

# No Military Solution to Migrant Crisis: UN Chief

ROME - UN chief Ban Ki-moon on Sunday urged Europe to refrain from resorting to a military solution to prevent a repeat of the shipwreck in the Mediterranean that left more than 750 migrants dead. Last weekend's tragedy off the Libyan coast has spurred the EU to plan a military mission against people smugglers, with the bloc's top diplomat Frederica Mogherini charged with obtaining UN approval for such a deployment. But Ban said in an interview with La Stampa that "there is no military solution to the tragedy in the



Mediterranean". "What is crucial is to have a global approach that

takes into account the roots of the problem, the security and human

rights of migrants and refugees, such as having immigration chan-

nels that are legal and regular," he said. "The United Nations

is ready to work with our European partners to this end," said Ban, who is visiting Italy on Monday. "The measures recently announced in Luxembourg and Brussels are an important first step towards collective European action. That's a unique approach which can work for a problem of this nature," he added. Beyond the military action against human traffickers, the EU agreed at the crisis talks in Brussels on Thursday to triple funds for the bloc's maritime search and rescue operation. Italian Prime Minister Matteo... (More on P4)... (15)

## Sudan's Pyramids, Nearly as Grand as Egypt's, Go Unvisited

AL-BEGRAWIYA, Sudan - The small, steep pyramids rising up from the desert hills of northern Sudan resemble those in neighboring Egypt, but unlike the famed pyramids of Giza, the Sudanese site is largely deserted. The pyramids at Meroe, some 200 kilometers (125 miles) north of Sudan's capital, Khartoum, are rarely visited despite being a UNESCO World Heritage site like those in Egypt. Sanctions against the government of long-time President Omar al-Bashir over Sudan's long-running internal

conflicts limit its access to foreign aid and donations, while also hampering tourism. The site, known as the Island of Meroe because an ancient, long-dried river ran around it, once served as the principle residence of the rulers of the Kush kingdom, known as the Black Pharaohs. Their pyramids, ranging from 6 meters (20 feet) to 30 meters (100 feet) tall, were built between 720 and 300 B.C. The entrances usually face east to greet the rising sun. The pyramids bear decorative elements inspired by... (More on P4)... (17)

## Japan's Prime Minister Goes to US to Showcase Close Ties

TOKYO - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's itinerary for his weeklong U.S. visit beginning Sunday will showcase the success of the alliance built from Tokyo's defeat in World War II, while promoting a political agenda based on still stronger military and economic ties. With no major trade or economic deals expected, the aim, officials in Tokyo said, is to confirm an upgrading of joint defense guidelines and to advertise the bright side of Japan and its people, including Americans of Japanese ancestry, and possibly sell some bullet train systems. Abe is first among several leaders of Asia, including China and South Korea, visiting the U.S. this year, a sign of Washington's growing attention to the region. He can point to his brief summit the week before with Chinese

President Xi Jinping as a sign of improving relations despite lingering friction over Japan's wartime history and territorial disputes. Abe still hasn't met bilaterally with South Korea's President Park Geun-hye due to a dispute over his stance on the issue of sex slaves - women forced to work in military brothels during the war. But he will acknowledge the wartime past with a visit to the Holocaust Memorial National Museum. Abe will also go to Arlington National Cemetery and pay respects to Japanese-American war dead at the "Go for Broke" memorial. "I plan to deliver a message that Japan and the United States, based on our strong ties, will together build peace and prosperity in the 21st century and open a new era," Abe told reporters Sunday just before his departure. (AP)

## Jimmy Carter to Visit Gaza to End Palestinian Split: Hamas

GAZA - Former U.S. president Jimmy Carter will pay a visit to the Gaza Strip on Thursday in a bid to end an internal Palestinian division, a senior Hamas official said Sunday. Leading a delegation representing the International Committee of Wise Men, Carter will have talks with Hamas leaders in Gaza, including Ismail Haniya, the Islamist movement's deputy chief, Ahmed Yousef told Xinhua. The talks will tackle a number of issues including the ties with Israel to reinforce a cease-fire and a new prisoner swap deal, Yousef added. In August, a fragile truce put an end to a 50-day war in Gaza between Israel and the Hamas militants. About 2,200 Palestinians, mostly civilians, were killed during the fighting. On the Israeli side, it claimed the lives of 73 people, all but six were soldiers. Carter visited Gaza in 2010, right after a three-week large-scale Israeli military operation waged on the coastal enclave. On Sunday, officials from the committee that Carter chairs arrived in the Gaza Strip to prepare for Thursday's visit. (Xinhua)

## Saudi-Led Airstrikes Hit Yemen Rebels

SANAA, Yemen - Aircraft from the Saudi-led coalition battling Shiite rebels in Yemen struck targets in several cities on Sunday, including the capital, security officials said, as fighting raged across the country. The continued airstrikes and combat between rival factions on the ground underline how a negotiated peace remains elusive in the Arab world's poorest country. They also

come despite a Saudi announcement last week saying coalition operations would scale down and shift to focus on diplomacy, humanitarian and counter-terrorism issues. The Sunday airstrikes began just after midnight, officials said, hitting a military base known to be an arms depot on the outskirts of Sanaa, as well as sites near the presidential palace where weapons were being moved.

In the southern port city of Aden, they said air raids targeted the rebels, known as Houthis, as street fighting between them and forces loyal to exiled President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi continued. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief journalists. The Houthis are allied with military units loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh against

the coalition and pro-Hadi forces. Although Hadi is Yemen's internationally recognized leader, he was forced to flee his stronghold of Aden last month as the Houthis advanced toward the port. The Saudi-led coalition began conducting airstrikes against rebel positions a day later on March 26. Hadi is now in the Saudi capital of Riyadh. The Houthis still control much of the country. (AP)

## Jihadist Militants Make Notable Gains in Syria

DAMASCUS - In recent months, the extremist groups, mainly the al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front, have made progress on several key fronts in Syria, stripping the Syrian government forces of crucial areas and threatening the security of others. In less than two months, the Syrian forces lost the northwestern city of Idlib, near Turkey, the key town of Busra al-Sham in the south, and the Nasib crossing, the last remaining border point with Jordan.

On Saturday, the Nusra fighters and affiliated militants overran the Jisr al-Shughour city in the countryside of Idlib, near the Turkish borders. Local media said the militants were streaming in droves into the city from the Turkish territory, amid fresh reports that the Syrian army has started a counter-offensive for the recapture of that key area. Jisr al-Shughour is located in the western countryside of Idlib, to the far northwest of the Syrian-Turkish borders. It's also adjacent to the al-Akrad mountain in the countryside of the coastal city of Latakia, the hometown of President Bashar al-Assad.

The city has a strategic importance as it lies on the international road connecting Latakia with the northern city of Aleppo, which makes it a link and compulsory conduit between the coastal cities and the provinces of Idlib and Aleppo, not to mention its proximity to the Turkish borders. Experts said the city constitutes the gate of the coastal cities in Syria from the north and the demarcation line between the Syrian and Turkish borders. (Xinhua)

## Syrian Jets Pound Insurgent-Held Town: Monitor

BEIRUT - Syrian jets carried out at least 20 air strikes on the town of Jisr al-Shughour in northwestern Syria on Sunday, a group monitoring the war said, one day after it was seized by Islamist fighters closing in on government-held territory by the coast. Syrian television also reported that the insurgents had slaughtered civilians, but the Observatory said only government supporters had been detained and no one killed. "Terrorist groups com-

mitted a horrific massacre of civilians after entering Jisr al-Shughour," state television quoted a military source as saying. It said at least 30 civilians had been killed in the town close to the Turkish border. But Observatory said combatants had detained government backers and that there was no confirmation so far they had killed anyone. "If we knew people were killed by them we would report it," the Observatory's founder

Rami Abdulrahman said. "No women and children were captured." His monitoring group, which says it collects information from all sides of the conflict, said at least 27 people, mainly insurgents, were killed after Syrian jets bombed Jisr al-Shughour overnight. Heavy fighting continued south of the town. The capture of the town of 50,000 people in Idlib province was the latest setback for government forces in the south and north of Syria. (Reuters)

## 'Heavy Toll' Feared after Boko Haram Attacks Niger Army

NIAMEY - Boko Haram militants attacked troops from Niger on an island base in Lake Chad, the government said on Saturday, in a raid believed to have taken a heavy toll on the army. "At dawn on April 25, fighters from the terrorist group Boko Haram riding motorised canoes attacked the island of Karamga, a position northwest of the town of Bosso held by our defence and security forces," the ministry of defence said. "Operations are ongoing with the support of partners to counter the ambitions of this terrorist group," the ministry



added in a statement broadcast on television. The ministry did not indicate if there were any casualties as a result of the raid. An official from Diffa, the capital of the south-east, however warned the death toll was "very heavy in the ranks of

the Nigerien army," without providing further details. State television reported that Niger's President Mahamadou Issoufou had called a meeting of the national security council after the Islamists' attack. (AFP)

## More than 2,200 Confirmed Dead in Nepal Earthquake

KATHMANDU, Nepal - Sleeping in the streets and shell-shocked, Nepalese cremated the dead and dug through rubble for the missing Sunday, a day after a massive Himalayan earthquake killed more than 2,200 people. Aftershocks tormented them, making buildings sway and sending pan-

icked Kathmandu residents running into the streets. "The aftershocks keep coming ... so people don't know what to expect," said Sanjay Karki, Nepal country head for global aid agency Mercy Corps. "All the open spaces in Kathmandu are packed with people who are camping outdoors.

When the aftershocks come you cannot imagine the fear. You can hear women and children crying." Saturday's magnitude 7.8 earthquake spread horror from Kathmandu to small villages and to the slopes of Mount Everest, triggering an avalanche that buried part... (More on P4)... (16)

## Neighbour News

### China Calls Emergency Meeting Following Nepal Quake

BEIJING - China called an emergency meeting Sunday morning to coordinate relief and rescue work following the devastating earthquake in Nepal. The meeting, convened by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, was attended by officials from departments in charge of the seismology, finance, tourism, health, state assets, commerce and sports. The meeting pledged to speed up assistance to Nepal and ensure the safety of Chinese citizens and organizations in Nepal. China will provide emergency aid including tents, generators, water purification equipment and medical supplies and begin the delivery as soon as

possible. Road connecting Tibet and Nepal will be repaired. Emergency aid will continue to be provided to those trapped while climbing Mount Everest. China will also send medical teams to treat the injured and help with epidemic prevention. A 62-member search and rescue team arrived in Nepal on Sunday. Officials also agreed to provide protection and assistance to Chinese citizens in Nepal, and help Chinese companies there. Six flights are expected to take around 600 Chinese nationals home on Sunday. Over 300 had already returned from Kathmandu by 6 pm Sunday. (Xinhua)

### Pakistan Sends Rescue and Relief Assistance for Nepal Earthquake Victims

ISLAMABAD - In line with the Pakistani Prime Minister's directive, 2 Pakistani C-130 Aircraft on Sunday landed at the Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu, carrying Medical Team of Doctors and Paramedics, 30-Bed Hospital, Medicines, Tents, Water, Dry Food, Search and Rescue Team with Equipment with the active collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan Army, Pakistan Air Force, National Disaster Management Authority of Pakistan, the Embassies of Pakistan in Kathmandu and Nepalese Authorities,

a statement from Pakistani foreign affair ministry said. The Ambassador of Pakistan and other Embassy officials were present at the Airport to facilitate and extend logistical support to Pakistan Relief Assistance Team. Besides making efforts for the relief assistance to Nepal Government, the Embassy also reached out to the Pakistani Expatriate Community Members to extend them necessary support. Two more Pakistani C-130 Aircraft with relief assistance are due to arrive in Kathmandu on 27 April 2015. (PR)

### DEWA Receive Tajikistan's Consul General

DUBAI - HE Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, MD & CEO of Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) has received in his office HE Abdulrahman Aiubov, Consul General of the Republic of Tajikistan in Dubai. Welcoming the Consul General of the Republic of Tajikistan in Dubai, Al Tayer emphasised that such meetings are important for exchanging information and experiences in different areas, and that they strengthen friendly relations and cooperation in energy and water. The Consul General invited Al Tayer to the International Conference to take place in

Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from 9-11 June 2015, whose theme is 'Water for Life.' The conference is to raise awareness among the global community about water issues and mobilise efforts to develop integrated strategies for the management of water resources to assist developing countries. It will also harness the efforts of governments, UN organisations, international and non-governmental organisations, and related organisations to solve water issues and support the efforts to implement international obligations related to water and water resources. (Agencies)

### Iran Vows Response to Saudi Blocking of Aid Plane to Yemen

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian official says Saudi Arabia's blockade of Yemen and its prevention of the delivery of the Islamic Republic's humanitarian aid to the war-ravaged country will not go unanswered. "We consider all options for helping the Yemeni people and immediate dispatch of humanitarian aid and transfer of the injured," Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said on Sunday. Noting that Saudi Arabia has no right to decide for regional countries, he added that Riyadh's military intervention in Bahrain has left hundreds of people dead and injured, and created instability and a

wide gap between the government and nation in the Persian Gulf state. "The continuation of Saudi aggression against Yemen will have no outcome but insecurity for Saudi Arabia and for the region," Amir-Abdollahian said. The Iranian official added that Saudi Arabia was expected to take steps to "improve sustainable security in the region" but it has become the main cause of regional instability. He expressed hope that Riyadh would reconsider its wrong approaches and play a constructive role in the region, noting, "Tehran has always supported dialog between the two countries" through diplomatic channels. (Agencies)