

# Iraq Summit Brings Together Rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran

BAGHDAD - A summit organized by Iraq is bringing together regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran to bridge relations and invest in Iraq. Iraqi Parliament Speaker Mohamed al-Halbousi is heading the one-day summit between Iraq and its six neighbors: Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Jordan, and Kuwait. The summit underlines a shift to Iraq's foreign policy, placing the country as a mediator between neighbors who are often at odds over weighty issues, such as the civil war in Syria, and U.S. sanctions against Iran. Iraqi leaders have emphasized Iraq's sovereignty since elections last year, and they say it is vital to Iraq's security and economy to develop good relations with the neighbors.



The country is seeking billions of dollars in aid and investment to help it rebuild after 15 years of war. (Fox News)

## South Asia Has Tremendous Trade Potential: Ruwan

ISLAMABAD - Ruwan Edirisinghe, President SAARC Chamber Saturday said South Asia has tremendous trade potential, which needs to be tapped for greater economic integration by fully exploiting all indigenous natural resources to make the region an abode of peace, progress and prosperity. He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of prominent trade leaders led by SAARC CCI Senior Vice President Iftikhar Ali Malik held

here today. Ruwan Edirisinghe stressed that core trade issues should be addressed and Pakistan's role in that regard would be vital as prosperity was not possible without restoring peace in the region. He said since its inception, the SAARC Chamber has facilitated regional cooperation in various areas for the welfare of people of South Asia. The SAARC should be more active to address major challenges faced ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

## BRI Provides World with New Development Methods: Thai Expert

BANGKOK - The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) offers new development methods to other countries as it was put forward by China based on China's experience of development in the past 40 years, a Thai expert told Xinhua recently. Gen. Surasit Thanadtang, the director of the Thai-Chinese Strategic Research Center, National Research Council of Thailand, told Xinhua in an interview on Wednesday that the BRI, especially its five cooperation priorities,

namely policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and relationship of culture and people, points out a new, or alternative development method for countries participating in BRI cooperation. "Since the 1900s, the world followed the Western method of development, modernization is defined by Western standards, while now the BRI, based on China's development experience, shows us another way," Surasit



said. The director of the research center described the BRI as a stage for countries participating in BRI cooperation to communicate and to exchange. "I really like the BRI principle of extensive consultation, joint ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

## Key Events in Egypt Since the 2011 Pro-Democracy Uprising



CAIRO - Here are key events in eight years of turmoil and transition in Egypt, leading up to a national referendum on constitutional amend-

ments that could allow President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi to remain in power until 2030. Feb. 11, 2011: Autocrat Hosni Mubarak steps

down after 18 days of nationwide protests against his nearly 30-year rule. The military takes over, dissolving parliament and suspending the constitution after the uprising leaves hundreds of protesters dead in clashes with security forces. Nov. 28, 2011-Feb. 15, 2012: The Muslim Brotherhood wins nearly half the seats in multi-stage elections for the first post-Mubarak parliament. June 30, 2012: The Muslim Brotherhood's can-

didate Mohammed Morsi takes office as Egypt's first freely elected president. Aug. 12, 2012: Morsi removes the defense minister and military chief, Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, and replaces him with Lt. Gen. Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi. Nov. 22, 2012: Morsi unilaterally decrees greater powers for himself, a move that sparks days of protests. Dec. 15-22, 2012: Egyptians approve a constitution drafted and hastily ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

## Japan Asks Pentagon to Share Military Airbase for Civilian Flights During 2020 Olympics

WASHINGTON - Japan has asked the Pentagon for permission to use its own military airstrip, currently shared with US forces, during the 2020 Olympic Games. An Air Force spokesman said the US is "excited" to consider the proposal. Tokyo is seeking to increase its passenger capacity during the competition in July and August 2020 by making use of the Yokota Airbase, which currently houses the US Air Force and Japanese Air Self-Defense

Force. Transforming the base into a dual-use airstrip would alleviate congestion at Narita and Haneda airports, the two main hubs servicing the capital, the Japanese government believes. The US, which has never left Japan since World War II, had agreed back in January to allow some civilian aircraft to cross airspace typically reserved for American forces. However, it fears that granting civilian jets permission to ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

## Russian Embassy Calls for End of 'Smoke and Mirrors' in Tit-For-Tat Response to Mueller Report

MOSCOW - It was no surprise that the Mueller team, which did so much to prove a "hollow and laughable" Russiagate conspiracy, delivered no tangible result, the Russian Embassy in the US said in its own report on the issue. The embassy responded to the much-anticipated report by Robert Mueller and his team just two days after it was made public on Thursday. In a massive 120-page paper, the diplomatic mission debunked key Russiagate claims, including allegations of meddling in the 2016 US election, involvement in the DNC hack attack, and Donald Trump's alleged collusion with Russia. The publication also featured a long list of "groundless accusations" made by US mainstream media, politicians and experts in relation to the Russiagate conspiracy theories. It notes that the tremendous efforts made by the Mueller team to find any sign of collusion had failed. ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

## Populists Expected to Gain Seats in May's EU Elections

BRUSSELS - The European Parliament is predicting that nationalist, populist and anti-migrant groups will make significant gains in the May 23-26 EU elections but says it thinks mainstream parties will keep control over the assembly. Projections released Thursday suggest the center-right European People's Party will remain the biggest group, with 180 seats in the 751-seat parliament, down 37 seats. The center-left Socialists and Democrats would drop from 186 to 149 seats. ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

## 3 Candidates Vie for North Macedonia Presidency

SKOPJE, North Macedonia - Three candidates are vying for the presidency in North Macedonia, where voters go to the polls on Sunday for the first round of elections. The post is largely ceremonial, but the election is seen as a key test of the government following deep polarization after the country changed its name to end a decades-old dispute with neighboring Greece over use of the term "Macedonia." Here is a look at the three candidates, all of whom are university professors: Gordana Siljanovska Davkova, 63 - The first woman to run for president since the country



declared independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Known for her love of yoga and rock-and-roll, Siljanovska, a constitutional law professor, first emerged as a non-partisan candidate promoted by her university. Her nomination is now supported by the main conservative opposition VMRO-DPMNE party. ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

Siljanovska campaigned under the slogan "Justice for Macedonia, fatherland calls." She has been a vocal opponent of the deal with Greece that changed the country's name to North Macedonia in return for Athens dropping its objections to the country joining NATO. Siljanovska served as ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

## India Launches Its 3rd Ship of Project 15B Guided Missile Destroyer Imphal in Mumbai

MUMBAI - India launched its third ship of Project 15B, Guided Missile Destroyer Imphal Saturday at Mumbai's Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd., a defense ministry release said. With a launch weight of 3,037 tons, the vessel made its first contact with water at 1220 Hours with full fanfare

during the launching ceremony. The first two ships INS Visakhapatnam and INS Mormugao out of the four in Project 15B were launched in April 2015 and September 2016, respectively. The fourth vessel in the project INS Porbandar is under construction. (Xinhua)

## North Korea Slams Bolton's 'Dim-Sighted' Call for Sign of Denuclearization

SEOUL - North Korea has criticized U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton's "nonsense" call for Pyongyang to show that it's serious about giving up its nuclear weapons, the second time it has criticized a leading U.S. official in less than a week. U.S. President Donald Trump has said he is open to a third summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, but Bolton told Bloomberg News on Wednesday there first needed to be "a real indication from North Korea that they've made the strategic decision to give up nuclear weapons." "Bolton, national security adviser of the White House, in an interview with Bloomberg, showed above himself by saying such a nonsense," North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui told reporters when asked about his recent comments, the Korean Central News Agency said on Saturday. "Bolton's remarks make me wonder whether they sprang out of incomprehension of the intentions of the top leaders of the DPRK and the U.S. or whether he was just trying to talk with a certain sense of humor for his part, with its own deviation," she said, referring to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea's official name. "All things considered, his word has no charm in it and he looks dim-sighted to me." The North ...*(More on P4)...(19)*

## Neighbor News

### Pakistan Takes Steps to Boost Border Security with Iran

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan Foreign Minister on Saturday shared six steps the country has taken to ensure security of Pak-Iran joint border ahead of Prime Minister Imran Khan's maiden official trip to Iran. Addressing a press conference, Shah Mehmood Qureshi said he had a detailed conversation on the recent incident of terrorism in Pakistan's Balochistan with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif. Prime Minister Imran Khan is set to visit Iran for a two-day official visit starting tomorrow (Sunday) on the invitation of the President of Iran, Hassan Rouhani. Shah Mehmood Qureshi during the briefing shared steps

that have already been taken, keeping the sensitivity of the border in mind, in order to make it a 'border of peace' and to ensure stability. He said a new southern command has been formed to create ease in vigilance and prompt action. The command will be headquartered in Turbat and has been formed so that the border can be manned more effectively than previously. He said another initiative for better border security is that new Frontier Corps force has also been raised to increase border patrolling. The minister said joint border centers will be formed for check and balance along the border. (Monitoring Desk)

### Rouhani Assures of Govt. Aid on Visit to Flood-Hit Provinces

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani has visited Iran's flood-stricken provinces of Lorestan and Khuzestan to assess relief operations and pledged to unsparingly support the affected families. The president took part in a coordination council meeting at Disaster Management Headquarters of Lorestan Province Saturday before visiting the badly-hit city of Pol-e Dokhtar. "God willing, we will stay with you until your life returns to normal. All the thoughts and efforts of the Leader [of the Islamic Revolution]

tion Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei] are to rebuild this region," he told locals. "We will also stand with you; all the Armed Forces, the Basij and the people will do," the president added. Rouhani was accompanied by his chief of staff and ministers of interior; roads and urban development; energy; intelligence and agriculture Jihad. Speaking at the coordination council meeting, Rouhani said the experience gained during the floods should be used to prepare for possible disasters in the coming years. (Press TV)

### Turkey Interested in Supplying Energy Resources of Caspian Basin to World Markets

ASHGABAT - Turkey is interested in supplying energy resources of the Caspian basin to the world markets, Fatih Donmez, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of Turkey, said following a trilateral meeting with the ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, a number of adopted documents, common regional interests and joint projects such as the Afghanistan-Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey transport corridor, the Trans-Eurasian Super-informational Highway and the restoration of the Great Silk Road form a strong base for cooperation in a trilateral format. (Trend)

meeting, issues related to the current state and prospects for the development of cooperation between the countries in the energy sector were discussed. It was noted that successive meetings of the ministers of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, a number of adopted documents, common regional interests and joint projects such as the Afghanistan-Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey transport corridor, the Trans-Eurasian Super-informational Highway and the restoration of the Great Silk Road form a strong base for cooperation in a trilateral format. (Trend)

### S. Korean President to Visit Samarkand to Highlight Friendship with Uzbekistan

TASHKENT - South Korean President Moon Jae-in was set to visit Uzbekistan's historic city of Samarkand Saturday, highlighting his country's long friendship with the Central Asian nation that he says dates back to the era of the Silk Road, Trend reported citing Yonhap. Moon's trip to the city comes one day after he and Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev agreed to upgrade the countries' relationship to a "special strategic partnership" in their bilateral summit here. Seoul and Tashkent established diplomatic ties in 1992. Their relationship was upgraded to a strategic partner-

ship in 2006. Moon says the friendship between the two countries dates back hundreds of years when they were connected by the ancient network of trade routes, the Silk Road. "Uzbekistan's development is South Korea's development. South Korea will gladly share its experience of economic development with Uzbekistan," Moon said in an address to the Uzbek parliament Friday. Samarkand is one of the oldest cities in Uzbekistan and Central Asia. It is known to have been frequented by merchants from countries in the region, including ancient Korean dynasties. (Trend)