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1. TOP STORIES

Donbas situation deteriorates

Active shelling of the antiterrorist operation positions and civilian facilities from the territories controlled by the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics continues.

Read more in ARMED CONFLICT IN EAST UKRAINE.

Power supply from Ukraine to Crimea stopped

Ukrainian power supply to Crimea is disrupted after electricity pylons in Kherson Region were blown up.

Read more in CRIMEAN ISSUE.

Greece, Belgium ratify EU-Ukraine association agreement

The parliaments of Greece and Brussels ratify the EU-Ukraine association agreement.

Read more in INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL.

2. ARMED CONFLICT IN EAST UKRAINE

Militants continue shooting at Ukrainian servicemen, civilians

The situation in the combat zone in Donbas has deteriorated over the past week, the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces has said.

According to the antiterrorist operation (ATO) press centre, the positions of Ukrainian ATO troops and civilian facilities continue to be actively fired upon from anti-aircraft guns, mortars, grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms.

It also said that separatists shelled population centres with Grad multiple-launch rocket systems several times.

On 17 November, the trilateral contact group demanded an immediate cease-fire in Donbas.

European Commission chief offers EU-EurAsEC trade ties if Minsk deals honoured

European Commission President **Jean Claude Juncker** has written Russian President **Vladimir Putin**, suggesting closer ties between the EU and the Moscow-led Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) if the Minsk deals are implemented, according to Reuters.

The European Commission confirmed that Juncker had written to Putin but said he had made no new commitments in the letter.

Western leaders inclined to extend sanctions against Russia by six months - media

At the G20 summit in Turkey's Antalya on 15-16 November 2015, the leaders of the

USA, Germany, the UK, Italy and France agreed to extend sanctions against Russia by another six months, Reuters has quoted a diplomatic source as saying.

The decision to extend the sanctions was adopted with a view to continuing exerting pressure on Russia ahead of local elections on separatist-held areas in Donbas, the agency said.

The Wall Street Journal earlier said that the EU was on course to renew the economic sanctions against Russia imposed in the wake of the Ukraine crisis. In addition to being extended, the sanctions may also be expanded, it added.

German MPs illegally visit Donetsk separatists

German Bundestag MPs **Wolfgang Gehrcke** and **Andrej Hunko** from the De Linke party paid another visit to the self-proclaimed separatist Donetsk people's republic on 19 November 2015.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry has criticized their illegal visit to the temporarily occupied part of Donetsk Region.

This is the second visit of the German MPs to the separatist-held area of Ukraine's Donbas.

3. CRIMEAN ISSUE

Crimea cut off from electricity

Ukrainian power supply to Crimea was disrupted in the early hours of 22 November 2015 after electricity pylons in Kherson Region were knocked down by an explosion.

At the same time, pro-Ukrainian activists blocked any access to the damaged power lines. MP **Mustafa Dzhemilyev**, a member of the Petro Poroshenko Bloc and former head of the Crimean Tatar self-styled government Majlis, has said that the protest is being coordinated by Crimean Tatars. He explained that any negotiations on restoring power supply to Crimea can be held only after Ukrainian political prisoners in the annexed peninsula and Russia are released.

Crimea is currently partly meeting its demand for electricity with the help of local generating facilities. The self-proclaimed head of Crimea, **Sergey Aksenov**, has said that a schedule of emergency blackouts has been rolled out.

In response, Russia stopped shipping coal to Ukraine which uses it at its thermal power plants.

Crimean court prolongs arrest of Majlis deputy head

The Simferopol Kievskiy district court has decided to keep **Akhtem Chyyhoz**, a deputy head of the Crimean Tatar self-styled government Majlis, in custody until 29 January 2016, thus prolonging his term behind bars.

Chyyhoz was arrested in Crimea on 29 January 2015 on suspicion of organizing and taking part in mass riots on 26 February 2014. He was remanded in custody.

Government banned freight traffic flow across the border with Crimea

On 23 November, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted a decision to temporarily ban freight traffic flow across the administrative border between Ukraine and Crimea.

Previously, on 4 November, President **Petro Poroshenko** addressed Ukrainian Prime Minister **Arsenii Yatsenyuk** a proposal to set up a task force to analyse the issue of ceasing freight traffic flow and ceasing goods circulation with occupied Crimea.

It is to remind that the Crimean Tatars have been blocking the cargo traffic to Crimea since 20 September.

4. INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL**UKRAINE-RUSSIA****Russia to impose food embargo on Ukraine as of 2016**

Russia is planning to impose food embargo on Ukraine as of 1 January 2016 in response to Kiev joining the financial and economic sanctions against Moscow, Russian Economic Development Minister **Aleksey Ulyukayev** has said.

UKRAINE-EU**European Commission says Ukraine implements visa-free travel action plan**

European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations **Johannes Hahn** has said that the European Commission's internal documents show that Ukraine has completed the implementation of the action plan on visa liberalization, with a European Commission evaluation pending in December.

Greece, Belgium ratify EU-Ukraine association agreement

The parliaments of Greece and Brussels ratified the EU-Ukraine association agreement on 18 and 20 November 2015 respectively.

Ratification in Belgium is subject to the approval by the Federal Parliament, regional parliaments and the Brussels parliament, which was the last to ratify the association agreement.

Ukrainian president pays official visit to Italy

President **Petro Poroshenko** paid an official visit to Italy on 19-20 November 2015.

According to the Ukrainian presidential press service, Italian President **Sergio Mattarella** promised Poroshenko to make sure that the Ukraine issue remains high on the agenda despite the developments in Syria. He also confirmed his country's firm belief that the sanctions against Russia should be extended until it fully meets the Minsk agreements.

The Ukrainian president was also granted an audience with **Pope Francis** and a meeting with Vatican Secretary of State cardinal **Pietro Parolin**.

UK to allocate 1m pounds in technical support for Ukrainian army

UK Defence Secretary **Michael Fallon** has said that London will allocate 1m pounds in technical support for the Ukrainian army for the winter period.

5. DOMESTIC POLITICAL

People's Front to quit coalition if PM sacked

Ukrainian Prime Minister **Arseniy Yatsenyuk** has said that he will accept any decision by the Supreme Council (parliament) regarding the government's future following the cabinet's report on the results of its work over the past year, which is scheduled for December.

At the same time, Yatsenyuk noted that if parliament votes for his dismissal, the People's Front faction will quit the coalition.

Criminal proceedings launched following mayoral runoff in Kryvyi Rih

The adviser to the interior minister, **Zoryan Shkiryak**, has reported that a criminal case over forgery by official has been opened following the second round of the mayoral election in Kryvyi Rih city (Dnipropetrovsk Region).

It should be recalled that the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) officially declared **Yuriy Vilkul** (Opposition Bloc party), who gained 49.25 percent of the votes, the winner of the mayoral runoff in the city. His competitor **Yuriy Myloboh** (Self-Help party) received support from 48.83 percent of the voters.

Following the vote, Myloboh leads in six of the seven districts of Kryvyi Rih. Vilkul won the majority of the votes only in the city's Inhuletskyi district. As noted by the Self-Help party, the abnormal voter turnout recorded in the district indicates that the election results were rigged.

For his part, CEC head **Mykhaylo Okhendovskyy** said that he had no reason to question the results of the mayoral election in Kryvyi Rih.

It should be noted that activists are holding rallies in Kryvyi Rih, demanding that the results of the mayoral runoff be cancelled.

Mayoral runoffs in Ukraine meet international standards - ENEMO

The head of the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) mission, **Zlatko Vujovic**, has said that the second rounds of the local elections in Ukraine were held in compliance with most international election standards, although certain legal provisions leave room for doubt and discussion.

In particular, the observers noted that there had been the lack of transparency in financing of election campaigns, unequal access of candidates to mass media and unbalanced representation of candidates in election commissions.

6. ECONOMY

Fitch, Moody's raise Ukraine's rating after debt restructuring

Fitch Ratings has raised the long-term issuer default rating (IDR) of Ukraine in

foreign currency from 'RD' (restricted default) to 'CCC'.

The short-term IDR in foreign currency was upgraded from 'RD' to 'C'.

The rating upgrade reflects, in the first place, Ukraine's emergence from default on commercial external debt and the issuance of new bonds to holders of 15bn dollars in defaulted Eurobonds on 12 November.

Moody's followed Fitch Ratings by also upgrading on 20 November the issuer rating of Ukraine's government from 'Ca' to 'Caa3'. The rating outlook was changed from 'negative' to 'stable'.

GDP drops by 7 percent in third quarter

The State Statistics Service has reported that Ukraine's GDP in the third quarter of 2015 fell by 7 percent as compared with the same period of the previous year.

According to the Economic Development Ministry, the country's GDP over the first nine months of 2015 declined by 12.6 percent against the respective period in 2014.

Earlier, the EBRD worsened the GDP growth forecast for Ukraine in 2015 from -9 percent to -11.5 percent.

Fitch also worsened Ukraine's economic forecast, expecting its GDP to decline by 10 percent in 2015 compared to 9 percent predicted earlier.

Ukraine-Russia trade turnover halved over nine months

The State Statistics Service has reported that the trade turnover between Ukraine and Russia for the first nine months of 2015 fell by more than two times. Specifically, Ukrainian exports to Russia decreased by 55.6 percent to 3.6bn dollars compared to 8.1bn dollars recorded in the same period of the last year. Imports of goods from Russia declined by 47.9 percent to 5.5bn dollars.

However, Russia remains Ukraine's largest trading partner with 12.8 percent of exports and 20 percent of imports.

Government suspends privatization of Odessa portside plant

Ukrainian Prime Minister **Arseniy Yatsenyuk** has said that his government has suspended the privatization of the Odessa portside plant, one of Ukraine's biggest chemical enterprises, due to shortcomings in the privatization mechanism and the lack of fresh valuations of privatization objects.

The Odessa portside plant is the country's second largest producer of ammonia and carbamide and the third largest manufacturer of nitrogen fertilizers. The company also performs transshipment of chemical products coming from CIS countries for exports.

7. ENERGY

Cabinet approves new Ukrtransnafta director

Ukrainian Energy and Coal Industry Minister **Volodymyr Demchyshyn** has said that the cabinet has approved the appointment of **Mykola Havrylenko** as director of the Ukrtransnafta company.

Havrylenko's appointment as director is subject to approval by the general shareholders meeting of Ukrtransnafta.

Havrylenko was one of the three shareholders of the Vik Oil network of fuel filling stations. He was also director of the Vik Oil network, which comprised 118 stations at the time of its sale to TNK-BP in 2010.

It should be recalled that Ukrtransnafta, whose shares are under the management of the state-run energy company Naftohaz Ukrainy, operates the national oil transport system in Ukraine.

Ukrtranshaz liquidates its subsidiary in Donbas

The Ukrtranshaz company has liquidated its subsidiary Main Gas Pipelines Administration "Donbastranshgaz" in connection with the ongoing changes in the company's structure.

It should be noted that Ukrtranshaz, which is by 100 percent owned by the state-run energy company Naftohaz Ukrainy, operates a system of main gas pipelines and 12 underground gas storage facilities in Ukraine.

Enerhoatom wins 175m-dollar lawsuit against it

The Kiev Administrative Court of Appeal has overturned the ruling by the District Administrative Court of Kiev to recover 4.2bn hryvnias (175.6m dollars) from the Enerhoatom company in favour of the State Fiscal Service's central office for large taxpayers.

Founded in July 2010, Gorshenin Weekly is a weekly digest of expert analysis covering the most important political, social and economic events in Ukraine. It is the key source of information about opinion polls carried out by the Gorshenin Institute as well as the best professional commentaries on recent developments.

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