

## Turkey's Erdogan Seeks Better Economic, Political Ties with Germany

ISTANBUL - Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Sunday he would work on improving political and economic ties with Germany during a visit to the country later this month. Turkey is seeking to improve its awkward relationship with Europe at a time when its ties with the United States have deteriorated and the lira has been falling sharply.

Erdogan is also traveling to the U.S. to attend a United Nations meeting and will meet with U.S. investors before visiting Germany between Sept. 27 and 29.

"Our priority agenda on my visit to Germany will be completely leaving behind the period experienced in recent years in our political relations," he said at a press conference prior



to his departure for the U.S.

"It will (also) be the steps that can be taken to carry our economic ties further on a mutually beneficial basis."

Relations between Germany and Turkey deteriorated after a post-coup crackdown in Turkey that has seen tens of thousands of people

imprisoned since 2016, including some German citizens.

There has been a slight thaw in recent months since Turkey released one German-Turkish journalist and allowed another German citizen to leave the country.

Germany is home to a three-million-strong

Turkish diaspora, the world's largest, many of whom have dual citizenship. German officials believe they have little choice but to improve ties, despite concerns over human rights in Turkey.

German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz said after meeting with his Turkish counterpart on Friday that Erdogan will not ask for economic aid when he meets Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Turkey's lira has lost nearly 40 percent of its value this year on concerns over Erdogan's grip on monetary policy. More recently Ankara has accused the U.S. of waging "economic war" amid a bitter standoff between the NATO allies over the fate of a Christian pastor detained by Ankara. (Reuters)

### Macron's Popularity at Record Lows

PARIS - The popularity of French President Emmanuel Macron has hit its lowest level since the start of his term, according to a major tracker poll published on Sunday, with just 29 percent of respondents satisfied with his leadership.

The poll by research group Ifo and published in the Journal du Dimanche showed an overall fall of five points in September compared with August, reflecting the 40-year-old's battle with a series of domestic and foreign setbacks.

The results of the widely watched Ifo poll are broadly in line with other surveys that have shown the approval ratings of the centrist falling sharply following a scandal involving a security aide in July. A separate poll by the Kantar Sofres OnePoint group published on September 17 showed that only 19 percent of French people had a positive view of Macron's record, while another survey on September 11 showed only 29 percent thought he was a "good president." (AFP)

DUBAI - Iran's Revolutionary Guards vowed on Sunday to wreak "deadly and unforgettable" vengeance for a shooting attack on a military parade that killed 25 people, including 12 of their comrades, and Tehran accused Gulf Arab states of backing the gunmen.

Saturday's assault, one of the worst ever against the elite force of the Islamic Republic, struck a blow at its security establishment at a time when the United States and its Gulf allies are working to

### Iran Revolutionary Guards Threaten to Avenge Military Parade Attack

isolate Tehran.

"Considering (the Guards') full knowledge about the centers of deployment of the criminal terrorists' leaders... they will face a deadly and unforgettable vengeance in the near future," the Guards said in a statement carried by state media.

The assailants fired on a viewing stand in the southwestern city of Ahvaz where Iranian officials had gathered to watch an annual event marking the start of the Islamic Republic's 1980-



88 war with Iraq. Soldiers crawled about as gunfire crackled. Women and children fled for their lives.

There has been a blizzard of furious statements

from top Iranian officials since the attack directed at the United States and Gulf kingdoms, blaming them for the bloodshed and threatening a tough response. (Reuters)

### From Reality TV to U.N., Trump to Wield Security Council Gavel



UNITED NATIONS - He has chaired board meetings, cabinet meetings and starred in a reality television show, but on Wednesday U.S. President

Donald Trump will wield the gavel in the United Nations Security Council to denounce Iran for what it sees as its malign regional behavior. Trump is able to

preside over the 15-member council as the United States holds the monthly rotating presidency, which coincides with the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations in New York this week.

"I am sure that's going to be the most watched Security Council meeting ever," U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley told reporters.

But despite the unpredictable nature of Trump, some diplomats aren't expecting a reality television performance in the Security Council, where nearly

every member is likely to be represented by their prime minister or president except Russia and China, which are expected to send ministers.

"I don't think it will be that entertaining at all," said one senior U.N. diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Even those who don't like him, the attitude of all other heads of state and government in a public meeting when faced with any president of the United States of America is to be on their best behavior," the diplomat said. (Reuters)

### Swiss Canton Becomes Second to Ban Burqas in Public

ZURICH - Voters in St. Gallen on Sunday approved by a two-thirds majority a ban on facial coverings such as the burqa, becoming the second Swiss canton to do so.

Full-face coverings such as niqabs and burqas are a polarizing issue across Europe, with some arguing that they symbolize discrimination against women and should be outlawed. The clothing has already been banned in France and Denmark.

Under the Swiss system of direct democracy, voters in the northeastern canton demanded tightening the

law to punish those who cover their faces in public and thus "threaten or endanger public security or religious or social peace".

The regional government, which had opposed the measure, now has to implement the result of the vote, which drew turnout of around 36 percent. Switzerland's largest Islamic organization, the Islamic Central Council, recommended women continue to cover their faces. It said it would closely monitor the implementation of the ban and consider legal action if necessary. (Reuters)

### Maldives Extends Voting in Tense Presidential Election

MALE - The Maldives extended voting in the presidential election, in which Abdulla Yameen is expected to cement his grip on power, amid criticism over the fairness of the poll in the islands, best known as a luxury holiday destination.

The Indian Ocean nation's Election Commission has extended voting by three hours to 1900 hours (1400 GMT) due to long queues, an official said.

The Muslim-majority Indian Ocean nation has become a theater of rivalry between its traditional partner, India, and China, which has backed Yameen's infrastructure drive, and prompted concern in the West about Beijing's increasing influence. (Reuters)

### Modi Launches Health Insurance Scheme "Ayushman Bharat"

NEW DELHI - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched an ambitious health insurance scheme "Ayushman Bharat" for the poor and the downtrodden. The scheme will benefit around 100 million families by giving them free medical care worth 500,000 Indian Rupees (around 7200 U.S. dollars) per year per family.

The prime minister said that the beneficiaries will be covered for 1,300 ailments, including cancer, problems related to heart, kidney and liver.

A beneficiary covered under the scheme will be entitled to avail cashless cover of medical expenditure during treatment at identified or empanelled private hospitals across the country. Insurance cover will include pre and post-hospitalisation expenses. (Xinhua)

### Britain's Opposition Labour Backs New Election over Brexit Impasse

LIVERPOOL, England - Britain's opposition Labour Party prefers a new election to a second referendum on Brexit, its leader said on Sunday, heaping pressure on Prime Minister Theresa May whose plans for a deal with the EU have hit an impasse.

Labour's Jeremy Corbyn has so far resisted calls to back a "People's Vote", or new referendum on the decision to quit the EU.

But the political landscape has changed since May was ambushed by the European Union on Thursday over her plans for Brexit - the biggest shift in British policy for more than four decades.

With talk of a new elec-



tion swirling after May's "Chequers" plan was all but shredded at an EU summit in Austria last week and chances of Britain exiting the bloc without a deal rising, Labour is under pressure to start setting the Brexit agenda. "Our preference

would be for a general election and we can then negotiate our future relationship with Europe but let's see what comes out of conference," he told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show, saying Labour was ready to vote against any deal. (Reuters)

### Russia Blames Israel for Downing of Plane by Syrian Forces

MOSCOW - The Russian Defense Ministry on Sunday again blamed Israel for the downing of a Russian plane by Syrian government forces and said Israel appeared "ungrateful" for Moscow's efforts to rein in Iran-backed fighters in Syria.

Syrian government forces mistook the Russian Il-20 reconnaissance plane for an Israeli jet and shot it

down Monday, killing all 15 people aboard. While the Russian military initially blamed the plane's loss on Israel, President Vladimir Putin later attributed it to "a chain of tragic, fatal circumstances."

The Russian Defense Ministry on Sunday presented its latest findings on the Il-20's downing, laying the blame squarely on Israel. (AP)

### Israel Sets October Deadline to Evacuate Bedouin Village in West Bank

KHAN AL-AHMAR, West Bank - Israel on Sunday told residents of Khan al-Ahmar, a Bedouin village in the occupied West Bank slated for demolition, to clear their houses by Oct. 1.

Khan al-Ahmar consists of tin and wood shacks built on a desert hillside beside an Israeli highway that runs from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea.

Israel plans to demolish the village and relocate its 180 residents - Bedouins who scrape a living by raising sheep and goats - to a site 12 kilometers (7 miles) away, near the Palestinian village of Abu Dis and adjacent to a landfill site.

The move has drawn criticism from Palestinians and some European states, who cite the impact on the community and prospects for peace.

A spokeswoman for Israel's military liaison agency with the Palestinians said no date had been set for demolition should the houses remain after the deadline.

Israeli security forces on Sunday morning handed out letters telling residents to voluntarily take down the buildings by Oct. 1 or Israeli authorities would enforce the demolition orders.

"We will not voluntarily evacuate the place," said village resident Faisal Abu Dahuk. "The occupation forces that have an army and weapons can evacuate us by force, but there is no other place to go and we refuse to be moved anywhere else."

Israel's Supreme Court has rejected petitions to prevent the move, siding with the authorities which say the village was built without the required permits. (Reuters)

## Neighbor News

### Iran's President Leaves for New York to Attend UN Assembly

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani left Tehran on Sunday to attend the 73rd United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York.

Rouhani will deliver a speech at the UN General Assembly on Sept. 25.

During his four-day stay in New York, Rouhani is scheduled to hold talks with the remaining parties to the Iranian nuclear deal as well as the UN Secretary General.

He will also meet with Iranian expatriates living in the United States, as well as a number of world political officials. The president, how-

ever, has no plan to attend the UN Security Council meeting in New York, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qassemi said earlier.

On Sept. 5, it was announced that Rouhani will not meet U.S. President Donald Trump during the UN meeting despite Trump's readiness for such meeting. The UN General Assembly comes amid heightened tensions between Tehran and Washington, which pulled out from the landmark 2015 Iranian nuclear deal in May and re-imposed sanctions on the Islamic republic. (Xinhua)

### PM Directs Immediate Finalization of LG System

LAHORE - Prime Minister Imran Khan Sunday directed for finalization of the Local Bodies System within next 48 hours.

The prime minister said devolution of powers at the grass-roots level was the most important agenda of the PTI government. The objective behind this agenda was to empower the local people in the real sense, he added.

He gave the directive during a meeting on the Local Bodies system. Punjab Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar, Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Farman, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hus-

sain and senior leadership the PTI were present during the meeting, PM office media wing said in a press release.

The prime minister observed that besides, devolution of power at the grass-roots level, effective public accountability of the elected representatives would be ensured.

He further observed that the LG system would remove the status quo. The devolution of powers and the local bodies system would help rise the new leadership, he noted.

He said the new system would be rooted in the democratic norms in which the governance and transparency would be ensured. (Monitoring Desk)

### Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan may Jointly Build Satellite

TASHKENT - The Ministry of Defense and Aerospace Industry of Kazakhstan talked about its activity plans for the future. Among them is creation of a satellite together with Uzbekistan, Podrobno.uz reported referring to the Kazakh media.

Director of the Department of International Military and Technical Cooperation Aslanbek Syrlanov said there are specific proposals on creation of joint Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan satellite.

This device will be able to provide services not only to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, but also to other countries in the region. "Currently, our Uzbek colleagues use foreign

satellites. Therefore, it was proposed to jointly build one satellite," said Syrlanov at a press conference dedicated to the Kazakh-Uzbek cooperation.

In addition, within the framework of cooperation of Central Asian countries, it is proposed to build five satellites for remote sensing of the earth. Those devices will be able to photograph objects up to five meters in size.

"In such case each Central Asian state will operate one satellite. But, at the same time, it will be possible to use data from all five devices. Thus, it will be possible to receive new pictures every day. (Trend)

### PM's Visit to Saudi Arabia Strengthened Strategic Cooperation: Saudi Envoy

ISLAMABAD - Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Islamabad Nawaf Saeed Al-Maliki has said that Prime Minister Imran Khan's decision to choose Saudi Arabia as the destination of his first official visit abroad confirmed that Islamic Republic

of Pakistan considered the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the first country in the list of its strategic allies. "This visit carries many messages, the most important of which is that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan ties are like

one soul and two bodies which can not be separated" he said in an interview to Al Arabiya.

Al-Maliki said the first foreign visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan included cooperation in the fields of economics and culture as well as military, and it would be followed with subsequent visits.

He said Khan's visit to Saudi Arabia had many dimensions, it would help in further strengthening and deepening the bilateral, brotherly, strategic and economic relations, underscoring that Saudi Arabia had always stood with Pakistan in difficult times and crises.

He said Khan's choice of Saudi Arabia for his first official visit confirmed the sincere expression of the new government of Pakistan that Saudi Arabia was its important strategic ally. (Monitoring Desk)