

# U.S. Refused Guarantees for Ukraine's Liabilities: Russia

MOSCOW - Russia has received an official refusal from the U.S. government to provide guarantees for Ukraine's liabilities, Russian news agencies reported on Saturday, citing Russia's Finance Ministry. Russia and Ukraine are at loggerheads over a \$3 billion Ukrainian Eurobond held by Russia and maturing on Dec. 20. Russia has offered to restructure the debt in equal installments over the next three years if the West provides guarantees. But Ukraine has included it among the sovereign and sovereign-guaranteed bonds to be restructured



in a deal with a group of its largest creditors. "This week we received an official refusal from

the U.S. government to provide guarantees on Ukraine's liabilities. In this regard, there is

nothing left but for us to file a legal case against Ukraine if the debtor does not fulfill its liabilities ful-

ly on Dec. 20," RIA news agency cited the Finance Ministry as saying in a statement.

The ministry added that Russia had offered Ukraine better terms than those the International Monetary Fund had asked for.

Ukraine is restructuring its debts in order to plug a \$15 billion funding gap under an IMF-led \$40 billion bailout program. The Eurobond is especially contentious as it was issued by the government of former president Viktor Yanukovich in late 2013 as public protests took off against his swing away from association with the European Union towards deeper ties with Russia.(Reuters)

## Obama Insists US 'will not be Terrorized' as IS Hails Attackers

SAN BERNARDINO - President Barack Obama insisted Saturday that America "will not be terrorized" as the Islamic State group hailed the perpetrators of the mass shooting in California as "soldiers" of its caliphate. The president's pledge and extremists' praise came on the heels of an announcement by the FBI that it was treating the investigation into the San Bernardino rampage as "an act of terrorism." "It is entirely possible that these two attackers were radical-

ized to commit this act of terror," Obama said of Syed Farook, 28, and his 29-year-old Pakistani wife Tashfeen Malik, who slaughtered 14 people and wounded 21 others at a year-end office party on Wednesday. In its English-language radio broadcast Saturday, IS stopped short of explicitly claiming the attack but referred to the assailants as soldiers of the Khilafah (caliphate) who were "killed in the path of Allah." In the group's ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

## Turkish Deployment Inside Iraq Violates International Law: Iraq President

BAGHDAD - Iraqi President Fouad Massoum on Saturday called the deployment of several hundred Turkish troops inside Iraq near the northern city of Mosul "a violation of international norms and law". A Turkish security source said on Friday the forces would provide training for Iraqi troops near Mosul, which is controlled by Islamic State. Iraq's prime minister and foreign ministry have called for Turkey to withdraw its forces.

In an online statement, Massoum also called on Turkey to withdraw the troops and asked Iraq's Foreign Ministry to take the necessary measures "to preserve the country's sovereignty and independence". Islamic State militants overran Mosul in June 2014. A much anticipated counter-offensive by Iraqi forces has been repeatedly postponed because they are tied down in fighting elsewhere. A senior Kurdish mili ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

## Turkish Energy Projects Unharmed by Row with Russia: Erdogan

ISTANBUL - Turkey's row with Moscow over the downing of a Russian jet over Syria has not affected joint energy projects, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Saturday. Russia has imposed trade sanctions against Turkey, including freezing investment projects and restricting food imports, after the Turkish air force last week shot down a Russian fighter bomber near the Syrian border as it took part in the Kremlin's campaign against militants in Syria.

Russia buys about \$1 billion worth of Turkish food and other products annually and is Turkey's No. 1 energy provider, shipping gas, coal and oil. It is also due to build Turkey's first nuclear power station in the town of Akkuyu, a deal worth \$20 billion. "There is no sign yet that the problems with Russia will affect projects like natural gas and the Akkuyu nuclear power plant," Erdogan said in a speech to businessmen that was broadcast live by NTV news channel.



He denied Russian assertions that Moscow had suspended talks with Turkey on the planned TurkStream natural gas pipeline project, saying Turkey was the one to halt work.(Reuters)

## Iraq Demands Withdrawal of Turkish Troops from Area Near Mosul

BAGHDAD - The Iraqi government on Saturday demanded withdrawal of Turkish troops deployed near the city of Mosul as part of training the mission without permission of the Iraqi side. "A battalion of tanks and artillery entered the Iraqi territory specifically, in Nineveh province under the pretext of training Iraqi groups without the request or authorization from the Iraqi federal authorities," Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's office said in a statement posted on his website. "This is

a serious breach of Iraqi sovereignty, which is not consistent with the good neighborly relations between Iraq and Turkey," the statement said. The statement came after media reports said a Turkish training battalion equipped with armored vehicles deployed near the city of Mosul, some 400 km north of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, which is under control of Islamic State (IS) militant group. The Turkish troops were supposed to provide training to Iraqi paramilitary groups at a camp



near Mosul in order to participate in liberating the city from the extremist IS militants. The Iraqi statement also called on Turkey to "respect good neighborly relations and to withdraw immediately from the Iraqi territory." The IS group took control of Mosul in June 2014. Mosul, the capital of Nineveh province, has been under IS control since June 11, when bloody clashes broke out between Iraqi security forces and ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

## Senior Al-Qaida-Linked Commander Killed in Syria

DAMASCUS - A senior commander of the al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front was killed in a bomb explosion in Syria's southern province of Daraa, state news agency SANA reported on Saturday. The Jordanian, Abu Jalib al-Ordoni, the general security chief of Nusra Front and the emir of the group in Damascus and Daraa, was killed on Friday when a roadside bomb tore through his car between the towns of Saida and Kahil in the countryside of Daraa, said SANA. Other reports said al-Ordoni is the second high ranking commander of Nusra. Meanwhile, SANA said the Nusra group has suf-



fered great losses over the past few days, where the Syrian army dealt heavy blows on their militants, particularly in battles in the northern countryside of Daraa. The Nusra and likeminded groups recently unleashed a battle called "The Battle of Liberating Jidiyeh" in the town of Jidiyeh in northern Daraa. However,

the group was quick to bring the battle to a halt after suffering losses, according to pan-Arab al-Mayadeen TV. SANA said 17 militants of the fighters were recently killed in northern Daraa. The official news agency said several terrorist groups linked to the Nusra Front and Israel are ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

## UN Mediator in Yemen to Press for Peace talks

ADEN - The UN mediator travelled Saturday to Aden in south Yemen to press for the government and Shiite rebels to open long-delayed peace talks in Geneva on December 12, a Yemeni official said. Ismail OuldCheikh Ahmed was to meet with President Abdrabbo Mansour Hadi, who has declared the port city of Aden Yemen's provisional capital following the rebels' capture of Sanaa and other regions of the country over the past year.

"Mr OuldCheikh Ahmed is seeking the agreement of President Hadi to convening the talks in Geneva on December 12," a senior official close to the president told AFP. "But this mission will be difficult," said the source, accusing the rebels of dragging their feet on implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2216, which calls for them to withdraw from occupied territory. And Foreign Minister Abdel Malak al-Mekhlafi told AFP: "The putschists are refusing to lay down their arms or to allow the government to carry out its duties" from Sanaa.

"They have not announced their list of negotiators" for the talks "and are trying to escalate the situation on the ground by bombing residential districts of Taez," a strategic city in southwest Yemen under siege by the rebels and their allies, he said. In a protest sent to the United Nations, Yemen's minister in charge of human rights, Ezzedine al-Isbahi, condemned the "massacres and atrocities" allegedly committed in Taez by the rebels that he said had killed 33 civilians last week, including four children.(AFP)

## British RAF Jets Carry out Second Airstrikes

LONDON - British RAF (Royal Air Force) have carried out its second mission of airstrikes in Syria against the IS, local media reported Saturday. Targets in the second mission were oil fields as its first strikes, and the mission involved two Typhoons and two Tornados, said the BBC. British warplanes conducted six strikes against IS-controlled oil fields earlier on Thursday morning, just hours after MPs voted to extend bombing missions to Syria. A vote in the House of Commons following a ten-hour debate on Wednesday evening resulted in a vote of 397 to 223 in favour of Britain bombing targets in Syria.(Xinhua)

## Assad's Departure not Necessary before Political Transition: French FM

PARIS - The departure of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is no longer necessary before any political transition in the war-torn country, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said in an interview published Saturday. The comments mark a softening of Paris' position on the Syrian president as attention turns to the fight against the Islamic State group which staged a series of bloody attacks on the French capital last month, killing 130. "The fight against Daesh is crucial, but it will only be totally effective if all the Syrian and regional forces are united," Fabius told the French regional newspaper Le Progres, using an Arabic acronym for IS. "How is it possible that Bashar al-Assad is president, he who committed so many atrocities, and who has a large part of the population against him?" he said. "A united Syria implies a political transition. That does not mean that Bashar al-Assad must leave even ...*(More on P4)...(19)*

## OSCE Meeting Failed to Agree on Ukraine, Migrants: Serb FM

BELGRADE - Serbia's foreign minister says disagreements among member states have blocked joint resolutions about Ukraine and migrant crisis during this week's meeting of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe. Ivica Dacic, 2015 OSCE chairperson-in-office, said Saturday Ukraine and Russia failed to agree on the conflict in Ukraine, while several countries disagreed with Turkey on the wording in the document dealing

with the massive refugee movement toward Western Europe. Dacic says "this shows how difficult it is to reach a compromise." He says the OSCE, which has 57 member states, still faces divisions 40 years after it was formed during the Cold War era. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry attended the OSCE ministerial conference Thursday and Friday in Belgrade. Germany takes over the 2016 chairmanship.(AP)

## Neighbor News

### Iran Preparing to Launch Key Petchem Event

TEHRAN - Iran is preparing to hold a key petrochemical conference in which representatives from 25 countries will participate. Officials say that over 300 Iranian companies as well as around 100 foreign petrochemical enterprises will take part in the two-day conference which is titled Iran Petrochemical Forum (IPF). Mohammad-Hassan Peyvandi, the IPF secretary, told reporters on Saturday that the participants include a company from the United States

which he did not name. Other key participants are companies from Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, Switzerland, Russia, Britain, Australia and India. The IPF will open in Tehran on 13 December, IRNA reported. Peyvandi emphasized that foreign companies are particularly interested in exploring the opportunities for investing in Iran's petrochemical industry specifically now that the sanctions against the country are about to be removed.(PressTV)

### China Urges EU to end Trade Measures Against Chinese Solar Exports

BEIJING - China urged the European Union (EU) to stop anti-dumping and anti-subsidy duties over Chinese photovoltaic (PV) exports as the latter is considering an extension of those trade measures. China's Ministry of Commerce said in a statement on Saturday that it would harm interests of both sides to extend the measures, and it hoped the EU terminates the policies as soon as possible to improve China-EU economic ties. Solar panels and related components are significant to the development of clean energy and will help countries to achieve their emission-cut goals to tackle climate change, the ministry said. The EU's executive body, the

European Commission, on Saturday decided to launch expiry review of its PV trade measures. The ministry said the growth pace of clean energy has been dragged down in Europe after European countries slashed subsidies on solar panels and set minimum import price. The region's PV installed capacity dropped to 7 GW in 2014, compared with 24 GW in 2012, and with its shares falling to 14.5 percent from 74 percent of the world's total. The two sides went through major disputes on trade measures on solar panels imported from China before reaching deals on a minimum import price and quota set for Chinese imports in 2013. (Xinhua)

### Uzbekistan Parliament Starts Fourth Plenary Session

BISHKEK - The fourth plenary session of the Senate of the OliyMajlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan continued its work on Friday in Tashkent. During the session, the senators considered the Law "On introducing amendments and additions to some legal acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan". Aiming to implement the changes to the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, introduced in 2014 and directed towards further democratization of the system of state power, amendments and additions to the Law "On Regulation of the Legislative Chamber of the

OliyMajlis", "On regulations of the Senate of the OliyMajlis", "On the Cabinet of Ministers" and other laws. The senators noted the particular significance of the amendments and additions, directed towards increasing the role of political parties in organizing legislative, controlling and analytical activity of the Legislative Chamber. In particular, mandatory consultation with the party groups in each stage of considering draft laws as well as preliminary discussion of the report on execution of the State budget by party groups has been legally secured. (Agencies)

### Pakistan should be more Transparent on \$46bn China Deal: SBP Head



KARACHI - Pakistan needs to be more transparent about the details of energy and infrastructure deals worth \$46 billion signed with China earlier this year, the governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said on Friday. The deals, called the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), should help shore up Pakistan's crumbling infrastructure and reduce its electricity shortages by building more power plants. China will get a free trade zone in Pakistan's Gwadar port and access to the Indian Ocean. New roads in

the country will open up routes for Chinese goods into Europe and the Middle East. But the details, terms and financing of many of the deals remain unclear. "CPEC needs to be more transparent," Ashraf Mahmood Wathra said. "I don't know out of the \$46 billion how much is debt, how much is equity and how much is in kind." Pakistan, a nuclear-armed nation of more than 190 million people, has frequently struggled to manage its cash flows because the government is reluctant to tax the wealthy and powerful.(Agencies)