

S. Korea, U.S., Japan to Hold Meeting on DPRK Nuke Test

SEOUL - Vice foreign ministers of South Korea, the United States and Japan will hold a meeting in Tokyo on Saturday to discuss countermeasures after the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s nuclear test, Seoul's foreign ministry said Tuesday.

Attending the second round of such meeting will be South Korea's first vice minister for foreign affairs Lim Sun-Nam, U.S. deputy secretary of state Antony Blinken and Japan's vice foreign minister Akitaka Saiki. The first round



was held in Washington in April 2015. During the weekend

meeting, the senior diplomats will make in-depth discussion on the DPRK's nuclear program, according to the ministry. Seoul's vice minister is

pushing to hold bilateral talks with his Tokyo and Washington counter-

parts separately from the trilateral meeting.

Ahead of the meeting, the three countries' chief delegates to six-party talks to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula will gather in Seoul on Wednesday to discuss the DPRK's claim of its first successful hydrogen bomb test.

The six-party talks involves South Korea, the DPRK, China, the United States, Japan and Russia. Schedules for chief delegates talks between South Korea and Russia are under discussion. (Xinhua)

Iraqi PM Vows to Rout IS after Mall Bombing, Mosque Attacks

BAGHDAD - Iraq's prime minister vowed Tuesday to keep up the fight against the Islamic State group, a day after an IS suicide attack on a shopping mall in Baghdad killed 18 people and a wave of retaliatory attacks targeted Sunni mosques.

Touring the bombed and destroyed mall in the eastern Shiite-dominated area of New Baghdad, Haider al-Abadi described the attack as a "desperate attempt" by militants after they lost control of the key west-

ern city of Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province.

Iraq's government will "spare no efforts" to expel IS forces from the country, al-Abadi said. Gunmen stormed the Jawhara Mall on Monday after setting off a car bomb and launching a suicide attack at its entrance. Iraqi forces later surrounded the building, landing troops on the roof before clashing with attackers inside, killing two gunmen and arresting four. Along with the 18... (More on P4)...(18)

Ongoing War in Yemen Further Endangering Children's Lives: UN

GENEVA - The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) highlighted on Tuesday the growing threats faced by Yemeni children as deadly bombardments and street fighting add to disease and deprivation prevalent in the war-torn country.

"What we need above all in Yemen is an end to the conflict," UNICEF spokesman Christophe Bouliere iterated amid figures showing that some 10 million children inside the country face both pain and suffering



as 2016 gets underway. UN-confirmed statistics reveal that 747 children have lost their lives since

the conflict erupted in March last year, while a further 1,108 have been injured. Some 724 children are also thought to have been forced by warring factions to partake in... (More on P4)...(19)

Syria Army Enters Rebel Bastion in Latakia Province

BEIRUT - Syrian regime forces advanced Tuesday into the main bastion of rebels in the northwestern province of Latakia, the coastal heartland of President Bashar al-Assad's clan, a monitor said.

Supported by pro-regime militias, fighters with Lebanese Shiite movement Hezbollah and intense Russian air strikes, the army entered the town of Salma, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Rami Abdel Rahman,



head of the British-based monitor, said pro-government forces were locked in fierce fighting with rebels including Islamist hardliners Ahrar

al-Sham and Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Nusra Front. Over the past 48 hours, more than 120 air strikes by Russian warplanes targeted Salma and its

outskirts, the Observatory reported. Syria's state news agency SANA said army units and the pro-government National ... (More on P4)...(20)

Critical Aid Delivered to Syrian Towns for First Time in Months: UN

GENEVA - The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported Tuesday that trucks carrying critical supplies were able to offload cargo in besieged Syrian towns, providing some 60,000 people with vital humanitarian aid.

Forty-seven trucks were directed on Monday to Madaya where aid was delivered to 40,000 people, while a convoy of 21 trucks was sent in parallel to Foah and Kefraya, further providing 20,000

civilians living in miserable conditions with critical humanitarian assistance.

According to OCHA, the aid delivered to the towns for the first time since October last year included food, health supplies, and winterization and shelter material. Aid personnel on the Madaya-bound convoy described the situation on the ground as "miserable", confirming they had seen severely malnourished children. ... (More on P4)...(21)

Obama to Sum up Legacy, Look into Future in Final State of the Union Speech

WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama is expected to deliver his final State of the Union speech Tuesday evening. It is believed that he will sum up the legacy of his mandate and speak of the country's future. With one year remaining in Obama's second and final term, the president will not present a to-do list of what he'd like to accomplish in the year ahead, unlike in his previous speeches. Because it would be futile to present a meaningful agenda before a Republican-controlled Congress, Obama will instead set the tone for his successor. "What I want to focus on in this State of the Union address is not just the remarkable progress we've made, not just what I want to get done in the year ahead, but what we all need to do together in the years to come," said Obama in a video message sent to supporters last week. Nevertheless, the president's speech will cite achievements made during his ... (More on P4)...(22)

Sri Lanka, Japan Hold High Level Talks to Enhance Cooperation

COLOMBO - Japan and Sri Lanka held high level discussions on Tuesday to enhance bilateral and economic cooperation, the Foreign Ministry said here. The Sri Lanka, Japan Policy Dialogue was held between the foreign ministries of the two countries in Colombo after such a dialogue was proposed during Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's visit to Japan, last year. The Japanese delegation will also hold discussions with the Sri Lankan Defence Ministry on Wednesday on maritime security, safety and oceanic issues, the Foreign Ministry said. (Xinhua)

Refugee Crisis Delays Denmark's Tax Reform

COPENHAGEN - The Danish government on Tuesday postponed its tax reform which was scheduled in the spring until the autumn 2016 due to the current refugee crisis. Danish Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen announced the decision at a press meeting on Tuesday, saying that the government will first try to find a solution to the high costs of asylum seekers and refugees through negotiations with local authorities and the social partners. "As I said in my New Year speech, the asylum crisis was this century's greatest crisis ... It chal-



lenges our cohesion and our economy," said the prime minister.

"The way we handle the crisis, will be crucial to how our society develops in the coming years," he added. The

Danish government also plans to present its new 2025 economic plan in the summer, and against this background the scheduled tax reform negotiations will first get ... (More on P4)...(23)

Union Peace Conference Begins in Myanmar Capital

NAY PYI TAW - Myanmar's union peace conference kicked off here Tuesday, ahead of the first round of national-level formal political dialogue between the government and eight ethnic armed groups. The conference, which runs through Saturday, is the biggest gathering of political forces in the country since its independence in 1948, said President U Thein Sein. For more than six decades, armed conflicts has been prevalent in the country, and the current government, since it took office in 2011, has made various efforts to bring the conflict to an end, which the president said has laid a good foundation for the next government to continue the peace process. The peace process plays an important part in the country's political transition, and the peace conference is also part of the power transfer process following the general election in ... (More on P4)...(24)

Thousands of Junior Doctors go on Strike Across England

ONDON - Thousands of junior doctors in England staged a 24-hour strike on Tuesday over pay and working hours disputes with Britain's health authorities. The strike is the first by British junior doctors in nearly 40 years. Thousands of hospital operations and procedures have been affected by the walkout, which began at 8:00 a.m. local time (0800 GMT). Trainee doctors in England will provide emergency-only care during the strike, similar to the medical service offered on Christmas Day in the country. A total of 37,000 of 45,000 junior doctors in England took part in a vote in November last year ... (More on P4)...(26)

Neighbor News

F-16 Sale Delayed in US Congress

WASHINGTON - The US Congress has stalled a planned sale of eight new F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan, although the Obama administration is still trying to undo the hold, congressional and diplomatic sources told Dawn.

The hold reflects the growing anti-Pakistan sentiments on Capitol Hill where it is now a routine to see strong attacks on Pakistan and its policies during congressional hearings.

Lawmakers used clarification and information notices to delay the sale. The administration also received a "hold" notice from the Senate,

using this legislative process to delay floor action on the proposed sale to Pakistan. The hold, however, does not kill the measure and it can still go through if the administration continues to push for it. Sources on the Hill say that since the Obama administration is keen on selling these aircraft to Pakistan, it may ultimately succeed in undoing the hold.

At recent congressional hearings, key US lawmakers raised a host of questions about the end use of the F-16 aircraft and about the US relationship with Pakistan. (Agencies)

Arak Reactor not Yet Decommissioned, Work Ongoing: Iran

DUBAI - Iran has not yet decommissioned the Arak heavy water reactor, one of its obligations under the nuclear deal with world powers to win a reprieve from sanctions, but expects to do so in the coming days, its nuclear body was quoted as saying. The comments carried by state news agency IRNA on Monday evening contradicted an earlier report by the Fars news agency, which cited an "informed source" as saying Iran had removed the core of the Arak reactor and filled it with cement. "Some preliminary steps have been taken, but removing the core of the Arak reactor has not been completed," IRNA quot-

ed an unnamed senior official at the Atomic Energy Agency of Iran as saying. Iranian officials expect to finish implementing the July 14 deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in the coming days. Iran has already shipped most of its enriched uranium stockpile to Russia, and must still mothball most of its centrifuges and decommission the Arak reactor. Once the United Nations confirms Iran has done this, international sanctions against Iran will be lifted, paving the way for an influx of foreign investment and, Iranian officials say, a rapid increase in crude oil exports. (Reuters)

Xi Calls for Unrelenting Efforts in Fight Against Corruption in 2016

BEIJING - President Xi Jinping said Tuesday that anti-corruption efforts should not be relaxed in 2016 in order to deter fresh cases from emerging.

The campaign against corruption should continue to cover all sectors and zero tolerance will be shown to violators, Xi said at the sixth plenary session of the 18th Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) of the Communist Party of China (CPC). In addition to intensified efforts in bringing back fugitive officials suspected of corruption, anti-corruption agencies should also

be serious in handling misconduct at the grassroots level, according to Xi.

Violators should be severely punished to safeguard people's immediate interests, Xi said, adding the achievements of the anti-corruption campaign should be more tangible for members of the public. The president stressed the importance of respecting the Party Constitution and that its rules and regulations must be followed strictly. Party committees and disciplinary watchdogs at all levels should strengthen ... (More on P4)...(27)

Russia Provides Humanitarian Aid to the Earthquake Victims in Tajikistan

DUSHANBE - Russia has provided humanitarian aid to the affected population in Tajikistan.

According to the Russian Embassy in Dushanbe, Russian Emergencies Ministry's IL-76 delivered more than 32 tons of humanitarian aid in Dushanbe on Tuesday.

The assistance that includes mobile generators, multi-seat tents and blankets will be distributed among the victims of a devastating earthquake that struck the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region

(GBAO) last month. We will recall that a magnitude-7.2 tremor occurred in Gorno Badakhshan on December 7, killing two persons and injuring ten people.

The Geophysics Survey of Tajikistan's Academy of Sciences says the epicenter was 93 kilometers west of the settlement of Murgab, the administrative center of GBAO's Murgab district, 138 kilometers northeast of Khorog, the capital of Gorno Badakhshan and 357 kilometers southeast of Dushanbe. (Asia-Plus)