

Over 4,000 Migrants Rescued off Libyan Coasts: Italy's Coast Guard

ROME - Some 4,400 migrants were rescued off the Libyan coasts on Saturday, the Italian coast guard said on Sunday.

It appeared one of the biggest operations carried out so far by naval multinational forces involved in the European Union (EU) Triton rescue mission in the Mediterranean Sea, according to local media.

Italy's navy ships and coast guard patrol boats, together with at least two other vessels from Norway and Ireland, carried out 22 rescue operations overall to pick up the migrants, who were sailing aboard overcrowded crafts and inflatables,



Italian authorities added. A military aircraft was also involved in the saving operations. No casualties

were reported in the operations, which had been launched after several distress calls were received,

the coast guard added. Two major missions on Saturday were carried out by Italian navy vessels Fiorillo

and Diciotti, which rescued 432 and 507 people respectively crammed aboard two wooden crafts at risk of

sinking off the coasts of Libya, Italian authorities said.

Three other migrant boats were signaled in the waters of the Canal of Sicily between Italy and Libya on Sunday morning, and three merchant vessels were asked to approach to the area to provide first aid, according to the coast guard in Rome coordinating the operation.

A first group of 506 rescued people were brought to the Sicilian port of Augusta on Sunday. Some 132 women and 92 minors were among these migrants, who were believed to be mostly refugee-seekers from Eritrea. (Xinhua)

Indian FM Leaves for 4-Day Visit to Egypt, Germany

NEW DELHI - Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj Sunday left for a four-day tour of Egypt and Germany, aimed at bolstering bilateral trade and investment. The foreign minister will first go to Egyptian capital Cairo where she will meet President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and hold talks with her counterpart Sameh Hassan Shoukry, sources said. In Cairo, Swaraj will also meet Nabil Elaraby, secretary general of the League of Arab States, and give a public address at the prestigious Diplomatic

Club, the sources added. Bilateral trade between the two countries stood at 4.76 billion U.S. dollars during the last financial year. The minister will visit Germany in the last leg of her two-nation tour from August 25 to 27. In Berlin, she will meet German Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier and other political leaders, the sources said. The aim of the visit is to review bilateral relationship with an emphasis on economic ties, the sources added. (Xinhua)

Nigerian Army Chief Unhurt in Boko Haram Attack: Official

ABUJA - Nigeria's army chief Lt-Gen. Tukur Yusuf Buratai was unhurt Saturday after suspected Boko Haram members attacked his convoy in the country's northeastern state of Borno, a spokesman said Sunday. The leading column of the army chief's motorcade was ambushed by the terrorists at Faljari village, located between Mafa and Dikwa districts of the northern Borno State, but the Boko Haram members encountered an overwhelming fire power from the troops, acting spokesman for the Nigerian army, Col. Sani Kuskasheka Usman, said. The army chief was on his way to visit troops deployed to rout out Boko Haram in that region when the incident occurred. "Ten of the ter-

rorists were killed," the army spokesman said, adding five others were captured by the gallant troops. However, a soldier was killed during the gun fight while an army officer and four soldiers sustained gunshot injuries from the attack, he said. According to the official, the arrested terrorists have been sent for interrogation while the remains of the gallant soldier and the wounded soldiers were evacuated back to Maiduguri, capital of the restive Borno State and known headquarters of Boko Haram.

Nigerian troops on Friday entered and cleared more terrorists camps in Borno State as offensive operations against Boko Haram continued in the region. (Xinhua)

French Gov't. Raises Vigilance to Secure Public Transport after Train Shooting

PARIS - French government on Saturday called for higher vigilance and to further intensify security mainly in public transport after a gunman opened fire against passengers at a Thalys high-speed train injuring three people.

"Facing high level of threats that continues to weigh on the country, the government recalls the full mobilization of government services to ensure the safety of everyone in all parts of the country, especially in transport," Prime Minister Manuel Valls, Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve and junior minister in charge of transport Alain Vidalis said in a joint statement. Valls called on the prefects to increase vigilance

to improve surveillance of stations and their surroundings across the country, they added. Since Jan. 7, French government had increased the vigipiratsysetem to the highest level after three Islamist gunmen killed 17 people in three separate attacks in Paris. A total of 30,000 policemen, gendarmes and soldiers were poured across the country to protect 5,000 sensitive areas including train stations and airports, according to the statement. A gunman wounded three people on a high-speed train between Amsterdam and Paris on Friday before being overpowered by passengers who included American soldiers. (Xinhua)

Al Qaeda Deploy in Yemen's Aden, British Hostage Freed

ADEN - Al Qaeda militants took control of a western district of Yemen's main port city of Aden on Saturday night, residents said, in another sign that the group is drawing strength from five months of civil war.

The entrance of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula into Aden, once one of the world's busiest ports and the most secular and secure parts of an otherwise restive country, would be one of its biggest gains yet. "Dozens of al Qaeda militants were patrolling the streets with their weapons in total freedom in a number of areas in Tawahi. At the same time, others



raised the al Qaeda black flag above government buildings," a resident told Reuters. He said flag was also flying over the administrative building of the port, although a port official

later said that the flag was flying at the gate of the port's complex. United Arab Emirates forces based in Aden meanwhile freed a British hostage who had been held by the group, the

UAE state news agency WAM said on Sunday. The hostage, earlier identified by a Yemeni police source as an oil worker abducted in February last year. (Reuters)

Koreas Resume Talks as Seoul Sees North Korea Troop Movement

PYONGYANG - Senior officials from North and South Korea on Sunday were in their second day of marathon talks meant to pull the rivals back from the brink, even amid reports of unusual North Korean troop and submarine movement that Seoul said indicated continued battle preparation. While it was not clear whether any progress was made

during the first round of talks, which started Saturday evening and finished just before dawn Sunday, the second day of diplomacy, for the time being, pushed aside the heated warnings of imminent war. These are the highest-level talks between the two Koreas in a year. And just the fact that senior officials from countries that have spent recent days vowing



to destroy each other are sitting together at a table in Panmunjom, the border

enclave where the 1953 armistice ending fighting in ... (More on P4)... (19)

Syrian Refugees in Jordan Face Worsening Conditions

AMMAN - For Abdullah Salameh, a Syrian refugee now taking shelter in Jordan, a growing reduction in aid he receives from international agencies is likely to increase his suffering.

Salameh, living in Al Zaatari camp in north of Jordan along with his wife and five children, grumbled at the gradual aid decline from agencies, saying that he was forced to look for a job outside the camp to support his family.

He used to receive 30 dinars (42 U.S. dollars) for each member of his family per month from the World Food Program (WFP) to buy food.

The volume was decreased to 25 dinars (35 dollars) in 2014 and this year it was downed to 20 dinars (28 dollars) per person per month.

Salameh is one of the more than 600,000 Syrian refugees who were affected by the withering international assistance. The situation is likely to become more difficult as the program said it needs over 40 million dollars to be able to continue providing help to the Syrians in Jordan this year. To make ends meet, Salameh has managed to get an approval from the authorities to leave the camp for several hours a day. "I find a job in one of the farms in the area near the camp. I get about 10 to 12 dinars (14 to 17 dollars) per day through collecting tomatoes and other crops," he said. Like Salameh, many refugees also started to look for jobs for the same sad reason, an employee at an international aid agency working inside the camp told Xinhua.

"They definitely need more aid. The current amount of aid is not enough. There should be more aid to help Jordan and the Syrians in Jordan," said the worker who preferred not to be named. (Xinhua)

PKK Militants Kidnap 11 Turkish Customs Officials



ANKARA - The outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) militants abducted 11 customs officials and their driver, said a Turkish military statement on Sunday.

The hostages, who have been missing for two days, had been kidnapped at the Kapikoy border crossing with Iran by the "separatist terror organization," said the statement issued by the Turkish General Staff without referring to the PKK.

One kidnapped female customs official and the driver was freed in the region, local Hurriyet reported on Sunday. Meanwhile, a group of PKK rebels early Sunday attacked the Turkish troops who were on duty for the security of a dam in Panak village in Kulptown of Diyarbakir province with rocket launchers and long barreled weapons, killing one Turkish soldier and wounding

three others injured in the clashes, said a statement released by the Turkish General Staff.

The Turkish military has launched air and ground operations against the PKK targets after the attack on Sunday, added the statement.

Tensions between the PKK and Turkish security forces are increasing following a tumultuous week which began with an Islamic State (IS) suicide bombing July 20, killing 32 individuals and injuring 104 activists in the town of Suruc in the Sanliurfa province bordering Syria.

The People's Defense Forces (HPG), affiliated with the PKK, claimed responsibility for the death of the two police officers as retaliation to the Suruc bombing, insinuating that the officers were linked to IS. (Xinhua)

Neighbour News

Iran, Britain FMs to Meet in Tehran

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad-Javad Zarif and his British counterpart Philip Hammond will meet on Sunday following a ceremony to reopen British embassy in the capital Tehran, semi-official ISNA news agency reported on Saturday.

After the meeting, Zarif and Hammond will hold a joint press conference, according to the report. In November 2011, a group of angry Iranian students stormed the British embassy in Tehran over Britain's nuclear-related sanctions against the country. Britain shut down its embassy in Tehran and asked Iran to close its embassy in London. Earlier reports said that Hammond would travel

to Iran on Sunday to reopen the British embassy. At the same time, Iran will also reopen its embassy in London.

Meanwhile, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for the European and U.S. affairs Majid Takht-e-Ravanchi said Saturday that Tehran and London will keep the relationship at the level of chargé d'affaires, according to Press TV. Last month, Iran and the world powers reached a historical agreement to end the decade-long standoff over Iran's nuclear issue.

The accord will put restrictions on Iran's nuclear activities to alleviate world's concerns in return for the removal of international and western sanctions on the country. (Xinhua)

China has been Perfecting its Political System

SANTIAGO - China's political system has successfully promoted social development and reduced poverty in the past decades and the Asian giant has been perfecting its model, said Canadian political observer Daniel Bell in an interview with Xinhua. Bell took the interview after giving a speech titled "China and Political Power: what are the driving forces of its system?" on Friday in the University of Andres Bello in Santiago, Chile.

"China has its own political system, with a policy of meritocracy, and the civil servants are chosen through exams and are

promoted to higher positions for their knowledge and work experience. The main leaders are chosen by the National Congress of Communist Party of China and the National People's Congress (China's parliament)," Bell said. As the director of the Berggruen Institute of Philosophy and Culture, U.S.-based independent think tank on governance, and a professor on Political Philosophy at Tsinghua University, one of the top universities in China, Bell has been researching on China's meritocracy, and defined it as a political system where ... (More on P4)... (20)

Multiple Suspected Militants Arrested from Karachi

KARACHI - The Counter-Terrorism Department (CID) detained multiple suspected militants of the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Khan Zaman Group in separate raids conducted in Karachi on Sunday. According to CID sources, in a raid conducted in the city's SITE area, five suspected members of the proscribed organisation were arrested. Those arrested were identified as Naimatullah, Abdullah Jan, SherWali, Saeedullah and Samiullah. According to security sources all the individuals belong to TTP's Khan Zaman Group operating in Karachi. Weapons and ammu-

nition were also recovered in the raid, which included five pistols and hand grenades. In a separate raid conducted by the CID in the city's Korangi Industrial area, another four suspected militants from TTP's Khan Zaman Group were arrested. Police also recovered four pistols and associated ammunition from the detained individuals. Karachi, a teeming metropolis of around 18 million people, is rife with political, ethnic, sectarian and criminal violence. Proscribed organisations have also used Karachi as a base to generate funds for furthering their anti-state agenda. (Agencies)

President Rahmon Named Savior of Tajikistan

AVESTA - Tajik President Emomali Rahmon saved Tajikistan from the threat of destruction, rallied the population and brought thousands of refugees back home, Herbert Dorfmann, the European Parliament member and also the Chairman of the European Parliament-Tajikistan Friendship Group, said in his statement published by the Brussels Times on Friday. In his statement, dedicated to the 24th anniversary of Tajikistan's Independence Day, Dorfmann said that Emomali Rahmon was chosen as President of Tajikistan, when the country was experiencing particularly trying times. "A bloody civil war had resulted in mas-

sive physical devastation and high human losses, while threatening the integrity of the country and the very existence of the Tajik nation. Rahmon saved the country from the threat of destruction, rallied the population and brought thousands of refugees back home," Dorfmann said. He said that Emomali Rahmon laid solid foundations for the construction of a democratic society in Tajikistan, piloted constitutional reforms and the adoption of a new constitution for the country, the creation of the legal conditions for multi-party parliamentary democracy and saw to the political and legal bases for the signature of the General ... (More on P4)... (21)