

## China's BYD Successful Model of U.S.-China Cooperation

LOS ANGELES - China's leading electric vehicle maker BYD held a ceremony on Wednesday to mark the completion of the 300th electric bus at its Lancaster manufacturing plant in the U.S. state of California. "Do right one time, one team BYD."

Hundreds of excited American workers were cheering, colorful balloons bobbed toward the sky, and a big blue ribbon fluttered in the breeze.

"Three hundred electric buses is a significant milestone. And one million miles of emission-free transportation is pretty cool," said Frank Girardot, BYD's vice president of communications, referring to BYD's customer Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA), which is expected to realize 1



million miles (1.6 million km) of zero-emission bus operations in early May. AVTA has ordered 85 electric buses from BYD, and 25 buses have been delivered up to now, according to the company.

Local, state and international officials who attended the ceremony agreed that a concerted U.S.-China effort allowed BYD North America and the city of Lancaster to take the lead in the business of manufacturing zero-

emission electric buses.

"The U.S. and China working together ... This is a successful model that the rest of the country could use to achieve similar success," said Lancaster Mayor R. Rex Parris, in an interview with Xinhua. Michael D. Antonovich, former Los Angeles County supervisor and Metro board chairman, signed a contract with BYD's Senior Vice President Stella Li in 2013 for 25 all-electric buses from the company, as part of the County's 30-million-U.S.-dollar clean air bus technology pilot project.

"There were some skeptics when BYD chose Lancaster as home to its operations. Now these same skeptics are true believers, ... (More on P4)...(14)

## Neighbor News

### Pakistan Announces Release of 360 Indian Fishermen

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan's Foreign Ministry says officials will release 360 Indian prisoners detained for fishing illegally in the country's territorial waters in the Arabian sea. Mohammad Faisal, ministry spokesman, said Friday the anglers will be freed in four batches starting April 15. Pakistani and Indian maritime agencies frequently arrest each other's fishermen on charges of illegal fishing. The de-

tainees often languish in prison until such goodwill gestures are shown from either side. Friday's announcement comes days after Pakistani and Indian soldiers traded fire in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, killing seven Pakistanis and three Indians. Both sides blamed each other for violating a cease-fire in the region, which is split between them and claimed by both in its entirety. (Fox News)

### Iran Goes Nationalist as Islamism Declines

TEHRAN - Forty years after the 1979 revolution, Islamism is exhausting itself as a legitimizing force for Iran. Studies sponsored by the Iranian government show that resentment toward the state's religious symbols is at an all-time high.

According to the research arm of the Iranian parliament, around 70 per cent of Iranian women do not strictly follow the official diktats for wearing a veil. Anticlerical sentiments have turned violent. Regardless of their ties to the government, clerics are routinely attacked and stabbed in the streets by angry anti-regime individuals.

Iran is responding by cautiously downplaying Islamism and emphasizing nationalism and foreign threats to win over disgruntled citizens. Iran's leaders acknowl-

edged the societal shift away from Islamism by making unprecedented references to nationalism and showing their determination to incorporate patriotic sentiments into the state ideology during the 40th anniversary celebrations of the revolution in February.

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has repeatedly appealed to Iranians to back the government, even if they do not endorse its Islamist ideology, for the sake of their country and for their own security. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which was established to preserve the Islamic Republic and the ideals of the 1979 revolution, now portrays itself as the guardian of the nation and the symbol of Iranian power against foreign aggression. (Gulf News)

### India Caught Between Superpowers in 'Star Wars' Arms Race, Says Expert in Space Politics

NEW DELHI - From partnering with Russia in space to a defense alliance with Japan against the rise of China's orbital weapons, India finds itself facing global challenges created by competing superpowers, an expert on space policy told RT. Dr. Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, a Distinguished Fellow and head of the Nuclear and Space Policy Initiative at Observer Research Foundation, said India in the modern era is engaged in a balancing

act when it comes to outside partnerships in space. Following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of a manned space mission last year, India's space agency inked a deal with the Russian State Corporation for Space, Roscosmos, to cooperate in creating a global navigation system and on sending an Indian astronaut into orbit by 2022 - the 75th anniversary of the country's independence from British rule. (RT)

### With Brexit, Britain Is in Crisis and Not for The First Time

LONDON - Few would argue that Britain is in what is often referred to as a bit of a pickle. A crisis in fact, undoubtedly of historic proportions. With the country mired in confusion and recrimination over how to leave the European Union, many of Britain's centuries-old institutions have clogged up, struggling to meet the challenges of Brexit.

Anthony Seldon, the historian and the vice chancellor of the University of Buckingham, calls it the "biggest political and constitutional crisis" to

afflict the country in 300 years - since the Glorious Revolution of 1688 when King James II was replaced by the joint monarchy of King William III and Queen Mary II. A look at some of the other crises that have beset Britain since the end of World War II: SUEZ CRISIS Before Brexit, arguably the biggest crisis of British diplomacy and its standing in the world occurred in 1956 in the Suez Canal, which connects the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. When



Egypt's leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser, nationalized the canal, Britain, in secret, along with France and Israel, joined forces to take control of it.

Worried about a potential Soviet intervention, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower warned the coalition to withdraw. ... (More on P4)...(15)

### Turkey's Opposition Worries as Istanbul Votes Go to Recount



ISTANBUL - The mood among opposition supporters in Turkey's biggest city is one of jubilation but also worry - fear that their

win in Istanbul's mayoral race could be overturned in a recount taking place after the ruling party challenged the election results.

In an unexpected setback to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the opposition party's quarter-century-

old stronghold of Ankara, the capital, in Turkey's local election last Sunday. The opposition also won a tight race in Istanbul, the country's financial and cultural capital, where Erdogan himself rose to power as mayor in 1994. The opposition made these gains despite an election that international observers say was not fair. Turkish media covered Erdogan's constant campaign appearances on behalf of his party but did not give remotely similar coverage to opposition candidates. (Fox News)

### Netanyahu Plays A 'Trump Card' as Israeli Elections Near

JERUSALEM - In a tight race for re-election, Israel's prime minister has gotten a welcome lift from his friend in the White House. Benjamin Netanyahu's campaign speeches, billboards and social media videos have all heavily featured President Donald Trump's image, statements and pro-Israel actions as endorsements of the long-seated prime minister. Drawing inspiration from Trump, Netanyahu has dismissed a corruption case against him as a "witch hunt" and his Likud party has launched

a weekly webcast to counter what it claims is "fake news" broadcast by mainstream media. For Netanyahu, the close ties with Trump are a welcome change after eight frosty years with the Obama administration, which repeatedly clashed with the prime minister over his policies toward the Palestinians and his opposition to the nuclear agreement with Iran. Upon taking office two years ago, Trump quickly reversed course and established a tight relationship with Netanyahu. (AP)

### Tajik Parliament Speaker Visits Qatar for Participation in 140th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly

DUSHANBE - Speaker of Tajikistan's lower house (Majlisi Namoyandagon) of parliament (Majlisi Oli), Shukurjon Zuhurov has left for Qatar for participation in the 140th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), reports Trend citing to news.tj While in Doha, Shukurjon Zuhurov will hold a number of bilateral meetings with high-ranking Qatari state officials to discuss inter-parliamentary cooperation between the two countries, Muhammadto Sultanov, a spokesman for the Majlisi Namoyandagon, told Asia-Plus in an interview. According to him, Zuhurov will also dis-

cuss with Qatari high-ranking officials issues related to attraction of investments in Tajikistan's economy and employment of Tajik labor migrants in Qatar. Recall, Tajikistan and Qatar have signed a government-to-government agreement on regulation of recruitment of manpower from Tajikistan.

The document was inked by Ms. Sumangul Taghoizoda, Minister of Labor, Migration and Employment of Population of Tajikistan, and Mr. Yousef bin Mohamed al Othman Fakhro, Minister of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs of Qatar, in Doha on February 3. (Trend)

### U.S. Count Shows No Pakistan F-16s Shot Down in Indian Battle: Report

NEW DELHI - Pakistan's F-16 combat jets have all been accounted for, U.S.-based Foreign Policy magazine said, citing U.S. officials, contradicting an Indian air force assessment that it had shot down one of the jets in February. India and Pakistan engaged in an aerial battle over the disputed region of Kashmir a day after Indian jets crossed over into Pakistan to attack a suspected camp of anti-India militants. An Indian jet was brought down during the fight and its pilot captured when he ejected on the Pakistani side of the border. India said it, too, had shot down a Pakistani aircraft and the air force displayed pieces of a missile that it said had been fired by a Pakistani F-16 before it went down. (Reuters)

### Croatia's Former PM Sanader Jailed for Corruption: Supreme Court

ZAGREB - Former Croatian prime minister Ivo Sanader has been jailed for a corruption conviction after the Supreme Court increased his sentence above the level that requires him to go to prison. Sanader was taken from his home to prison late on Thursday. In 2017, a lower court sentenced Sanader to four-and-a-half years, below the five year threshold that would require him to go to prison, pending the Supreme Court ruling. The Supreme Court has not so far made his exact sentence public, but Croatian media reported he had been jailed for six years. Sanader, who was prime minister from 2003 to 2009 when he stepped down without giving an explanation, has always denied the charges. (Reuters)

### 'Security Risk & Lawbreaker': German MP Says 70yo NATO Should Retire

BERLIN - German lawmaker Alexander Neu lambasted NATO for conducting aggressive wars and raking up defense spending, suggesting Germany should quit its military command, and the bloc be dissolved altogether. NATO's 70th birthday is "not a reason to celebrate, but rather an occasion to finally rethink it, before it's too late," Neu wrote in Die Freiheitliche blog on Thursday. The lawmaker from the opposition Left Party slammed the US-led mili-



tary bloc as an organization that poses "significant security risk to the world" and "systematically violates international law." NATO revealed its true colors when it waged an

"aggressive war" against Yugoslavia without the UN's approval, and carried out numerous interventions, which claimed the lives of "countless victims," Neu argued. (RT)

### Japanese Probe BOMBS Ancient Asteroid to Look Inside It

TOKOYO - The Japanese space probe Hayabusa2 has launched an explosive device at the asteroid it is exploring, aiming to create an artificial crater and take a look inside. The Japanese Space Exploration Agency (JAXA) confirmed that Hayabusa2 "has carried out operations to separate the SCI (Small Carry-on Impactor)" in a statement on its website. The probe then moved out of the blast zone, ducking behind the other side of the same asteroid - Ryugu, or 'Dragon Palace,' located almost 300 million kilometers from Earth. The impactor was expected to deto-

nate 40 minutes after launch, but JAXA will not know for certain if it worked as intended until late April. For now, it has provided a picture of the detached explosive, taken with Hayabusa2's onboard camera. Small Carry-on Impactor separated from Hayabusa2 © JAXA, The University of Tokyo, Kochi University, Rikkyo University, Nagoya University, Chiba Institute of Technology, Meiji University, The University of Aizu, AIST The 'bomb' sent a 2kg (4.4-pound) copper "impact head" at the asteroid in order to create an artificial crater. (RT)

### NASA's Curiosity Rover Captures 2 Solar Eclipses on Mars

LOS ANGELES - NASA's Curiosity rover has captured two solar eclipses on Mars over the past few weeks caused by Phobos and Deimos, Mars' two moons, according to a NASA release on Thursday.

Curiosity captured the eclipses by its Mast Camera (Mastcam), and sent some spectacular imagery back to the earth. Phobos, which is about 11.5 kilometers across, was imaged on March 26, 2019. Deimos, which is about 2.3 kilometers across, was photographed on March 17, 2019. According to NASA, Phobos doesn't completely cover the sun, so it would be considered an annular eclipse. As Deimos is so small compared to the disk of the sun, scientists said it's "transiting" the sun.

In addition to capturing each moon crossing in front of the sun, one of Curiosity's Navigation Cameras (Navcams) observed the shadow of Phobos on March 25, 2019. As the moon's shadow passed over the rover during sunset, it momentarily darkened the light. Solar eclipses have been seen many times by Curiosity and other rovers in the past. These events helped researchers fine-tune their understanding of each moon's orbit around Mars.

Mark Lemmon, a co-investigator with Curiosity's Mastcam, said before the Spirit and Opportunity rovers landed in 2004 that there was much higher uncertainty in the orbit of each moon. (Xinhua)

### Saudi Arabia May Support Financing of TAPI Gas Pipeline Project

ASHGABAT - Saudi Arabia may support the financing of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, Trend reports with reference to the Saudi newspaper Al-Riyadh. Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources of Saudi Arabia Khalid Al-Falih said that the company Saudi Aramco believes that gas reserves concentrated in Turkmenistan are among the biggest ones in the world. The company is studying the issue of supporting financing for the project of a giant pipeline from Turkmenistan, which will be connected to India through a number of countries, the minister added. "Saudi Arabia's support of gas exports from

Turkmenistan to India is the biggest shift in world trade of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for India," the minister said. Al-Riyadh notes that Saudi Arabia as a whole promotes joint investments in the countries of the Caspian region in the sectors of petrochemistry, oil, gas, mining, renewable energy and others. Earlier it was reported that Saudi Aramco is considering the possibility of investing in the production of oil and gas in Turkmenistan. The King of Saudi Arabia Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in his letter to President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov a year ago drew attention to the fact that the Saudi Fund for Development supported the construction of the TAPI gas pipeline. (Trend)