

UN Envoy Plans New Round of Syria Talks in July

BEIRUT — The United Nations' special envoy for Syria says he plans a new round of peace talks in Geneva next month.

Staffan de Mistura's office said Saturday that the aim is for delegates to arrive in the Swiss city on July 9 and for talks — the seventh round so far — to start the following day. It didn't specify how long the round is expected to last. It said that de Mistura plans to convene further rounds of talks in August and September.

The U.N.-hosted Geneva talks between parties to the conflict in Syria are the main political forum for efforts to end the six-year conflict. The Iraqi military says it has



captured a border crossing with Syria from the Islamic State group.

Tribal forces and border police, supported by Iraqi and U.S.-led coalition aircraft, took part in the operation to take the al-Waleed crossing, the Iraqi Joint Operations Command said in a statement Saturday.

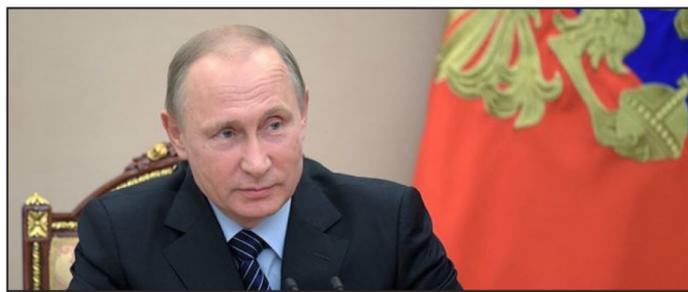
Al-Waleed, in the far west of Iraq, fell to the Islamic State group in 2015, giving the militants full control of the Iraq-Syria border, which they vowed to erase as part of their ambition to build a caliphate. In recent months the militants have been coming under increasing pressure in the country's western ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

New Sanctions will 'Complicate' Russia-US Ties: Putin

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned that new U.S. sanctions on Russia will damage ties between the two countries.

Putin said Saturday that "it will of course complicate the Russian-American relationship," according to an interview reported Saturday by the TASS news agency. The Russian leader said it was too early to speak about a possible response.

The U.S. Senate voted overwhelmingly Thursday to approve sanctions against



Russia for its alleged interference in the 2016 election. The bill, which passed 98-2, targets Russian individuals accused of corruption and key sectors of the Russian economy.

Putin said that Russia would be forced to make changes because of the sanctions, but they wouldn't lead to a "collapse." The penalties have been criticized by Austria and Germany for promoting U.S. economic interests. *(AP)*

Turkey Aids Qatar with Delivery of 5,000 Tons of Food to Break Blockade

ISTANBUL - Turkish Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci said Saturday that his country has supplied 5,000 tons of food to Qatar facing a blockade by a number of Muslim countries. The minister said the supplies were sent to Qatar with 71 planes after the Gulf country was plunged into a crisis on June 5, when Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt and some other countries severed diplomatic ties and closed off sea, air and land links to Doha, accusing it of fund-

ing terrorism, hosting terrorists and interfering with their internal affairs.

"Our shipments via sea route will also begin this weekend," Zeybekci said at a TV program in Istanbul. "Right now our trucks are on their way."

"Turkey could supply all the humanitarian needs of Qatar," he was quoted as saying by the Haberturk daily.

Turkey has been siding with Qatar and pushing for a settlement through dialogue. Addressing a ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

Trump's Tighter Restrictions Against Cuba to Hamper Economy, Normalization of Ties

BEIJING - U.S. President Donald Trump's newly-announced tightening of restrictions on U.S. travel and trade to Cuba will spoil the normalization of U.S. ties with the Caribbean country and hit the economies of both countries, analysts and observers told Xinhua.

According to a statement by the White House, individual leisure travel, permitted by the Obama administration, will be prohibited. Americans will be required to visit Cuba with regulated tour groups. Besides, U.S. individu-

als and companies will be banned from doing commerce with Cuban businesses owned by the Cuban military. Trump also reaffirmed a decades-old U.S. economic embargo against Cuba. In response, the Cuban government said on Friday that Trump's announcement reverses the advances made in the past two years since Dec. 17, 2014, when presidents Raul Castro and Barack Obama decided to restore diplomatic relations and begin normalizing bilateral ties. ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

UN Official Disappointed at EU's Call for Increase in Defense Spending

UNITED NATIONS - A UN aid official on Friday expressed his disappointment at the European Union (EU)'s plans to seek an increase in military spending instead of in humanitarian aid.

At a conference on EU security and defense in Prague on June 9, EU Commission President Jean Claude Juncker urged the bloc, whose member states are spending an average of 1.3 percent of GDP on defense, to lift its defense spending for its own sake. "I would have hoped that he (Juncker) would have

also issued in that statement an appeal to the members of the EU to increase their Official Development Assistance to the level of their stated responsibility of 0.7 percent (of their gross national product)," said John Ging, operation director for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Ging made the remarks during a news briefing at UN Headquarters on his mission last week to conflict areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Central African Republic (CAR).



"As anyone calls for an increase in funding the war machinery, they must, in my view, at least call for an increase in the funding for humanitarian assistance at least to the level

that has been committed to by all of our member states in the framework of financing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals," Ging said. "Otherwise, we ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

UN Chief Expresses "Great Sadness" on Death of Former German Chancellor Kohl

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres Friday expressed "great sadness" on the passing of former Chancellor of Germany, Helmut Kohl, saying that "today's Europe is a product of his (Kohl's) vision and his tenacity, in the face of enormous obstacles."

"He played an instrumental role in the peaceful reunification of his country, within a year of the fall of the Berlin Wall, and helped set a course for the historic process of Europe's political and economic integration," said Guterres in a statement. The UN ...*(More on P4)...(25)*

Trump Announces New Restrictions on Cuba Travel, Business

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday announced new restrictions on U.S. leisure travel to Cuba and U.S. business with Cuban military.

"The previous administration's easing of restrictions on travel and trade do not help the Cuban people," said Trump at a rally at Miami's Little Havana, Florida, adding that he was effectively immediately canceling his predecessor Barack Obama's "one-sided deal" with Cuba.

According to a statement by the White House, U.S. individuals and companies will be prohibited from doing commerce with Cuban businesses owned by the Cuban military. As to travels, individual leisure travel, permitted by the Obama administration, will be prohibited, and Americans will be required to visit ...*(More on P4)...(26)*

BRICS Agriculture Ministers Highlight Cooperation, Food Security

NANJING - Agriculture ministers from BRICS countries underlined cooperation and the importance of food security at a meeting that ended here on Saturday.

"Social, economic and environmental support is needed to ensure sustainable development of food security," said a joint declaration signed by the ministers during the three-day meeting.

The ministers agreed to promote multilateral coordination and guard against protectionism, according to the declaration, a blue-



print for future cooperation. They endorsed new work to solve the problem of climate change.

BRICS is committed to technological innovation on food security, green agriculture and environ-

mental improvement, according to the declaration. To foster new growth momentum on agriculture, new technology will be shared and fresh cooperation modes explored, the ministers agreed. *(Xinhua)*

AIIB to Build a Sustainable Tomorrow for Future Generations

JEJU ISLAND, South Korea - The 18-month-old Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has won acclaim for its good work from representatives of all over the world at its Second Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors held here through Saturday.

The multilateral development bank (MDB), initiated by China and supported by a wide range of countries and regions, has been playing a unique role in promoting development while showing great creativity and potential. PROMISES DELIVERED

"In January 2016, at the Bank's inauguration, I made a pledge that we would ensure that this institution operates as a 'lean, clean and green' organization," said Jin Liqun, president of AIIB.

"Eighteen months on, I can report to you that the management and the staff have been translating these principles and aspirations into reality," he said.

To date, AIIB has approved some 2.49 billion U.S. dollars in financing for 16 infrastructure projects in nine countries. Twelve of the projects were co-financed, while four were ...*(More on P4)...(27)*

Macron Says Reforms to Cement Ties with Netherlands, Eurozone Integration

PARIS - French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday said his economic and social package of reforms will further cement ties with the Netherlands in a way to help muscle integration and boost growth in the single-currency bloc. In a meeting with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, Macron said both sides discussed ways to outline a common working plan on bilateral and European issues ahead of the European Council scheduled for next week.

"It is clear that this program and these reforms, which each of us are carrying, bring us closer as well as our two countries, that face common challenges of competitiveness and economies which should be now more attractive in an open world," he said. "I think there is much to be done for this common agenda and it is our wish to be able, even if our cultures are different, even if our political balances are different, to do more together."

In a joint press meeting with Rutte, the French head of state said both sides decided to work more together and be able, "bilaterally, to try to move forward." Paris and Amsterdam "together will take strong initiatives to have a much more responsible, much more efficient and humane policy in terms of migration, in order to coordinate the common asylum with third countries and countries of origin," Macron said. "We will have this shared ambition for our two countries and for Europe," he stressed. *(Xinhua)*

Nieghbor News

China-Britain Trade, Financial Cooperation to Endure despite Brexit

LONDON — Britain's decision to leave the European Union (EU) will not be a handicap to collaboration between Britain and China in financial services and trade, according to James Sassoon, chairman of the China-Britain Business Council (CBBC). "Bilateral trade, (Britain's) exports to China and the Chinese investment in the UK have grown very strongly and I think that is the trend that will continue," Sassoon told Xinhua recently in an exclusive interview. China-Britain trade in goods stood at \$74.34 billion in 2016, according to statistics from the official website of the Economic and Commercial Counsellor's Office of the Chinese Embassy in the United Kingdom. Britain had a surplus with China on trade in

services, outweighed by a deficit on trade in goods. China, the seventh-largest export market for Britain, contributed 3.6 percent of Britain's exports and 7 percent of all of Britain's imports. "Bilateral trade started from a very low base. It was embarrassing to me when I took over as chairman of CBBC four years ago that our UK exports were lower than Italian exports to China. Those days are well behind us," Sassoon said. The British capital London is one of the world's most important financial centers and the largest single hub for trading in currencies. Sassoon said that London's financial services and Britain's financial and capital markets have been crucial drivers for the Britain-China relationship. *(Xinhua)*

Nawaz Sharif to Visit Tajikistan for Talks on Energy, Defence

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will visit Tajikistan next month where talks are expected to be held on bilateral energy and defence cooperation.

The matter came up for discussion when Tajikistan Ambassador to Pakistan Sher Ali Jononov called on Water and Power Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif. They talked about areas of mutual interest and cooperation in the fields of energy and defence. Pakistan and Tajikistan have been working on the Central Asia-South Asia (Casa) 1,000 power supply programme for the past many years. They have made significant headway in pushing the project forward in re-

cent months. Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan are also part of the project, which will bring at least 1,000 megawatts of electricity from Central Asia to energy-starved South Asia. Separately, Pakistan and Tajikistan along with China and Afghanistan have established the Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism to fight terrorism. Under the mechanism, they will coordinate and provide mutual support in the areas of counter-terrorism situation evaluation, clue verification, intelligence-sharing, counter-terrorism capacity building, joint training exercises and personnel training. *(Monitoring Desk)*

Iran, China to Hold Joint Naval Drill in Strait of Hormuz

TERHAN - The naval forces of Iran and China are to hold a joint military drill in the Strait of Hormuz. The Chinese Navy fleet, which docked at the southern Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas on Thursday, will take part in the joint exercises in waters of the Islamic Republic on Sunday.

The Iranian and Chinese naval forces will display their military capabilities and share experience during the drill. China's Navy fleet, comprising of guided-missile destroyer Chang Chung, replenishment ship Chao Hu and

guided-missile frigate Jin Zhou as well as a helicopter, is in Iran to boost relations and marine interaction between the two countries' naval forces. In recent years, Iran has made major breakthroughs in its defense sector and attained self-sufficiency in the production of important military equipment and systems. The country has also conducted major military drills to enhance the defense capabilities of its Armed Forces and to test modern military tactics and state-of-the-art equipment. *(Presstv)*

Uzbekistan Creating Single Service to Explore Uranium, Non-Ferrous, Precious Metals

TASHKENT - A single service for geological exploration of uranium, precious and non-ferrous metals will be created in Uzbekistan under the State Geology and Mineral Resources Committee, according to the decree of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

The decree published June 16 reads that the Scientific and Production Center "Geology of Precious Metals and Uranium" of the Navoi Mining and Metallurgical Complex and the Scientific and Production Center "Geology of Non-Ferrous Metals" of the Almalik Mining and Met-

allurgical Complex must be transferred to the new single service for geological exploration within two months.

Uzbekistan's State Geology and Mineral Resources Committee was instructed to conduct an active investment policy for the industrial development of mineral deposits and develop recommendations for their rational use. Navoi Mining and Metallurgical Complex is one of the largest gold producers in Central Asia and is a monopoly operator for production, enrichment and export of uranium in Uzbekistan. *(Trend)*