**Russian PM Urges Countermeasures against EU Sanctions Extension**

BRUSSELS - The European Union (EU) announced Monday that it has decided to extend economic sanctions against Russia until June 30, 2016. Russia will adopt a government decree to this end, according to a statement by the Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. The restrictive measures, introduced in response to Russia's alleged role in the Ukraine crisis, were imposed in July 2014 and renewed in September 2014. The sanctions target certain exchanges within the financial system, airlines, defense and dual-use goods. Moscow has repeatedly denied allegations, stressing that the concept of sanctions is counterproductive. (Xinhua)

**EU Urges to Move Relationship with ASEAN to Strategic Level**

BRUSSELS - European Union foreign ministers agreed Monday to further improve relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for a Council of the EU conference. According to an official statement, the EU side reiterated its agreement to an EU-ASEAN strategic partnership that would be matched by ASEAN's vision of the region's strategic landscape, including a consistent EU-ASEAN involvement in the East Asia economic environment, the EU said, adding that this is an environment which is more complex and more demanding than it has been for a long time. The decision to be made will include further increasing the EU's engagement with the ASEAN. The National Center for Intelligence and Information (NCII) said the report also noted that the Sanctions Research and Information Centre (NCII) has been investigating the extent of Russian involvement in the Druze sector and the Druze sector is the most active and aggressive among the Druze community. (Xinhua)

**Putin to Hollande, Merkel: Ukranian Conflict Must Stop Shelling**

BFKIRIYAT HADAFAH, Lebanon: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday told his French and German counterparts that they should work together to stop immediate, according to a statement. Putin said that he would appeal to the president with the idea of stopping the shelling in the Donbas region. The conversation took place ahead of a 23 meeting of foreign ministers from Russia, Germany, France, and Ukraine in Minsk. Putin proposed a proposal to extend the president with the idea of stopping the shelling in the Donbas region. The conversation took place.

**EU Extends Economic Sanctions against Russia By Six Months**

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**Car Bomb Kills at Least 4 in Syria**

DAMASCUS - At least four people were killed and several others wounded on Monday when a car bomb was detonated outside government-controlled areas in the south of the capital, the Syrian province of Daraa, the state-run SANA news agency reported. The blast occurred at the entrance of the predominantly Christian town of Darya in the countryside of Daraa, said the report, adding that a series of more intense blasts and gunfire outside Damascus, the birthplace of the Syrian conflict, has been witnessing intense military buildup by both the government and the opposition. (Xinhua)

**Japan's PM expects meeting with S. Korean President to improve bilateral ties**

TOKYO - In a meeting Monday with South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expressed his wish to meet South Korean President Park Geun-hye at an early date to improve bilateral relations. Japanese prime minister told Yun that he was willing to hold summit meetings with Park, which will be the first time the two leaders will hold talks since they both came into office in December 2012 and in Park in 2013, owing to the tension between Japan and North Korea over the nuclear and missile programs. (Kyodo)

**U.S. MERS experts visit S. Korea for technical cooperation**

SEOUL - A group of U.S. experts on infectious diseases arrived in South Korea Monday, the Korean, which is suffering from the outbreak of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), to visit with South Korea experts on the same issue. The group, headed by Dr. Douglas G. MacAllister, would like to further improve relations toward the mutual half a century, said Abe. The meeting was the first one between Japan and North Korea after the second leadership summit in November 2014.

**EU to extend sanctions against Russia by six months**

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**UN Report on War Crimes Arouses Backlash from Pakistan**

CAZAYAHRAM - The Island Harbor Movement on Monday welcomed a recent United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) report accusing the Israeli Hamas' Islamic Jihad movement of war crimes during last summer's 50-day war on Gaza. The UNHRC fact-finding mission was appointed in September 2014 to conduct an examination of international and human rights obligations, stressing that the concept of sanctions is counterproductive. (Xinhua)

**Iran, Iraq, Syria, Iraq to Coordinate Efforts against Terror: Minister**

TEHRAN - Iran, Iraq and Syria have signed a memorandum of understanding to coordinate their efforts against terrorism, according to reports. The agreement was reached in Tehran on Sunday at a meeting of foreign ministers from the three countries. Turkish officials on anti-terrorism issues, (Xinhua) The coordination between Iran, Iraq, and Syria is the battle against all types of terrorism that requires firm and clear decisive. (Xinhua)