

Xi, Trump Agree to Boost Win-Win Cooperation, Develop Constructive China-U.S. Ties

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping and his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump pledged Friday to boost win-win cooperation in a variety of areas and develop a constructive China-U.S. relationship. The two leaders made the pledge in a phone conversation Friday, the first of its kind since Trump took office in January. Xi congratulated Trump on being inaugurated as U.S. president and thanked him for sending a letter Wednesday to extend his holiday greetings to the Chinese people, who are celebrating the Chinese Lunar New Year -- the Year of the Rooster -- and the upcoming Lantern Festival that falls on Saturday. Xi said he greatly appreciated Trump's willingness to expand China-U.S. cooperation and develop a constructive bilateral relationship that will benefit the two countries and the international community. China and the United States have maintained close communication on issues of common concern since Trump's inauguration, Xi noted, saying that the necessity and urgency of strengthening China-U.S. cooperation is further increased in the face of the current complicated international situation and various challenges. The development of China and the United States ... (More on P4)...(28)



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Nieghbor News

China Ready to Expand Cooperation with New Zealand: FM

WELLINGTON - China is willing to expand cooperation with New Zealand, said visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi here on Friday. During talks with his New Zealand counterpart Murray McCully, Wang said the China-New Zealand relations have achieved a leaping development since the two countries established diplomatic ties 45 years ago. Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to New Zealand in 2014 and decided to establish the China-New Zealand comprehensive strategic partnership, opening new perspectives for the development of bilateral ties, Wang said. He hoped that both sides would take the opportunity of the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties to make plans for future high-level exchanges and expand all-round cooperation. China welcomes New Zealand to actively participate in the "Belt and Road" initiative, Wang said. He said China is willing to boost cooperation with New Zealand in such areas as science and technology, innovation, agriculture, livestock farming, biomedicine ... (More on P4)...(36)

Spanish Parties to Hold Political Congresses over Weekend

MADRID - The ruling People's Party (PP) and left-wing Podemos both hold their party congresses over the next three days, it was reported Friday. The PP Congress comes just over three months after it returned to power in Spain as the head of a minority government. Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy aims to use the national congress of his party to strengthen internal organization. For example, some party members such as Maria Dolores de Cospedal, currently occupies the positions of secretary general, regional president of Castilla-La Mancha and minister of defense. Rajoy is expected to push for the creation of an "office for public accusations" to deal with corruption cases against party members. Meanwhile, Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias and party spokesman Pablo Errejon will battle to lead the party. Iglesias announced that if he loses, he will not only step down as ... (More on P4)...(29)

Russia, US Constructive Ties have Positive Impact on World: Russian FM

MOSCOW - The development of constructive, mutually beneficial bilateral ties can bring real benefits to the peoples of Russia and the United States and will also have a positive impact on the world situation, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told local media. "From our side, we are ready to work with the administration of D. Trump on the whole agenda of the Russia-U.S. relations on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual respect and taking each other's interests into account," the minister said in an interview with the Russian newspaper Izvestia published on Friday. The top Russian diplomat also said that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been discussing the possibility of the allies' military deployment in Bulgaria and Romania, which the minister said is "certainly provocative and destabilizing." "We are closely monitoring the current and prospective military-political situation in Europe. We will stick to a comprehensive approach aimed at securing our borders and Russia's national interests," he said. Concerning the Syrian issue, the minister stressed: "Unanimously adopted Resolution 2254 of the UN Security Council remains a key element of the internationally accepted ... (More on P4)...(30)



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Pakistan PM Terms CPEC Key Regional Initiative for Connectivity

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Thursday told world leading investors here that the multi-billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a key regional initiative for connectivity and shared prosperity of nations. Addressing a gathering of corporate and business leaders from around the world in Islamabad, Sharif said CPEC is in partnership with China as a part of China's One Belt One Road Initiative. "Under CPEC, a portfolio of over 55 billion U.S. dollars is already being implemented. Investment of more than 35 billion dollars in the energy sector is being implemented. Apart from energy, road and rail infrastructure, industrial parks and economic zones and a deep sea port at Gwadar give CPEC the potential of changing the destiny of people in the region and beyond," Sharif said. The prime minister said the corridor will substantially shorten transportation distances between Africa and Middle East to Central and South Asian regions. "CPEC would connect the port of Gwadar to Kashghar. It will not only connect Pakistan to China ... (More on P4)...(37)

Talks to Decide Future of Nuclear Pact with US: Kremlin

MOSCOW - The possibility of extending a pivotal Russia-U.S. arms control pact is to be discussed in prospective talks with Washington, the Kremlin said Friday without saying whether Moscow wants to keep it. President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said the prospects of extending the New START Treaty that is set to expire in 2021 will "depend on the position of our American partners" and require negotiations. He wouldn't say whether the Kremlin favors extending the 2010 pact that limited Russian and U.S. nuclear arsenals to no more than 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads each. Speaking in a conference call with reporters, Peskov pointed to a "certain break in dialogue on strategic security issues" during the Obama administration, and said Moscow and Washington now need "an update of information and positions." Russia-U.S. relations have been strained over the Ukrainian crisis, the war ... (More on P4)...(31)

US Appellate Court Rules Against Trump's Travel Ban

SAN FRANCISCO - The motions panel of a U.S. federal appellate court ruled Thursday against reinstating the travel ban in a presidential executive order. The three judges sitting on the motions panel of the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the 9th Circuit, based in San Francisco, presented their decision in 29 pages of writing released in the afternoon. The latest development effectively maintained a temporary restraining order (TRO) imposed by a lower court judge against the travel ban, allowing citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East region with proper visas to enter the United States. The motions panel heard oral arguments Tuesday pertaining to the executive order signed on January 27 by President Donald Trump that bars entry into the United States by nationals of the seven countries. Last Friday, Judge James Robart of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington ruled in favor of the states of Washington and Minnesota and put the travel ban on hold, prompting the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to appeal Saturday. The two states filed a suit on January 30 before the district court and challenged the travel ban, citing harms to the states in areas including employment, education, trade, family relation and freedom of travel. The DOJ, however, insisted that the ban is within the authority of the president. (Xinhua)



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Iran's Military Power Only Meant for Self-Defense: Rouhani

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has stressed that Iran's military might is merely meant for self-defense as the country has never interfered in the domestic affairs of other states and has no plans to do so in the future. "Iran's military power is solely meant for defending the country," Rouhani said in a meeting with ambassadors and foreign envoys in Tehran on Thursday during a ceremony held on the eve of the 38th anniversary of the victory of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution. "The Islamic Republic has never invaded any country and has no such intention. Our weapons are meant to defend the country and [we] should not allow certain parties to spread illusions in order to create unhealthy conditions in the region and the world," added the president. Rouhani further stated that Iran favors close bonds among nations, saying that governments are duty-bound to help bring nations closer in order to take advantage of common interests. (Presstv)

Erdogan Approves Constitutional Change Bill, Referendum Expected on April 16

ANKARA - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday ratified the constitutional amendment package for presidential system change, paving way for a referendum on April 16. The popular vote is planned to take place on April 16, Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus told state-run TRT broadcaster on Friday. "God willing, Turkey will start a new era on the evening of April 16," he added. The High Election Board will announce the date for referendum, but the procedure requires April 16 for the popular vote. On Dec. 30, 2016, a constitutional committee of deputies from the ruling AK Party and the opposition Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) ... (More on P4)...(32)



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Brexit Court Case Barrister to Speak in House of Lords Debate

LONDON - The barrister at the center of the historic court case over Britain's exit from the European Union (EU) is to address the House of Lords on the Brexit bill, it was announced Thursday. Lord David Pannick represented businesswoman Gina Miller who challenged Prime Minister Theresa May's right to trigger the article 50 mechanism to kickstart Britain's departure from Brussels without the consent of parliament. The Supreme Court in London ruled in favor of Miller on Jan. 24, which means MPs (members of the Parliament) need to vote on a parliamentary bill before the process can start. The Brexit bill ended its journey on Wednesday in the House of Commons with a landslide victory for May. The parliamentary ... (More on P4)...(33)

German President Calls for Strong, United EU

RIGA - German President Joachim Gauck on Thursday admitted the European Union (EU) is facing "problems with unity" and called for a "strong and united EU." In a meeting here with his Baltic counterparts, Gauck voiced concerns about EU citizens' critical attitudes, especially in regard to the Brexit referendum. "We need a strong and united EU. We need a sustainable agreement on the EU's future," the German president said, adding that the bloc's member states have to be prepared for compromise. Speaking at a joint news conference with the Baltic heads of state after his meeting with the presidents of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, Gauck said he understood the Baltic states' concerns about their security very well. "Germany is and will remain on the Baltic states' side," the German president said, reiterating German solidarity with the Baltic states' efforts to boost their defense capabilities. Latvian President Raimonds Vejonis underlined Germany is one of the Baltic states' key partners not only in business exchange, but also in security matters. Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė also called attention to regional security issues and thanked Germany for its decision to become the framework country leading the multinational NATO battle group to be deployed in Lithuania. Grybauskaitė also expressed the necessity for unanimity on the EU's future and said that the Baltic states would therefore have to ... (More on P4)...(34)

Uzbekistan, EBRD Discuss Economic Cooperation

TASHKENT - The delegation of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development headed by Mrs Natalia Khanjenkova, Managing Director, Central Asia and Russia visited Uzbekistan, said the EBRD. They had meetings with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, other ministers and national and local government representatives, along with members of the diplomatic, business and financial community. Discussions focused on the strategic priorities of the economic development of Uzbekistan and potential areas of cooperation. Some of the areas of possible EBRD investment in Uzbekistan ... (More on P4)...(38)

Rahmon Orders to Reinforce Shore Protection in Flood-Prone Areas of Tajikistan

DUSHANBEH - President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon on Friday ordered the Emergency Situations Committee to strengthen shore protection in the flood-prone areas of the country, reported the President's press service. Opening the meeting, the head of state expressed condolences over deadly natural disasters that killed many people over the past 5 years. The session addressed issues of elimination of natural disasters, prevention of emergency situations that cause damage to the economy of the country, support of those affected by natural disasters and other issues. Prime Minister, First Deputy Chairman of the ... (More on P4)...(39)

Trump, Senior Republican Spat over Deadly Yemen Raid

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday released three tweets in succession lashing out at fellow Republican John McCain for denying a Yemen raid that killed a U.S. navy officer was a success. "Sen. McCain should not be talking about the success or failure of a mission to the media. Only emboldens the enemy! He's been losing so long he doesn't know how to win anymore, just look at the mess our country is in - bogged down in conflict all over the place," Trump said. "Our hero Ryan died on a winning mission (according to General Mattis), not a 'failure.' Time for the U.S. to get ... (More on P4)...(35)

Russian Jet Kills Turkish Soldiers as Result of Coordination Mistake: Deputy PM

ANKARA - A Russian jet accidentally killed Turkish soldiers in northern Syria as a result of a mistake in coordination between Turkish and Russian militaries, Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus said on Friday. "According to the initial findings, the incident is a result of incorrect coordination, an incident that happened unwillingly," Kurtulmus told reporters in central Anatolian Afyon province of Turkey. He added that the coordination mistake will be revealed over an investigation, local broadcaster CNN Turk reported. Kurtulmus underlined the need for closer coordination with Russia to avoid such incidents. On Thursday, a Russian war jet, conducting airstrikes against Islamic State (IS) targets in al-Bab town of Syria, hit a building where Turkish Armed Forces units were placed, killing three soldiers and wounding 11 others, according to the Turkish Armed Forces. Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday that the airstrikes were launched based on coordinates provided by the Turkish military. "It was a lack of coordination in providing coordinates. That is how I would formulate it," Peskov said. (Xinhua)