U.S., Turkish Officials Hold Talks against IS Threat in Syria

ANKARA - Turkish and U.S. officials held talks yesterday about the threat posed by the Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq. The discussions were reportedly centered on the possibility of a potential Turkish intervention in Syria. The talks were reportedly held in the context of U.S. President Barack Obama's reported decision to send more troops to the region.

Neither side disclosed any details of the talks, and a Turkish Foreign Ministry official said that any potential cooperation with the United States would be subject to further consultation with the U.S. government.

European Commission Decides to Loan 600 Mln Euros to Ukraine

BRUSSELS — The European Commission announced on Wednesday that it had decided to give Ukraine a loan of €600 million to help the country stabilize its economy and support its transition to a market economy.

The loan, which is part of an €8 billion package of financial aid for Ukraine, is designed to support the country's efforts to tackle its debt problem and to help it move towards a more market-oriented economy.

SCO Not to Become Military Bloc Ever: Secretary General

SHISHKE - The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Secretary General has reaffirmed that the SCO is not a military bloc.

The decision was announced during a meeting of the SCO heads of state in Kyrgyzstan.

SCO Secretary General Kirsan Ilyumzhinov said that the SCO’s main goal is to promote regional stability and development.

Syria Ratifies Fresh $1 Billion Credit Line from Iran

BEIRUT - Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has signed a law ratifying a $1 billion credit line from Iran.

The line of credit is expected to be used to finance the country’s energy sector.

Russian Lawmakers Issue “Patriotic Stop-List” of NGOs

MOSCOW — The upper house of Russia’s parliament has called on the government to consider whether some prominent foreign organizations, including the MacArthur Foundation and Ford Foundation, which have supported some NGOs in Russia, are engaged in activities that are opposed to Russia’s interests.

The call was made by the head of the Senate’s International Affairs Committee, Vyacheslav Volodin, who said that the organizations are not necessarily supporting the interests of Russia.

Ukrainian Minister Hails Agricultural Cooperation with China

KIEV — Ukrainian Agriculture Minister Mykola Lebedev has praised the growth of agricultural cooperation with China and voiced hope that the collaboration would further be deepened.

"A steady increase in agricultural cooperation with China is a solid confirmation of the country’s economic potential," Lebedev said in his address to the Chinese delegation.

Other countries to facilitate win-win cooperation in the four-day fair trade deal, making it one of the most successful trade fairs in China.

In addition to 130 Chinese companies, the fair also featured a variety of Russian, Japanese, and Korean companies.

China Pavilion Opens at Industrial Trade Fair in Yekaterburg

YEKATERBURG - The China Pavilion opened at the Industrial Trade Fair in Yekaterburg. The pavilion features more than 130 companies from China, showcasing a wide range of products and services.

The fair is one of the largest industrial trade fairs in Russia and is expected to attract thousands of visitors.

UN Reports Civilian Deaths Toll in Yemen Tops 1,500

UNEP - The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) announced yesterday that the civilian death toll in Yemen has reached 1,500.

The figure includes those killed in airstrikes by Saudi Arabia-led coalition and those killed in battles between Houthi rebels and government forces.

Houthi rebels have control over the northern and central parts of the country, while the government holds the southern and southern-western parts.

Thailand’s Minister of Defense, General Yutthasak Sasiprom, has called for a peaceful solution to the crisis in Yemen.

Day of Uzbek Folk Songs

BISHKEK - Yekaterinburg hosted a Day of Uzbek Folk in the framework of the International Folklore Festival “Melodious Days of the World”.

The event was attended by representatives of Uzbekistan, Russia, China, and dozens of countries.

The festival is one of the largest international events, showcasing traditional music, dance, crafts, and arts created by Uzbek folk artists.

The festival attracts more than 130 Uzbek and foreign companies who perform at the venue.

The festival is an annual event held in Yekaterinburg and attracts more than 70 countries.

Chand Pavilion Opens at Industrial Trade Fair in Yekaterburg

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Sharif to Meet Modi in Russia

UFA, Russia - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Russian counterpart Nawaz Sharif will meet in Ufa today to sign a number of agreements under the framework of the SCO summit. The two leaders plan to sign agreements on energy, trade, and cultural exchanges.

The meeting comes ahead of the SCO summit in June, which will be attended by leaders from the six member states.

The talks are expected to focus on issues such as energy cooperation, trade, and cultural exchanges.

It is the second summit after the SCO summit in July 2015, which was attended by leaders from Russia, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

NATO’s “Agile Spirit 2015” Drill Kicks off in Georgia

Tbilisi - Georgian authorities kicked off NATO’s “Agile Spirit 2015” drill today, which is aimed at strengthening the alliance’s military capabilities in the region.

The exercise, which is an annual event, brings together NATO and partner countries to practice joint military exercises.

Several thousand of NATO’s and Georgian forces are taking part in the exercise.

The exercise is the first major joint exercise held by NATO and partner countries in Georgia since the 2008 conflict with Russia.

The exercise is expected to improve the readiness and interoperability of NATO and Georgian forces.

Putin Meets with Sharif in Russia

SAINT PETERSBURG - Russian President Vladimir Putin met with his Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, on Saturday in Saint Petersburg. The meeting comes amid growing tensions between Russia and Pakistan over the Syrian conflict.

The two leaders discussed a range of issues, including the situation in Syria and the prospects for bilateral cooperation.

The meeting was held as part of the Russian-Pakistani talks on the sidelines of the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum.

The talks are expected to focus on issues such as trade, energy cooperation, and security.

They held talks in Saint Petersburg, a major port city, and discussed a range of issues, including the situation in Syria and the prospects for bilateral cooperation.

Eventually, we will not share this vision for others, an Iranian diplomat, who was not identified, told the Reuters, adding that Pakistan indicated they had yet to receive any concrete proposals.

The biggest sticking point for Pakistan was the issue of a United Nations arms embargo, which remains in place.

The speed of sanctions being lifted and the development of economic relations between the two countries are “in our interest,” the Reuters, adding that Pakistan had not received any concrete proposals.

The meeting comes amid growing tensions between Russia and Pakistan over the Syrian conflict.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is scheduled to visit Russia later this month for a meeting with President Putin. The meeting is expected to focus on issues such as trade, energy cooperation, and security.

Sharm el-Sheikh - Egypt’s President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has arrived in Sharm el-Sheikh to attend the four-day summit of the Islamic Cooperation Conference (OIC). The summit is expected to focus on issues such as the situation in Syria and the prospects for bilateral cooperation.

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UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who is attending the summit, said that the focus would be on the situation in Syria and the prospects for bilateral cooperation.

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