

Russian, French, German Leaders Discuss Russia-NATO Relations over Phone

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande held a phone conversation on Wednesday, hoping to strengthen trust between Russia and NATO. Speaking of the latest NATO summit in Warsaw from July 8 to 9, the three leaders "expressed mutual interest in a constructive dialogue and taking concrete measures aimed at strengthening trust between Russia and



the alliance," a Kremlin statement said. The NATO summit has

decided on reinforcing its eastern flank by deploying four battalions in Po-

land and the Baltic states, with a communique accusing Russia of posing

"risks and challenges for the security of allies and others." The com-

unique said, however, that NATO remained open to a periodic, focused and meaningful dialogue with a Russia willing to engage based on reciprocity in the NATO-Russia Council, "with a view to avoiding misunderstanding, miscalculation, and unintended escalation, and increasing transparency and predictability." A NATO-Russia Council meeting at the level of ambassadors is due to take place later on Wednesday. (Xinhua)

G20 Labor Ministers Agree Entrepreneurship Drive

BEIJING - G20 labor and employment ministers have agreed to encourage young entrepreneurs following a meeting in China. Around 300 delegates, including ministers from G20 members and invited countries, as well as representatives from international organizations, gathered in Beijing for the G20 Labor and Employment Ministerial Meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday. The main outcome was adoption of the Entrepreneurship Action Plan, as they identified entrepreneurship as a ma-

job opportunity to increase employment, said Yin Weimin, China's minister of human resources and social security, at a press conference on Wednesday. They also analyzed the ramifications brought about by globalization, technology and population aging, Yin said. "G20 economies agreed to carry out the action plan and create a policy environment for spurring entrepreneurship, especially among young people," Yin said. They welcomed China's leadership in setting



up the entrepreneurship research center for G20 economies, he said. The meeting also adopted the G20 initiative to promote quality apprenticeships, which improve work-

ers' skills in both theory and practice and meet the needs of the labor market. The ministerial meeting was held in advance of the G20 Hangzhou Summit in September. (Xinhua)

Candidates for UN Chief Job Tested in First-Ever Global TV Debate

UNITED NATIONS - Ten of the 12 publicly announced candidates to succeed from January 2017 retiring UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon were tested on Tuesday in a wide-ranging, first-ever globally-broadcast TV and Internet streaming debate. There was no clear winner among the six females and four males, seven of them from Eastern Europe believed due for the top UN office. A female successor is also widely expected. Each was chosen by lots to serve in one of the two

groups, standing for an hour behind the podium in the front of the UN General Assembly hall. Questions were fired at them by moderators from Al Jazeera Media Network, producer of the history-making event broadcast, along with President Mogens Lykette of the General Assembly. Correspondents James Bays and Folly Bah Thibault moderated, throwing dozens of questions mixed with sharp queries from UN ambassadors, ... (More on P4)... (22)

McConnell Says Chances "Pretty Slim" for TPP Vote This Year

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said on Tuesday that chances for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement to get a vote in Congress this year are "pretty slim". McConnell told reporters at a weekly press briefing that the U.S. presidential campaign has made it increasingly difficult for Congress to consider the controversial trade deal this year as "both the Democratic and Republican candidates for president" are against it. McConnell said he hasn't

decided on the timing of a TPP vote in the Senate, but suggested that the upper chamber could wait until the next president takes office. "It's important to remember the Trade Promotion Authority continues through the next President and the agreement doesn't die at the end of this year," he said of the trade legislation passed last summer that would allow the U.S. president to submit trade deals to Congress for an up-or-down vote without amendments. "It's ... (More on P4)... (23)

S. Korea to Enter U.S. Missile Defense Network with THAAD Deployment

SEOUL - Experts here voiced serious concern about South Korea entering a U.S. missile defense network by deploying the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) to its soil, boosting expectations for escalating regional tensions and arms race amid strong oppositions from neighboring countries. South Korea's defense ministry on Wednesday announced its agreement with the United States to deploy one THAAD battery to the Seongju County, some 300 km southeast



of Seoul, by the end of next year. The decision came amid repeated expression of resolute oppositions from China and Russia as the THAAD's X-band

radar can keep watch on Chinese and Russian territories and negatively affect security interests of the neighbors. Seoul claimed it will

adopt the terminal mode radar with a detectable range of 600-800 km, but it can be converted at any time, and even takes less ... (More on P4)... (24)

Asia-Europe Summit to Boost Security and Economic Cooperation: Expert

KUALA LUMPUR - The upcoming Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit is expected to boost cooperation in security and economic cooperation between Asian and European countries, a Malaysian expert said on Wednesday. One significant area for Asia-Europe cooperation would be in the security field, as both Asian and European countries are facing increasing threat

from terrorism, said Oh Ei Sun, senior fellow at S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies of Singapore's Nanyang Technological University. "We have seen terrorist activity in both European countries as well as a number of Asian countries, it appeared that nobody is immune as a victim," he told Xinhua. "So if we could enhance information exchange and intelligence exchange



between the law enforcement authorities between Asian as well as European countries, hopefully we

could lower the risk of terrorism." Another key area for ... (More on P4)... (25)

China Urges Early Resumption of Israel-Palestine Peace Talks

UNITED NATIONS - China on Tuesday urged the Israelis and Palestinians to resume peace talks as early as possible to promote peace and stability in the Middle East. Wu Haitao, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, voiced this opinion at an open meeting of the UN Security Council. The peace talks should adhere to the land-for-peace principle and the Arab Peace Initiative as well as relevant UN resolutions, Wu said, adding that an early resumption "serves the fundamental interests of the two sides." "The two sides should exercise restraint and refrain from unilateral actions and use of force against civilians," he said. "Israel should stop building settlements, abide by international law and lift its blockade against the Palestinians, especially in Gaza. At the same time, its legitimate security ... (More on P4)... (27)

UN Chief Urges Israel, Palestine to Overcome "Political Paralysis" Through Talks

UNITED NATIONS - UN chief Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday urged both Israelis and Palestinians to immediately discuss implementation of the recommendations made by an international diplomatic group mediating the Middle East peace process as efforts continue to restore hope for a lasting political solution. "The parties will have to make the necessary compromises for peace. At the same time, the region and the wider international community must exercise its influence to encourage both sides," Ban said in remarks to the UN Security Council's briefing on the current situation in the Middle East. Last direct peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians stopped in April 2014 after it was

sponsored by the United States for nine months. The talks came to a halt after the two sides failed to resolve their deep disputes on Israeli settlement, borders of the Palestinian state and security. On July 1, the Middle East Quartet, comprising the United Nations, the European Union, Russia and the United States, released the first-of-its-kind report, which analyzes the impediments to a lasting resolution to the conflict and offers recommendations on the way forward, urging Israel to stop its settlement policy and Palestine to end incitement to violence. In the report, the Quartet called on each side to "independently demonstrate, through policies and ... (More on P4)... (28)

Iran Can Fully Restore Nuclear Program If JCPOA Violated: Rouhani

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani says Iran can restore all those aspects of its nuclear program that it has agreed to limit under a deal with six world powers if the agreement is violated by those countries. Speaking at a ceremony in Tehran Wednesday to mark the first anniversary of the deal, Rouhani said Iran will remain committed to the accord but will also be able to quickly return the nuclear program to any desired level if the agreement is violated. The accord, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was reached between Iran and

the the US, Britain, Russia, France, China, and the Germany - known as the P5+1 - on July 14, 2015 following some 23 months of intensive talks. Under the deal, Iran agreed to limit its nuclear program and provide enhanced access to international atomic monitors in return for the termination of all nuclear-related sanctions against the Islamic Republic. "If, some day, the P5+1 refuses [to fulfill] its commitments, we will be completely prepared, and, in terms of nuclear capabilities, we are at such a level ... (More on P4)... (26)

Italian PM Says to bring Part of London's Financial Agencies to Milan

ROME - Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said Tuesday he will try to bring to Milan a small part of the financial and sanitarian institutions now based in London. He made the remarks in an interview with the Italian RTL radio station, while talking about the Brexit effects. "Today I will be meeting Beppe Sala, the Milan's major and together we

will try to bring to Italy a small part of the financial and sanitarian institutions that are in London. We are working together in order to attract brains and to attract talents," he said. After the Brexit, Italian and other European economies could briefly slow, he said. "In the mid-term, anyway, the English will feel the damage the most," he told the radio station. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

Chinese Premier Underscores Trade, Investment Facilitation with EU

BEIJING - Chinese Premier Li Keqiang called for reciprocal opening-up and improved trade and investment liberalization and facilitation between China and the European Union at the 11th China-EU Business Summit in Beijing on Wednesday. Addressing the meeting, Li said China and Europe can offer more opportunities to each other against the backdrop of a sluggish global economic recovery. He suggested the two sides implement the China-EU 2020 Strategic

Agenda for Cooperation to better align their development strategies, and that they should "properly deal with" trade disputes, oppose trade barriers and speed up negotiations on a China-EU investment treaty. He encouraged European companies to invest more in China's advanced manufacturing, service industry and the central and western parts of the country, and promised that foreign companies registered in China will enjoy the ... (More on P4)... (29)

Pakistani Media Voice Support for China's Stance on South China Sea

ISLAMABAD - The award by an ad hoc arbitral tribunal on the South China Sea issue has drawn wide attention of Pakistan's leading newspapers, most of which gave special coverage to voice support for China's stance on the issue on Wednesday. Pakistan's major English daily Pakistan Observer published an article on the issue as its super lead at the front page in title "China rejects third-party imposition on South China Sea". Pakistan Observer also wrote an editorial, pointing out that China's right to the area goes back to centuries, and in 1947 China issued a map detailing its claims. "Despite all this, China is still in favor of bilateral negotiations to sort

out differences, but the United States is encouraging other parties to the conflict to raise the ante," it said, urging all sides to avoid escalating conflict and sit on negotiating table to find a peaceful resolution. China has established its credentials as a peace-loving country and harbors no aggressive designs against any other state, but the United States is indulging in highly provocative activities in the name of freedom of trade patrolling, making it a flashpoint with potentially serious global consequences, it said. Pakistan's largest English daily The News published the news with a headline "China vows to protect South China Sea ... (More on P4)... (30)

Caspian Sea Legal Regime Must Guarantee Littoral States' Interests: Iran FM

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says the Caspian Sea's legal regime should guarantee that the interests of the littoral states are met in view of the geopolitical developments. Zarif made the remark in a ministerial meeting of the Caspian Sea littoral states in the Kazakh capital of Astana on Wednesday. The Caspian Sea littoral states - Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Russia - are discussing a convention on the sea's legal regime that would be a comprehensive document outlining the duties and rights of

the five littoral states as well as the framework of cooperation among these countries. Zarif and foreign ministers from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Russia have come together in Astana to discuss key issues pertaining to the Caspian Sea, including its legal status, and to outline a plan for a summit of the sea's littoral states scheduled to be held in Kazakhstan. An Iranian working group arrived in Astana earlier this week to participate in the expert-level sessions to devise a convention on the Caspian Sea's legal status. (Presstv)

Businesses Made to Pay \$100,000 to Help Ailing Turkmenistan Govt.

ASHGABAT - Evidence is mounting that the economic situation is getting grimmer in Turkmenistan, although the government is giving nothing away. Chronicles of Turkmenistan, a foreign-based news website, reported on a meeting of local businessmen in which attendants were asked to gather money to support the government. These events took place last month, but details are emerging only now. The CoT account begins on June 8, when President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov met with representatives of the country's business community. Two days later, the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs

summoned a meeting of the same businessmen to make their unusual request. The list of attendees was drawn up by union chairman Alexander Dadayev, who issued the appeal, CoT reported. "Our deeply esteemed president, speaking before you all, spoke about the global economic crisis, which has led to a sharp drop in prices for energy resources," Dadayev is quoted as having said by CoT's unnamed source. "In this difficult time, we members of the national business community should help our country and our dear president." Getting down to brass tacks, Dadayev suggested every person present in the room pony up \$100,000. (Agencies)