

NATO Urged to Show Stronger Resolve on Russia, Boost Defense

TIRANA - NATO's Parliamentary Assembly urged member nations Monday to stand up to Russia's military assertiveness as a senior official vowed to strengthen forces along the alliance's eastern borders.

A unanimously approved declaration called on alliance members "to provide reassurance to those allies who feel their security is under threat, focusing on the eastern and southern flanks of the alliance."

The declaration sought to strengthen conven-



tional and nuclear deterrence measures, heighten NATO military preparedness, and boost coop-

eration with non-NATO members Sweden and Finland. All are expected objectives of the alli-

ance's July 8-9 summit in Warsaw, where Polish leaders already have appealed for stronger

NATO deployments in the east. The assembly president, American lawmaker

Michael R. Turner, declared that "Russia's aggressiveness comes with a price" as he appealed to European partners to boost defense spending. "Moscow has decided that its own interests are better served if it works against us rather than with us," said Turner, a Republican member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Ohio. "The challenge from Russia is real and serious." NATO Deputy Secretary-General Alexander Vershbow said NATO ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

Residents Return to Ravaged Turkish Town As Curfew Lifted

YÜKSEKOVA - Residents on Monday cautiously returned to a war-ravaged town in Turkey's southeast after authorities partially lifted a more than two-month curfew following a major operation against Kurdish militants.

The curfew in Yuksekova, which has been in place since March 13, was lifted between 6:00am and 8:00pm (0300-1700 GMT) and the hours are to be further extended during the upcoming Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, the local province of Hakkari

said in a statement.

After the measure was announced, hundreds streamed back to the town which lies in Turkey's extreme southeastern corner on the border with Iran and Iraq, an AFP photographer said.

On some streets, there were near apocalyptic scenes, with some buildings reduced to mountains of rubble while others sustained severe damage. Elsewhere, a young man walked through the devastation, waving a two-finger victory sign to passers-by.



Hakkari governor's office said that thanks to "successful operations" by the military, residents would again be able to live in "peace and tranquility". And it said that schools

which had been closed since March 14 would now reopen.

The Turkish military has carried out long, curfew-backed operations in a ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

Singapore Leaders Congratulate Incoming Philippine President

SINGAPORE - Singapore President Tony Tan Keng Yam and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong have written to president-elect of the Republic of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte, to congratulate him on winning the Philippines Presidential Election, following the official announcement by the Congress of the Philippines, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in a statement on Monday. Saying that Singapore and the Philippines are "old friends with strong ties," President Tan extended

an invitation to Duterte to visit Singapore.

"Our countries cooperate closely in ASEAN and internationally, including at the United Nations, to promote peace, stability and prosperity," Tan also wrote. Singapore Prime Minister Lee said that Singapore and the Philippines share close ties spanning many sectors, including trade and investment, culture and people-to-people exchanges. "Our bilateral relationship ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

NATO to Strengthen Defense, Deterrence At Warsaw Summit: Top Official

BRUSSELS - NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow on Monday discussed key issues on NATO's agenda for the Warsaw Summit in July, saying NATO leaders will take important decisions at the summit on strengthening the Alliance's defense and deterrence.

He made the remarks while addressing the spring session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Tirana, Albania, according to the NATO



press release.

"The summit will take place at a critical time for our Alliance, a time when our security and our values are facing significant challenges from the south

and the east," Vershbow said.

"I expect leaders at Warsaw to agree on an enhanced forward presence in the east of the Alliance, ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

Turkey, Libya in Discussion of Visa and Security Issues

TRIPOLI - Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu on Monday met with Libyan Prime Minister Fayez Serraj in the capital city of Tripoli to discuss a series of issues concerned.

Cavusoglu told a press conference following his meeting with Serraj that the Turkish visa will be granted electronically to Libya citizens in one month. Cavusoglu also said that Turkey hopes the security conditions in Libya will improve so the visa imposition can be lifted. Turkey imposed visa on



Libyan citizens in 2015 due to "insecurity and increased danger of terrorist groups" in Libya.

Cavusoglu stressed that Turkish companies are looking forward to return-

ing to Libya and resuming nearly 300 suspended projects since the uprising of 2011. The UN-backed government has been appointed based on a UN-...*(More on P4)...(19)*

S. Korean President Lands in Kenya for 3-Day State Visit

NAIROBI - South Korean President Park Geun-hye arrived Monday in the Kenyan capital Nairobi for a three-day state visit during which she will sign various bilateral agreements with her host President Uhuru Kenyatta.

Park who arrived in Nairobi from Uganda is on a tour of Africa which has also taken her to Ethiopia is expected to meet President Kenyatta, business leaders and later deliver a speech at the United Nations office in Nairobi.

According to South Korean ambassador to Kenya, Young Dae Kwon, Park who was sworn in as South Korea's first female president in 2013, arrives with a delegation of more than 200 people, including businessmen and government officials. Young said Memorandum of Understanding in security, health, agriculture, ICT, trade and culture will be signed in the tour.

"(South) Korea leads in e-government issues and that is what we would like to happen in Kenya because this will help in general growth economically, promote transparency and efficiency. We will also have agreements in security where we will share experience with Kenya on management of the border and terrorism among others," he said.

The envoy said South Korean health and supplementary food projects will also be inaugurated in her presence.

He said they have an agenda in the name of "Korea Aid," South Korea's new official development assistance...*(More on P4)...(22)*

US-Backed Syrian Alliance Widens Offensive Near IS Capital

BEIRUT - A U.S.-backed alliance of Syrian militias is widening an offensive against Islamic State near its de facto capital of Raqqa, targeting an area where the group controls a disused air base, a monitoring group and a Kurdish official said on Monday.

The Syria Democratic Forces (SDF), which includes the Kurdish YPG militia, launched an attack against Islamic State-held areas north of Raqqa city last week. The city itself is not a target of the current offensive however, the SDF has said. In an expansion of



the operation, the SDF is now targeting the IS-held area of Tabqa, some 60 km (40 miles), to the west of Raqqa city. IS captured Tabqa air base from government forces in 2014 at the height of its rapid expansion in Iraq and Syr-

ia, killing scores of Syrian soldiers there. The SDF forces are advancing toward Tabqa from Ain Issa, an SDF-controlled town some 70 km (40 miles) to the northeast. The Tabqa ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

Palestinian-US Dialogue Brings Hope to Boost Economy, Revive Stalled Peace

RAMALLAH - The recent U.S. promises to the Palestinians following a two-day economic dialogue between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the United States gave Palestine a new hope to ease the tight Israeli restrictions imposed on its economy.

Officials and analysts believe that the dialogue held in the West Bank city of Ramallah last week, which will be resumed in Washington soon, was a good

step forward not only to boost the Palestinian economy, but to keep pressure on Israel for further development in their growing economy.

Allam Mousa, Palestinian minister of communications and information technology, told Xinhua that his ministry received U.S. promises that it would intervene to ease Israeli restrictions imposed on the sector of communications and information technology. Mousa, a member in

the Palestinian delegation that held talks with the U.S. side, said the U.S. promises were made in response to a series of Palestinian demands to boost its economy in all fields.

The PNA delegation to the dialogue comprised Minister of Economy Abeer Ouda, Minister of Finance Shukri Bishara, along with representatives of government institutions. The U.S. delegation was headed by Assistant Secretary of State ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

Hungary Bolsters Anti-Migrant Fence on Serbia Border

SZEGED - Hungary said Monday it had begun reinforcing its anti-migrant fence on the Serbian border following an increase in arrivals after the evacuation of Idomeni camp on the Greece-Macedonia frontier. Last week, Greek officials moved some 8,400 people from the squalid, makeshift Idomeni encampment to reception centres elsewhere in the country.

But Hungarian authorities said some people had managed to make their way up the migrant route, despite the border closure imposed in mid February by many Balkan states in a bid to halt the influx to northern Europe.

"Following last week's closure of the Idomeni refugee camp, the number of migrants trying to cross Hungary's ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

S.Korea's Military Tracking Signs of Possible DPRK Ballistic Missile Launch

SEOUL - South Korea's military said on Monday that it was tracking signs of possible ballistic missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) after a Japanese broadcaster's report on it.

An official at South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) told Xinhua on the phone that it was tracking the signs of the DPRK's ballistic missile launch and has made complete preparations for possible launches.

The comments came after Japan's state broadcaster NHK reported that Japan had put its military on alert for possible DPRK ballistic missile launch in order to shoot down any projectile heading for Japan.

Japan's military reportedly advanced Aegis-equipped destroyers in the country's western waters and deployed Patriot PAC-3 anti-ballistic missile batteries in Tokyo and other areas to intercept possible ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

Neighbor News

Tobacco Kills About 100,000 People Annually in Pakistan

LAHORE - As many as five million people die in the world as a direct result of tobacco while about 100,000 people lost their lives annually in Pakistan, according to data given by the Tobacco Control Cell of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination. The data showed that about 22 to 25 million population was smoker out of which around 36 percent of adult males and nine percent of adult females were tobacco users in the country while use of 'Shisha' amongst the youth is an emerging health risk.

In 2025, 10 million people are expected to die from

this addiction while in 20th century, tobacco epidemic killed 100 million people world-wide and if this habit remains unchecked and uncontrolled, it could kill one billion during 21st century, the data showed.

Every year, like other parts of the globe, the World No Tobacco Day will be observed in Pakistan on Tuesday. On May 31, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and partners mark World No Tobacco Day, highlighting the health risks associated with tobacco use and advocating for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption. (Agencies)

Iranians Not Attending Hajj Due to Saudi Obstructionism: Official

TEHRAN - The head of Iran's Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization says Iranians will not attend this year's Hajj, blaming Saudi Arabia for creating obstacles in the way of Iranians seeking to perform the ritual.

In an interview with the Iranian media on Monday, Saeed Ohadi explained reasons why Iran has finally decided not to send its Hajj pilgrims to Mecca this year. He noted that after lengthy negotiations between the two sides, the government in Riyadh added 11 articles

to a memorandum of understanding signed between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which were not there in last years' Hajj agreements between the two countries.

Ohadi noted that the new articles added by the Saudi government, which tried to impose new restrictions on Iranian Hajj pilgrims, made it impossible for the Islamic Republic to accept the whole agreement as a result of which Iran will not be sending Hajj pilgrims to the holy city of Mecca this year. (PressTV)

Daughter of Tajikistan's President Elected to Upper Chamber of Parliament

DUSHANBE - Tajikistan's Khovar news agency reports that Ozoda Rahmon -- the daughter of President Emomali Rahmon -- has been elected as a senator in the country's upper chamber of parliament.

The 38-year-old Rahmon, the mother of five children, has been serving as President Rahmon's chief of staff since January 27.

Her election came on May 29 during a joint

session of councils of deputies from Dushanbe and its districts.

Unlike Tajikistan's lower chamber of parliament, lawmakers in the Majlisi Milli do not compete in a direct general election.

Twenty-five of the 33 senators are elected by secret ballot at joint sessions of regional, town, and district deputies. The other eight are appointed by the country's president. (Agencies)

Expo in Egypt Highlights Win-Win China-Arab Mutual Cooperation

NAIROBI - The 14th United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) slated to take place from July 17-22 in Kenya will kick start the global sustainable agenda, a senior Kenyan official said Monday. Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for foreign affairs Amina Mohamed told a media briefing in Nairobi that

the conference will represent a starting point of translating all the global commitments that that have been made so far. "The conference will provide a platform for shaping the world for the full benefit of all," Mohammed said. The conference will be the first UN ministerial conference of the post 2015 era. ...*(More on P4)...(25)*

Turkmenistan Approves National Plan to Fight Human Trafficking

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov has approved national plan to fight human trafficking in 2016-2018, the Turkmen government's message said Monday.

"Implementation of all planned activities and measures will directly contribute to ensuring human rights and freedoms, the strengthening of social and legal

protection of the population, as well as the improvement of the work carried out in this direction," said the message. Turkmenistan adopted the law "On combating human trafficking" in December 2007, according to which the Article 129 that provides the penalty of imprisonment was introduced into the criminal code. A special anti-human ...*(More on P4)...(26)*