

Young Generation can Put End to Poverty, Climate Change: UNESCO Chief

BRATISLAVA - Today's young people are the first generation that can put an end to extreme poverty and the last that can resolve climate change, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova said in a lecture at Comenius University here on Friday. She described the young generation as the most traveled, educated and open-minded as well as one that carries the heaviest burden of transformation.

Bokova stressed that around 1.5 billion people currently live in conflict-stricken areas,



of which 40 percent are young people. There are also as many as 73 million youngsters that are unemployed. The UNESCO chief stated: "We're witnessing the destruction of cultural heritage

as well as a new global fight for the hearts and minds of mostly young people."

"When our planet and resources are being depleted, we can tap into the renewable energy of the human mind," said Bokova.

Bokova became UNESCO's tenth director-general on Nov. 15, 2009, making her the first woman and the first Eastern European to head the agency. In February, Bokova was named as Bulgaria's official candidate for the post of UN secretary general. (Xinhua)

Pope Francis Tells EU to Tear Down Migrant Walls

VATICAN CITY - Pope Francis said Friday he dreamed of a Europe in which "being a migrant is not a crime", as he urged EU leaders to "tear down the walls" and build a fairer society.

Invoking the memory of the EU founding fathers' pursuit of integration in the aftermath of World War II, the pontiff said they inspired because they had "dared to change radically the models" that had led to war.

"Today more than ever, their vision inspires us to build bridges and tear

down walls," he told a Vatican audience including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has been at the centre of the EU's attempts to resolve its biggest refugee crisis since the war ended in 1945.

And in a rhetorical flourish with echoes of Martin Luther-King's legendary 'I have a dream' speech, the pope said he dreamed of a new European humanism that embraced the poor, the elderly, the young and the sick.

"I dream of a Europe ... (More on P4)...(27)

Erdogan Rebuffs EU on Terrorism Law; 'We're Going our Way, You go Yours.'

ISTANBUL - President Tayyip Erdogan told the European Union on Friday that Turkey would not make changes to its terrorism laws required under a deal to curb migration, and declared: "we're going our way, you go yours". His fiery speech will be a blow to any hope in European capitals that it might be business as usual with Turkey after Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, who negotiated the migration deal with Europe and had largely delivered on Turkey's commitments so far,

announced he was standing down. The EU asked member states on Wednesday to grant visa-free travel to Turks in return for Ankara stopping migrants reaching Europe, but said Turkey still had to change some legislation, including bringing its terrorism laws in line with EU standards. "When Turkey is under attack from terrorist organizations and the powers that support them directly, or indirectly, the EU is telling us to change the law on terrorism," Erdogan said in a speech at the open-



ing of a local government office in the conservative Istanbul district of Eyup. "They say 'I am going to abolish visas and this is

the condition.' I'm sorry, we're going our way, you go yours. Agree with whoever you can agree," he said. (Reuters)

Russia Urges Strict Observance of Truce in Aleppo

MOSCOW - Russia on Friday urged strict observance of cease-fire in the war-ravaged Syrian city of Aleppo and an uncompromising struggle against terrorist groups that violate truce in Syria.

Russia, in coordination with the United States, is exerting all efforts so that the truce which has proven itself positively over the last few days in Northern Latakia and Eastern Ghouta, is reliably spread throughout Aleppo, spokeswoman of the Russian Foreign Ministry Maria Zakharova said at a

weekly briefing. A 48-hour truce called by Russia and the United States started in Aleppo at 1:00 a.m. Thursday (2300 GMT Wednesday) to bring a lull to the troubled city that has witnessed raging violence in the past few weeks.

Fierce violence in and around Aleppo has claimed the lives of more than 280 civilians since April 22.

Zakharova blamed Syria's Al-Qaida affiliate Al-Nusra Front for the latest escalation of hostilities in Aleppo, which has put truce



and intra-Syrian talks on the verge of collapse.

She called on all international and regional powers that have influence on armed groups in Syria to persuade their "fosterlings" to separate decisively from the Islamic State and Al-Nusra Front.

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8 Killed in Suicide Bomb Attack at Busy Market in N. Yemen

SANAA - At least eight people were killed and more than 17 others injured when a suicide bomb attack targeted a busy market in Yemen's northern province of Marib on Friday, a local security official told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

In Yemen's southern port city of Aden, where the government is temporarily based, unidentified gunmen opened fire from silenced weapons and killed the director of the city's Central Prison and his bodyguard in Mansou-

rah neighborhood. Witnesses said that "masked attackers ambushed the director of the central prison and killed him along with his brother in a main street."

No group has so far claimed responsibility for the two attacks, but the Yemen-based al-Qaida offshoot is believed to be behind most such attacks in the past, which usually targeted security and government officials.

Yemen, an impoverished Arab country, has been ... (More on P4)...(28)

IS Takes Advantage of Discord Among Libyan Military Powers

TRIPOLI - Libyan observers feared on Friday that the Islamic State might benefit from the current discord among the Libyan military powers regarding the fight to restore the IS-dominated Sirte.

Armed rival parties announced this week the start of the battle of Sirte against the IS, with the

UN-backed unity government objecting to the competition to lead the internationally-supported battle.

A few days ago, the parliament's army announced in a statement that it is ready to launch a military campaign to free Sirte from the IS. "The Supreme Commander of

the Army, Major General Khalifa Haftar, has put a plan to free Sirte and he is following up the implementation of the plan."

On the other hand, forces loyal to Libya Dawn militias announced the start of the "battle to free Sirte from the IS by launching airstrikes on sites of the ... (More on P4)...(29)

Greece Hit by General Strike As Gov't Plans to Push Reforms

ATHENS - Greece was hit by a 48-hour nationwide general strike starting on Friday as labor unions protested tax and pension reform bills that the government promotes in exchange of further aid by international lenders.

The protests in downtown Athens kicked off with a rally of trade union PAME.

The general strike affected public transport and other services. Ships will remain docked at ports until Tuesday, as the seamen federation has opted for a four-day strike. Metro, train and bus services have also been disrupted, while schools, banks, tax offices and courts remained closed, and hospitals were running on emergency services. Journalists un-



ions have also joined the strike, while delegations of farmers were heading to Athens to join the rallies.

The general strike was declared for Friday and Saturday by the umbrella trade unions of public and private sector employees ADEDY and GSEE and other unions, which reject

the government's plans to overhaul pensions and increase taxes, as demanded by international creditors.

The vote in parliament on the reforms was originally scheduled for around May 10, but the government on Thursday decided to speed up procedures and bring them forward on Sunday night. (Xinhua)

Russian S-300 Air Defense Missile Battery Takes up Duty in Belarus

MINSK - A battery of Russian-supplied air defense missile system S-300 has been deployed by the Polotsk District-based 377th Guard Air Defense Missile Regiment, the Belarusian Defense Ministry said on Thursday.

With a view to further develop and improve joint regional air defense system in the framework of military-technical cooperation between Belarus and Russia, anti-aircraft missile system S-300 batteries were delivered to the air force and air defense force of Belarus, two of them for military unit in Polotsk, the ministry informed.

Moscow and Minsk inked an agreement on Feb. 3, 2009 to establish a common air defense system.

The original S-300 system, also named SA-10 Grumble by NATO, was first deployed in the former Soviet Union in 1979 to defend the country against aircraft and cruise missiles. It has been modernized and currently regarded as one of the most potent air defense systems. According to ... (More on P4)...(30)

Hungary Plans Further Border-Tightening: Gov't Official

BUDAPEST - The Hungarian government is planning to introduce new measures to protect its borders, Karoly Kontrat, state secretary at the Interior Ministry told a news conference here on Friday.

The proposal is aimed at preventing any migrant from entering or staying in Hungary illegally, Kontrat said.

The changes, which require approval by parliament, call for allowing police to halt people within an 18-kilometer zone around the border and to move all persons who legally entered the country to a transit zone where they will have the opportunity to request asylum. The decision on whether to grant them refugee status will be an expedited one, Kontrat added.

Parliament is expected to begin debating the issue on May 17.

Meanwhile, government spokesman Zoltan Kovacs said that so far this year 10,000 people had been detained for illegally entering Hungary, while the number of people submitting requests for asylum is higher than that. (Xinhua)

Hamas Says Not Seeking War but will Fight Israeli Incursions

GAZA CITY - Hamas' leader in Gaza said Friday his Islamist movement did not seek war with Israel but would resist incursions into the Palestinian enclave, following the worst cross-border violence since the 2014 war.

Three days of mortar and tank fire between Israel

and Palestinian militants, as well as Israeli air strikes, have raised concerns of a new conflict in the Hamas-run territory.

Ismail Haniyeh accused Israeli forces of intruding nearly 200 metres (yards) into Gazan territory.

"We are not calling for a new war, but we will not

under any circumstances accept these incursions," he said in a Friday prayer sermon in the Gaza Strip. Earlier in the day Israeli aircraft carried out their fourth air raid on the Palestinian enclave since Wednesday, attacking sites at Beit Lahiya in ... (More on P4)...(31)

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Saudi Must Stop Interfering in Mideast: Iran Official

TEHRAN - A senior adviser to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says Saudi Arabia must stop interfering in the internal affairs of Middle Eastern countries. "Whenever Saudi Arabia stops meddling with [internal affairs of] other countries, particularly Muslim and regional states, we think that domestic, regional and international problems will have been resolved," Ali Akbar Velayati, who is the Leader's adviser on international affairs, said in an interview with IRNA on Friday. He added that neither Iran nor any other

country must interfere in the internal affairs of other nations, emphasizing that the Islamic Republic's presence in some regional countries including Syria and Iraq is based on the request of Baghdad and Damascus governments. "If we are present in Syria, [it is] based on a request by the country's legal government to [help] it protect the oppressed [Syrian] people against terrorists and criminals," Velayati pointed out. He, however, added that Riyadh is present in Syria upon a request by Takfiri groups which are nurtured by Saudis themselves. (PressTV)

Xi Calls for Building Competitive Human Resource System

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for reform in a bid to build a globally competitive human resource system. Xi made the remarks in an instruction for a seminar convened Friday on implementing a guideline on reform of the human resource system. Human resources are key to China's development, and overall national strength lies in the competitiveness of its talent, Xi said in the instruction, adding that reform efforts should be strengthened and the guideline should be fully implemented to attract global talent. He called for breaking systemic obstacles to attracting talent and unleashing their creativity and innovative capacity. Xi asked officials

to provide better services for talent and care for them to encourage them to contribute to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and achieving the "Chinese dream." Zhao Leji, member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, delivered Xi's instruction at the seminar. Liu Yunshan, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, said at the seminar that the reform should focus on implementing new development concepts, major projects and programs, and integrate human resources development with social and economic development. (Xinhua)

'No Difference Between Agitators and Terrorists': Sharif

SUKKUR - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Friday, while furthering his development agenda at the inauguration of the 393-kilometre-long Sukkur-Multan motorway, took another swing at his opponents, likening them to "terrorists" halting progress in Pakistan. In a harshly-worded statement, the prime minister said, "People should think twice about which side they want to be on." "What do terrorists do? They wish to halt progress

in Pakistan," he said. Referring to the opposition, he asked: "What is the agenda of those who agitate?" "Don't they try to stop progress in Pakistan? Don't they try to disrupt peace? What is the difference between them and terrorists?" he questioned. He thanked China for their investment in Pakistan. "This assistance would have come earlier if it weren't for the 'dharanas'," he said, referring to the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's (PTI) Islamabad sit-in. (Agencies)

Berdymuhamedov, OCA President Discuss Preparations for Asian Indoor Games



BISHKEK - Turkmen leader President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov met with President of the Olympic Council of Asia Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, who arrived in Ashgabat to attend the events marking 500-day countdown for the Asian Indoor Games.

The Turkmen President and Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah visited the Olympic village, which includes over 30 sports and related infrastructure facilities, including rehabilitation center, doping

control center, business and cultural centers, hotels for sportsmen and guests. A monorail stretching for 5,180 m is one of such facilities.

Turkmenistan attaches a great importance to the Asian Indoor Games and makes all necessary arrangements to host the Games duly, President Berdimuhamedov said during the talks with the OCA President.

The officials exchanged views regarding priority aspects of preparations for the Asian Indoor Games during the talks. (AKIpress)