

# Madrid Hosts Conference on NATO Strategy

MADRID - A conference dedicated to examining new threats towards NATO, such as those posed to the south of Europe by the rise of jihadist terrorism inspired by the Islamic State, was held Wednesday.

It was organized jointly by the public diplomacy division of NATO and the Elcano Royal Institute along with the participation of the Instituto Affari Internazionali and the Portuguese Institute of International Relations and Security.

NATO's Deputy Secretary-General Alexander Vershbow will attend



and will also take advantage of his two-day trip to Spain to talk to foreign representatives of the Spanish government. Spain, along with Italy and Portugal, is currently hosting Operation Trident Juncture 2015, which is the biggest NATO exercise since 2002.

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The operation, which involves over 36,000 NATO troops from 30 different countries, is designed to test NATO's Response Force and High Readiness Response Force in the face of "a changed security environment and challenges from the South and the East," including scenarios such as cyber-attacks, terrorism, conventional combat and the humanitarian crisis, such fighting would produce. (Xinhua)

## Nieghbor News

### Turkey to Provide 34 T-37 Aircraft to Pakistan free of Cost

ISLAMABAD/ANKARA - Pakistan and Turkey signed a landmark defence cooperation agreement Wednesday under which Turkey will provide Pakistan with 34 T-37 fighter cum training aircraft and its spare parts on a gratis basis.

The agreement was signed after the conclusion of the 11th Meeting of the Pakistan-Turkey High Level Military Dialogue Group (HLM-DG) in Ankara.

From Pakistan's side, the agreement was signed by Director General Defence Procurement Major General Naveed Ahmed while

from the Turkish side, Chief of Logistics Major General Serdar Gulbas signed the documents.

A joint communiqué from both Pakistan and Turkey was signed by Defence Secretary Lieutenant General (ret'd) Muhammad Alam-Khattak and Gen Yasar GULER, Deputy Chief of Turkish General Staff.

Defence Ministry spokesman Narita Farhan told media that the T-37 is a jet trainer light combat aircraft and Turkey, on Pakistan's desire, extended a fleet of 34 aircraft along with spare parts to Pakistan. (Agencies)

### US Secretary of State to Make the First-Ever Visit to Tajikistan

DUSHANBE - US top diplomat, Secretary of State John Kerry, is expected to visit Tajikistan for the first time.

The Department of State said that U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry will travel to Austria, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan from October 28 to November 3. Kerry will fly to Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan on Friday after talks on the crisis in Syria in Austria. The Secretary of State will travel to

Bishkek, Samarkand, Astana, Dushanbe, and Ashgabat to conduct bilateral discussions with senior government leaders in each country. This will be Secretary Kerry's first visit to Central Asia and the first-ever visit by a U.S. Secretary of State to all five Central Asian republics on the same trip.

In Bishkek, Kerry will participate in the opening of the new campus of the American University of Central Asia and dedicate the new chancery of the U.S. Embassy. (Asia-Plus)

### Chinese State Councilor meets UN General Assembly President

BEIJING - Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi met with United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) President Mogens Lykkesøft on Wednesday.

Yang hailed the fruitful summits held in September to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. He said the meetings will have a significant impact on enhancing the future

role of the transnational body and the development of international relations.

"China will continue to support the work of the UNGA," Yang vowed.

Lykkesøft praised China's contribution to the success of the summits and its positive role in UN affairs, expressing his willingness to cooperate more with China. (Xinhua)

### Iran Launches Website for Information on Road, Urban Services



TEHRAN - In an exhibition kicked off in the capital Tehran on Wednesday, Iran launched a website to avail the citizens with the information on road and urban development projects as well as the relevant services.

The exhibition aims to spotlight on the security of the traffic on the roads and the future of the urban development, Iran's Minister of Road and Urban Development Abbas Akhondi told Xinhua.

Besides, "people should have free access to the information at any stage of the projects for the road and urban development plans," Akhondi said.

"The first step to fight bureaucratic corrup-

tion is to be transparent over giving information to the people," he said, adding that to this end "we have tried to provide people with direct access to all the road and urban development services by launching Shahrah website."

The website will offer myriad of services including investment opportunities in road constructions and city projects, he said.

The transparency of information is the best way for the management of urban discipline and utility, he added. Some 150 state companies and NGOs have attended "Iran 5th Road and Urban Development" exhibition, which will last until Saturday. (Xinhua)

### Germany Strikes Sharper Tone on Refugees as Merkel Sinks in Polls

BERLIN - Germany toughened its rhetoric on Wednesday in response to an accelerating influx of asylum seekers, pledging to step up deportations of migrants and accusing its neighbor Austria of trying to push refugees over their common border after dark.

The sharper tone from Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere came as a new poll showed support for Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives slumping to a three-year low over her handling of the refugee crisis. She has been pummeled by her conservative allies in Bavaria, the southern state where most migrants are entering Germany from Austria, for refusing to commit

to measures to stem the tide.

On Wednesday, Germany's top-selling newspaper Bild reported that Horst Seehofer, the premier of Bavaria and head of the Christian Social Union (CSU), was considering pulling his party's three ministers out of Merkel's cabinet in Berlin in protest at her policies.

Although Seehofer has delivered a series of ultimatums in recent weeks that he has not followed through on, the report underscored how serious tensions within the federal government have become as hundreds of thousands of migrants, mainly from Syria and Afghanistan, stream into Germany. (Reuters)

### Refugees Stuck in Greece with no Place to go Further in Europe

ATHENS - Over 300 migrants are lying in Victoria Square in central Athens. Most of them are Afghan men, in their early or late 20s. They arrived Tuesday morning at Athens' main port Piraeus and began their journey in Athens, one of their first stops in continental Europe. However, with many European Union (EU) leaders talking about closing their borders, the refugees may get in stuck in Greece longer than they originally thought.

They are waiting for the buses that will transfer them to the refugee camps around Athens. Their hope is to stay there for two or three days and then continue their long journey towards northern and western Europe.



They are not so sure anymore about their destination but most of them reply in broken English: Germany or Sweden. They are aware that EU countries leaders talk about closing the borders but refugees hope they can still make it. A 16-year-old Afghan explains on condition of anonymity that he has already

paid 3,500 U.S. dollars in order to reach Europe and since he arrived in Greece, he has no longer worried about paying any smuggler. So far, the most difficult part of his journey was in the Iranian border where he was beaten up. He described his life in Afghanistan as "difficult, unbearable." "They kill

us!" So he chose to leave. MohammadhassibSoltani, 25, has been travelling for more than 40 days. He left Afghanistan and entered Iran where he was beaten by soldiers and had his bags and money stolen. In Turkey, again, border soldiers attacked him and sent him back to Iran. (Xinhua)

### France to take Part in Vienna talks on Syria

PARIS - France will participate in talks on Syrian crisis scheduled for Friday in Vienna, government spokesman Stephane Le Foll said on Wednesday. At a briefing after a weekly cabinet meeting, Le Foll announced that Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius would attend the upcoming meeting on Syrian conflict later in the week. On Friday last week, France missed the latest round of Vienna talks on Syria during which U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry met with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov along with foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Three days later, Paris held separate talks on Syria which



according to Le Foll was "a preparation for Vienna meeting." "France continues to hold dialogues with everyone, especially with Russia and Iran. France favors that Iran will be invited (and) all parties will be present,"

said the government's spokesman, who is also agriculture minister. Later on Wednesday, Fabius would hold phone talks with Lavrov, according to Le Foll. Diplomatic efforts to end peacefully the four-year long civil war were

shrouded with doubt as the United States, European states and Arab allies set the departure of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad as a pre-condition for negotiating a political transition in Syria, which Russia rejects. (Xinhua)

### Austria to Build Fence Along Parts of Border with Slovenia

VIENNA - Austria, a strong critic of building of fences to keep out refugees, announced plans Wednesday to erect border barriers of its own, but insisted the move was aimed solely at bringing order to the river of people entering the country.

The announcement threatened to ignite a chain reaction along the land route in Eastern Europe used by those seeking a better life in prosperous European Union nations. Slovenia, the main entry point into Austria, also said it was ready to build a fence, while Hungary has been championing the success

of its razor-wire border fences with Serbia and Croatia and plans another one with Romania. Germany, the country of choice for many fleeing regions torn by war and hardship, also signaled its intention to reduce its load of asylum-seekers. Syrian citizens are mostly being accepted, but Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere said many of the Afghans pouring into the country will likely be sent home. "People who come to us as refugees from Afghanistan cannot all expect to be able to stay in Germany," he said, adding that Afghans will be considered on a case-by-case basis. (AP)

### Migrant Crisis Could be Fixed by "Stopping Boats": Tony Abbott

CANBERRA - Former Australian prime minister Tony Abbott said on Wednesday that Europe's migrant crisis could be fixed by closing borders to asylum seekers.

Abbott, delivering a speech to the annual Margaret Thatcher Lecture in London, said European nations risked making a "catastrophic error" in allowing too many migrants to pour into established countries, saying it could destabilize them and create a new wave of poverty.

"All countries that say 'anyone who gets here can stay here' are now in peril, given the scale of the population movements that are starting to be seen. There are tens, perhaps hundreds, of millions of people, living in poverty and danger, who might readily seek to enter a Western country if the opportunity is there," Abbott said.

Drawing upon his hard-line "stop the boats" campaign which was widely regarded as a major reason Abbott was voted in at the 2013 election, the former prime minister said it was the only way of stopping the potentially catastrophic "surge" of illegal immigrants. Abbott told the conservative party dinner that... (More on P4)... (17)

### Ukraine's Business Environment Improves: World Bank



KIEV - Ukraine went up to the 83rd place in the latest World Bank business ranking, which signals that the country has become more business-friendly, a senior World Bank official said here Wednesday.

"The advancement by four notches is a significant improvement in a single year," Fan Qimiao, the World Bank country director for

Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, told reporters, when commenting on the bank's "Doing Business 2016 Report" published on Tuesday. The reform to shorten business registration from 40 days to 7 days was the key factor behind the improvement of Ukraine's position in the ranking, Fan said.

The ranking, which evaluates how easy it is to conduct business

in 189 global economies in reference to 10 indicators, also noted progress in Ukraine in terms of getting electricity and registering property.

Among the indicators showing downward trend, the World Bank listed the issuing of construction permits, credit provision, the protection of minority investors and tax payment. (Xinhua)

### Nepal Parliament Elects First Female President

KATHMANDU - Nepal's parliament on Wednesday elected Bidhya Devi Bhandari, Vice Chairperson of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), as the country's first female president.

Bhandari, 54, has been the second president of the Himalayan country after it became the federal democratic republic in 2008 ending a 240-year Monarchy. The election came after the Himalayan country promulgated a new constitution on Sept. 20. Bhandari secured 327 votes to become the president when 541 lawmakers cast ballots out of 597 in the presidential election while her rival, Nepali Congress leader KulBahadurGurung garnered 214 votes.

Bhandari has replaced Ram Baran Yadav who was appointed on July 23, 2008 as the country's first head of the state. Bhandari, a communist leader in Nepal belonging to the country's second largest party CPN (UML), secured majority votes as she was backed by the third largest party UCPN-Maoist, the fourth largest party Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (Nepal) and other fringe parties in the Nepali Parliament. (Xinhua)