

Erdogan Warns U.S. Jerusalem Decision Breaches Int'l Law

ISTANBUL - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Saturday that the U.S. decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel contradicts international law and UN resolutions. "The United Nations Security Council has taken the major blow out of this declaration," Erdogan said at a meeting in Istanbul. He said the declaration on Jerusalem has put the U.S. at odds with Security Council Resolution 478 which condemns Israel's attempted annexation of East Jerusalem and urges UN member states to withdraw their missions from Jerusalem.



"How could it be possible? You have a signature on and now you are denying it," Erdogan demanded. "Leading the world is not that easy and being strong does not give you this right," Erdogan said of U.S. President Donald Trump, who on Wednesday reversed long-held U.S. policy by announcing his decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and start the procedures of moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. "Leaders of the big countries are tasked with making peace, not to create conflicts," the Turkish leader said. (Xinhua)

Pope Warns of Jerusalem 'Spiral of Violence'

JERUSALEM — The Vatican says Pope Francis is praying so that "leaders of nations" commit themselves to work to "avert a new spiral of violence" over Jerusalem and is expressing "sorrow for the clashes in recent days that have produced victims." The U.S. administration's announcement recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital has triggered violence. In a statement Sunday the Holy See recalled Francis's appeal last week for "wisdom and prudence" to prevail and reiterated its position asserting "the

essential need for respecting the status quo" of Jerusalem. The Vatican statement says only a negotiated solution between Israelis and Palestinians can achieve "stable and lasting peace and guarantee the peaceful co-existence of two states within internationally recognized borders." It calls Jerusalem "a sacred city for Christians, Jews and Muslims from all over the world." Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld says the guard was seriously wounded Sunday and his attacker arrested. (AP)

LONDON - Brexit Secretary David Davis said Sunday Britain will not honour financial commitments agreed this week with the European Union if they fail to secure a future trade deal, contradicting finance minister Philip Hammond. "No deal means that we won't be paying the money," he told the BBC. "It is conditional on an outcome. It is conditional on getting an implementation period, it is conditional on a trade outcome," he said. "It has been made clear

UK Won't Pay Brexit Bill if No Trade Deal Agreed: Davis

by number 10 already. So that's not actually new," Davis added, referring to the Downing Street office and residence of British Prime Minister Theresa May. Under an initial agreement reached with the EU on Friday, Britain will pay a financial settlement of between £35 billion-£39 billion (40-45 billion euros, \$47-52 billion) for leaving the bloc in March 2019. The 15-page document, detailing post-Brexit arrangements for citizens' rights and the Irish bor-



der, was hammered out after nearly six months of negotiations and now allows the talks to move on to a future trade deal. Davis' stance contradicts comments from Hammond on Wednesday, who said London would pay the bill regardless of their outcome. "Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed in this negotiation," he told a parliamentary committee. (AFP)

Islamic Body Calls for Safeguarding Palestinians' Human Rights



RABAT - The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) on Saturday called for safeguarding the legitimate rights of the world's peoples, especial-

ly the Palestinians, a day ahead of the international Human Rights Day. In a statement, ISESCO highlighted the need for "enabling all the peoples of the world to fully enjoy

their rights, in particular the Palestinian people, whose legitimate and inalienable rights have been usurped by Israel and pro-Israel international forces." The international Human Rights Day in 2017 coincides with a "very serious" setback to the rights of the Palestinian people, as the U.S. has recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and decided to move its embassy to the holy city "in flagrant defiance of international law and in blatant violation of international law," the Islamic body said.

According to ISESCO, the Islamic world has always played an active role in enforcing, enhancing and enriching the global human rights system. It also called for sustained action to contribute to the dissemination and defense of human rights culture through its programs, projects and activities, especially through human rights education, and respect for the religious, cultural and civilizational identities of all peoples and communities. (Xinhua)

India to Host Trilateral Talks with China, Russia

NEW DELHI - China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov will be arriving in Delhi on Saturday for the 15th Russia-India-China (RIC) Foreign Minister level trilateral meet with their Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj. India is hosting RIC foreign ministerial meeting on Monday. The three foreign ministers will issue a joint statement as well. According to a media report, the three foreign ministers are likely to begin their discussions after calling on President Ram Nath Kovind. The discussions will be followed by a working lunch. The platform of the three major BRICS powers is aimed at facilitating common position on key global challenges - radical ideas, terror threats, Afghanistan and West Asia. Swaraj will hold bilateral meeting on the sidelines of RIC with Wang Yi and Sergei Lavrov who will be the first minister from Beijing to visit India after the Doklam episode. China and India are at odds on issues like NSG membership for India, Masood Azhar's ban or even India's participation in One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR). (ANI)

France to Push for European Financial Transactions Tax

PARIS - France will push for an European financial transactions tax to fund the fight against climate change, four French government ministers said in a joint statement. The tax could raise up to 5 billion euros (\$5.9 billion) per year by 2020, according to a joint opinion piece authored by finance minister Bruno Le Maire, foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, environment minister Nicolas Hulot and higher education minister Frederique Vidal. It was published in Le Journal du Dimanche ahead of a climate summit in Paris on Monday. They said that France had already put in place a financial transactions tax which helps finance its environmental policies. "We will push for this tax to become applicable in Europe and will ask everyone to take part in this solidarity effort," the four ministers said. In 2012, France introduced a 0.2 percent tax on purchases of shares in French companies with a market capitalization of at least 1 billion euros. The tax raised 1.1 billion euros in 2016 and was raised to 0.3 percent this year. France and Germany have long led efforts to create a financial transactions tax. Ten countries - Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Belgium, Greece, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain - have signed up in principle. But talks have dragged on since 2011 as countries struggle to agree what instruments should be covered and at which rate. French President Emmanuel Macron said in July he would push for a European financial transaction tax as long as it was effective. (Reuters)

UN Political Chief Stresses Urgency of Reducing Tensions on Korean Peninsula

UNITED NATIONS - The UN's political chief on Saturday stressed the urgency of reducing tensions on the Korean Peninsula after finishing his four-day visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). "There can only be a diplomatic solution to the situation, achieved through a process of sincere dialogue," UN Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman said in a press release, adding that "Time is of the essence." Feltman arrived in the



DPRK on Tuesday to begin a rare four-day visit at the invitation of Pyongyang, for a "wide-ranging" discussion on policy issues "of mutual interest and concern." The highest-level UN official to visit the DPRK

in more than six years, Feltman had a series of meetings with Ri Yongho, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Pak Myong-guk, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, of the DPRK, according to the press release. (Xinhua)

Putin to Visit Turkey to Discuss Jerusalem Crisis, Syria

ANKARA - United States President Donald Trump's ground shaking announcement on Jerusalem prompted a new wave of rapprochement between Turkey and Russia, and the issue will be high on the agenda during Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Ankara on Dec. 11. The Russian leader, already scheduled to visit Egypt on Monday, will travel to Turkey on the same day for talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the Jerusalem crisis and the situation in Syr-

ia. Putin and Erdogan plan to discuss bilateral issues, including joint energy projects, as well as the conflict in Syria and the broader situation in the Middle East, according to the Kremlin. JERUSALEM HIGH ON AGENDA Sources in Ankara told Xinhua that the two leaders will discuss "the tension caused by the U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the effects of this very wrong decision on an already volatile and vulnerable region." (Xinhua)

Syrian Govt. Returns to Geneva Talks, Western Envoys Skeptical

GENEVA - The Syrian government's delegation returned to Geneva on Sunday for the resumption of talks with United Nations mediator Staffan de Mistura after more than a week's absence, but Western diplomats voiced scepticism about its willingness to engage. Bashar al-Ja'afari, Syria's ambassador to the U.N. and chief negotiator in talks aimed at finding a political solution to end the nearly seven-year-old war, landed in a snowstorm on a flight from Beirut, a Reuters reporter on board said. Ja'afari declined to comment. De Mistura convened an eighth round of separate talks with the government and unified opposition delegations on Nov. 28, focusing on constitutional reform as well as elections. But Ja'afari arrived a day late and left after two days, saying the opposition had "mined the road" to the talks by insisting that President Bashar al-Assad could not play any interim role in Syria's political transition. De Mistura told reporters last Thursday that he would assess this week whether either side is trying to "sabotage" the process. "The opposition has been extremely constructive and willing to get down to it," a senior Western diplomat said. "They are in a difficult place while being criticized internally and pressured by the fact that the regime is bombing away in eastern Ghouta and other places." (Reuters)

Neighbor News

China Rises to Key Role in WTO

BEIJING - As China marks the 16th anniversary of joining the WTO on Monday, it has found itself in a complex situation with regard to its position in the global trade organization, with the country playing an increasingly important role but also facing a tough battle with the EU and US. Since joining the multilateral trade body on December 11, 2001, China has been trying to make good on its promises to the WTO, carrying out massive reform and opening programs, but it has become clear that these efforts have not been fully recognized by some members of the organization who are failing to hold up their end of the bargain, experts noted on Sunday. "It has become a really one-sided relationship between China and a few WTO members that have benefited massively from

China's accession to the WTO in the past 16 years. They still thwart China at every corner and refuse to keep their promises," Jiang Yong, a research fellow at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, told the Global Times on Sunday. China is currently in a legal battle with the EU and the US at the WTO regarding China's market economy status, a key issue that has huge implications for trade between China and other WTO members. Under the terms of China's accession to the WTO, other members could levy anti-dumping duties on Chinese goods using the analogue country method, but that expired on December 11, 2016, at which point China should have been granted recognition as a market economy. (Agencies)

Rouhani Meeting Wraps British FM's 'Worthwhile' Iran Visit

TEHRAN - Britain's foreign minister Boris Johnson met with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Sunday, wrapping up a "worthwhile" visit in which he pushed for the release of imprisoned dual nationals. In a series of meetings over two days, the foreign secretary took flak from Iranian officials for not doing more to build on the nuclear deal signed with world powers in 2015. "Relations between the two countries have not matched the potential expected in the post-JCPOA (nuclear deal) atmosphere," Rouhani told Johnson, according to a statement from his office. There was similar criticism from the powerful

parliamentary speaker, Ali Larijani, who met with Johnson on Saturday and said other European countries had put in "much more effort." "You haven't even solved the banking problems of the Iranian embassy in London," Larijani said, according to the IRNA news agency. A key focus of Johnson's visit had been efforts to secure the release of imprisoned British-Iranian Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe. Zaghari-Ratcliffe, 39, is already serving a five-year sentence for her part in mass protests in 2009 - which she denies - and was due to face fresh charges in court on Sunday of "spreading propaganda". (AFP)

Pakistan Committed to its Human Rights Responsibilities: Abbasi

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has reiterated that Pakistan is fully alive to its national and international responsibilities to preserve the human rights. Pakistan stood resolute in upholding the core values and fundamental rights pertaining to the equality of all human beings, peaceful co-existence, respect for diversity and difference, and protection against discrimination in any form, as ordained by the religion and obligated by the constitution, he said in a message on the International Human Rights day being observed across the globe

on Sunday. The prime minister said it was Islam that for the first time, incorporated human rights as an integral part of its code of law, thereby providing the necessary legal foundations for just and inclusive society. He said the International Human Rights Day was an occasion for the comity of nations to reaffirm its commitment to the protection of human rights and the promotion of human values across the globe in the true spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Proclaimed by the United Nations in 1948. (Monitoring Desk)

Turkmenistan Stabilization Fund has Sufficient Funds: Gurbanguly

ASHGABAT - While defining the priorities for the next year, Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov stressed that despite all the difficulties, the country must also dynamically develop in 2018, Neutral Turkmenistan newspaper reported. "The state budget adopted for 2018, as well as the Stabilization Fund with sufficient funds will facilitate the successful implementation of social and

economic programs," the president said. Roads, houses, schools and other facilities will be also constructed next year. The energy sector, oil and gas industry, as well as entrepreneurship will be also developed. Joint ventures are expected to be set up. In this regard, the president stressed the need to reduce the country's share in the economy and expand the private sector. (Trend)