

# Trump to Dissolve his Foundation to Avoid Possible Conflict of Interest

WASHINGTON - U.S. President-elect Donald Trump said Saturday he plans to dissolve the charitable foundation bearing his name in attempts to avoid a possible conflict of interest.

"The Foundation has done enormous good works over the years in contributing millions of dollars to countless worthy groups, including supporting veterans, law enforcement officers and children," Trump said in a statement. "However, to avoid even the appearance of any conflict with my role as President I have decided to continue to pursue my strong interest in philanthropy in



other ways," he said.

Trump is under pressure to contain his various potential conflicts of interest related to his business and charitable dealings ahead of his inauguration on Jan. 20.

The New York-based foundation, which has been the subject of several controversies and investigations, was originally set up to give away the proceeds from Trump's bestselling book, "The Art of the Deal," according to a TheHill news daily report. A Washington Post investigation in June found that Trump had personally given his foundation 28 ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

## Trump's Election Victory to Hardly Affect Europe's Economy: Survey

BERLIN - German finance experts believe Donald Trump's election as U.S. president will only have minor effects on Europe's economy, a recent survey showed. According to a survey conducted by the Center for European Economic Research (ZEW), the U.S. economic policy changes pursued by the Trump administration will have rather small effects on Member States of the European Union with regard to economic growth, consumption and investment. The survey, which polled

around 200 finance experts as part of the financial market survey in December 2016, show 86 percent of the experts expect there will be positive effects on economic development in the U.S. after Trump's election victory. However, most experts expect the U.S. will reduce its foreign trade after Trump takes office. Altogether 66 percent of experts in the ZEW survey forecast that Trump's forthcoming presidency is associated with a further increase of U.S. national debt. *(Xinhua)*

## Indian PM Pitches for Digital Economy to Root out Corruption

NEW DELHI - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday pitched for a digital economy to curb corruption and announced two new schemes to boost e-payments in the country.

Explaining the two new schemes in his monthly radio address to the nation, Modi said under the first scheme businessmen going in for cashless transactions will be given a rebate in income tax. Under the second scheme, which will last for the next 100 days, 15,000 people will get 1,000 Indian

rupees (15 U.S. dollars) each for every day for using mobile banking and making e-payments.

The second scheme will be for the benefit of the poor and lower-income groups, but only those making transactions up to 3,000 Indian rupees (45 U.S. dollars) will be eligible for the reward. The announcement of the schemes came after Modi



on Nov. 8, in a sudden televised address to the nation, announced scrapping of currency notes of higher denominations to curb corruption. *(Xinhua)*

## Over 10,000 Displaced Persons Return as Stability Restored in N. Myanmar

YANGON - A total of 10,248 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned to conflict-torn Mongko, Muse district in Myanmar's northern Shan state as stability has been restored there, Myanmar News Agency reported on Sunday. The IDPs are from 2,260 households of about 200 wards and villages. Myanmar government forces have claimed control of Mongko after two weeks' fighting earlier this month which came under attack by a combined forces of three non-ceasefire

signatory armed groups, Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and Kokang's Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA). The government forces regained control of the town on Dec. 4 after fighting back and conducted area clearance operation and since Dec. 9, the IDPs, who abandoned their homes due to the conflicts, have been returning homes as the local authorities scrutinized them and admitted them back to the town. *(Xinhua)*

## Turkey, Russia Trust Each Other on Strategic Issues: Turkish FM

ANKARA - Turkey and Russia have understood that they feel confident with each other on strategic issues, a top Turkish diplomat has said, adding that both sides kept their words in the implementation of the Aleppo deal that provided a partial ceasefire and evacuation from the city.

"Russia has kept its word in our efforts to implement a ceasefire, to provide humanitarian aid, to save these people [from Aleppo] and to expand the ceasefire to the whole of Syria. They

kept their words until the end. It even urged those who violated [the deal]. Likewise, Turkey has also kept its words," Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said in a meeting in Antalya on Dec. 25.

Turkey and Russia have understood that they can trust each other, Çavuşoğlu said, informing that sanctions imposed by Moscow on agricultural products will soon be lifted.

"We are working day and night for the removal of any kind of obstacle.



Our wish is to lift restrictions on trade and travel, in line with our friendship," he added. Çavuşoğlu reiterated that the killing of Russian Ambassador to Ankara Andrey Karlov was planned and executed by the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization (FETÖ) and described the assassination as "treachery". *(Agencies)*

## ASEAN Economic Community Makes Progress in its First Year

JAKARTA - The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is now advancing its mechanisms to facilitate the creation of the ASEAN Community (AC) with several measures to address its efficacy target by 2025 already carried out in the first year since it was instituted on Dec. 31, 2015.

The three pillars that embody the ASEAN Community, comprised of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), ASEAN Political and Security Community (APSC) and ASEAN Socio-Cultural



Community (ASCC), were set in an ASEAN blueprint to configure the bloc's new paradigm in the future. The creation of the single identity supported by those pillars is assessed as

being essential in dealing with the current global economic and political issues, analysts said. They said strong cohesiveness among the ASEAN member ...*(More on P4)...(19)*

## UAE Sets up Climate Change Council

DUBAI - The United Arab Emirates (UAE) said on Sunday it has formed a new council to reinforce the Gulf state's policies on climate change, environmental and sustainable development, the UAE state news agency WAM reported.

The objective of the UAE Council for Climate Change and Environment is to develop plans towards "achieving environmental objectives" and represent the UAE in regional and international negotiations, the report said.

The UAE, a major oil supplier, has ratified the Paris Climate Agreement on Sept. 22 after the cabinet approved it on Sept. 4. The UAE has achieved several leads in relation to green technology, as it harbors the world's biggest solar park outside the United States -- the 100 megawatt Shams ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

## Over 6,000 Filipinos Displaced on Christmas Day Due to Typhoon

MANILA - More than 6,000 people have been displaced as typhoon Nock-ten battered parts of the Philippines, authorities said Sunday.

Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanan said in a statement that government workers, particularly those involved in disaster relief and operations, are "working round-the-clock even on Christmas Day" as the weather disturbance, locally named Nina, maintains its strength and now endangers eastern province of Catanduanes.

Packing maximum sustained winds of up to 185 kilometers per hour near the center and gusts of up to 255 kph, Nock-ten is expected to make landfall over Catanduanes Sunday evening and will cross the provinces of Albay, Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte, southern Quezon, Laguna, Batangas and Cavite, the state weather forecasting agency Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said.

According to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Disaster Response and Management Bureau (DRAMB), the typhoon has displaced a total of 585 families or 2,340 individuals in Region V or Bicol Region. "The affected families are currently staying in two evacuation centers in Guinobatan, Albay," DSWD said in a statement. Some 975 families or 3,793 persons residing along coastal and riverside areas in the municipalities imposed any specific...*(More on P4)...(23)*

## Neighbor News

### China to Levy New Taxes in Bid to Strengthen Pollution Fight

BEIJING - Chinese parliament passed a law on Sunday that will levy specific environmental protection taxes on industry for the first time from 2018, as part of a renewed focus on fighting the country's pollution woes. Anger has risen in the world's second-largest economy at the government's repeated failure to tackle land, water and air pollution, with large parts of northern China enveloped in dangerous smog in recent days.

"Tax revenue is an important economic means to promote environmental protection," the Finance

Ministry said in a statement.

The tax rate will be 1.2 yuan (\$0.17) per unit of atmospheric pollution, 1.4 yuan per unit of water pollution, 5 yuan per tonne of coal waste and 1,000 yuan per tonne of "hazardous waste".

Industrial noise polluters will also be levied 350 yuan per month if they exceed limits by 1-3 decibels, 700 yuan for 4-6 decibels and 11,200 yuan per month for 16 decibels and more.

The law goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2018. China has not previously ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

### Putin, Rouhani Welcome Aleppo 'Victory'

TEHRAN - Iran's President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin welcomed the "Syrian army's victory against the terrorists in Aleppo" during a late-night phone call, Iranian media reported on Sunday. "The Syrian army's victory sends a message that the terrorists cannot achieve their objectives. We must stop terrorists using the ceasefire to rebuild their forces and create new bases in other regions of Syria," Rouhani said following the call on Saturday night, according to a statement published by state media.

Putin also welcomed the defeat of rebel forces in Syria's second city and said cooperation between

Tehran and Moscow "will continue".

They said peace talks would take place in Kazakhstan, without providing further details.

Iran and Russia have been the key backers of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and label all rebel forces in the country as "terrorists".

"The result of this cooperation is a major victory in the fight against international terrorism," added Putin. Syrian troops this week retook control of eastern Aleppo, which has been held by disparate rebel groups since mid-2012, after a devastating month-long offensive that has caused tens of thousands of refugees to flee their homes. *(AFP)*

### Latest Round of Turkey-Pakistan Free Trade Talks Makes Progress: Report

ANKARA - The latest round of Turkish-Pakistani free trade talks have finished and substantial progress were achieved on tariff lines proposed by both sides, state-run Anadolu Agency reported.

"Both sides undertook discussions on agreements on goods, services and investment. Considerable progress was made during the talks on all these agreements," Pakistan's embassy in Turkey said in a statement.

The fifth round Turkish-Pakistani free trade talks were held in Turkey's capital Ankara on Dec. 21-23, in which both senior representatives from trade, indus-

try and commerce took part.

Negotiations over the deal were launched by then Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during the latter's visit to Turkey in October 2015.

Then Turkish Economy Minister Mustafa Elitas and Pakistani Commerce Minister Khuram Dastgir Khan inked the free trade agreement framework in Islamabad this March.

Bilateral trade between the two countries reached around 600 million U.S. dollars last year, including 289 million U.S. dollars in imports from Turkey. *(Xinhua)*

### Turkmenistan Developing Construction Materials Industry

Ashgabat - The construction materials sector on the basis of local raw materials has been greatly supported in Turkmenistan, the Turkmen Dovlet Habarlary state news service reported.

According to the message, among the important substituting enterprises are the plant for the production of inert materials with a capacity of 70,000 cubic meters per year, built in Kaahka district of Akhal province. The enterprises producing thermal insulation materials, composite building materials and other items based on super-thin, highly durable basalt fiber are being built in the country, the message said. *(Trend)*

## UN Envoy Warns Against Renewed Violence in Central Somalia

MOGADISHU - The UN envoy for Somalia has expressed concern over renewed violence between rival states in the central Somali town of Galkayo, which killed at least three people and injured several others on Friday.

In a statement issued on Sunday, Michael Keating, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia, called on the warring states of Puntland and Galmudug to honor a ceasefire agreement reached last month.

"Puntland and Galmudug must resolve their differences in a non-violent manner and immediately ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

## UN Resolution on Israeli Settlement a Victory for Palestinian Diplomacy

GAZA/RAMALLAH - Friday's overwhelming vote in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in favor of a resolution that condemns Israeli settlement in the Palestinian territories was a great victory for the Palestinian diplomacy, according to analysts.

They believe that the new 2334 resolution, which gained 14 votes in favor and one sustained, during a UNSC special session held in New York, would encourage the Palestinians to go for another step forward to sue Israel at international courts and agencies.

The voting on the resolution was made upon the request of four member states;

Venezuela, Senegal, Malaysia and New Zealand, just 24 hours after Egypt, which leads the Arabs group, suddenly decided to withdraw an anti-settlement resolution it intended to submit to the UN Security Council on Thursday.

"The vote in favor of the resolution is a victory to the Palestinian diplomatic policy and to the policy of President Mahmoud Abbas," said Nabil Abu Rdeinah, Palestinian presidential spokesperson, adding that "It empowers the vision of the two-state solution and condemns all the measures that Israel has introduced on the Palestinian lands." Ahmed Rafiq Awad, the Ramallah-based ...*(More on P4)...(22)*