Merkel Says Islamist Terrorism is Biggest Test for Germany

BERLIN - Islamist terrorism is the biggest test facing Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Saturday in a New Year's address to the nation, and vowed to introduce laws that improve security after a deadly attack before Christmas in Berlin.

Merkel, seeking a fourth term as chancellor in 2017, described 2016 as a year that gave many the impression that the world had "turned upside down". She urged Germans to shun populism and said Germany should take a leading role in addressing the many challenges facing the European Union.

"Many attach to 2016 the feeling that the world had turned upside down or that what for long had been held as an achievement is now being questioned. The European Union for example," Merkel said.

"Or equally parliamentary democracy, which allegedly is not caring for the interests of the citizens but is only serving the interests of a few. What a distortion," she said in a veiled reference to claims by the far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD) that is stealing votes from her conservatives. Ahead of the ...(More on P4)...(15)

MSF Sound Alarm over Living Conditions of Refugees on Greek Islands

ATHENS - Living conditions for refugees on Greece's northern Aegean Sea islands is "regrettable and infuriating" despite progress made in recent months, the head of the Doctors without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières -- MSF) mission in Greece, Clément Perrin, said on Friday, after Greek authorities vowed to improve the situation in 2017.

During a press briefing in Athens on Wednesday, Greek Migration Minister Yannis Mouzalas presented the steps made during 2016 pledging more support to the more than 61,000 people stranded in Greece since last winter after the closure of borders.

Although some of the dozens accommodation facilities nationwide have been upgraded lately, in the hotspots of Lesvos, Samos and other islands at the frontline of the refugee crisis, families with newborn babies or small children are still living in tents without heating and access to hot water, even as Greece is gripped by ...(More on P4)...(16)

Trump Praises Putin as "Very Smart" after Moscow Holds Off Retaliatory Actions

WASHINGTON - U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Friday praised Russian President Vladimir Putin as "very smart" for holding off on retaliatory actions after Obama administration's new sanctions.

"Great move on delay (by V. Putin) - I always knew he was very smart!" Trump wrote on Twitter.

Putin said Friday that Russia will not expel anyone despite Washington's latest sanctions, according to the Kremlin press service.

"We will not create problems for American diplomats. We will not expel anyone," Putin said in a statement.

Three weeks before leaving office, U.S. President Barack Obama on Thursday struck back at Russia over alleged election hacking.

Nine Russian entities and individuals, including two Russian intelligence services, were sanctioned for their alleged interfering with the U.S. election, Obama said in a statement. In addition, the U.S. State Department on Thursday announced ejection of 35 Russian government officials from the United States, calling them "acting in a manner inconsistent with their diplomatic status."

Two Russian government-owned compounds, one in U.S. State of Maryland and ...(More on P4)...(17)

Outgoing Ban Ki-Moon Bids Farewell to UN

UNITED NATIONS - Outgoing UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Friday bid farewell to the United Nations where he has worked for 10 years.

Ban said "thank you" to UN staff here at UN headquarters before his departure and encouraged them to keep working hard on UN causes and never give up.

A crowd of UN officials, staff members, diplomats gathered here to see him off.

Ban told the crowd that he will join the New Year celebration at the Times Square in New York City on Saturday. He will push the button beginning the official 60-second countdown to the New Year, and call on people worldwide to take actions in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"Millions of people will be watching as I lose my job," he quipped. "Now I feel a bit like Cinderella. Tomorrow at midnight, everything changes."

Ban's tenure as the eighth UN secretary-general started on Jan. 1, 2007 and will end on Dec. 31, 2016.

Portugal's Antonio Guterres will succeed Ban on Jan. 1, 2017. (Xinhua)

EU Foreign Policy Chief Hails Latest Ceasefire in Syria

BRUSSELS - European Union (EU) foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on Friday hailed the latest ceasefire between Syrian government and opposition groups, in the hopes that the truce "can be implemented fully."

"What matters first and foremost is that it can be implemented fully and by all the parties to the conflict," she said in a statement, expressing hope that the ceasefire can open the way to unhindered and countrywide humanitarian access to those in need. She also expressed hoped that the truce can open the way to a renewal of intra-Syrian talks under UN auspices, within the framework set by the UN Security Council.

As the biggest humanitarian aid donor in Syria, the EU will host a series of bilateral talks to find common ground on the post conflict in Syria, Mogherini said.

She pledged that the EU will help the Syrian people to rebuild their country "once the political conditions are in place."

The nationwide ceasefire in Syria, brokered by Turkey and Russia and agreed upon by the Syrian government and major opposition groups, came into force at midnight local time Thursday, as the latest attempt to end nearly six years of civil war. (Xinhua)

Bank Alfalah

Public Notice

اطلاعیه

A) All Account Holders / Customers of Bank Alfalah Limited (Afghanistan operations) who have not received their statement of account are requested to collect Statement of their Account (Statement of Account) from the concerned branches maintaining their accounts by January 31 / July 31 every year. Customers can also contact / visit their respective branches to get their statement of account through their email by providing request / indemnity to the branch. Customers can also nominate their representative to collect their statement of account by filling the requisite form for nomination of authorized representative. Accordingly, all customers are requested to collect their statement of account and in case any discrepancy / error are pointed out, must intimate the respective branch (in writing) by February 15 / August 15 every year.
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الف) به اطلاع تمام مشتریان بانک الفلاح افغانستان رسانیده میشود که اشخاصیکه صورت حساب بانکی خود را بدست نیآورده اند لطفا صورت حساب بانکی خود را از نمایندگی های مربوطه بانک الفلاح تا تاریخ 31 جنوری/31 جولای هر سال بدست آورند. همچنان مشتریان محترم میتوانند با نمایندگی مربوطه خود تماس گرفته و صورت حساب بانکی خویش رابه اساس ارایه تقاضا و برائت بانک از خساره به دست آورند. مشتریان گرامي نیز میتوانند صورت حساب خویش را توسط نماینده با صلاحیت خود و یا به ذریعه ایمیل بدست آورند. لذا از همه مشتریان تقاضا بعمل میآید تا صورت حساب خویش را وصول نموده و بعد از بدست آوردن صورت حساب بانکی, اگر کدام تغییر و یا اشتباه در آن وجود داشته باشد، باید بانک را به شکل تحریری تا 15 فبروری /15 آگست اطلاع دهند.

در صورتیکه مشتري صورت حساب بانکی خویش را بدست نیاورد و یا ایمیل آدرس را معرفی ننماید و اشتباه را هم در صورت حساب به بانک اطلاع کتبي ندهد، بانک الفلاح لمیتد مسؤولیت هیچ نوع تغییر و اشتباه در صورت حساب بانکی را نخواهد داشت.

ب) به اطلاع تمام مشتریان بانک الفلاح لمیتد که از حســـــابات بانکی خود در جریان 12 ماه گذشته استفاده نکرده اند رسانیده میشود که طبق پالیسی در رابطه به حفظ نمودن منافع سپرده گذاران اگر یک حساب بانکی توسط مشتری در جـــــریان 12 ماه گذشته مورد استفاده قرار نگیرد آن حساب به حالت غیر فعال مبدل گردیده و برداشت پول تازمانیکه حســـــاب دوباره توسط مشتری شخصا فعال نگردد مجوز نمیباشد.
لذا به اطلاع تمام مشتریان محترم رسانیده میشود که اگر آنها از حســـــابات بانکی خود در جریان 12 ماه اعتبار از تاریخ آخرین معامله از حساب استفاده نکرده باشند حساب بانـــکی شان به حالت غیر فعال تبدیل میشود.

Nieghbor News

Iran Welcomes Enhanced Ties with EU: President Rouhani

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says Iran welcomes the expansion of bilateral ties with European Union (EU) member states.

President Rouhani made the remarks during a Saturday meeting with Romania's new Ambassador to Tehran Adrian Kozjacski, who submitted his credentials to the Iranian chief executive during the meeting.

"The Islamic Republic welcomes the expansion of cooperation in all areas with the European Union, including with the country of Romania," he said.

There is nothing in the way of the enhancement of mutual relations with Romania, the Iranian president said, adding that the two countries enjoyed many capacities that could be used toward that purpose.

Rouhani said, given Iran's interest in reinforcing the transportation channels leading to and from the country, especially railways, Romania can act as the Islamic Republic's gateway to Europe via the Black Sea and can in ...(More on P4)...(18)

Security Situation Improves in Pakistan as Terrorist Attacks Drop Sharply in 2016

ISLAMABAD - Security situation in Pakistan during the year of 2016 have been improved evidently as the number of terrorist attacks dropped sharply as compared with the terrorist incidents took place in 2015, according to the official statistics from security sources here.

In 2016, terrorists conducted at least 172 terrorist attacks, including bomb blasts and gun attacks, in different areas of Pakistan, which were about 46 percent less than that of 2015 when 322 such incidents took place because of the successful countrywide military operations against the terrorists and their facilitators.

According to the data, at least 600 people, including 423 civilians and 177 personnel of security forces, were killed and over 1,400 others injured in the 172 terrorist attacks. In 2016, the number of killings dropped only by 13 percent as compared with the 2015 when 688 people were killed.

Out of the total number of attacks, 110 attacks were bomb blasts which killed 501 people and left 1,344 others wounded.

Year 2016 witnessed 19 suicide attacks, which are the lowest number of such attacks since 2007, the time when suicide bombing got momentum in Pakistan in reaction to its decision to become a front-line state in war on terror.

The 19 suicide attacks killed 401 people and left 935 others wounded in different areas of the country. In 2016, the number of suicide attacks dropped by only 5 percent as compared with the previous year when 20 suicide blasts took place. However, the number of causalities caused by the suicide attacks in 2016 were 113 percent higher than that of 2015. (Xinhua)

Uzbekistan Unblocks Major Media Websites

TASHKENT - A number of websites long blocked in Uzbekistan have been made available for internet users in the past few days, just the latest development in an apparent wave of liberalization sweeping the country.

Among the outlets whose websites can now be viewed without use of proxy servers are the BBC, RFE/RL's Uzbek service (Ozodlik), Moscow-based Ferghana.ru and EurasiaNet.org. Perhaps even more strikingly, blocks on the websites of organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International and the People's Movement of Uzbekistan opposition group have also been lifted.

Quite what prompted the authorities to adopt this measure is not yet known. And the permissiveness has not been universal.

The editor of opposition news website eltuz.com, Germany-based Umida Niyazova, said most of the formerly banned sites became available for viewing on December 29.

"But our site is still blocked. It will take a week or so before we can draw any conclusions [about what is happening]," Niyazova told EurasiaNet.org.

eltuz.com is a particularly popular resource for its regular output of topical and controversial news stories, much of which focus on the everyday problems of people in Uzbekistan. The website is also well-known for its coruscating caricatures of political figures. (Monitoring Desk)

China's Coal-Producing Province to Slash PM2.5 Pollution

TAIYUAN - Northern China's Shanxi Province, a major coal-producing area, has vowed to reduce annual average PM2.5 density by 20 percent by 2020, the provincial government said Saturday.

Aiming to increase the proportion of days with good air quality to 75.4 percent per year, the province will create a pollutant discharge license system covering all polluting enterprises. The expansion of industrial capacity will also be strictly restricted to control air pollution. No new projects in major polluting industries, such as coal, steel, cement and plate glass, will be approved.

Some major industries will undergo improvements to become more environmentally friendly. By the end of 2017, all 300,000-KW and above coal-fired units will be upgraded to lower emission. (Xinhua)