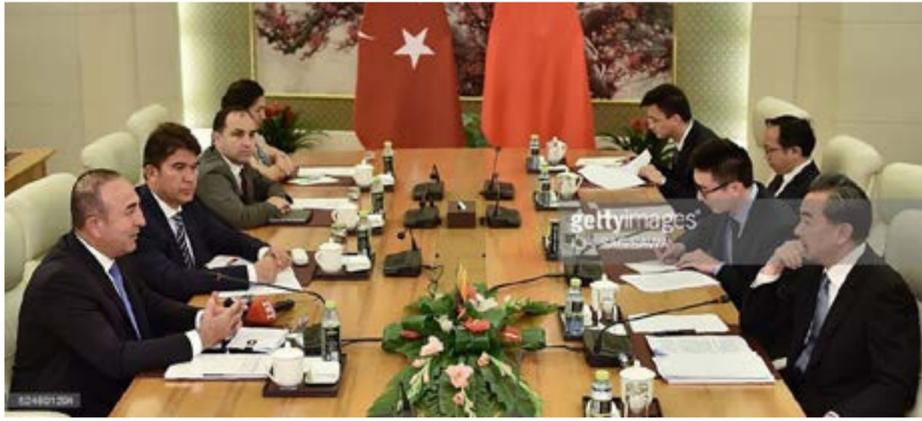


China, Turkey Pledge to Strengthen Anti-Terrorism Cooperation

BEIJING - China and Turkey on Wednesday pledged to strengthen anti-terrorism cooperation, such as fighting the terrorist group the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM).

The pledge came during a meeting between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu, who is in Beijing for a foreign ministers' meeting on Asian security.

"Anti-terrorism and security cooperation are important components of China-Turkey political trust. Both sides should work closely



to combat terrorist organizations including the ETIM, oppose extremism

and address illegal immigration," Wang told Cavusoglu. Cavusoglu said

Turkey treats China's security concerns as its own and will take all necessary

measures to enhance bilateral cooperation in this regard, echoing Wang's

remarks about combating illegal immigration and the ETIM. Turkey will continue to attach importance to China's security concerns and will never allow anybody in Turkey to engage in activities that threaten China's security, Cavusoglu said. Cavusoglu came to attend the fifth foreign ministers' meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), on Wednesday and Thursday. As China and Turkey are founding members of the CICA, China is willing to work with Turkey ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

Russia Urges Formation of Broad Int'l Anti-Terrorism Front

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday urged the establishment of a broad international front against terrorism under United Nations (UN) auspices. "To effectively combat this global threat (of terrorism), the entire international community should exert concerted and energetic efforts," Putin said in an address to the fifth Moscow International Security Conference. Putin stressed that the formation of a broad front against terrorism

should be based on international laws and conducted under UN auspices. During the conference, several senior Russian officials made their own suggestions regarding the fight against terrorism. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov suggested every country involved thoroughly analyze mistakes made during anti-terror missions, and warned against using terrorists as instruments for certain political goals. Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu for his part urged



more efforts on financially devastating the terrorists in Syria, who largely rely on oil smuggling. Secretary of Russia's Security Council Nikolai

Patrushev noted the importance of information exchange with other countries on the movement of terrorists and ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

Greece Seeks Emergency EU Summit to Unlock Further Bailout Aid

ATHENS - Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras is seeking an emergency EU summit to unlock the immediate payment of further bailout aid to Athens, the Greek national news agency AMNA reported Wednesday, citing government sources. The initiative follows the latest impasse in negotiations between the Greek government and envoys of the country's international creditors. Greek cabinet ministers were optimistic over the past few weeks

that by May 1, Greece would have reached an agreement with its lenders on the next set of measures, which would clear the way for the release of the next payment and the start of talks on debt relief. However, the first review of the third bailout program since 2010 Athens clinched last summer has not been concluded despite marathon negotiations. The same government sources, according to the news agency, put the ...*(More on P4)...(25)*

Russian FM Urges DPRK to Abandon Nuclear Ambitions

MOSCOW - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) should refrain from irresponsible actions and attempts to achieve nuclear status, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Wednesday. "At the same time we believe that it is dangerous and counterproductive for some countries to use this situation as an excuse to increase their military presence in Northeast Asia," Lavrov said here at the Moscow Conference on International Security. He added that it was necessary to create reliable

mechanisms to "ensure equal and indivisible security" in the Asia-Pacific region. "Mechanisms should be set up on non-aligned approaches, principles of respect for international law, and refusal to carry out or support any action aimed at overthrowing governments or undermine the stability of other countries," Lavrov said. In March, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution to impose the toughest sanctions to date on the DPRK to curb its nuclear and ...*(More on P4)...(26)*

13,000 Operations Canceled as Thousands of British Junior Doctors go on Strikes

LONDON - Thousands of junior doctors in Britain are taking part in the fifth round of industrial action over a long-running dispute over pay and working hours, leaving about 13,000 operations canceled during this week's strikes. It is the first time that emergency care, including accidents and emergencies, maternity and intensive care, has been withdrawn in the National Health Services' (NHS) 68-year history. The full withdrawals would take place be-

tween 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. local time on Tuesday and Wednesday. Senior doctors and other health care staff provided such services over this period. The key point of the disagreement focuses on a long-running dispute over pay, working hours and patient safety. Negotiations failed between junior doctors and the British government, so the government announced that a new contract would be imposed as from this summer. Four out of five junior doctors took part



on Tuesday, with some hospitals losing up to 90 percent of junior doctors, local media reported. However, it said most hospitals coped well, while no patient safety

incidents were reported. However, about 13,000 operations and 113,000 outpatient appointments have been canceled because of the strikes. ...*(More on P4)...(27)*

Turkey PM Says Draft Constitution will Guarantee Secularism

ANKARA - Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu on Wednesday pledged that Turkey's draft constitution would guarantee secularism after calls for a religious charter sparked controversy in the predominantly Muslim country. "Secularism will feature in the new constitution we draft as a principle that guarantees citizens' freedom of religion and faith and that ensures the state is at an equal distance from all faith groups," Davutoglu said in a televised speech. He said Turkey's secular and democratic character was "not up for debate" under the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which has been in power since 2002. Parliament speaker



Ismail Kahraman on Monday said the country "must have a religious constitution", triggering fears that the AKP government was seeking to Islamise the traditionally secular country. The call led to protests on Tuesday in major cities where police fired tear gas and rubber bullets to

disperse demonstrators in Ankara and Istanbul. Kahraman's comments also drew fire from opposition parties, prompting the speaker to release a statement saying he had been expressing his own opinion, not that of the AKP of which he is a member. (AFP)

AU Calls for Youth De-Radicalization in Somalia

MOGADISHU - The African Union top envoy for Somalia on Wednesday called for de-radicalization of youth in Somalia and shield them from victimization by Al-Shabaab terrorists. AU Special Representative for Somalia Madeira Francisco said countering radicalization of the Somali youth was necessary

to curb terrorism in the Horn of Africa nation. "We are going to concentrate on de-radicalization. We are going to sensitize the youths that they are being misled by these murderers; that joining these people is not a good idea and that these people stand for evil," he said in a statement issued from African Union Mission in

Somalia (AMISOM). Madeira told an engagement forum in Mogadishu that though extensive progress has been made against Al Shabaab, more needs to be done to curtail its ability to spread terror. He said AMISOM with the help of its development partners will continue helping Somalia ...*(More on P4)...(28)*

Putin Orders Space Program Shake-up after Launch Delayed

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin told his space officials to raise their game on Wednesday after he flew thousands of kilometers to watch the inaugural launch of a rocket from a new spaceport, only for it to be called off. With moments to go before the launch of an un-

manned Soyuz rocket, officials had to postpone early on Wednesday morning because a fault was uncovered with the rocket. They rescheduled for 24 hours later, but there was uncertainty about whether the second attempt would go ahead. The episode was the latest

in a series of problems to beset the Vostochny cosmodrome. A prestige project for Putin, it is intended to phase out Russia's reliance on the Baikonur cosmodrome, in ex-Soviet Kazakhstan, for launching its rockets into space. Several people involved ...*(More on P4)...(29)*

Italian PM Renzi Says Austrian Border Plans are Shameless

ROME - Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi on Wednesday denounced plans by Austria to curb migrant flows by tightening border controls at the Alpine Brenner Pass between the two countries. The Austria plan was "shamelessly against European rules, as

well as being against history, against logic and against the future," Renzi said in a statement posted on his website. He cited figures showing that the number of migrants reaching Italy via the Mediterranean this year were no higher than in 2015 and 2014, and argued

that this showed alarm over immigration was "exaggerated". Austria is considering building a 400-metre border fence at the Brenner crossing, the police chief for the province of Tyrol said on Wednesday, according to the Tiroler Tageszeitung newspaper. (Reuters)

Neighbor News

Pakistan Steps up Islamic Finance in Infrastructure Deals

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan is stepping up its use of sharia-compliant financing to fund infrastructure deals, which could help to promote the use of longer-term transactions in Islamic finance. Islamic deals are backed by specific assets, which makes them convenient for infrastructure projects. But traditionally, Islamic bonds and loans have shorter tenors - often around five years - than their conventional equivalents. This is partly because Islamic markets are generally not as deep and liquid, and products are not as standardized. Also, Islamic banks mostly hold short-term deposits on their books. This month, however, Pakistani banks arranged 100 billion rupees (\$955

million) worth of 10-year Islamic bonds (sukuk) for a hydropower plant, the largest infrastructure deal to use Islamic financing in the country. Opportunities for similar deals are growing with \$45 billion worth of domestic infrastructure projects planned by Pakistan's government under an initiative dubbed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), agreed between the states in 2014.

Islamic banks have become increasingly willing to manage any mismatch between their short-term deposit bases and such long-term projects, said Abdullah Ghaffar, head of investment banking at Al Baraka Bank Pakistan. (Agencies)

UNSC Meeting on Gulf of Guinea Piracy Helps Cooperation: China

BEIJING - China said on Wednesday the UN Security Council (UNSC) open debate on fighting piracy in the Gulf of Guinea has helped build international consensus and enhance cooperation on the issue. As an important international shipping passage and energy base, the Gulf of Guinea has fallen victim to frequent piracy and armed robbery at sea in recent years, which poses serious threats to the safety of navigation as well as regional peace and security, said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying at a daily press briefing. The Security Council open debate, initiated by China, Angola and Senegal, has earned attention and positive

responses from the international community, said Hua. China holds the rotating UN Security Council presidency for April. The Security Council has previously held meetings on fighting piracy in the Gulf of Guinea in 2011 and 2012. The Security Council issued a presidential statement, a consensus document from the 15-member panel expressing unanimous will, after the open debate held on Monday, calling on West African states to fight piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and urging regional organizations to enhance sub-regional, regional and international cooperation on maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea. (Xinhua)

Uzbekistan Strategic Partner and Reliable Ally of Russia: Putin

DUSHANBE - Russian President Vladimir Putin met Uzbek President Islam Karimov, who was in Russia on an official visit. According to the Kremlin press service, the presidents discussed the further development of bilateral relations in many areas and cooperation in the framework of the CIS and SCO. They exchanged views on current issues of the regional and international agenda. A number of documents were signed in the two leaders' presence following the Russian-Uzbekistani consultations. These documents include an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the export

of military products to other countries; an inter-governmental program of cultural and humanitarian cooperation for 2016-2018; a program of cooperation between the foreign ministries of Russia and Uzbekistan for 2016-2017; a memorandum of understanding between the Russian Sport Ministry and the Uzbekistani Culture and Sport Ministry on cooperation in physical training and sport; and an agreement on research and academic cooperation between the Bauman Moscow State Technical University and the Tashkent Institute of Railway Engineering. (Asia-Plus)

Iran Capable of Producing Inter-Continental Missiles: Diplomat

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian diplomat says the country's scientific power has made it capable of producing inter-continental missiles, stressing that Iran's military doctrine is based on defense. "Our country's power is increasing, and today we have no restrictions in defense fields, as in our missile program, we have no technical limits anymore," Hamid Baei-

dinejad said in remarks published on the Basirat website. Baeidinejad is the Iranian Foreign Ministry's director general for political affairs and the Basirat website is affiliated to the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). "Today, our scientific power has provided us the opportunity to even produce intercontinental ...*(More on P4)...(32)*

27 Yemeni Soldiers Killed in Mukalla Offensive

ADEN - At least 27 Yemeni soldiers were killed in a government offensive, backed by Saudi-led forces, which drove Al-Qaeda militants out of a key southeastern city, military officials and medics said Wednesday. Life, meanwhile, was returning to normal in the port city, residents said. More than 60 other soldiers were wounded in the operations that began at the weekend and saw government forces recapture Mukalla, the provincial capital of Hadramawt, the officials said. The city ...*(More on P4)...(30)*

UK Economic Growth Slows in First Quarter

LONDON - Britain's economic growth slowed in the first quarter of the year, hit by a heavy drop in construction and manufacturing, official data showed on Wednesday. Gross domestic product (GDP) -- the total value of all the goods and services produced in the economy -- grew by 0.4 percent between January and March, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in an initial estimate. That tallied with market expectations but marked a slowdown from 0.6-percent expansion in the fourth quarter of 2015. Construction ...*(More on P4)...(31)*