

West Ceasing to Oust Assad to Help Fighting IS: Russian FM

MOSCOW - The international community will struggle with the Islamic State (IS) more efficiently if Western countries and their partners stop demanding the resignation of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Tuesday. "If we remove from the equation the entirely unrealistic and counter-productive demand of the resignation of Assad as a precondition for the fight against terrorism... we may work effectively," Lavrov was quoted as saying by RIA Novosti news agency. Russia's top diplomat said he was puzzled by the



Western claim that only when the Syrian authorities agreed to destroy the country's chemical weapons could they be considered as a legitimate partner. "It simply cannot be that, for the purpose of the destruc-

tion of chemical weapons Assad is legitimate, and for the purpose of fighting against terrorism he is not. It is not logical," Lavrov said. Moscow insists that the resolution of the Syrian crisis should include all forces capable of resisting the IS. In June, Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed to establish an international framework to create a coalition on fighting regional terrorism. The anti-IS coalition implies that the Syrian and Iraqi army as well as their militia of the Kurds, along with forces of the Syrian opposition, which consist

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New Zealand PM Under Fire for Inflexible Refugee Stance

WELLINGTON - The New Zealand government, currently represented on the United Nations Security Council, was accused of lacking global leadership Tuesday after ruling out an increase in refugee numbers. New Zealand has accepted a quota of 750 refugees a year for the last three decades and humanitarian groups and representatives have called for an increase given the migrant crisis unfolding in Europe. But Prime Minister John Key had flatly rejected an emergency intake of refugees, Radio New Zealand reported Tuesday. "Everyone accepts the enormity of the challenge of what's taking place, but New Zealand can pride itself on the fact that it's one of the countries that's consistently taken refugees for a long period of time," Key said in the report. Key said the refugee quota was due to be reviewed next year and he would take advice from officials then. But New Zealand needed to make sure it could provide a proper service in areas such as housing and education before upping its intake, he said. However, government allies and opponents alike criticized Key's stance. Internal Affairs Minister and head of one of the government's minority party partners Peter Dunne said consideration should be given to an emergency response to the mounting refugee numbers in Europe. (Xinhua)

Migrants Protest as Hungary Shuts Budapest Train Station

BUDAPEST - Hundreds of angry migrants demonstrated outside Budapest's Eastern Railway Terminus on Tuesday demanding they be allowed to travel on to Germany, as European Union asylum rules came close to collapse under the strain of unprecedented migration. Around 1,000 people waved tickets, clapping, booing and hissing, and shouting "Germany! Germany!" outside the station. Later they sat down, staring at a police blockade erected at the entrance. Hungarian authorities closed the train station altogether, then reopened it but barred entry to the migrants. About 100 police in helmets and wielding batons guarded the station. Dozens of migrants who were inside were forced out. The decision to bar the migrants from west-bound trains was a reversal from the previous day, when Hungary and Austria let trainloads of undocumented migrants leave for Germany, a violation of EU rules. (More on P4)...

Millions of India's Workers Threaten 24-Hour Strike



NEW DELHI - Millions of India's workers have vowed to go on strike on Wednesday against right-wing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "anti-labour" economic policies. Ten major unions have called the nationwide strike for 24 hours over the government's pro-business initiatives, after recent talks with Finance Minister Arun Jaitley broke down. Unions are demanding the government dump plans to sell off stakes in state-run companies to boost the public purse and to shut

ter unproductive factories. "We are against these anti-labour policies. The government is going to change the laws to benefit the corporates," said Gurudas Dasgupta, secretary of the Indian Trade Union Congress which has 3.6 million members. "The changes they want to bring are against the working classes. I am very confident of a hugely successful strike," he told AFP. Workers in the banking, manufacturing, construction and... (More on P4)...

Germany, Spain Call for Uniform EU Asylum Policy

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel and visiting Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy on Tuesday declared themselves in favor of a uniform EU asylum policy. The two leaders told a joint press conference in Berlin that the influx of refugees in Europe had reached a new dimension. Thousands of refugees have reportedly arrived in Austria and Germany via trains from Hungary since Monday. Merkel told reporters on Tuesday that it did not help to accuse each other in the current situation. Merkel urged a definition of safe countries of origin



by the European Commission and the establishment of joint registration centers in Greece and Italy. The chancellor renewed her call for a fair distribution of asylum seekers, aligned

with the economic strength and the capacity of each member state of the EU. Those who don't have the right to stay should be returned to their homeland, said Merkel. For his part,

Rajoy said the refugee crisis would become the biggest challenge for Europe in the coming years. He noted that the issue could not be solved without a

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Obama Paints Doomsday Scene of Global Warming in Alaska

ANCHORAGE - President Barack Obama planned to hike a melting glacier and paint a doomsday scenario if climate change is not dealt with fast: entire nations submerged underwater, cities abandoned and refugees fleeing in droves as conflict breaks out across the globe. It's a harrowing image of a future that Obama insists is inevitable unless

the world follows his and America's lead by making sweeping cuts to greenhouse gases. As he traverses Alaska this week, Obama will become the first sitting president to visit the Alaska Arctic. Obama is counting on Alaska's exquisite but deteriorating landscape to elicit a sense of urgency that his previous calls to action on climate change have not. He



opened his three-day trip to the largest U.S. state on Monday with a speech to an Arctic climate summit, calling global warming an

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Britain Set to Change EU Referendum Question

LONDON - British Prime Minister David Cameron's government is poised to change the question for voters in an upcoming referendum on whether Britain should remain in the European Union, his spokeswoman said Tuesday. The change, which must be approved by parliament, comes after Britain's elections watchdog said the existing question risked favouring campaigners who want to remain part of the EU. Cameron wants to stay in the EU subject to securing a string of reforms ahead of the referendum, which must take place by the end of 2017 and is expected to be held next year. Voters are now set to be asked: "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" The possible responses would be either: "Remain a member of the European Union" or "Leave the European Union". The previous wording of the question was: "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union?" -- which would have elicited a "Yes" or "No" answer. The move came after research among the public by the independent Electoral Commission on the phrasing of the initial question raised "concerns about the potential legitimacy... of the referendum result -- particularly if there was a vote to remain a member of the European Union." Cameron's spokeswoman said the government would amend the bill currently going through parliament paving the way for the referendum to reflect the change in question. "We will accept the electoral commission's recommendation and we will table an amendment accordingly," she told reporters. This will be voted on when the House of Commons next debates the issue on Monday, the first day back after the summer break. (AFP)

UN Special Representative for Libya to Hold Talks in Istanbul, Geneva



GENEVA - The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Libya, Bernardino Leon, will hold consultations on Tuesday in Istanbul ahead of a planned round of dialogue in Geneva this Thursday, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) announced on Tuesday. According to the UNSMIL announcement, the Special Representative will meet with representatives of the General National Congress to discuss ways to move forward the Dialogue process with a view to reaching a peaceful solution to the political crisis and military conflict in Libya. "The meeting in Istanbul will discuss GNC concerns with respect to the political agreement and ways to overcome them," the announcement said. Earlier on 27-28 August a round of political dialogue was convened in Skhirat of Morocco, with discussions focusing on the way forward with an urgency to finalizing the Libyan Political Agreement in the coming few days. During the latest talks the participants agreed that it is high time to conclude the talks that have been under way for seven months and there was reportedly consensus to make the final push to expedite the dialogue to conclude the agreement according to the timelines they committed to in the Geneva round of dialogue on 11-12 August 2015. As a result, the participants also agreed to hold a round of political dialogue at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 3-4 September 2015 to complete the discussions with a view to finalizing the Libyan Political Agreement for it to be ready for signing. (More on P4)...

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Neighbour News

Chinese VP Urges Further Cooperation with Sudan

BEIJING - Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli urged further cooperation between China and Sudan when meeting with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse on Tuesday. Al-Bashir left his country Monday on a four-day visit to attend China's celebrations to commemorate the 70th anniversary of victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and World War II. Zhang said that China is willing to work with the Sudanese side to implement the important consensus reached by leaders of the two countries. With an eye on mutual benefits and common development, the two nations are expected to link their development

strategies and boost cooperation in both the traditional areas of oil and infrastructure and on new fronts such as agriculture, mining, and renewable energy sources, according to the Chinese vice premier. Since the establishment of bilateral relations 56 years ago, China and Sudan have boasted solid political mutual trust, friendly exchanges, and substantial results in areas such as the economy and trade, energy, and people-to-people cooperation, said Zhang. For his part, Al-Bashir said that the Sudanese side has always attached great importance to its relations with China. Sudan is willing to enhance pragmatic cooperation with China in various areas to benefit the two peoples, the Sudanese president said. (Xinhua)

Iran Hopes Nuclear Deal Propaganda will not Sway US Congress

TUNIS - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Tuesday he hoped the US Congress would not be swayed by "warmongers' propaganda" over the nuclear deal struck between Tehran and world powers. "What happens in the US Congress, that's certainly a US issue," he told a news conference in Tunisia. "We believe it's a mutually beneficial agreement," Zarif said of the July 14 accord on scaling down Iran's controversial nuclear programme in exchange for a lifting of international sanctions. "And if people are not too much concerned with the propaganda being raged by warmongers in our region, there's no reason for the deal to face any impediments in the United States," said the minister who negotiated the deal. Congress is due to vote this month on whether to

endorse the agreement between Iran and six world powers -- Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States. Republicans strongly oppose the deal, saying it makes too many concessions to the Islamic republic and does so at the expense of the security of America and its chief ally Israel. If the Republican-dominated Congress passes a resolution against the deal, President Barack Obama is expected to veto that move. On the battle against the jihadist Islamic State (IS) group, in which arch-foes Tehran and Washington find themselves on the same side, Zarif called for a "multi-faceted" campaign. "We believe and I think we agree with our Tunisian friends that the fight against ISIL is not simply a military operation," he said, using another name for IS. (AFP)

Cooperation of Tajikistan with EAEU States to be Discussed in Moscow

BISHKEK - The prospects of cooperation of Tajikistan with the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) will be discussed at the round table discussion in Moscow, reports RIA Novosti. The meeting will consider various issues related to the development of relations with the EAEU, including the priority areas of economic cooperation, impacts of modern economic and geopolitical processes

on Tajikistan, the current level of Russian-Tajik cooperation and other. The event will be attended by the Director of the Analytical Center of Moscow State Institute of International Relations of Russia's Foreign Ministry (MGIMO) Andrei Kazantsev, General Director of the Institute of Regional Problems Dmitry Zhuravlev, president of the Center for Advanced Research Sergei Masulov. (AKIpress)

Pakistan Army to Participate in China's Victory Day Parade

ISLAMABAD - A contingent of Pakistan army will take part in China's Victory Day celebrations as well as the parade on the day, the military has said. The Pakistan contingent were drawn from the three services and has been imparted special training for the special parade in China, Major Ishtiaq, an official of the army's Inter-Services Public Relations told Xinhua on Tuesday. "It is an honor to participate in Chinese victory day parade on Sept. 3. Besides, this is a message of peace to world community and solidarity with China to commemorate the

occasion," Major Ishtiaq said. The contingent, comprising troops from Pakistan Navy and Pakistan Air Force, is selected from a lot of officers and soldiers. It is headed by Lt. Col Tayyeb, commander of prestigious Frontier Force Regiment, according to Ishtiaq. President of Pakistan Mamnoon Hussain will also be in China at the invitation of President Xi Jinping to attend the parade. Pakistan's Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Committee (CJCS) Gen Rashad will lead a delegation to attend the parade as observer group. (Xinhua)