Among Dead in Saudi Fire

RIYADH - Three Canadians, a Pakistani and a Nigerian were among those killed in a fire that engulfed parts of a residential compound in Saudi Arabia's oil-rich east, a Saudi official said. The blaze began early Sunday in a sprawling, multistory housing complex in the city of Khobar that accommodates workers for state oil giant Saudi Aramco. Col. Ali bin Saad al-Qahtani, a civil defense spokesman for the king-

dom's Eastern Province, provided the update in comments carried by the official Saudi Press Agency early Monday. He said a total of 10 people died and 259 were injured in the blaze. The civil defense directorate previously said 11 people were killed. Al-Qahtani did not provide the nationalities of the other five people killed. Diana Khaddaj, a spokeswoman for Canada's ... (More on P4)... (25)

Greece's 'Invisible Negotiator' May Assuage Bailout Fears in Election Run-up

ATHENS - The appointment of Greek bailout negotiator George Chouliarakis to be finance minister in a caretaker government may help assuage some fears that Greece's bailout program could go off track while it prepares for elections.

Greece is due to hold elections on Sept. 20 after former prime minister Alexis Tsipras resigned in a bid to win popular backing for his decision to accept the 86-billion-euro (\$96 billion) aid plan from creditors and get rid of leftist rebels opposed to it. But with European and International Monetary Fund lenders inspectors due to review Greece's progress under the bail-

out in October, having weeks of election campaigning raised fears that Athens could once again fall behind on targets set under the plan. Chouliarakis, who played a key role in technical-level talks with EU and IMF lenders, sought to address those concerns when he took over as interim finance minister on Friday saying his main target was "to make sure we won't lose valuable time". His appointment quickly won a vote of confidence from Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the head of the group of euro zone finance ministers that decides on aid disbursements to Greece. (Reuters)

Egypt Starts Dig on Gaza Border to Stop Smuggling Tunnels

RAFAH - Egyptian military bulldozers are digging through the sand along Egypt's border with the Gaza Strip in recent days, pressing ahead with what appears to be a renewed campaign to pressure Gaza's Hamas rulers and stamp out militant activity along the border.

The project, billed as an Egyptian military-operated fish farm, effectively would fill the border area with water and is designed to put an end to the last remaining cross-border underground smuggling tunnels, Egyptian military officials said. Hamas accuses Egypt of further isolating the beleaguered Palestinian territory.

The new excavations seem to be "a tightening of the grip of siege on Gaza," Hamas official Mushir al-Masri said. Egypt "should not slide into this cliff that agrees with the Israeli policies of siege." Israel and Egypt have maintained a blockade of the territory since the



Islamic militant group Hamas seized control of Gaza in 2007. For several years, Egypt tolerated a smuggling industry, allowing hundreds of tunnels to bring in goods like cigarettes and spare motorbike parts, as well as weapons. These tunnels were a lifeline for Hamas, which collected millions of dollars in taxes and revenues from the smuggled goods. They continued to thrive after longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak was ousted in 2011 and the Islamist Mohammed Morsi won the country's first free presi-

dential election. But things changed after the Egyptian army ousted Morsi, a key ally of Hamas, in 2013. The military-backed government accused Islamic militants of using smuggling tunnels to move between Gaza and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. Hamas denies militants move in and out of its territory. The new excavations seem to be "a tightening of the grip of siege on Gaza," Hamas official Mushir al-Masri said. Egypt "should not slide into this cliff that agrees with the Israeli policies of siege." (AP)

Terrorism is Foundation of Israeli Regime: Rouhani

TEHRAN - Iran's President Hassan Rouhani says the Israeli regime has been founded and continues to survive on terrorism. President Rouhani made the remark at an international conference commemorating the Iranian victims of terrorism in the capital, Tehran, on Monday. "This regime (Tel Aviv) began its work on the basis of intimidation, terror and occupation, and is continuing [to move on] the same anti-human path today," Rouhani said. In his keynote speech, the president also referred to Takfiri

groups, including Daesh, Taliban and Boko Haram, as other sources of terrorism in the region. Another example of terrorism, he said, is ideological terrorism, in which a group of fanatics commits acts of terror under the cover of religion. President Rouhani said terrorism has turned into an organized practice, saying a "global will" is required to wipe out terror. Terrorism is one of the scourges plaguing the human community since old times, said the president, adding, "In the modern world and mod-



ern politics, terror and terrorists have taken on a new shape." He said Iran itself has been a victim of terrorism. "Following the victory of the [1979] Islamic Revolution, Iran first fell victim to terror and

terrorism, and second, it fell victim to an imposed war [by Iraq in the 1980s]; and in the very same war, it (Iran) fell victim to weapons of mass destruction," the president said. (PressTV)

Europe Feels Pressure as Migrant Crisis Exposes Splits

VIENNA - Huge traffic jams built up along the Austro-Hungarian border on Monday as police hunted for people smugglers, while divisions opened up across Europe over dealing with the influx of migrants and refugees. Austria's tightening of security checks came just days after the discovery of 71 dead migrants, four of them children, in an abandoned lorry near the border. Since the checks began late on Sunday, more than 200 migrants have been picked up and five peo-

ple arrested on suspicion of smuggling. Across the border, hundreds of people stuck in makeshift refugee camps in Budapest were allowed to board trains headed for Austria and Germany, an AFP correspondent at the scene said. Police had previously prevented some 2,000 people from leaving the station because they had no legal papers, but on Monday, police were no longer present as the refugees, many from Syria, rushed to board trains. Several hours later, up



to 400 of them were stopped at the Austrian border and taken off a Munich-bound train and transferred to a regional train heading for Vienna, police said. The sense of chaos has

been reflected across Europe as the continent struggles to respond to the biggest movement of people since World War II, with more than 300,000 arriving this year. (AFP)

Delayed Egypt Elections to Start on October 17

CAIRO - Egypt's much delayed legislative elections, the first since President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi ousted his Islamist predecessor and cracked down on the opposition, will be contested between October and December. Electoral commission chief Ayman Abbas said on Sunday that voting will be in phases from October 17 to December 2, with a new 568-seat parliament in place by the end of the year. The polls come more than two years after Sisi, then army chief, toppled Islamist president

Mohamed Morsi whose now-banned Muslim Brotherhood swept the last general election in 2011. Analysts say Sisi loyalists are expected to emerge the big winners from the polls, which serve to appease Cairo's Western backers who see the president as a rampart against jihadist violence despite concerns over repression that has eliminated any meaningful opposition. "It will not be a parliament that represents the people but one that represents the president," said Cairo

University professor of political sciences Hazem Hosni. The elections had initially been scheduled for early 2014 but were then delayed on legal grounds amid charges from rights groups of repressive measures during a crackdown on the Islamist opposition. Polls were then set to begin in March this year, but a court delayed them citing legal obstacles and lawyers said the electoral law did not divide up districts in a way that would adequately represent voters. (AFP)

Britain Announces Investment in Scottish Naval Base

LONDON - Scotland's Faslane naval base is to receive £500 million (\$770 million, 688 million euros) in investment over 10 years, the British government has announced. The site of Britain's Trident submarine nuclear deterrent, Faslane is to receive investment in ship lifts, sea walls, jetties and other projects from 2017, with jobs at the base increasing to 8,200 by 2022 from 6,700, according to

a statement. "Today's announcement of more than £500 million demonstrates the UK government's commitment to investing in the infrastructure and capability to ensure that Faslane remains the centre of UK submarine operations for the next generation," Chancellor of Exchequer George Osborne said in a statement. The announcement of investment in the military, a key shared

British institution, came as former prime minister Gordon Brown warned of risks to the centuries-old union of Scotland and England due to divisive politics. "The Conservatives decided to play at the general election the English nationalism card," Brown told an audience in the Scottish capital Edinburgh. "They are pushing Scotland and England further apart." The Con... (More on P4)... (26)

Neighbour News

Pakistani President to Attend China's V-Day Celebrations

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain will visit China from September 1 to 4, and he will attend China's V-Day celebrations, Pakistani foreign ministry said Monday. The visit is being undertaken at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, a foreign ministry's statement said. During the visit, the president will attend the military parade to be held in Beijing marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II on Sept. 3, and he will also hold meetings with Chinese leaders. The two sides will review important aspects

of bilateral relations and exchanges will also take place on regional issues and international developments, the statement said. "Pakistan and China attach highest priority to their strategic cooperative partnership. Exchanges at the highest level are the hallmark of their unique friendship and wide-ranging cooperation," it said. "The president's visit would further consolidate the existing all-weather relations between Pakistan and China in all areas of importance, especially political, economic and strategic," the statement added. (Xinhua)

Iran FM Urges Further Ties with Latam States

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says the Islamic Republic and Latin American countries need to improve their relations in various fields. "The Islamic Republic of Iran stresses expansion of ties with Latin American countries, and cooperation with these states can be promoted in bilateral relations as well as in consultations on regional and international issues," Zarif said in a meeting with Bolivia's Deputy Foreign Minister Juan Carlos Alurralde in Tehran on Sunday. He added that Iran and Bolivia have the necessary capacity to strengthen economic cooperation, adding that the two countries can

also enhance ties in other sectors. The senior Iranian official further pointed to a nuclear agreement clinched between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia - plus Germany in July and said, "We showed that pressure and economic sanctions against countries will be of no avail." The Bolivian diplomat, for his part, called for bolstering cooperation with Iran, particularly in the energy sector. Alurralde also underlined the need for the two countries to increase exchange of political and economic delegations. (PressTV)

China, Kazakhstan Pledge Stronger Ties During Nazarbayev Visit

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in Beijing on Monday, agreeing to build stronger ties. Xi welcomed Nazarbayev to China for his state visit and to participate in the country's V-Day celebrations on Sept. 3. Xi praised the progress of ties since the two forged an all-round strategic partnership in 2011, citing expanded cooperation, solid political trust and efficient coordination. He called on both sides to strengthen support for each other and safeguard each other's core interests. Xi called for improved bilateral cooperation in capacity, investment, trade, energy, infrastructure and high technology, and urged the countries to make full use of financing mechanisms such as

the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk Road Fund. The two leaders agreed to integrate the China-proposed Silk Road Economic Belt with Kazakhstan's new economic policy, called the Bright Road, to achieve common prosperity. China is ready to cement security cooperation with Kazakhstan to jointly safeguard regional peace and stability, Xi said. "We support Kazakhstan's efforts to host the 2017 World Expo in Astana and 2017 Winter Universiade in Almaty," said the Chinese president, vowing joint efforts with the country to hold cultural activities and a tourism year to strengthen friendship. Xi and Nazarbayev also agreed to enhance coordination on major topics including regional issues, climate change, food security and information security. (Xinhua)

Tajikistan Representative will Take Part in the OSCE Meeting

DUSHANBE - The Commissioner for Human Rights in Tajikistan Zariif Alizoda, the Head of the Central Election Commission administration of Tajikistan Abdumannon Dodozoda, representatives of the Supreme Court of the republic, the executive office of the President of the country in the delegation of Tajikistan will take part in a meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to examine the implementation by the country-participants the obligations in the field of "human measure". According to him, in the above-mentioned meet-

ing, the Head of CEC administration in Tajikistan will perform on democratization of elections at various levels in the country. Recall that in the terminology of the OSCE the "human dimension" expression is used to describe a set of rules and measures related to human rights and democracy that are regarded within the OSCE as one of the three dimensions of security, along with the political-military and economic-environmental dimensions. This term also indicates that OSCE norms cover a wider scope in this field than the traditional law of human rights. (Asia Plus)