

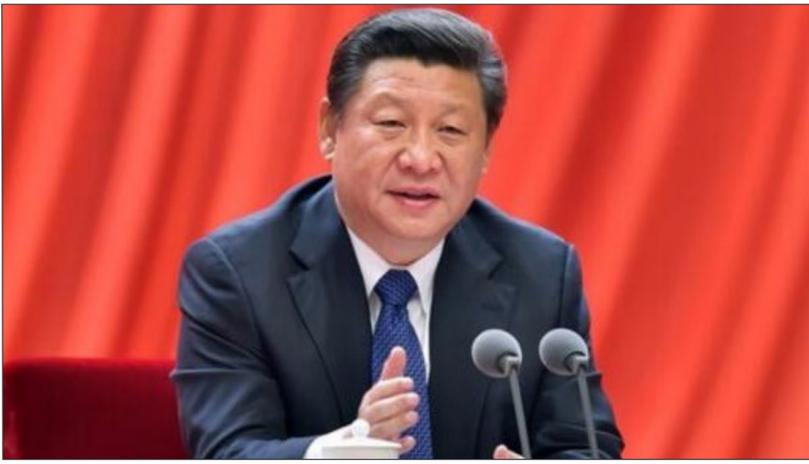
Xi Sends Letter to Congratulate 70th Anniversary of National Writer, Artist Groups

BEIJING - President Xi Jinping has sent a congratulatory letter to honor the 70th anniversary of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and the China Writers Association.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, extended greetings to writers and artists across the country on behalf of the CPC Central Committee.

The development of literature and art is an important cause of the Party and the people, and the literary and art front is a vital front of the Party and the people, Xi noted.

Since the founding of the



People's Republic of China 70 years ago, especially since the 18th CPC National Congress held in 2012, writers and artists have made very im-

portant contributions to the pursuit of a stronger and more prosperous country, social progress and the happiness of the people, Xi said.

The two groups should thoroughly study and implement the thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era and the spirit of the 19th CPC National Congress, he said. Xi called on them to unite and lead writers and artists nationwide in documenting, writing on and extolling the new era, striving to create outstanding works that do justice to the times, the people and the nation, and making greater contributions on delivering the two centenary goals and realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

The congratulatory letter was read by Huang Kunming, a member of the Political ... (More on P4)...(12)

Macron Vows to Help Restart Serbia-Kosovo Dialogue

BELGRADE - French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday vowed to help restart dialogue and reach a long-lasting agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, former war foes who have been locked in a diplomatic spat for months.

Visiting Serbia's capital Belgrade, Macron said that he would organize a meeting in the coming weeks with the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo as well as German Chancellor Angela Merkel "in order to find a global and sustainable

solution".

Serbia and its former province still have a bitter relationship two decades after the Kosovo war led to Pristina breaking away and later declaring independence.

Belgrade refuses to recognize Kosovo, still considering it to be Serbia's southern province, and the ensuing acrimony has quashed any hopes either country has of joining the European Union. Kosovo introduced a 100-percent tax on Serbian ... (More on P4)...(16)

Erdogan Hails Russian S-400 Delivery, wants to 'Go Much Further' And Make Weapons with Russia

ISTANBUL - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has celebrated the arrival in Turkey of the Russian S-400 air defense system, despite the threat of US sanctions, and stated that he wishes to co-produce weapons with Russia in the future.

Speaking in Ankara on Monday - on the third anniversary of a failed coup attempt against him - Erdogan promised that the newly-acquired S-400 batteries will be fully deployed in less than a year. Russian

cargo planes began delivering the system's components on Friday, with more transport flights arriving over the weekend.

"And as of today, the eighth plane arrived and started being unloaded. Inshallah [God willing], we will be done by April 2020," Erdogan said. The Turkish leader then said Ankara would "go much further" with a view to setting up "joint production with Russia." During the tenure of US President Barack



Obama, Turkey had been in negotiations to purchase American-made Patriot missiles, a deal that fell through when Erdogan's government asked for the sale to include a transfer of technology. Erdogan ... (More on P4)...(13)

German Defense Minister Resigns to Pursue EU's Top Job



BERLIN - German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen says she is resigning from Chancellor Ange-

la Merkel's Cabinet to focus on becoming the next head of the European Commission, the top job in the European

Union. Von der Leyen tweeted Monday that "tomorrow I will ask for the confidence of the Eu-

ropean Parliament. Regardless of the outcome, I will step down as Minister of Defence on Wednesday in order to serve Europe with all my strength." The EU parliament is expected to vote Tuesday on whether to confirm her as European Commission president. Von der Leyen, 60, was the surprise last-minute compromise candidate nominated by the leaders of EU nations earlier this month to replace Jean-Claude Juncker. (AP)

North Korea Suggests It Might Lift Weapons Test Moratorium

PYONGYANG, North Korea - North Korea on Tuesday suggested it might call off its 20-month suspension of nuclear and missile tests because of summertime U.S.-South Korean military drills that the North calls preparation for an eventual invasion.

The statement by the North's Foreign Ministry comes amid a general deadlock in nuclear talks, but after an extraordinary meeting of the U.S. and North Korean leaders at the

Korean border raised hopes that negotiations on the North's growing nuclear and missile arsenal would soon resume. The statement serves as a reminder of North Korea's longstanding antipathy toward U.S.-South Korean military cooperation, which the allies call defensive and routine but the North sees as hostile. It also ramps up the pressure on the United States going into any new round of talks. ... (More on P4)...(17)

UAE Oil Tanker Missing in Strait of Hormuz after Drifting into Iranian Waters

TEHRAN - An oil tanker traveling through the tiny strip of water located in the mouth of the Persian Gulf stopped transmitting its location more than two days ago when it drifted into Iranian waters. It is not clear what happened to the Panamanian-flagged oil tanker - which is based in the United Arab Emirates - on Saturday night as it traveled through the Strait of Hormuz, but its apparent disappearance has raised concerns amid heightened tensions between Iran and several Western nations. ... (More on P4)...(18)

Senior CPC Official Meets DPRK Central Court President

BEIJING - Guo Shengkun, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, met with Kang Yun Sok, president of the Central Court of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), in Beijing Tuesday.

Guo, also head of the Commission for Political and Legal Affairs of the CPC Central Committee, called on the judicial authorities of the two countries to step up exchange and cooperation, share their experience and practices in the rule of law and justice, and make positive contributions to carrying forward the traditional friendship between China and the DPRK.

The DPRK stands ready to deepen judicial cooperation and commit to developing friendly relations with China, Kang said. (Xinhua)

China Welcomes US-Russia Talks on Arms Control but Sees No Reason to Participate in Negotiations

BEIJING - Beijing will not discuss a nuclear weapons treaty but welcomes arms control talks between the US and Russia, China's Foreign Ministry said, pouring cold water on Donald Trump's claim that Beijing was open to negotiations.

Washington hopes to begin drafting a nuclear weapons treaty with Moscow at a meeting in Geneva on Wednesday. China, however, will not take part in the summit, according to Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang. "At the moment, we see no reason or precondi-



tions for China's participation in such discussions," he said at a press briefing on Tuesday. He stated that "Russia has also repeatedly expressed its understanding regarding China's position on this issue." China fully supports any talks on the issue, but believes the world's

two leading nuclear powers should take the lead in non-proliferation negotiations, Geng added. The announcement will likely deflate Washington's stated goal of inking a trilateral accord that includes Beijing. US President ... (More on P4)...(14)

Italian Police Detain 3 Men, Seize Missile, Weapons, Nazi Memorabilia

ROME - Three men were detained in northern Italy after police uncovered a stash of automatic weapons, a missile and material featuring Nazi symbols, officials said Monday.

The discoveries stemmed from an investigation into Italians backing pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine, Turin police said. One of the men, identified by Italian media as Fabio Del Bergiolo, had been linked to a neo-fascist Italian political party, police said. He ran unsuccessful-

ly in 2001 as a Senate candidate for the Forza Nuova party, police said. At his home in Gallarate, police found nine assault weapons, nearly 30 hunting rifles, pistols, bayonets, ammunition and antique Nazi plaques featuring swastikas.

Two others, identified by Italian media as Alessandro Monti and Fabio Bernardi, were detained after a French-made missile was discovered at an airport hangar, police said. "During the ... (More on P4)...(15)

Turkey Says EU's Measures Not to Affect Turkey's Energy Activities Near Cyprus

ANKARA - The European Union's measures to suspend high-level talks and funding for Turkey won't affect Turkey's determination to continue energy activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkish Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday. "The EU's failure to mention Turkish Cypriots, who have equal rights to the natural resources of the island of Cyprus, showed how biased and partisan the EU is on the subject of Cyprus," the ministry said in a statement.

Turkey will continue to protect the rights of the country and Turkish Cypriots and will increase its activities in this aspect, the statement added.

The European Council published a final declaration on Monday after a meeting of EU's foreign ministers, saying that they would suspend the EU-Turkey high-level dialogues and negotiations on an aviation accord.

It also endorsed a proposal to reduce pre-accession funds worth over 145 million euros (163 million U.S. dollars) to Turkey for 2020 and asked the European Investment Bank to review its lending to Turkey.

Regardless of warnings by the EU and the United States to stop its drilling activities near Cyprus' coasts, Ankara has sent two drilling vessels, Fatih and Yavuz, to the Eastern Mediterranean for oil and gas exploration. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

Iran Aims to Woo 2 Million Chinese Tourists with Visa-Free Entry 'Within Weeks'

TEHRAN - Iran will waive visas for Chinese visitors as early as the end of July in a bid to boost the economy, faltering under the weight of US sanctions.

Tourism officials have said they hope to attract as many as two million Chinese a year to Iran, a massive increase from the 52,000 Chinese visiting last year. Tapping into the Chinese tourism market could pay off in the long run. China has the world's most outbound tourists. Last year the Chinese made nearly 150 million trips abroad, spending a whopping £233 billion overseas. And those numbers are expected to grow as more Chinese apply for passports. Now only nine per cent of the coun-

try's 1.4 billion people hold passports.

Iran's economy has been sliding toward recession after the US reimposed sanctions last November, heavily targeting vital oil exports and international financial transactions.

The country's GDP is expected to shrink by 6 per cent this year, a further slide from last year's 3.9 per cent contraction; inflation could reach 40 per cent, according to the International Monetary Fund.

In response, Tehran has been looking for other ways to boost the government's non-oil revenues. Tourism is seen as an "unsanctionable" sector," tourism board chief Ali Asghar Mounesan told IRNA, a state media agency, in June. (Press TV)

Agreement on Extension of Co-Op Between Uzbekistan and Belarus Put into Force

TASHKENT - Intergovernmental agreement between Uzbekistan and Belarus, signed in Tashkent on September 12, 2018, came into force, Trend reports with reference to Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan.

"This agreement will allow for the development of assistance to mutual trade system. Entities involved in the foreign economic activity will be provided with preferential registration at destinations and with easier customs procedures,"

the report said.

In September 2018, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko visited Uzbekistan. Within the visit, a number of documents on development of bilateral cooperation was signed. Prime ministers of both countries also approved a Plan of Action plan to develop partnership.

It is planned that the forum of regions of Belarus and Uzbekistan will be held on July 29-30 of 2019 in Belarus. (Trend)

Pakistan Reopens Airspace to Civil Aviation

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has reopened its airspace to all civilian aviation, ending months of restrictions imposed after a deadly terrorist attack in Indian Kashmir pushed Islamabad and New Delhi to the brink of war.

Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority announced Tuesday that its airspace was reopening "with immediate effect" for all types of civilian aircraft. The closure of the airspace disrupted hundreds of international routes for passenger and cargo air carriers. Islamabad closed off the airspace back in February in the aftermath of a suicide bombing attack

that killed 40 Indian parliamentary soldiers in Indian-controlled Kashmir. The attack was later claimed by Pakistan-based militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad. The crisis escalated into a series of cross-border air attacks and "dogfights" between Pakistani and Indian fighter pilots.

Pakistan and India have fought three wars, two over Kashmir, since they both gained independence from Britain in 1947. They have both armed their militaries with nuclear weapons since their last war 50 years ago, raising fears another conflict could escalate into a nuclear exchange. (Monitoring Desk)

Webmoney Talks Uzbekistan's Benefits from Joint Co-Op

TASHKENT - The arrival of WebMoney system in Uzbekistan will be an important factor for the growth of e-commerce in the country, a source from the International company WM Transfer told Trend in an interview.

"The system will also increase citizens' trust in online shopping," a source said. The representative noted that sellers and buyers in Uzbekistan will be able to use dozens of solutions developed by WebMoney Transfer: automatic payments, mass payments, protection of transactions and many other services. Uzbek businessmen

interested in exporting goods will be able to set up WebMoney system accounts for accepting payments from foreign clients in foreign currencies.

"The owners of cafes, restaurants and shops have a solution to the system that makes it possible to accept non-cash payments using a QR code," the source said.

Founded in 1998, WebMoney Transfer is an international settlement system which creates online business environment. The number of registrations with WebMoney Transfer currently exceeds 39 million. (Trend)