

# Merkel's Popularity Drops in Germany Amid Migrant Crisis

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel's popularity at home has been hit by her policy of openness towards the wave of migrants coming in from Syria and elsewhere, according to an opinion poll published Saturday.

Merkel's "strong commitment to the refugees has obviously not been met with much backing," the Der Spiegel weekly newspaper said on the poll published in its pages.

Germany is expecting up to a million refugees and migrants to enter its borders this year, many



encouraged by Merkel's welcoming stance. On Saturday she urged Germans to bring back

the spirit of the country's reunification in 1990 to help face today's challenge of integrating the

hundreds of thousands of people fleeing war and misery.

The German Chancellor

was placed fourth in the paper's regular popularity contest, carried out by the TNS Forschung insti-

tute.

In first place was her foreign minister, the Social Democrat Frank-Walter Steinmeier who won 67 percent support in response to the posed question: which political figures they hoped would "play an important role in future".

Merkel garnered 64 percent in the poll, five points less than in June. In second place was Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble, who has won plaudits for his handling of the Greek debt crisis. Third was German President Joachim Gauck. (AFP)

## China, Russia Vow to Jointly Safeguard Post-War World Order

KHABAROVSK - An international seminar titled "70-Year Common Victory" was co-organized by the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Communist Party of Russia here Saturday to mark the 70th anniversary of the victory in the World Anti-Fascist War. Liu Qibao, head of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, attended the seminar together with Ivan Melnikov, vice chairman of the Communist Party of Russia. In his opening speech, Liu, also a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, said both

China and Russia, as main battlefields during World War II (WWII) in Asia and Europe respectively, made great sacrifices and contributions to the victory in the war. The commemorative activities jointly held by the two countries reflect the two people's common respect of history, Liu said. He also noted that both China and Russia, as the founding members of the United Nations, share the common responsibility of safeguarding peace, security and stability in the region and the world. Liu called on the two countries to strengthen coordination ... (More on P4)...(21)

## Saudi Stampede Death Toll Rises to 769: Minister

RIYADH - The death toll in Thursday's stampede in Mina, neighboring the holy city Mecca, has risen to 769, Saudi Health Minister Khalid al-Falih said on Saturday.

Until now, the deadly disaster has left 769 pilgrims dead and 934 wounded, the minister said at a news conference.

The accident took place amid a rush of the stoning as part of Hajj rituals. Muslim pilgrims throw stones on a wall representing devil.

The stampede has drawn fierce criticism of the Saudi authorities' handling of safety, par-



ticularly from regional rival Iran. Earlier on Saturday, the Saudi official media reported that the kingdom's top religious leader said the stampede was beyond human control.

"You are not responsible for what happened.

As for the things that humans cannot control, you are not blamed for them. Fate and destiny are inevitable," Sheikh Abdul Aziz al-Sheikh told Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, who is also the minister of interior, the report said.

It was the second major accident involving massive casualties this month in Saudi Arabia. Earlier in September, 111 pilgrims were killed and 331 others injured in a crane crash in the grand mosque of Mecca. (Xinhua)

## UN Cites Utter Desperation Behind "Tsunami" of Syrian Refugees into Europe

UNITED NATIONS - Despair at appalling living conditions among the 4 million Syrians who have fled to neighboring countries is fuelling the current flood of refugees to Europe as they flee once more, this time from restrictions and underfunded aid programs that have led to child labor and even "survival sex," the United Nations said Friday. "Refugees face horrible living con-

ditions, and restrictions in the legal regimes for refugees in the countries where they live ... When people don't have proper shelter and are living on 45 cents a day, of course they want to move," Amin Awad, director of the Middle East and North Africa Bureau of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said at a press conference. "Refugees are having to

adopt negative survival strategies -- like child labour, dropping out of school, begging and survival sex. They need much more support," he said. "These are societies that put a high value on education and now they are seeing their children out of school."

There have now been almost 429,000 Syrian asylum applications in Europe since March 2011, when the Syrian

political crisis broke out and it later led to armed conflicts. But due to the lack of reception facilities many of the most recent arrivals have yet to apply with the flood increasing exponentially. Based on surveys of refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq, Awad cited seven principal factors behind the latest outflows, first among them loss of hope with no sign of a solution in sight. (Xinhua)

## Hungary Removes Partial Razor Fence from Slovenian Border

LJUBLJANA - Hungarian authorities removed several hundred metres of razor wire fence from the Slovenian border on Friday afternoon after its official expression that "not planning to build a fence on the Slovenian border". Murska Sobota police from the Slovenian border region with Hungary confirmed that all razor wire, laid out in two stretches of border near the border crossing of Pince starting on Thurs-

day, had been removed by late Friday afternoon. It is as yet unclear why exactly Hungary decided to put up razor wire in the first place and there was some confusion Friday as the wire was being removed from some sections and installed at others at the same time, according to Slovenian Press Agency (STA). Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban told the press in the Austrian ... (More on P4)...(22)

## Serbia to Start Talks with EU by Year End: EU Commissioner



BELGRADE - Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic and Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn agreed Friday that Serbia should be supported in its attempts to open first negotiation chapters by the end of the year. Vucic and Hahn met here to discuss Serbia's European integration. At a press conference, Hahn praised Vucic's recent moves to reconcile Serbia with its neighbors and continue dialogue with its southern province Kosovo, which unilaterally declared independence in 2008. "I am convinced that we are on a good way to open the first negotiation chapters before the end of this year," Hahn said at the conference, stressing the necessity of supporting countries in their EU aspirations as Serbia is the key partner of the EU in the region. Vucic agreed that Serbia deserved to open the first chapters as it kept a responsible policy, and acted sensibly in the past period. He said he expected the EU to maintain the same level of support for Serbia in the further process of European integration. Vucic and Hahn previously visited the refugee shelter in the town of Sid in northwest of Serbia where migrants from Middle East and Africa keep arriving on their way to the Croatian border. (Xinhua)

## U.S.-Trained Syrian Rebels Gave Equipment to Nusra: U.S. Military

WASHINGTON - Syrian rebels trained by the United States gave some of their equipment to the al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front in exchange for safe passage, a U.S. military spokesman said on Friday, the latest blow to a troubled U.S. effort to train local partners to fight Islamic State militants. The rebels surrendered six pick-up trucks and some ammunition, or about one-quarter of their issued equipment, to a suspected Nusra intermediary on Sept. 21-22 in exchange for safe passage, said Colonel Patrick Ryder,

a spokesman for U.S. Central Command, in a statement. "If accurate, the report of NSF members providing equipment to al Nusra Front is very concerning and a violation of Syria train and equip program guidelines," Ryder said, using an acronym for the rebels, called the New Syrian Forces. U.S. Central Command, which oversees U.S. military operations in the Middle East, was told of the equipment surrender around 1 p.m. on Friday, Ryder said. Earlier on Friday, Ryder had said all weapons and equipment issued to the rebels remained under their control. (Reuters)

## Saudi Border Officers Killed in Attack from Yemen

DUBAI - A district commander and a sergeant in Saudi Arabia's border guard have been killed in an attack launched from across the frontier with Yemen, the Saudi interior ministry said on Saturday. The men were killed by heavy gunfire from the Yemen side of the border on Friday after their patrol vehicle was hit by a mine explosion, the ministry said. Saudi Arabia has been fighting Iran-allied Houthi rebels

in Yemen for six months and has led a coalition of Arab states on a military campaign to eject the group from the capital Sanaa and restore the government from its exile in Riyadh. Several dozen soldiers from the kingdom have been killed in clashes along the country's long, rugged border with Yemen, including a general last month. Coalition air strikes and ground fighting have killed over 4,500 people in Yemen since the foreign intervention began on March... (More on P4)...(23)

## Ties Warm Between India and North Korea



NEW DELHI - It's not the most obvious international friendship. On one side is the world's largest democracy, with its riotous collection of battling political parties and a freewheeling media with thousands of newspapers, TV stations and websites. On the other is a deeply isolated nation, a country with no political opposition and a media that does not question the long-ruling family. Access to the Internet, except for a handful of government-approved websites, is restricted to a tiny elite. But ties are warming between New Delhi and Pyongyang, with mineral-hungry India looking to boost trade while North Korea, facing sometimes-rocky relations with China, searches for new friends. "We feel that there should not be the usual old hurdles and suspicion," Kiren Rijiju, a top official in India's home ministry told The Hindu newspaper after a recent meeting with North Korea's ambassador. "We have been discussing inside the government ways and means of upgrading bilateral ties." The goodwill began earlier this year, when North Korea dispatched Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong on a three-day trip to India, just a few weeks before Prime Minister Narendra Modi flew to Seoul for meetings with South Korean President Park Geun-hye. While Pyongyang and New Delhi have long had diplomatic relations, things cooled a couple decades ago as India blamed North Korea for selling nuclear technology to its archrival, Pakistan, and North Korea grew upset that India was growing close to South Korea. (AP)

## Neighbour News

### EU, Iran Discuss Push for Peace in Syria

UNITED NATIONS - The European Union's diplomatic chief and Iran's foreign minister met in New York to discuss the war in Syria ahead of a UN push for peace talks, an EU statement said Saturday. A key ally of President Bashar al-Assad, Iran has been kept out of UN diplomatic efforts to end the four-year war that has killed more than 240,000 people. During their meeting late Friday, EU diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif "underlined the need to bring the war in Syria, which has caused so much suffering, to an end," said the EU statement. "They expressed their readiness

to cooperate within UN-led efforts and exchanged views on how to contribute to that end," it added. US Secretary of State John Kerry is also due to meet with Zarif on Saturday in New York as is Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Monday. The United Nations had hoped to get a new round of peace talks off the ground this month, but Russia's military build-up in Syria threw a spanner in the works. The UN peace talks led by envoy Staffan de Mistura would be coupled with the creation of an international contact group that would for the first time include Iran, but Saudi Arabia opposes the plan. A flurry of ... (More on P4)...(24)

### China Says to Cooperate with US on Graft, Money Laundering

BEIJING - China and the United States have agreed to step up cooperation in fighting corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing, the Chinese foreign ministry said Saturday following a meeting between their leaders in Washington. Chinese President Xi Jinping wrapped up a state visit to the United States on Friday where he met with President Barack Obama. They vowed to fight global warming and halt commercial cybertheft, but exchanged sharp words on human rights and maritime territorial disputes involving China.

Xi has led a crackdown on corruption in China since coming to power more than two years ago and the country is pursuing citizens who have fled abroad in an operation known as "Sky Net" that aims to repatriate allegedly corrupt officials who have fled abroad. China said on Thursday that a Chinese woman convicted and jailed in the United States for her part in a scheme to steal nearly \$500 million from a state-run Chinese bank was sent back to China. A week earlier the ruling Communist Party said that a former official resident in the US for 14 years and suspected of "corruption and bribery" had also returned to China. China and the US decided "to take practical measures to handle mutually identified major corruption cases", the foreign ministry said in a lengthy statement on its website highlighting summit outcomes. (AFP)

### Washington Cannot Remain Silent as Tajikistan Becomes a One-Party State

DUSHANBE - Never a bastion of democracy, the post-Soviet republic of Tajikistan has just become a one-party state. The regime blamed the country's leading opposition party, the Islamic Renaissance Party, for an attack on September 4 that left 14 dead. In the wake of the violence, the security services detained at least 13 senior members of the party. "This is a very dangerous situation," the visibly-shaken party leader Muhiddin Kabiri told me. "My deputies are terrified of being taken away by the security services."

Now in the safety of a European country, Kabiri flatly denies orchestrating the attacks. And many outside observers agree. The accusations are "completely implausible," argues expert Tim Epkenhans from the University of Freiburg. Instead, Deputy Defense Minister Abdulhalim Nazarzoda - an opposition commander during the country's post-independence civil war who was later incorporated into the administration-led the recent attacks. Like other officials, he used his position to amass a fortune in Tajikistan's shady economy. When the regime decided to purge him in early September, he decided to go out with a bang. (Agencies)

### Pakistani Advocate Urges World Leadersto Promise Safe, Quality Education for Every Child

UNITED NATIONS - A Pakistani education advocate on Friday asked world leaders who are here to attend UN summits to promise that every child will have the right to safe, free and quality primary and secondary education. Malala Yousafzai made the remarks as she was speaking at the UN General Assembly alongside 193 youth representatives from the 193 UN member states. Also on Friday, world leaders adopted the Sustainable Development Goals in the General Assembly, which include the global efforts to improve education opportunities for every child in the world.

"World leaders sitting there, look up because the future generation is raising their voice," Yousafzai, who was shot in 2012 by the Taliban for attending classes, told hundreds of senior government officials in a stirring address delivered from the highest mezzanine of the General Assembly Hall. "Today, we are 193 young people representing billions more. Each lantern we hold represents the hope we have for our future because of the commitments you have made to the global goals," she said as each young person on the scene held up a blue light. (Xinhua)