

Trump Warned off Unilateral Mideast Moves at Paris Peace Talks

PARIS - France warned Sunday of "serious consequences" if Donald Trump moves to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital as representatives from 70 countries met in Paris to try to revive stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts. Neither Israel nor the Palestinians are represented at the conference, which Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dismissed as "futile". Opening the meeting, French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault said the international community wanted to "forcefully reiterate that the two-state solution is the only solu-



tion possible" to the seven-decade-old conflict. He also warned the US president-elect against relocating the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, in a move to recognise the contested city as Israel's capital. Ayrault said such a move, which Trump promised during campaigning, would have "extremely serious consequences" and predicted the incoming US leader would find it impossible to implement. "When you are president of the United States, you cannot take such a stubborn... (More on P4)... (21)

Russia Says Facing Increased Cyber Attacks from Abroad

MOSCOW - Russia is facing increased cyber attacks from abroad, a senior security official was quoted on Sunday as saying, responding to Western accusations that Moscow is aggressively targeting information networks in the United States and Europe. U.S. intelligence agencies say Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a cyber campaign aimed at boosting Donald Trump's electoral chances by discrediting his Democrat rival Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential campaign. Russia has dismissed the accusations as a "witch-hunt". "Recently we have noted a significant

increase in attempts to inflict harm on Russia's informational systems from external forces," Nikolai Patrushev, secretary of Russia's Security Council, told the Rossiiskaya Gazeta daily, according to excerpts of an interview to be published in full on Monday. "The global (Internet) operators and providers are widely used, while the methods they use constantly evolve," said Patrushev, a former head of the FSB secret service and a close ally of Putin. Patrushev accused the outgoing U.S. administration of President Barack Obama of being "incompetent" and "unethical" in its cyber operations. (Xinhua) ... (More on P4)... (22)

UAE, UK Launch Joint Military Drills "Sea Dagger 2017"

DUBAI - Joint military exercises between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Britain have started in the Gulf Arab state, Emirati state news agency WAM reported on Sunday. Dubbed "Sea Dagger 2017," the exercises are held "within the framework of cooperation, coordination and exchange of experiences and military information" between the two sides, said the report. It did not reveal which

branch of services are included in the exercises nor does it reveal the exact location of the drills. The joint military drill is a part of a "unified strategy to strengthen military cooperation between the UAE armed forces and their British counterparts." The "Sea Dagger 2017" intends to exercise training on the planning, implementation and management of joint military operations. (Xinhua)

Middle East Peace Conference Held in Paris

PARIS - The Middle East Peace Conference, an international meeting aiming to revive the stranded Middle East peace talks, was held in Paris on Sunday. About 70 countries, including the UN Security Council permanent members, key European countries and major Arab states, are taking part in the meeting. However, neither Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas nor Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are represented in the meeting. Israelis called the meeting a "rigged conference" aiming to adopt additional anti-Israel stances. French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault, who chairs Paris gathering, urged for a resumption of the talks. "Peace cannot be found in hate. The aim of the conference is precisely to allow a resumption of dialogue," Ayrault told the gathering at the opening speech. "There is no time to waste," because "we are not sheltered from an explosion of violence," said the minister. But France affirmed that the meeting wouldn't im-

pose conditions on the two rival camps to reach a lasting peace accord. France launched a diplomatic initiative to revive Middle East peace talks last June. The last round of peace negotiations be-



tween Israel and Palestinian authorities broke down in April 2014 after the two sides failed to resolve their deep disputes on issues, such as Israeli settlements, Palestinian state borders and security. (Xinhua)

IRENA, ADFD to Fund Renewable Energy Projects in Four Developing Countries

DUBAI - The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) said Saturday that it will work with a fund in Abu Dhabi to channel 44.5 million U.S. dollars to four renewable energy projects in Marshall Islands, Niger, Seychelles and Solomon Islands. The government-controlled Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) will support "a diverse set of projects including a hybrid micro-grid project employing solar photovoltaic systems," said IRENA

in an e-mailed press release. The other three funded projects are about advanced lithium-ion batteries, hydropower and an integrated wind and solar energy system, according to the energy agency. In the Marshall Islands, a 4.6-megawatt hybrid micro-grid project using solar cells and advanced lithium-ion batteries will be built to provide renewable energy to more than 16,000 people in the country. The project in Niger aims



to use 2.1-megawatt solar photovoltaic micro-grids and solar home kits to bring electrical power to 150,000 people and 100 schools in rural areas. The Seychellois government will launch a solar PV utility scale project to reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuels, while... (More on P4)... (23)

US will be Invited to Astana Talks: Turkish FM

ANKARA - The United States would be invited to Syrian peace talks due to be held on Jan. 23 in Astana, Kazakhstan, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Saturday. Officials from Turkey, Russia, and Iran met in Moscow Friday in preparation for the summit, and decided to invite the U.S. to the negotiations, state-run Anadolu Agency reported. "We have agreed to invite the U.S. to the talks. The U.S. will be in Astana. We do not deny the contribution and role of the U.S.,"



Cavusoglu said at the 9th Ambassadors' Conference in Ankara. The foreign minister also stressed that Turkey opposed to the inclusion of the People's Protection

Units (YPG) in the peace talks. "If you invite a terrorist group (YPG), then you should also invite Al-Nusra, the Islamic State. This is... (More on P4)... (24)

Syrian Airstrikes Hits IS Militants in Eastern Oil-Rich Area

DAMASCUS - The Syrian warplanes carried out airstrikes on the IS militants in the eastern province of Deir al-Zour Sunday, a day after the group unleashed a wide-scale offensive in the oil-rich area, a monitor group reported. The clashes are concentrated in the Muwazafien, Ummal, Bghailiyeh neighborhoods in the city and its northwestern outskirts, coupled with battles in the vicinity of the Deir al-Zour airbase and the mountain overlooking the city, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The UK-based watchdog group said the clashes were coupled with tens of airstrikes targeting the IS positions in the city and its countryside. It added that the IS militants succeeded to make progress in the Jamiyeh Ruwad and the mountain overlooking Deir al-Zour city, in... (More on P4)... (25)

Iraqi Forces Make Swift Advance into IS Stronghold in Mosul

MOSUL, Iraq - The Iraqi government forces on Saturday made swift advances in the fighting against the Islamic State (IS) militants in the eastern side of the city of Mosul, the Iraqi military said. In the northern front, the army soldiers, backed by the U.S.-led coalition aircraft, freed the neighborhood of al-Hadbaa and the nearby Modaraa Aameen and raised the Iraqi flags on some of their buildings after intense fighting with IS militants, Lieutenant General Abdul Amir Yarallah from the Joint Operations Command (JOC) said in a statement. The latest advance in the two neighborhoods linked the army soldiers to the commandos of the Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) who are fighting in the adjacent complex of Mosul University, Yarallah said. In the eastern front, the CTS continued their sporadic clashes with small pockets in the sprawling complex of Mosul University, while the troops carried out an operation to defuse roadside bombs and booby-trapped buildings, Yarallah added. On Friday, the elite CTS forces stormed in the morning the complex of Mosul University and managed to seize large part of the University complex, including its technical institute and student dormitories, after heavy clashes with IS militants, according to a JOC statement. Earlier in the day, a source from CTS command anonymously told Xinhua that the CTS special forces recaptured several government buildings, including the building of Nineveh's provincial council, in al-Faisaliyah neighborhood after the troops defeated IS militants in the neighborhood in sporadic clashes during late Friday and Saturday morning. (Xinhua)

Russia to Deploy More S-400 to Crimea: Report

MOSCOW - Russia will deploy more S-400 Triumf missile systems to Crimea after the Obama administration extended sanctions against Russia for its actions in Crimea and Ukraine, said local media Saturday. "Deployment of additional S-400 systems to Crimea is foreseen, but I will not talk about the timing now," said Lt. Gen. Viktor Sevastyanov, a senior Russian air force commander, was quoted by RIA Novosti agency as saying. An anti-aircraft missile regiment armed with the S-400 system had entered combat duty in Crimea, Russia's Southern Military District announced Friday. The S-400 Triumf, by far Russia's most advanced surface-to-air missile... (More on P4)... (26)

UK Wants Reciprocal Markets EU Deal: Finance Minister

BERLIN - Britain and the EU should reach a deal allowing reciprocal access to each other's markets -- though London cannot compromise on regaining immigration control, finance minister Philip Hammond said Sunday. London and Brussels should not fight against each other's red lines but work in the space in between to find an agreement on Brexit, the chancellor of the Exchequer told Germany's Welt am Sonntag newspaper. Hammond said Britain had not taken a firm position on post-Brexit EU immigration, but the message from the June referendum vote to leave the bloc was: "we must control our immigration policy".

He said European Union citizens would be free to travel to Britain and do business there -- but the debate was over the right to work, settle and set up business. "Clearly we need people to come and work in our economy to keep it functioning," he said. But as for having no control, "that has to stop". British Prime Minister Theresa May is to set out details of the government's Brexit negotiating strategy on Tuesday. Hammond said Britain wanted market access without Brussels politics. "We are optimistic that we will be able to reach an agreement that gives reciprocal access to each other's markets. The logic is there," he said. (AFP)

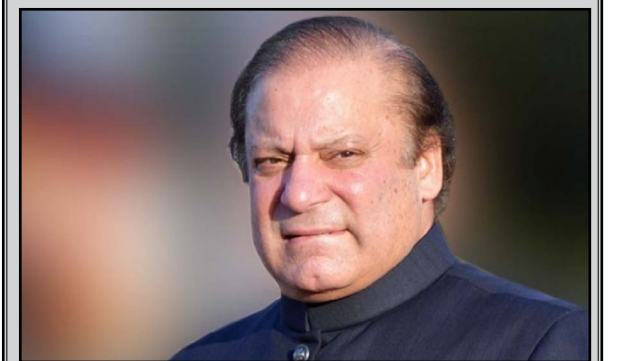
Neighbor News

Chinese Vice Premier Stresses Evaluation of Poverty Relief Work

TAIYUAN - Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang has said the evaluation of poverty relief work should be used as a way to pressure local governments to implement the country's poverty relief measures. The country should take poverty relief assessment and third-party evaluation seriously to push for earnest implementation of poverty relief measures, Wang said during his inspection this weekend in north China's Shanxi Province. Evaluation teams should make field visits

to ensure the accuracy and reliability of evaluation results, the vice premier said at a meeting during the inspection. Wang also said the country should make good use of the evaluation results by taking necessary measures against those who provide fake figures or fail to complete poverty relief goals. As of the end of 2015, China still had 55.75 million people living in poverty. The country plans to lift all of the poor out of poverty by 2020. (Xinhua)

Pakistani PM to Attend Economic Forum in Davos: Ministry



ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will participate in the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, from Jan. 17 to Jan. 20, the Foreign Ministry said on Sunday. Sharif is expected to hold bilateral meetings with heads of state and government, as well as with business leaders. He will meet the new UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and Swiss President Doris Leuthard during the visit, said the ministry. Sharif will address a group of some 60 top

business leaders on "Investing in Pakistan: The New Reality," according to the ministry, and have round-table meeting with business leaders on dramatic economic changes taking place in Pakistan and the immense investment and trade opportunities that are opening up in the country. The theme for the 2017 World Economic Forum annual meeting is "Responsive and Responsible Leadership." The meeting provides an unparalleled platform to discuss wide ranging economic and political issues. (Xinhua)

Nuclear Deal Promoted Iran's Global Image: Senior Diplomat

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian official has highlighted the achievements of the 2015 nuclear deal both at home and abroad, saying the historic accord promoted Iran's image in the international arena. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi made the remarks at a press conference in Tehran on Sunday, marking the first anniversary of the implementation of the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Araqchi, who is the head of the JCPOA follow-up committee, further said the 2015 deal foiled the attempts by the US and enemies to sell a "false image" of the Islamic

Republic using Tehran's peaceful nuclear activities as a tool. In the pre-JCPOA era, enemies were trying to portray Iran as "a threat to international peace" by hyping up Iran's nuclear program and claiming that the Islamic Republic was "after nuclear weapons," said Araqchi, stressing, however, that the nuclear deal thwarted all those attempts. Iran and the P5+1 countries -- the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia plus Germany -- succeeded in finalizing the text of the JCPOA, in Vienna on July 14, 2015, following intense negotiations, in what was praised as a win for diplomacy. (Presstv)

Turkmenistan Building Central Asia's Biggest Mining Enterprise

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan's biggest industrial complex with an annual capacity of 1.4 million tons of potash fertilizer is being built in an area exceeding one hundred hectares in Turkmenistan's Lebap Province, the Neutral Turkmenistan newspaper reported. The ore-dressing and processing enterprise will be put into operation in late March. Currently, preparation is being carried out in the industrial area to launch

the main and auxiliary sections, according to the report. It is planned to produce more than seven million tons of ore at the enterprise. The cost of the industrial complex, which is being built since 2009 by Belgorhimprom JSC, exceeds \$1 billion. After its commissioning, the enterprise will fully meet the needs of Turkmen agriculture, as well as ensure the export of the products demanded in the world market. (Trend)