

UN Chief Vows to Fight Sexual Harassment, Boasts Gender Parity of His Senior Aides

UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, as part of his gender parity strategy for the world organization, announced on Friday that for the first time, "We have now reached parity in the UN Senior Management Group." "That means 50-50 among the top leaders of the UN Secretariat," he said. "In fact it is slightly higher - 23 women and 21 men. This is a start." The group brings together the heads of UN departments, offices, funds and programs to discuss policy matters, planning and information sharing in the face of emerging challenges and cross-cutting issues and is chaired by Guterres. In a brief statement to reporters outside Security Council chambers initially focused on efforts to bring to an end the civil war in



Syria, he abruptly changed topics, saying sexual harassment "is rightly gaining the attention and visibility it deserves." The UN chief reaffirmed his "total commitment to the UN's zero tolerance policy on sexual harassment." Acknowledging "the male-dominated culture that permeates governments, the private sector, international organizations and even areas of civil society," he said it creates "obstacles to upholding zero tolerance policies on sexual harassment, including here at the United Nations." Determined to remove the obstacles, Guterres said they are "rooted in the historic power imbalances between men and women" and that is why he sought gender-parity in the world organization. (Xinhua)

S. Korean, U.S. Presidents Talk over Phone about Korean Peninsula, Winter Olympics

SEOUL - South Korean President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Donald Trump talked over phone about the Korean Peninsula issue and upcoming the Winter Olympics, the presidential Blue House said on Saturday. Moon and Trump held a telephone conversation for 30 minutes on Friday night, agreeing to closely cooperate for the successful hosting of the Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games set to kick off on Feb. 9 in South Korea's eastern county of PyeongChang.

The South Korean president said he hoped to make the PyeongChang Winter Olympics an opportunity for the inter-Korean dialogue that would last after the Winter Olympics and contribute to peace on the Korean Peninsula. During the high-level inter-Korean talks in January, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) agreed to send its athletes and cheerleaders to the South Korea-hosted winter sports event, as well as a high-ranking delegation. (Xinhua)

WASHINGTON - The Trump administration on Friday announced it will continue much of the Obama administration's nuclear weapons policy, but take a more aggressive stance toward Russia. It said Russia must be convinced it would face "unacceptably dire costs" if it were to threaten even a limited nuclear attack in Europe. The sweeping review of U.S. nuclear policy does not call for any net increase in strategic nuclear weapons - a position that stands in con-

trast to President Donald Trump's statement, in a tweet shortly before he took office, that the U.S. "must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes." In his State of the Union address Tuesday, he made no mention of expansion, though he said the arsenal must deter acts of aggres-



sion. A 74-page report summarizing the review's findings calls North Korea a "clear and grave threat" to the U.S. and its allies. It asserts that any North Korean nuclear attack against the U.S. or its allies will result in "the end of that regime." (AP)

Trump Nuclear Doctrine Takes Tougher Stance on Russia

U.S. Air Force Chief Flies India's Home-Made Tejas Fighter Jet



NEW DELHI - The head of the U.S. Air Force General David L. Goldfein on Saturday flew India's indigenous light combat

aircraft Tejas from an air force station in the western state of Rajasthan. "General David L. Goldfein, chief of staff of the

Indian Air Force tweeted. Indian Air Force's Air Vice Marshal A.P. Singh accompanied him as a co-pilot, defense officials said, adding that this is the first time that a foreign military chief flew

an Indian fighter jet. The U.S. Air Force chief arrived in the Indian capital Thursday. "There is already a strong relationship between our two air forces and I'm looking forward to making it stronger," General Goldfein wrote on Facebook after his arrival. Manufactured by the state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Tejas is a single-engine, multi-role combat aircraft that was inducted into the Indian Air Force in July 2016. (Xinhua)

Strike of Employees Halts German Automaker Production

BERLIN - The ongoing strike of German workers forced German automakers to halt production on Friday. Germany's biggest union IG Metall called on workers to strike for better pay and shorter working hours since Wednesday. According to the union, about 500,000 employees have taken part in walkouts at around 280 businesses in last three days. Alone on Friday, 300,000 employees laid down their tools. German big names like BMW, Audi, Daimler and Porsche all came to a standstill. IG Metall has

demand a salary rise of 6 percent for its members, while employers have offered about the half of the demand. Meanwhile, the union also demands that working hours of employees, who are parents of very young children or who need to take care of sick relatives, should be reduced from 35 to 28 per week for two years. "Now it's up to the employers to understand this signal and step up their game," IG Metall chairman Joerg Hofmann said to German news provider dpa. (Xinhua)

Pentagon Updates Nuclear Posture Review Seeking Enhanced Deterrent

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Defense Ministry on Friday officially published the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the guiding principle for the future U.S. policy seeking enhanced nuclear deterrent which is already the world's most powerful. "The United States now faces a more diverse and advanced nuclear-threat environment than ever before, with considerable dynamism in potential adversaries' development and deployment programs for nuclear weapons and delivery systems," the document claimed. The comprehensive report, which is largely in line with the 2010 review done by the Obama administration, reaffirms commitments to non-proliferation treaties but emphasizes the need to enhance capabilities to match with Russia, showing supports for U.S. nuclear modernization projects. The review, the first of this kind since 2010, also calls for a "lower-yield" option with less powerful explosive capacity for ballistic and cruise missiles launched from submarines.

The lower-yield weapons would enhance the credibility of the U.S. arsenal, the review claims. It also says that nuclear weapons could be used to respond to "extreme circumstances," including non-nuclear attacks. Elisabeth Braw, a researcher with the Atlantic Council, said: "While the Nuclear Posture Review may contain no radical departures from the Obama administration's nuclear policy, the public debate is already focusing on the low-yield nuclear weapons." (Xinhua)

Sri Lankan President Appoints Special Commission to Probe Fraud in National Airline

COLOMBO - Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena on Saturday appointed a special Presidential Commission to investigate alleged large-scale frauds and malpractices in the country's national airline carrier. The Presidential Commission will probe all the alleged frauds in SriLankan Airlines, SriLankan Catering Ltd and the state-owned budget carrier Mihin Lanka (Pvt) Ltd during the period from January 1, 2006 to January 31, 2018, a statement from the President's Office said.



The president signed the Gazette Notification appointing the Presidential Commission and accordingly a five-member panel also has been named, the statement said. The new commission will look into several irregularities in the relevant companies including monetary allocations, loans, shares, investments and other finances from the Treasury, the Central Bank, the People's Bank, the Bank of Ceylon or any other financial institution. (Xinhua)

Ukraine Equips All Border Checkpoints with Biometric Identification Systems

KIEV - Ukraine has equipped all 157 of its border crossing checkpoints with biometric identification systems, the State Border Guard Service said in a statement on Friday. A total of 1,200 new workplaces for border guards were set up on Ukrainian frontier checkpoints and more than 400 automated workplaces were equipped with fingerprint scanners, the statement said. So far, more than 57,000 foreigners, including 42,000 Russian citizens, have

crossed the Ukrainian border under the new biometric control procedure, it said. On Jan. 1, Ukraine has begun to gather biometric data from foreigners at the country's border control points. Under this system, Ukrainian border guards collect fingerprints from international travelers entering Ukraine and check their passports against several databases, including the database of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol). (Xinhua)

DPRK Slams S. Korean Conservative Media, Politicians for Calling Military Parade Plan "Provocation"

PYONGYANG - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Saturday slammed some South Korean conservative media and politicians for calling an upcoming military parade here as "provocation." The official daily Rodong Sinmun published a signed article on the military parade to be held on Feb. 8 in Pyongyang, on the eve of the opening of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in South Korea. The article said that the event will mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Korean People's Army (KPA), and accused some South Korean conservative media and politicians of twisting facts and making irresponsible comments on their neighbor's important event. "It is a unique idea of the Korean army and people to celebrate the founding date of the KPA and no one has the right to make irresponsible comments on it," it said. DPRK used to celebrate the military founding day on April 25, which marked the founding of a guerrilla troop by Kim Il Sung in 1930s to fight the Japanese occupiers. Less than two weeks ago, the nation declared that Feb. 8 will be marked as the founding anniversary of the KPA and the "Army-Building Day," as DPRK's Founding President Kim Il Sung established the regular revolutionary armed forces on Feb. 8, 1948. In this regard, April 25 will be marked as the founding anniversary of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi Says Beijing Values Ties with India but Remains Firm on 'Sovereign Rights'

BEIJING - China always values the good neighborhood and friendship with India, but it is also firm on upholding its "sovereign rights", interests and territorial integrity, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Saturday. Beijing handled the Doka La standoff with "restraint", showing the "emphasis" it places on ties with New Delhi, he said. Touching on China's relations with major countries and its diplomatic initiatives last year, Yi, in a lengthy article in the Chinese International Studies journal, dwelt about Sino-India ties, stating that Beijing's diplomatic engagement with New Delhi resulted in India withdrawing its troops and

equipment from Doka La. The journal is published by China Institute of International Studies, a think-tank attached to the Chinese Foreign Ministry. The 73-day standoff at Doka La over which Bhutan also has counter-claims began in June last year when Indian troops objected to Chinese army building a road close to India's Chicken-Neck Corridor, a narrow corridor connecting north-eastern states. The standoff ended on 28 August after Chinese troops agreed to stop building the road following which both the sides agreed on the "expedient disengagement" of personnel at Doka La, according to the External Affairs Ministry. (Agencies)

Nawaz Sharif Assures to Solve Problems Faced by Bengali Speaking Community

KARACHI - Former Prime Minister and President, PML-N, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif here on Friday assured members of Bengali speaking community to help resolving their grievances related to issuance of National Identity Cards (NICs). Addressing a session held under the aegis of Pak Muslim Alliance, he said NIC issuance to the third generation of Bengali speaking citizens settled in the country for the last 50 years or so was a humanitarian issue. Equally important was said to be the fact that they were descendants of

the people who contributed tremendously for the creation of Pakistan in 1947. "Pakistan Muslim League was founded in Dacca (Bengal) and the people of Bengal made tremendous sacrifices for Pakistan, which were the realities very close to my heart," said PML-N chief reiterating that he was fully conscious of the difficulties by members of the community in the absence of NICs. He assured the members of the community that PML-N once voted back to power would get solved the issue on priority basis through needed legislation. (Monitoring desk)

US Missile Show Ridiculous Political Spectacle: Iran MP

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian lawmaker says US accusations about the Islamic Republic providing Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah fighters with ballistic missiles are just a political and ridiculous show. "The US move to display the missiles and attribute them to Iran is a political and ridiculous show...which follows two purposes," Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's Committee on National Security and Foreign Policy Alaeddin Boroujerdi told IRNA on Friday. On December 14, US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley presented a charred tube and other material that she claimed were from an Iranian-made ballistic missile fired from Yemen at the King Khalid International Airport near the Saudi capital, Riyadh, on November 4. She claimed that that "evidence"

proved Iran's violation of United Nations resolutions banning the transfer of weapons to the Houthi Ansarullah fighters. Both Iran and the Houthi have denied that the missile fired was Iranian. Citing the two objectives of the US, Boroujerdi said US President Donald Trump aims to undermine the Islamic Republic's missile capabilities and prepare the ground for involvement in the issue which "is definitely a red line for the Islamic Republic of Iran." "They [the US] also seeks to put a lid on Saudi Arabia's massive crimes [in Yemen]," the Iranian legislator said. The US made the missile claims against Iran to distract the world public opinion from Saudi Arabia's brutal killing of tens of thousands of innocent people in Yemen, he said. (Presstv)

Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia to Strengthen Co-Op between Law-Enforcement Agencies

DUSHANBE - Representatives of Tajikistan and Saudi Arabia discussed issues of cooperation between law-enforcement agencies of the two countries, local news agency TajikTA reported. "Tajik Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Zarobiddin Kosimi met with Saudi Arabia's attorney general Saud bin Abdulah al-Mujib. The parties discussed cooperation between law-enforce-

ment agencies of the two countries during the meeting," the message reads. They also mulled issues of mutual actions, especially against organized and cross-border crime, terrorism and extremism. The sides confirmed commitment to the strengthening and development of cooperation between law-enforcement agencies in security sphere. (Trend)