West Ceasing to Oust Assad to Help Fighting IS: Russian FM

MOSCOW - The international community will struggle with the Assad regime in the future if the resignation of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is not considered, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov declared Wednesday.

"If we remove the problem of the issue of unilateral sanctions and counter-sanctions, which is one of the sources of conflict between Russia and the West," Lavrov said, "we won't have to fight against terrorism, but may work effectively against it." He added that Assad should step down, Russian officials quoted.

"We don't want those who support terrorism to remain in power," a Russian official said Wednesday.

The UN Security Council unanimously adopted a draft resolution Tuesday that calls for Syria's president to announce his resignation so the political transition can begin.

Putin's Europe

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel met with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday to discuss the situation in Ukraine and the detention of Russian symbol Alexei Navalny.

"The communist regime is a government of war and violence," Merkel said in Berlin. "With the coming of spring, we will be right in the center of the conflict with them, but we will continue to work with them." She added that the European Union was prepared to impose sanctions on Moscow if there was no progress in the conflict.

The European Commission on Tuesday approved the EU's plan for business initiatives in Russia, including infrastructure projects and energy cooperation.

"The sanctions are not aimed at achieving political results but at encouraging dialogue between the two sides," shredded a European official.

Economic sanctions will be imposed on Russia in the coming months, said the European Commission on Tuesday.

"These sanctions are a response to the failure of the talks with the Russian government," an official said.

The sanctions come on top of new economic measures imposed by the EU on Russia, said an official.

"These measures are targeted at key sectors of the Russian economy," an official said.

The sanctions are expected to last a year, said an official.

Novelists Protest Against Hungary Shutters Budapest Train Station

BUDAPEST - Hundreds of angry migrants demonstrated outside Budapest's Eastern Railway Terminus on Tuesday to demand free travel on to Germany, as authorities in the Hungarian capital closed the border to migrants from Serbia.

"We are not criminals," said one protestor. "We are just people trying to leave for a better life." The protesters waved tickets, clapped, sang, chanted slogans and shouted "Germany! Germany! Germany!" in front of the railway station. Later they sat down, against a police barricade.

Millions of India's Workers Threaten 24-Hour Strike

NEW DELHI - Millions of Indian workers are set to strike Wednesday to protest against recent government decisions and policies viewed as harmful to the working classes. The strike, known as a "Maha Kisan" (great farmers) movement, is expected to affect industrial, rural and agricultural activities nationwide.

"We are against these anti-labour policies," said a trade union leader. "The government is trying to change the benefit to the benefit of the capitalists." The trade unionists are calling for a general strike on Wednesday.

The government has ordered police to prevent the strike from taking place.

"A general strike is the only way to stop the policies of the government," said a trade union leader.

"We are against the policies that are aimed at destroying the economy," said another union leader.

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