

Turkey Needs Israel: Erdogan

ISTANBUL - Turkey must accept that it needs Israel, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Saturday, as the two countries seek to thrash out a deal on normalising ties. NATO member Turkey was a key regional ally of Israel until the two countries fell out over the deadly storming by Israeli commandos in 2010 of a Turkish aid ship, the Mavi Marmara, bound for Gaza. Erdogan further raised hackles in Israel with his sometimes inflammatory rhetoric towards the Jewish State. But the atmosphere has transformed following the revelation last month the two sides were making progress



in secret talks to seek a rapprochement, says "Israel is in need of a country like Turkey in the region," Erdogan said in remarks to Turkish reporters published in leading dailies Saturday. "And we too must accept that we need Israel. This is a reality in the region," said Erdogan. "If mutual steps are implemented based on sincerity, then normalisation will follow."

Ambassadors were withdrawn in the wake of the 2010 crisis and Erdogan said Turkey's three conditions for a normalisation were clear -- a lifting of the Gaza blockade, compensation for the Mavi Marmara victims and an apology for the incident. Israel has already apologised and negotiations appear to have made progress on compensation, leaving the blockade on the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip the main hurdle. Indicating possible progress on the blockade, Erdogan said Israel had suggested it would allow goods and construction materials into Gaza if they came via Turkey. (AFP)

France Quarrels over Revoking Citizenship of Terrorists

PARIS - The push by France's Socialist government to revoke the citizenship of convicted terrorists with dual nationality after the Paris attacks has turned into a harsh political dispute, with the far right applauding the move while some on the left express indignation at what they call a divisive measure.

French President Francois Hollande submitted the proposal three days after the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris that left

130 dead, in a shift toward a hard line on security. The idea appears to have strong support in French public opinion. Several polls over the past week suggest that 80 to 90 percent of the French are in favor of the measure. Under current French law, citizenship revocation can only be applied to people who have been naturalized, not if they are French-born, and the procedure is rarely implemented. The new rules would



extend it to all dual nationals, but cannot be applied to people who are only French citizens, as France's obligations under international law prevent it from leaving a person stateless. Opponents of the measure consider it would create two classes of citizens -- dual nationals who could lose their citizenship ... (More on P4)...(20)

British Soldiers may Face Iraq Prosecutions: Investigator

LONDON - British soldiers may be put on trial for alleged crimes committed in Iraq including murder, the head of a government unit investigating claims of torture and unlawful killing said in an interview published on Saturday. Mark Warwick, a former police detective who is in charge of the Iraq Historic Allegations Team (Ihat), was quoted as saying by The Independent newspaper that he believed there would be sufficient evidence to justify criminal charges. "There are serious allegations that we are investigating across the whole range of Ihat investigations, which incorporates homicide, where I feel there is significant evidence to be obtained to put a strong case before the Service Prosecuting Authority to prosecute and charge," he said. Ihat, which was set up by Ministry of Defence in 2010 and is independent of the military for its ... (More on P4)...(21)

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Cambodia Sends 6th Batch of Troops to Lebanon for UN Peacekeeping Mission

PHNOM PENH - Cambodia dispatched the sixth batch of 184 peacekeepers to Lebanon on Saturday to replace the fifth group, whose one-year United Nations peacekeeping mission in that country has ended. The military engineering group will carry out their duties by clearing landmines, constructing roads, bridges, shelters and defense posts, and providing medical treatment to Lebanese civilians. "It marks the 10th year that Cambodia has sent

peacekeepers to war-torn countries," Gen. Sem Sovanny, director-general of the Cambodian National Center for Peacekeeping Force, said during the sending-off ceremony at the Phnom Penh International Airport. He said since 2006, the Southeast Asian country has dispatched 3,372 troops, including 108 females, to join UN peacekeeping operations in Sudan, South Sudan, Chad, Central African Republic, Lebanon, Mali, Syria and Cyprus. (Xinhua)

Japan's Emperor Wishes for Peace in New Year's Appearance

TOKYO - Japan's Emperor Akihito expressed his hopes for world peace as he appeared Saturday with his wife, Empress Michiko, sons and grandchildren behind bullet-proof glass before thousands of well-wishers waving flags. The 82-year-old Akihito, who was scheduled to make five such appearances at Tokyo's Imperial Palace Saturday, also released a New Year's statement in which he expressed his sympathy for people displaced from their homes and still liv-

ing in temporary housing after the March 2011 tsunami and nuclear disaster in northeastern Japan. Michiko, wearing a pinkish beige dress, waved to the crowd, estimated by public broadcaster NHK at 44,000 in the morning. That's likely to double in the afternoon. Masako, wife of the crown prince who has made rare public appearances because of a stress-related illness, also joined this year's New Year's greeting, smiling in a deep blue dress. Akihito is the son of Hi-



rohito under whose name Japan waged World War II and surrendered seven decades ago. But from the start, he has stood for peace. His role is symbolic and he holds no political power, but he is relatively popular with the people. Michiko was the first commoner to marry into the Japanese royal family, and she also has ... (More on P4)...(22)

Iraq's Sadr Calls for Protests in Gulf, Iraq, after Nimr Execution



BAGHDAD - Prominent Iraqi Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr called on Saturday for demonstrations in Gulf countries and in Iraq to protest the execution of Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr in Saudi Arabia. "I ask that the Shi'ites of Saudi Arabia ... show courage in responding even through peaceful demonstrations, and the same for the Shi'ites in the Gulf, so as to deter injustice and government terrorism in the future," he said on his website. "I urge ... angry demonstrations in front of Saudi sites and interests, and I urge the government to refrain from opening the Saudi embassy," he said. Saudi Arabia reopened its embassy in Iraq this week. It had been closed in 1990 after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. (Reuters)

Nimr Execution Serves Islamic State: Iraqi MP

BAGHDAD - Saudi Arabia's execution of prominent Saudi Shi'ite cleric Nimr al-Nimr serves the interests of Islamic State, a prominent Iraqi lawmaker said on Saturday in a statement condemning the act. "The execution of Sheikh al-Nimr is a service to Daesh, which is betting on expanding by igniting sectarian wars," said Humam Hamoudi, a prominent Shi'ite politician and member of the powerful Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) party. (Reuters)

Unaccompanied Minor Refugees in Greece take up Family Burden onto themselves

ATHENS - "I feared that I might die, but I had to do it for my family," Omar, a Syrian boy only 16 years old, bears all the burden of his family to find a safe place in Europe, having experienced far too much for a child. Omar is one of the thousand unaccompanied minors, small heroes arriving every day in Greece fleeing from war-torn countries in the Middle East, risking their lives to cross the sea dealing with traffickers. He travelled in a wooden boat for eight days from Alexandria in Egypt to Crete island in southern Greece along



with other 266 refugees and migrants, bringing with him only the necessary for his difficult trip: food and water. With a serious and mature look in his eyes Omar stood in the accommodation center called "StegiPlus" (Shelter Plus) for unaccompanied minors of the non-government organization PRAKSIS (Action) in the center of Athens recently and shared his story to Xinhua. He arrived in Greece five months ... (More on P4)...(23)

Lack of Responses in European Society Pushes Youth into IS' Embrace: French Expert

PARIS - The radicalization of the youth in Europe and their engagement in jihadist movement is partially due to the lack of political responses in European society, Anne Giudicelli, director of Terrorisic, an operation consulting firm on political and security risks, told Xinhua. "There is a phenomenon of attractiveness that eventually represents the offer of the Islamic state. Because the European societies are no longer doing enough to hold a

fringe of youth," Giudicelli said. She said that the political class, especially the French one, does not make enough responses to embrace this evolution and to change its economic and social approach. "European society has changed, evolved, diversified and globalized. Social differentiation is occurring and when there are not enough strong social projects to unite the European societies, which allows each member ... (More on P4)...(24)

New Changes in UNSC may Serve Palestinian Cause: Official

RAMALLAH - The new changes in the United Nations Security Council may serve the Palestinian cause, a senior official in Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) said on Saturday. "The Palestinian leadership is looking forward to exploiting the new changes in the structure of the Security Council to apply with several bids related to the Palestinian cause," Ahmed Majdalani told Xinhua. He clarified that after five countries became new members in the Security Council, "this might be supportive in terms of earning more than nine votes backing the Palestinian bids." Majdalani said that within the coming stage, the Palestinians are intending to apply a series of bids to the Security Council related to the issues of settlements, Jerusalem and protecting holy sites as well as asking for full recognition of a Palestinian state and setting up a time schedule for ending the Israeli occupation. Five new countries, including Egypt, Senegal, Japan, Ukraine and Uruguay, have recently joined the Security Council as non-permanent Security Council members for two years. The five countries replaced Jordan, Lithuania, Chad, Nigeria and Chili. The Security Council have five permanent members, which are the U.S., Russia, Britain, France and China. The five countries have the veto right. Ties between Israel and the Palestinians have been deteriorating as an ongoing flaring wave of violent confrontations broke out in early October. (Xinhua)

Nieghbor News

Pak Senators Call for Inquiries into all Major Terror Attacks

ISLAMABAD - The Pakistani Senate echoed on Friday with a demand for holding inquiries into all major terror attacks in different parts of the country over the last decade to expose those who were responsible for breach of security. During a debate on an adjournment motion moved by retired Colonel Tahir Mashhadi of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) on the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) attack on the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar, some senators also called for an inquiry into the 1999 Kargil fiasco. Mr Mashhadi suggested setting up of a judicial commission to expose those guilty of negligence in providing security to the school, where the Taliban attack left over 140 schoolchildren and teachers dead in Dec 2014. Supporting Mr

Mashhadi's call, a number of senators from both the treasury and opposition benches regretted that parliament was not even aware of findings of the inquiry commission formed to investigate the Abbottabad incident in which the US Marines killed Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden in a military operation in May 2011.

Former interior minister Rehman Malik asked the government to take an extreme step of stopping transit trade with Afghanistan to force the country to hand over Mullah Fazlullah, who had claimed responsibility for the massacre of schoolchildren. The former minister wanted to know whether handing over of the "chief terrorist Fazlullah" was part of the agenda for the talks to be held with Afghanistan later this month. (Agencies)

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Iranians Not Interested in Russian Passenger Planes: Official

TEHRAN - Despite Russia's readiness to meet Iran's needs for new passenger planes, Iran's airlines are not interested in buying Russian planes, Press TV reported on Saturday quoting an Iranian aviation official as saying. No Iranian airliner has submitted any request to Iran's Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) over purchasing planes from Russia, deputy director of CAO Mohammad Khodakarami told reporters, replying to the question of the possibility of purchasing planes from Russian Sukhoi and Tupolev by

Iranian airlines. Khodakarami's remarks followed those of Sergei Dementiev, the General Director of the Russian commercial and transport aircraft manufacturer Aviastar-SP, that his company is interested in signing deals with Iran to provide the country with advanced Tu-204CM aircraft. Earlier, Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin also said that Moscow was ready to deliver a large batch of SSJ 100 Sukhoi planes, as the country's most modern commercial jets, to Iran before 2020. ... (More on P4)...(25)

Structural Reform to Power China's Stable Growth: Finance Minister

BEIJING - The supply-side structural reform to improve all-factor productivity will help China gather future growth steam, according to the country's finance minister. Despite heavy downward economic pressure, the Chinese economy is still resilient with generally positive fundamentals and huge potential, Lou Jiwei, head of the Ministry of Finance wrote in the latest edition of the Qiushi Magazine, the flagship journal of the Communist Party of China Central Committee. Labor force and capital inputs were used to power a country's growth in the

initial period, but post-industrial economic development will rely more on improvement of factors such as technology, management and labor force quality, Lou pointed out. The Chinese economy is facing headwinds from rising labor costs, falling marginal efficiency of capital, high leverage ratio and old-fashioned mechanisms that inhibit the effective allocation of resources, Lou noted. To address these challenges, China is pushing ahead with supply-side reform featuring reducing overcapacity, destocking, delev ... (More on P4)...(26)

Kyrgyzstan to Continue Border Delimitation Talks with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan

DUSHANBE - Kyrgyzstan in 2016 will continue the negotiation process to resolve the border line issue with the neighboring countries, primarily Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, CA-News Central Asian news service reported with reference to Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Erlan Abdyldaev. Abdyldaev made the remarks at a meeting with the media outlets. He said that in compar-

ison with 2014, in 2015, taking into account efforts of the government, the chances for conflict on the Kyrgyz-Tajik and Kyrgyz-Uzbek border have decreased. Although some conflicts exist, they are local in nature, the minister said. "We must create conditions for residents in remote areas, so that they wouldn't face conflict situations in their daily life," he said. (Agencies)