

Europe Has Experienced Degradation of Human Rights: PACE President

STRASBOURG - In the opening address of her last parliamentary session in office, President Anne Brasseur of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) judged here on Monday that Europe had experienced the degradation of human rights during her two-year mandate. "The past two years were not good for human rights and for the values that our organization is defending," the PACE president declared. Brasseur listed the European refugee crisis, a rise in radicalism, terrorist attacks that have rattled the continent, and also con-



lict in Ukraine as sources of concern troubling the Council of Europe (CoE), its 47 member states and

neighboring countries. Finding some cause for hope, however, the PACE president also saw some

positive developments, particularly in the struggle against discrimination and hate following the Paris

Charlie Hebdo attacks which shocked onlookers around the world. The outgoing leader, who will

serve until January 2016, when the PACE assembly will elect a new president, still felt that "the challenges that our values are facing are enormous." She urged unity from her fellow parliamentarians in confronting these challenges. Among those difficulties to be faced, Brasseur regretted that in some member states, NGOs struggled to operate freely due to "Restrictive laws, complex and inappropriate administrative procedures, pressure, intimidation and reprisals," a situation she found inappropriate in CoE member ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

Chinese President Pledges Support for UN Peacekeeping

UNITED NATIONS - Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday announced a string of measures to back United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions. Addressing a peacekeeping summit, which gathered leaders and representatives of over 70 countries and international organizations, Xi said his country is to join the new UN peacekeeping capability readiness system. China, he declared, will take the lead to set up a permanent peacekeeping police squad and will build a peacekeeping standby force of 8,000 troops. China is also to actively

consider the UN's request of sending more engineering, transportation and medical personnel to join peacekeeping missions, and will train 2,000 foreign peacekeepers and carry out 10 mine-sweeping assistance programs in the next five years, he added. In his remarks, Xi said the international community should increase support for Africa, augment the continent's ability to maintain peace and stability, and help it resolve its own problems in its own way. Xi announced that in the next five years, China is to provide a total of 100 ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

Russia Willing to Improve Ties with U.S.: Kremlin

MOSCOW - The Kremlin on Tuesday reaffirmed its willingness to improve relations with Washington and the hope to conduct more dialogues. "Russia has always said, and we have been confirming it at various levels, that it is interested in the development of bilateral relations as well as mutually beneficial dialogue," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. "Currently there is at least a certain readiness to cooperate on and resolve tense issues such as the Syrian crisis," RIA Novosti news agency quoted Peskov as saying.

He added that an intensive working-level dialogue on Syria between Russia and the United States would resume as soon as possible, stressing that "the main thing" to settle the crisis is to exchange anti-terrorism information. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday told the UN General Assembly that an anti-terrorism information center would be established in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad. Earlier, Russian media reported that the center was a joint initiative of Russia, Syria, Iran and Iraq in order to coordinate the



fight against the extremist group Islamic State (IS). "Putin and U.S. President Barack Obama discussed the anti-terrorism information exchange issue during their meeting on

Monday," Peskov said. "This is the main thing at the current stage, and other decisions would be made considering how the situation would develop." (Xinhua)

Asians to become Largest U.S. Immigrant Group: Pew Study

WASHINGTON - Asians will exceed Hispanic immigrants to become the largest immigrant group by 2055 and no racial or ethnic group will constitute a majority of the U.S. population by then, a new study said on Monday. If current demographic trends continue, Asian immigrants are projected to become the largest immigrant group by 2055 and make up 38 percent

of the total foreign-born population by 2065, according to Pew Research Center's latest analysis. While 47 percent of U.S. immigrants are Hispanic as of 2015, the proportion is predicted to drop to 31 percent by 2065, said the Pew report, citing the gradual slowdown of the influx of immigrants from Latin America as the basis for the projection. The Pew report said that by



2065, Hispanics will still remain a large share of the U.S. population at 24 percent, up from 18 percent in 2015, while Asian

immigrants will make up 14 percent of the overall U.S. population, up from 6 percent now. As the ...*(More on P4)...(19)*

U.S. Sanctions Islamic State Supporters, Targets Finances

WASHINGTON - The United States announced sanctions on Tuesday against major Islamic State leaders and financial figures and designated additional groups and individuals as foreign terrorist fighters. The Treasury Department announced sanctions against 15 Islamic State figures, including supporters and facilitators. "Treasury remains relentless about depleting ISIL's financial strength

and denying this violent terrorist group access to the international financial system," said Adam J. Szubin, acting undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence. The State Department designated 10 individuals and five groups as foreign terrorist fighters, including citizens of France, Britain, a designation that imposes sanctions and penalties on terrorists, it said in a statement. (Reuters)

Syria State Media Praise Putin's UN Speech

DAMASCUS - Syria's state media on Tuesday praised Vladimir Putin's speech before the U.N. General Assembly in which the Russian leader defended Syrian President Bashar Assad. Syrian newspapers said the speech drew "clear outlines" for what is needed to "fight terrorism" on a global level. In his address Monday in New York, Putin urged the world to stick with Assad, saying it was a "huge mistake" not to engage the Syrian military in the fight against the Islamic State group. The Al-Baath daily of Assad's ruling Baath party said the essence of the Russian plan for combating terrorism is "simple and clear." Al-Baath added that "the Russian step is pivotal in the history of the region and the world to prevent the expansion of devastation." The daily Al-Thawra said Putin entered the United Nations "from the Syrian gate," adding that "the Russian surgeon came to fix flabbiness in the international legitimacy."

Al-Thawra said Putin struck in his speech at "American charlatanism about fighting terrorism." U.S. President Barack Obama and Putin held their first formal meeting in more than two years in New York on Monday without reaching a breakthrough on Syria, which has strained their already tense relationship. The U.S. still insists Syria's future cannot include Assad, while Putin appears keen to bolster the standing of his longtime ally, casting Assad's government as the best defense against Islamic State militants. Moscow has been ramping up its involvement in Syria in recent weeks by ferrying weapons, troops and supplies to an airport near the Syrian coastal city of Latakia in what the U.S. sees as preparations for setting up an air base there. (AP)

NATO Aircraft Training Kicks off in Lithuania with Partners

BRUSSELS - The Baltic Region Training Event 22 (BRTE22) began Tuesday at Siauliai air base in Lithuania, involving Allied and Partner aircraft, NATO said in a press release. Hungarian JAS-39 Gripen and German Eurofighter Typhoon jets, currently executing the Baltic Air Policing mission, were joined by fighters and other aircraft from Lithuania, Norway, Poland and NATO partner countries Finland and Sweden. In total, approximately 20 Allied and Partner aircraft

participated, including a British Royal Air Force E-3D surveillance aircraft and a U.S. Air Force air-to-air refueling aircraft. The two-day event offers opportunities for Allied and Partner aircrew and ground controllers to train and practice standard interoperability, cooperation and coordination procedures. Since 2008, the BRTE series of two-day training events has taken place three times a year to enhance relations among regional air forces and to further develop interoperability. (Xinhua)

Meeting on Iran Deal Sends "Positive Signal": Chinese FM

UNITED NATIONS - A meeting of foreign ministers from Iran and the six powers late Monday discussed the implementation of the comprehensive nuclear agreement reached in July, sending a positive signal, said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Wang noted that the deal has been widely welcomed and the relations between Iran and other parties have been noticeably improved, which also brought positive elements to the Middle East

situation, saying that China is delighted for the positive development. Iran and the six powers, namely Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States plus Germany, have been actively making political, legal and technical preparations on the double tracks of the nuclear aspects and the lifting of sanctions, said Wang, adding that "things are moving generally smooth." The comprehensive agreement was clinched between Iran and the six countries in July after more than two...*(More on P4)...(20)*

US, Cuba Leaders Meet for 2nd Time in this Year



UNITED NATIONS - Making good on a pledge to change U.S. posture toward Cuba, President Barack Obama opened talks Tuesday with Cuban President Raul Castro, the second time the leaders of the once-estranged nations have met this year. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations. Obama and Castro smiled and shook hands before beginning their private talks. The encounter comes as the Cold War adversaries go about the long and complex process of normalizing relations following decades of animosity. The U.S. recently eased rules for citizens who want to visit or do business in Cuba, a step aimed at fostering greater economic freedom on the island. Both leaders surprised the world last December by announcing they had agreed to restore diplomatic relations. Since then, the two countries have reopened embassies in each other's capitals. But sharp differences remain, particularly over Cuba's human rights record and detainment of political prisoners. Both sides want Congress to lift a longstanding economic embargo against the communist island nation, but many Republican lawmakers and some Democrats want to keep it in place. Cuba also seeks the return of land occupied by the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay; the U.S. says that is not in the plan. (AP)

Neighbour News

Xi's UN Visit Breathes new Life into Int'l Ties

UNITED NATIONS - Chinese President Xi Jinping's first appearance at the UN headquarters breathed new life into the development of international relations, leaving a deep imprint in the history of China's diplomacy, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Monday. Concluding his state visit to the United States, Xi arrived in New York in the early morning of Saturday for a series of UN summits and conferences upon the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the world body. The Chinese president called for a new type of international relations featuring win-win cooperation when speaking for the first time at the

annual UN General Assembly high-level debate. China is the first among world's major countries to set win-win cooperation as its main objective in dealing with ties with other nations, Wang said. The vision of a new type of international relations with win-win cooperation at the core, put forward by Xi in late 2014, offered important inspirations and played a guiding role in the evolution of international relations, Wang added. While expounding the vision of a new type of international relations, Xi suggested that the international community build partnership in which countries treat each ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

Rouhani Calls Iran Deal Victory over War

UNITED NATIONS - The Iran deal is a victory over war, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani told the United Nations General Assembly here Monday. "The nuclear deal - (is a) victory over war," said Rouhani. " (It) has managed to disperse the clouds of hostility and perhaps even the specter of another war and extensive tensions from the Middle East. The statement came as the Iranian president was speaking at the General Debate of the UN General Assembly, which opened here Monday morning. In July, Iran and six world major countries adopted an agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue that will put Iran on the path of sanctions

relief but more strict limits on its nuclear program. The nuclear deal reached with the six world major countries is expected to help build confidence. The comprehensive agreement was clinched between Iran and the P5+1 group, namely Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States plus Germany, after more than two weeks of tough bargaining in Vienna, the capital city of Austria. Under the deal, the Security Council is expected to lift sanctions against Iran in return for Iran meeting strict conditions regarding its nuclear program. Rouhani said that Iran would continue to seek peace within the region, adding that he had ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

Pakistan Raises Police Force to Patrol Indus

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan is raising a special police force to curb crime, strengthen rescue and relief operations during floods and help conserve the endangered Indus dolphin along the River Indus. The first 700 recruits for the Riverine Amphibious Police Force (RAPF) will graduate in February next year, after being trained by the Pakistan army. The force will be deployed in districts of Punjab through which the Indus flows, including Rajanpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan, Layyah, Bhakkar, Mianwali and Attock. The Indus River is one of the longest rivers in Asia, flowing over 3,000 kilometres from Tibet through India and into Pakistan. The Indus provides es-

sential water for agriculture and livelihoods, but has also become a hotbed of criminal activity as armed groups have carved out safe havens for themselves on islands in the river. "Bandits and criminals have established their sanctuaries on islands in the Indus and have been challenging the writ of the state for many years now," said deputy inspector general of police Sohail Habib Tajik. He said the RAPF would help enforce the law on the waterway. "Some areas along the Indus have become the headquarters of kidnappers and criminals because the police can not reach them on the islands," explained Tajik, who is also commandant of the Sihala Police College where the police personnel are undergoing initial training. (Agencies)

Tajikistan-Switzerland Cooperation Discussed

DUSHANBE - Tajik Deputy Foreign Minister, Nizomiddin Zohidi, on Monday met with Ms. Elisabeth von Capeller, Vice-Director, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). According to the Tajik MFA information department, the two discussed a broad range of issues related to state and prospects of further expansion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation between Tajikistan and Switzerland. They also exchanged views on a number of international and regional issues being of mutual interest, the source said. The Swiss Agency for

Development and Cooperation (SDC) is an office-level agency in the federal administration of Switzerland, and a part of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Together with other federal offices, SDC is responsible for overall coordination of Swiss international development activities and cooperation with Eastern Europe, as well as humanitarian aid. The Swiss Cooperation Office was established in Tajikistan on the basis of the bilateral Agreement on Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid signed by the Governments of Switzerland and Tajikistan on October 19, 1999. (Asia-Plus)