

Trump Officially Wins 270 Electoral Votes Needed for White House: U.S Media

WASHINGTON - U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Monday officially won the 270 electoral votes needed for White House in the on-going 538-member U.S. Electoral College voting which is to end later on the day, U.S. media reported.

Texas' 36 electoral votes for Trump pushed him over the edge at around 4:30 pm central time, said a The Hill news daily report.

The electors, chosen by their state political parties, are convening on Monday in Washington D.C. and statehouses across the country to cast two votes



— one for president and one for vice president. So far almost all the Republican electors stayed loyal to their candidate, despite turmoil fuelled by the CIA conclusion that Russia intervened in the U.S. election partly in bid to harm Trump's Democrat rival Hillary Clinton. Though the former secretary of state takes a lead over Trump by nearly three million popular votes up to now, Trump is projected to win more than 300 electoral votes. The number of electors each state has is equal to its number of representatives... (More on P4)... (17)

Syrian Army Poised to Enter Aleppo's Last Rebel Enclave

BEIRUT/MOSCOW - The Syrian army broadcast messages into the last rebel enclave of Aleppo on Tuesday, warning that it was poised to enter the area during the day and urging insurgents to speed up their evacuation of the city. An operation to evacuate civilians and fighters from rebel-held eastern Aleppo has brought out 37,500 people since late last week and the goal is to complete the process by Wednesday, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said. But it is hard to know if that goal is realistic, given the problems that have be-

set the evacuation plan so far, and the wide variation in estimates of how many had left and how many still remained. The International Committee of the Red Cross put the number evacuated since Thursday at only 25,000. A rebel official in Turkey told Reuters that even after thousands had left on Monday, only about half of the civilians who wanted to leave had done so. The insurgents would only leave once all the civilians who wanted to go had departed, the rebel said. The ceasefire and... (More on P4)... (18)

Polish PM Calls for European Unity in Fight Against Terrorism

WARSAW - Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydlo on Tuesday urged Europe to stay united in the fight against terrorism, following a deadly attack at a Christmas market in Berlin on Monday. Politicians are bound by duties to protect their citizens, said Szydlo, while expressing her condolences to the German people after the attack.

Szydlo is scheduled to call German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Tuesday. Polish President Andrzej Duda has asked people to pray for all the victims and those injured in the attack. A truck ploughed into a Christmas market crowd in the heart of Berlin on Monday, killing 12 people and injuring 48. (Xinhua)



Japan, EU Put off Agreement on Free Trade Pact to 2017

TOKYO - Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said on Tuesday that Japan and the European Union will put off reaching agreement on a bilateral free trade pact to next year, dropping an earlier plan to strike a deal within the year. The Japanese foreign minister said the two sides are close to reaching a broad agreement on the free trade pact, though there are still some points that need to be discussed. "We've decided it can't be helped that the negotiations will carry over to next year," said Kishi-

da after telephone talks with EU trade chief Cecilia Malmstrom, adding that talks will be resumed next month so as not to "lose the momentum." The Japan-EU free trade talks, launched in April 2013, had missed an initial goal of reaching a deal by the end of 2015, before being put off again to 2017 due to difficulties in tariff negotiations on farm products, processed foods and automobiles.



The Japanese side has been seeking to remove tariffs imposed by the EU on Japanese cars and electronics, while the EU, for its part, wants Japan to scrap or lower its duties on agricultural products such as cheese, wine and pork. (Xinhua)

Scotland Seeks Own Future in EU Despite UK's Departure

LONDON - Scottish leader Nicola Sturgeon offered her proposals Tuesday to protect Scotland's place in Europe after Britain leaves the European Union, saying it's possible to keep Scotland in Europe's single market even after the rest of the U.K. pulls out. Britain voted to leave the EU in June but 62 percent of voters in Scotland backed remaining in the 28-nation bloc. Sturgeon, who backs Scottish independence, said Britain's departure — now called

Brexit — should be "flexible" to address the needs of the different parts of the U.K., which is made up of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Launching a document titled "Scotland's Place in Europe," Sturgeon said it was best for Scotland — and the rest of Britain — to remain in the European single market and customs union. She argued that the EU referendum did not give a mandate to take any part of Britain out of the... (More on P4)... (19)

Donald Trump Takes on Ex-President Bill Clinton



WASHINGTON - President-elect Donald Trump took on Bill Clinton Tuesday in a new tweet attack, after the former president questioned his intelligence. In an impromptu discussion at a book store in upstate New York earlier this month, Clinton said this when asked if he thought Trump was smart: "He doesn't know much. One thing he does know is how to get angry, white men to vote for him."

Clinton made the remarks December 10, and they were reported by a local newspaper editor who happened to be present. The comments were published Monday by Politico.

Clinton also said Trump called him after the election and sounded surprisingly cordial after such a bitter campaign. Trump fired back Tuesday morning. "Bill Clinton stated that I called him after the election. Wrong, he called me (with a very nice congratulations. He 'doesn't know much'..."

Trump added: "especially how to get people, even with an unlimited budget, out to vote in the vital swing states (and more). They focused on wrong states". During the campaign, Trump bluntly attacked Clinton over his marital infidelities and said Hillary Clinton was just as bad for putting up with it, calling her an "enabler" of those indiscretions. (AFP)

Russian Embassy in Baku Tightens Security after Assassination of Envoy in Turkey

BAKU - The Russian Embassy in Baku has increased security measures after Russian ambassador to Turkey, Andrei Karlov, was killed following a terrorist attack, Ambassador of Russia to Azerbaijan Vladimir Dorokhin told journalists here on Tuesday.

"I believe in Azerbaijan and believe that nothing could happen to me here," the diplomat said. The Ambassador expressed gratitude and appreciation for the support given to Russia by the leadership of Azerbaijan "in this difficult time."



Earlier on Monday Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev expressed condolences to Russian President Vladimir Putin. In a letter to Putin, Ilham Aliyev also offered his condolences to the ambassador's family and condemned the violent attack. "I am deeply shocked by the news of the tragic death of an Ambassador... of... (More on P4)... (20)

Yemen's Dominant Houthis Welcome Kerry's New Peace Call

SANAA - Yemen's dominant Houthi-led governing body Tuesday welcomed U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's new peace call aimed to achieve a lasting cessation to 22-month civil war in Yemen, said state Saba news agency. The Houthi-led newly formed body, called "the National Salvation Government" also urged immediate lifting to all-out blockade imposed by Saudi-led military coalition that backed Houthis' foe of the internationally-recognized government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. "The National Salvation Government welcome the new peace call, including the roadmap proposed

by UN envoy Ould Cheikh Ahmed as a basis for positive final negotiations to end war, blockade and reach an honorable comprehensive political compromise," read a statement carried by Houthi-controlled Saba. On Sunday, Kerry on this last visit to Saudi Kingdom expressed the hope that a new ceasefire in the Yemen conflict could be agreed within two weeks. Kerry said in a joint news conference with his Saudi counterpart Adel Al-Jubeir that "the U.S. will work with Britain, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia to achieve a new pause in the fighting." (Xinhua)

Britain's Science Sector Must Take Bold Brexit Steps to Protect Global Standing: Report



LONDON - Bold steps are needed to ensure Britain's science sector has a prominent place in the global economy after Brexit, a report from Westminster said Tuesday.

Members of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee put the issue of science in the pre-Brexit era under the microscope.

Politicians from parliament's upper chamber said Britain needs to retain current scientific talent and attract even more of the world's leading scientists. They warned uncertainty over the future relationship between European Union and Britain is having a corrosive effect on Britain's research base. "But the government has the power to mitigate many negative effects of Brexit and use it as a catalyst to address long standing underperformance in economic productivity," they add. In their report, "A time for boldness: EU membership and UK science after the referendum", the committee says Britain should expand and enhance existing programs. The report welcomed the major increase to science funding announced in the 2016 Autumn Statement, and recommends that, in addition, the science and research budget should be re-based at an early opportunity to compensate fully for any reduction of funding from Brussels. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

China Welcomes UN Resolution on Syria

BEIJING - China on Tuesday welcomed the United Nations' humanitarian resolution on Syria, the foreign ministry said Tuesday. Earlier on Monday, the 15-member UN Security Council adopted resolution 2328 to send UN observers to monitor evacuations in Aleppo, the first ever unanimously adopted resolution on the Syrian humanitarian issue.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said that in the process of seeking consensus, the key is to avoid politicizing the humanitarian issue.

China has played a constructive role in the consultation process and

mediation, calling on all sides to make efforts in the same direction, said Hua.

The resolution supports the UN to continue to play an important role of coordination in humanitarian efforts in Syria. She noted that adoption of the 2328 resolution, which has safeguarded the reputation of the UN Security Council, fully reflects the UN body's ability to resolve complex and sensitive issues through negotiation. Implementation of the resolution will serve to ameliorate the situation of the people and lay a sound foundation for the political resolution of the Syrian issue, Hua said. (Xinhua)

Deterrence at Sea: Pakistan Navy Demonstrates Live Missile Firing

ISLAMABAD - The front-line combat unit of Pakistan Navy undertook live missile firing in the North Arabian Sea on Tuesday, said a press release. "Surface to Surface Anti-ship Missile was launched from Sword Class frigate PNS Aslat," said the release.

The missile successfully destroyed its intended target with pinpoint accuracy, reaffirming weapon's lethality and offensive punch of PN's

fleet, it added. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Mohammad Zakaullah witnessed the firing onboard ship and expressed his complete satisfaction on the operational readiness of Pakistan Navy Fleet. He said that the live missile firing reaffirms credibility of deterrence at sea and reassures Pakistan Navy's commitment to safeguard its maritime frontiers against all threats. (Monitoring Desk)

Iran, World Powers Due to Debate on Sanction Extension



TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that six world powers and Iran will meet on Jan. 10 to consider a recent U.S. decision to extend sanctions against Tehran, official IRNA news agency reported on Tuesday.

Zarif made the remarks on Monday briefing the Iranian Majlis (parliament) National Security and Foreign Policy Commission on the implementation of the nuclear deal, known as JCPOA. Iran and six major world countries, namely the United States, Britain, China, Russia, France and Germany (known as the P5+1 group) reached an agreement on the Iranian nuclear issue in July

2015 which puts Iran on the path of sanctions relief but more strict limits on its nuclear program. On Saturday, Zarif called for a joint meeting of Iran and the six world powers to discuss the recent U.S. extension of Iran Sanctions Act (ISA), which Iran says is a violation of the nuclear agreement.

The ISA was first adopted in 1996 to sanction Iran over its controversial nuclear program. The meeting goes along with the presidential orders to the Foreign Ministry and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran to take appropriate measures in the face of the extension of the ISA, Zarif was quoted as saying on Monday. (Xinhua)

Turkmenistan Increases Liquefied Gas Production

Ashgabat - Turkmen gas state concern has produced 128,800 tons of liquefied gas since early 2016, which is more than the target plan for the period, the Turkmen Oil and Gas Complex said.

Gas processing complexes, which are located in the east of the country, are provided with fuel from Nayip, Balguji, Kerpichli, Bovrideshek and Gazlydepe deposits.

Earlier, it was reported that Afghanistan, Georgia, Iran, Tajikistan and Pakistan buy the Turkmen liquefied gas.

A number of natural gas fields in Turkmenistan contain sufficient propane-butane, which stipulates the feasibility of the construction of units to produce liquefied petroleum gas. Some tank gas is supplied to the domestic market. Turkmen gas state concern and a power plant in the city of Turkmenbashi are the main consumers. The remaining volumes are used in the country's refineries for the production of polypropylene and high-octane gasoline component. (Trend)