

Iranian Nuclear Talks to Continue for Next Couple of Days

VIENNA - Talks between Iran and major powers on Iran's nuclear issue will continue past Tuesday for a "couple of days", while the negotiations entered the most difficult and sensitive part of the talks, European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini told reporters on Tuesday in Vienna.

The remarks of Mogherini came when several foreign ministers from six world major countries are finishing their meetings with their Iranian counterpart in the ongoing Iranian nuclear talks in the capital city of Vienna.



"We are continuing the negotiation ... Some ministers are leaving, but will be back in the coming hours or days," she said, rejecting the idea that the talks could be once again extended as the ministers are leaving Vienna. There are still gaps between Iran and western states as the talks are approaching the self-imposed deadline of July 7. The EU foreign policy chief said the deadline of the talks could be treated in a flexible way to give the negotiators more time to finalize the deal. (Xinhua)

25 Killed in Suicide Bombings, Clashes with IS Across Iraq

BAGHDAD - A total of 25 people were killed and some 50 others wounded in clashes with Islamic State (IS) militants and suicide bomb attacks across Iraq on Tuesday, security sources said.

In Iraq's western province of Anbar, at least eight IS militants were killed and some 20 others wounded in fierce clashes between IS militants and Iraqi security forces backed by allied militias known as Hashd Shaabi, around the Sunni town of Saqlawiyah in

north of the IS-held city of Fallujah, a provincial security source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

The clashes near Saqlawiyah are part of battle that broke out the day before when the security forces and allied militiamen advanced to free Saqlawiyah and nearby Sheiha area from IS militants, but were confronted with fierce resistance when suicide bombers rammed their vehicle bombs into the troops' positions and blew them up. (Xinhua)

Syrian Forces Kill 50 Rebels in Coastal Latakia City

DAMASCUS - The Syrian army has killed more than 50 rebels in the countryside of the coastal city of Latakia in northern Syria, the official Syrian TV said Tuesday.

The military targeted the rebels' positions in the towns of Dwerashan, Darra and Rbaia in the northern countryside of Latakia, said the TV.

Meanwhile, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based watchdog group, said the rebel militants targeted government troops' positions in northern Latakia with many mortar shells, while the military units responded by shelling the rebel-held town of Salma near Latakia, with no reports on losses yet. Battles in the northern countryside of Latakia have been incessant since the rebels in the northwestern province of Idlib captured areas adjacent to the coastal city, the hometown of President Bashar al-Assad and the heartland of this Alawite sect, an offshoot of Shiite Islam. (Xinhua)

Obama Discusses Greek Crisis with Hollande

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Barack Obama spoke on Monday by phone with French President Francois Hollande about how to keep Greece in the eurozone, the White House said in a statement.

"The two leaders agreed on the importance of finding a path forward that will allow Greece to resume reforms and return to growth and debt sustainability within the eurozone, recognizing that this will require difficult compromises from all sides," the statement said.

About 61.3 percent of Greeks voted against a proposal from inter-

national creditors that included pension cuts, tax increases and other austerity measures in a critical referendum on Sunday, even though the country has been in arrears to the International Monetary Fund since Wednesday.

Since June 29, Greek banks have been closed and capital controls imposed to avert a collapse in the banking sector after the European emergency liquidity aid was cut off. Leaders of eurozone member states are set to gather in Brussels for an emergency summit on Tuesday to discuss a solution to the Greek crisis. (Xinhua)

U.S. only Training 60 Syrian Fighters, Far Below Expectations

WASHINGTON - The United States was only training about 60 Syrian opposition fighters to battle Islamic State as of July 3, far below expectations, Defense Secretary Ash Carter told Congress on Tuesday, citing rigorous U.S. vetting of recruits. The program, which launched in May in Jordan and Turkey, was designed to train as many as 5,400 fighters a year and seen as a test of President Barack Obama's strategy of engaging local partners to combat ex-

tremists. Carter's acknowledgement of the low number of recruits will give ammunition to critics who say Obama's strategy is too limited to have any influence on Syria's brutal civil war. "Given the poor numbers of recruited and trained Syrian fighters thus far, I am doubtful we can achieve our goal of training a few thousand this year," said Republican Senator John McCain, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. (Reuters)

NATO Naval Forces Begin Operations in the Black Sea

BRUSSELS - NATO naval forces have arrived in the Black Sea to train and operate with ships from Bulgaria, Romania, and the United States in Exercise BREEZE, NATO announced in a press release Tuesday.

NATO ships assigned to Standing NATO Maritime Group One (SNMG1) and Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group Two (SNMCMG2) joined the operation, which are two



of NATO's four Standing Naval Maritime Groups.

"This is a great opportunity to work with our Black Sea Allies and to operate in conjunction with SNMCMG2," said Rear Admiral Alberto Correia, Commander of SNMG1. "The Black Sea is a key strategic area for the Alliance and NATO deeply values its partnerships with the nations in the region," he said. (Xinhua)

UN Chief Welcomes Launch of High-Level Commission for Education Financing

OSLO - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on Tuesday he welcomed the launch of a high-level commission to promote funding for education and promised to act on its recommendations. The High-level Commission on the Financing of Global Education Opportunities will address challenges in financing global education and present recommendations for how to re-

solve the learning crisis, Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg said at the Oslo Summit on Education for Development. The commission, which is proposed by leaders of Norway, Chile, Indonesia and Malawi as well as UNESCO chief Irina Bokova, will be chaired by UN Special Envoy for Global Education and former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown. "I particularly welcome the announcement of the es-

tablishment of a commission on financing of global education...I will receive its report and act on its recommendations," Ban said at the opening ceremony of the summit's high level conference. "We need to increase funding to achieve universal education. And at the same time, we need to improve the coordination of financing," the UN chief said. (Xinhua)

No Plan to Send More U.S. Troops Abroad to Fight IS Right Now: Obama

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Barack Obama said Monday that local forces should be the main forces to fight the extremist group the Islamic State (IS) and currently there was no plan for his administration to send more U.S. troops abroad. Obama told reporters after being briefed by U.S. military leadership on the status of U.S.-led coalition campaign that to succeed in the long-term fight against the IS, "we have to

develop local security forces that can sustain progress." "This will not be quick. This is a long-term campaign," said Obama. "ISIL is opportunistic, and it is nimble." ISIL is another acronym of the extremist group. Meanwhile, Obama said the training of local anti-IS forces, touted by the administration as the linchpin of the U.S. anti-IS strategy together with air strikes, "was moving too slowly," echoing previous remarks made by U.S. military

leadership that U.S. training efforts in Iraq against IS "have far been slowed." The rare visit to the Pentagon came as Obama, though insisting he would not send U.S. "boots on the ground", was enhancing the U. S. military involvement in Iraq to help combat IS fighters by adding another 450 military trainers and advisors to help Iraqi troops to retake Ramadi, the provincial capital of Anbar province, which fell to IS in May. (Xinhua)

French Special Forces Kill Top Al-Qaeda Militant in Mali

PARIS - French special forces killed a leader of Al-Qaeda in Mali who was involved in the kidnapping of hostage Serge Lazarevic, but released from prison in exchange for the Frenchman's freedom, the army said Tuesday. During an operation on Sunday in the northeastern town of Kidal in Mali, "two terrorists were captured and a third, Ali Ag Wadossene, was killed. He is one of the operational leaders of AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) in the zone," said a French army statement.

Two special forces soldiers were injured in the operation in the troubled west African nation where France has had troops since 2013 when it launched an operation to oust Islamists who had seized northern Mali. While never confirmed by France, Mali admitted in December that four prisoners were released in exchange for the freedom of Serge Lazarevic, who spent three years in the hands of Islamist militants. (AFP)

Putin Watches on as Europe Flounders over Greek Crisis

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin is likely to be savouring Europe's struggles over the Greek crisis but not in a position to offer a financial lifeline despite cosy up to Athens, analysts said. As the dispute between Greece and its creditors has grown increasingly ugly, authorities in Moscow and Athens have made a show of bolstering ties between their two Orthodox nations, in a display that has rattled Brussels.

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has visited



Russia - locked in its own standoff with the European Union over Ukraine -- twice since April, overseeing an agreement on a

2 billion euro (\$2.18 billion) gas pipeline and denouncing Western sanctions against Moscow.

In the wake of Greece's resounding 'No' vote to a bailout plan in a referendum on Sunday, Putin was among the first leaders that Tsipras called to discuss the situation. But although Russia -- embroiled in an economic crisis over Ukraine -- is watching on with interest from the sidelines it looks unlikely to get directly involved in Greece's economic issues with its creditors. (AFP)

Greek Proposals Need to be "Credible": Eurogroup Head

BRUSSELS - Eurogroup President Jeroen Dijsselbloem said Tuesday that Greek proposals need to be "credible" to seek a way out after Greeks voted "no" to creditors' bailout offer on Sunday. Dijsselbloem made the comments minutes ahead of his one-on-one meeting with his new Greek colleague Euclid Tsakalotos. "Given the situation after the 'No' vote in Greece, we



need to hear from the Greek government first, how they seek a way out, how they think we can come to an

agreement, so I am going to listen to my new Greek colleague first," Dijsselbloem told the press. (Xinhua)

Neighbour News

Xi Calls for Better Role of Mass Organizations

BEIJING - President Xi Jinping said Tuesday the 1.3 billion Chinese should be better mobilized through mass organizations in the pursuit of a more promising life.

The work of mass organizations is an important component of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and they are channels connecting the public with the CPC, Xi said at a conference on improving these organizations' operation.

Mass organizations represent people from different lines of work or age groups, such as trade union federations, Communist youth leagues and women's federations. "The Party should always share the fate of the people, with their hearts closely linked together," he said, calling for the establishment of more powerful organizations that play an important role in advancing state governance. (Xinhua)

Iran, IAEA Firm to Boost 'Technical Interaction'



TEHRAN - The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have discussed ways to improve "technical interaction" in line with the Islamic Republic's red lines.

A five-member IAEA delegation, which arrived in Tehran on Monday, held intense and constructive negotiations with Iranian officials, said Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi.

He added that during the Monday talks, the IAEA team and Iranian officials reached an agreement which is "completely within the framework of national interests and security considerations and in accordance with the Islamic establishment's red lines."

"The agreement will facilitate technical interaction between Iran

and the agency," Kamalvandi said.

He added that Iran and the UN nuclear agency are determined to expedite joint cooperation with the purpose of solving outstanding issues.

The AEOI official said that the day-long IAEA delegation trip, which came just a few days after the agency's Director General Yukiya Amano paid a visit to Tehran, shows the two sides' resolve to strengthen constructive cooperation.

Kamalvandi expressed Iran's readiness to continue cooperation with the IAEA based on the agency's general regulations.

Amano held talks with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, Ali Shamkhani, on July 2. (Agencies)

Pakistan Speaks with 'One Voice' on Iran Nuclear Deal: Mushahid

ISLAMABAD/TEHRAN - Pakistani Senate Committee for Defence Chairman Mushahid Hussain emphasised that the whole Pakistan was in favor of Iran-P5+1 upcoming deal and Pakistan speaks with one voice regarding the final agreement. In an interview with IRNA on Tuesday, the Senator reiterated that there were no two views about this potential agreement in Pakistan. He stressed the government, the parliament and political forces, everybody here is in favor of Iran's nuclear deal. "First of all we are against the use of force, secondly, we are against any discrimination or double standards against

Iran, and thirdly, we feel any just and equal settlement on Iran nuclear issue would be good for the peace and stability in the region. So I don't think there are two views on that, whether they are people of Pakistan, the government or the parliament," he said. The parliamentarian said that any agreement between Iran and P5+1 should be welcomed as it is important for stability and regional peace.

The Senate chairman said that Iran nuclear issue has been lingering on for past many years but this time both the sides seem to be just few steps to reach a final agreement. (Monitoring Desk)

Presidents of Russia and Uzbekistan to open SCO Summit

BISHKEK - The summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will start with the talks of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Uzbek President Islam Karimov in Ufa.

During the SCO summit, Uzbekistan will take over SCO chairmanship from Russia, reported the press service of the Kremlin. The SCO members will discuss issues of development of strength-

ening of its role in the international arena. The leaders of the SCO member states will approve series of documents, including the SCO Development Strategy until 2025.

In addition, they will talk about the start of the admission of India and Pakistan to the Organization. By the end of the summit, Declaration of Ufa will be adopted, reported the source. (AKI Press)