

New UN Chief Calls for Reform, Collective Efforts to Achieve UN Goals

UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told UN staff members here on Tuesday that the UN needs their collective engagement to make changes to achieve the goals of the organization on peace, security and development. Guterres took reins of the UN on New Year's Day. In his speech at UN headquarters, Guterres encouraged his staff members to be proud of the organization and to recognize its achievements though there is doubt about the role that UN can play in world affairs.



He said due to the work of the UN, many people have been rescued, many people have suffered less, and many people have seen their living conditions improved through international cooperation in different parts of the world.

Guterres also asked the staff members to recognize the shortcomings of the UN as it had failed to prevent and resolve conflicts in some parts of the world.

He urged them to be collectively engaged in UN system reform to get rid of ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

Nieghbor News

China's Syrian Issue Envoy to Travel Abroad to Work on Political Solution

BEIJING - A special envoy of the Chinese government on the Syrian issue will travel to Geneva, the European Union, Turkey and Russia in efforts to work on a political solution to the Syrian crisis.

"The visit of Xie Xiaoyan is aimed at enhancing communication with the parties concerned, supporting global efforts in promoting peace and pushing forward a

political solution at an early date," Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said at a press briefing Wednesday in Beijing. "China, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has been playing a positive and constructive role in resolving the Syrian crisis," Geng added. Recently, the Syrian government and major opposition groups reached a ...*(More on P4)...(31)*

Iran Will Never Abandon Syrian People, Government: Velayati

TERHRAN - Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei

A senior Iranian official has stressed the Iran will never abandon the Syrian people and government.

Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior adviser to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, made the remarks on Tuesday fol-

lowing a meeting with Iraq's Vice President Nouri al-Maliki in Tehran.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will by no means retreat from its principal policy to support the resistance and the resistance front, including the people and government of Syria," said Velayati. Velayati also stressed that all efforts for Syria's peace and stability on ...*(More on P4)...(32)*

Trump Urges Obama to Halt Prisoner Transfers From Guantanamo

WASHINGTON - U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Tuesday urged the Obama administration to halt prisoner transfers from the Guantanamo Bay military prison in Cuba, calling the detainees "extremely dangerous people."

"There should be no further releases from Gitmo. These are extremely dangerous people and should not be allowed back onto the battlefield," Trump said on Twitter. U.S. President Barack Obama had vowed to close the prison during his tenure and his administration has signaled it is trying to transfer more detainees before the President leaves office on Jan. 20. During the presidential election campaign last ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

U.S. House Republicans Drop Proposal to Rein in Ethics Watchdog

WASHINGTON - U.S. House Republicans on Tuesday dropped a proposal they passed overnight to shift the Office of Congressional Ethics, an independent non-partisan agency that polices potential ethical wrongdoing by lawmakers, to a position underneath the House ethics committee, just hours after President-elect Donald Trump slammed it for "weakening" the

watchdog. "House Republicans made the right move in eliminating this amendment that should never have seen the light of day," said David Donnelly, president and CEO of Every Voice watchdog group on Tuesday. "Not one voter went to the polls in November hoping Congress would gut ethics oversight." "After eight years of operation, many members



believe the Office of Congressional Ethics is in need of reform to protect due process and ensure it is operating according to its

stated mission," House Speaker Paul Ryan defended the proposal in a statement earlier Tuesday. His ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

Paris Int'l Conference an Opportunity for Making Peace: Palestinian Official

RAMALLAH - A senior Palestinian official said on Tuesday that the Paris international conference for peace, scheduled to be held in mid of January, is an opportunity to achieve a just peace in the region. Nabil Abu Rdnineh, an aide to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and spokesman of the Palestinian Presidency, said in an official statement that the recent Israeli remarks are

a challenge to the international resolutions. Abu Rdnineh's remarks were Palestinian official reaction to an earlier statement of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who described the Paris peace conference as "absurd." "The Paris international peace conference is an opportunity to achieve a just peace and these statements (of Netanyahu) ...*(More on P4)...(25)*

Japan PM Says No Immediate Plan for Dissolving Lower House, Priority on Economy

TOKYO - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Wednesday that he has no immediate plan of dissolving the lower house of parliament for a snap election and priority for the new year would be on the economy. Speaking at a New Year press conference in Mie Prefecture, central Japan after visiting the Ise Grand Shrine, the prime minister said that he "is not considering at all dissolving the

lower house to call a snap election." Speculation around the timing of the next lower house election has been on the rise for the past several months, as leader of the majority party in the lower house would usually take on the position of prime minister, and Abe is apparently trying to choose the best window for the sake of himself and his party. "There could well be a



dissolution of the lower house and a general election this year, (so) we'll maintain and enhance our preparations for bat-

tle," said Yoshihiko Noda, Secretary General of the ...*(More on P4)...(26)*

UNWTO Secretary General Stresses Need for Sustainable Tourism

MADRID - The Secretary General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Taleb Rifai has again highlighted the role that tourism can play in breaking down barriers between peoples and as a key tool for sustainable development.



"Tourism is increasingly and rightly being recognized as a sector that can help usher in a better world and 2017 is a unique opportunity for us

to promote the contribution of tourism to achieving the future we want - and also to determine, together, the exact role we will have tourism play in

the sustainable development agenda, to and beyond 2030," wrote Rifai in an open letter to the press. The United Nations has ...*(More on P4)...(27)*

'We Need to Talk', Bavarian CSU Tells Merkel on Migrants

SEEON, Germany - Insisting "this is serious", the leader of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Bavarian sister party stood by his demand for a refugee cap and said the conservative allies still have differences to resolve before campaigning for September's election.

Horst Seehofer, the leader of the conservative Christian Social Union (CSU), said on Wednesday a "reconciliation summit" he is due to hold with Merkel in Munich in February was still planned but that the program was not finalized.

The CSU has long bristled at Merkel's open-door policies that allowed into Germany about 1.1 million refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere since mid-2015. Ignoring her objections, it insists on a limit ...*(More on P4)...(28)*

India Announces Election Dates in Five States

NEW DELHI - India's Election Commission Wednesday announced a scheduled for forthcoming local elections in five Indian states.

The elections for state Assemblies (law-making bodies) will be held in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa.

India's Chief Election Commissioner Nasim Zaidi while announcing the schedule at a press conference said the elections will be held between Feb. 4 and March 8.

Counting of votes according to Zaidi would be carried out on March 11.

More than 160 million voters are expected to cast their votes to elect representatives to these state assemblies. Elections in Uttar Pradesh, the India's most populous state will be held in five phases from Feb. 11 to March 8. In Manipur, elections will be held in two phases on March 4 and 8.

There will be single phase elections in Uttarakhand, Goa and Punjab. Goa and Punjab will go to polls on Feb. 4 while as in Uttarakhand elections will be held on Feb. 15.

According to officials 690 constituencies will go for polls. Uttar Pradesh has 403 seats, Punjab 117, Uttarakhand 70, Manipur 60 and Goa 40 seats. (Xinhua)

UN Voices Concern over 116,000 People Displaced from Eastern Aleppo, Syria

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations continues to be concerned with the 116,000 people that have been registered as displaced from formerly non-government controlled neighbourhoods of eastern Aleppo, Syria, said UN Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric Tuesday. "The scale of destruction in Aleppo is massive and needs enormous

help, including such things as health care, water and sanitation, education systems, housing and shelter, electricity and livelihoods," said Dujarric at a press briefing. In the meantime, the UN and its partners are working closely with the (Syrian) Government to respond to the most urgent needs, he said. "We ...*(More on P4)...(29)*

French Farmer Faces Risk of Prison for Helping Migrants

NICE, France - A French activist farmer faces up to five years in prison as he goes on trial accused of helping African migrants cross the border from Italy. The case has called attention to residents of the Roya valley in the Alps and others who have resisted antimigrant sentiment and are offering food, lodging or other aid to people from impoverished or war-torn countries coming to Europe illegally. Cedric Herrou is slated to go on trial Wednesday in Nice on charges of helping ...*(More on P4)...(30)*

Benefits of CPEC to Equitably Reach All Provinces: Nawaz

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday emphasised that the benefits of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will be equitably distributed among all federating units.

The premier said this while chairing a high-level meeting, where he was briefed on the progress made in the recently held meeting in Beijing of the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) on CPEC on December

29. The premier expressed satisfaction over the progress on CPEC-related projects and said international investors, due to the government's successful economic policies, were showing keen interest in investment in the country. About establishment of industrial parks, Nawaz directed the federal authorities to initiate process of providing electricity, gas and telecommunication to the proposed sites. He ...*(More on P4)...(33)*

Tajikistan Cannot Use WTO Opportunities Due to its Customs and Tariff Regulation

DUSHANBEH - The companies of Tajikistan cannot use the opportunities in connection with accession in the World Trade Organization (WTO) due to imperfection of the customs and tariff regulation of the domestic companies of Tajikistan, reports the Tajikistan Telegraph Agency (TajikTA).

"Due to imperfection of customs and tariff regulation the domestic companies of Tajikistan cannot use the opportunities

which they got in connection with membership in the WTO," reads the mid-term development program of Tajikistan until 2020. The customs standards on cotton import and carpets are several times lower the standards prescribed by the WTO. Goods to Tajikistan are imported taking in account the mass but not the quantity. This principle frustrates ...*(More on P4)...(34)*

President of Uzbekistan Signs Anti-Corruption Law

TASHKENT - President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev on signed a law on combating corruption.

The law entered into force on January 4. The law is aimed at regulation of works in fight against corruption.

According to the document, increasing legal awareness and legal culture of the popula-

tion, implementation of measures on fighting corruption in all spheres of public life and society, timely detection and suppression of corruption offenses and inevitability of punishment will be the main directions of the state policy in anti-corruption sphere. The anti-corruption activities will imply transparency and ...*(More on P4)...(35)*