

Japan's Abe Wants G-20 to Unite on Trade, Middle East

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pledged Wednesday to seek a consensus on trade and other contentious issues when he chairs this week's summit of the Group of 20 countries in Osaka.

Abe stressed the importance of global leaders overcoming their differences and joining hands in tackling difficult issues to send a strong message to the rest of the world.

"I hope to lead the summit by patiently finding common ground in order to achieve concrete results, rather than stressing or focusing on differences of opinion," Abe told a news conference marking the end of the parliamentary session.



He said he hopes to send "strong messages" on a wide range of issues.

Abe, seeking to demonstrate his leadership as Japan hosts the G-20 summit for the first time, is pushing for agreements on less divisive issues

such as handling of plastic waste. But he also has to steer the discussions on protectionism and other difficult topics.

G-20 finance ministers who gathered in Fukuoka in southern Japan earlier this month avoided us-

ing phrases such as "fight protectionism" in a joint statement.

Abe also expressed hope that the U.S. and China will resolve their trade dispute when their leaders meet during and on the sidelines of the summit on Friday and Saturday.

Planned talks between President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping on Saturday are receiving extensive attention and are almost eclipsing the main G-20 conference.

"Regarding the U.S.-China trade dispute, I expect the United States and China will constructively resolve the problem through dialogue," Abe said.

Abe ... (More on P4)...(15)

Neighbor News

Experts Fear 'Snowball Effect' as Iran Abandons Nuclear Deal

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — As Iran prepares to surpass limits set by its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, each step it takes narrows the time the country's leaders would need to have enough highly enriched uranium for an atomic bomb — if they chose to build one.

The United Nations says Iran has so far respected the deal's terms. But by Thursday, Iran says it will have over 300 kilograms (660 pounds) of low-enriched uranium in its possession, which would mean it had broken out of the atomic accord.

European countries that are still a part of the nuclear accord face a July 7 deadline imposed by Tehran to offer a better deal and long-promised relief from U.S. sanctions, or Iran will also begin enriching its uranium closer to weapons-grade levels. Breaking the stockpile limit by itself doesn't radically change the one year experts say Iran would

need to have enough material for a bomb. Coupled with increasing enrichment, however, it begins to close that window and hamper any diplomatic efforts at saving the accord.

"I worry about the snowball effect," said Corey Hinderstein, a vice president at the Washington-based Nuclear Threat Initiative who once led the U.S. Energy Department's Iran task force. "Iran now takes a step which puts Europe and the other members of the deal in an even-tougher position."

Under terms of the nuclear deal, Iran agreed to have less than 300 kilograms (661 pounds) of uranium enriched to a maximum of 3.67%. Previously, Iran enriched as high as 20%, which is a short technical step away from reaching weapons-grade levels. It also held up to 10,000 kilograms (22,046 pounds) of the higher-enriched uranium. (AP)

PM Directs to Expedite Pakistan Housing Programme in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday issued directive to expedite the projects under Pakistan Housing Programme to achieve the government's goal of affordable accommodation for common man.

Chairing a meeting on Pakistan Housing Programme here, the Prime Minister reviewed the progress on the ongoing projects. The Prime Minister di-

rected the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to promote tree plantation in Islamabad and also pay attention to preservation of green areas and forests in particular.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Housing Tariq Bashir Cheema, Secretary Housing Dr Imran Zaib, Chairman CDA and the Director General Housing Ministry. (Monitoring Desk)

Turkmenistan Joins ICAO Int'l Protocols

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan's ambassador to the US and Canada Meret Orazov met with Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Fang Liu in Montreal, Trend reports referring to the Turkmen Foreign Ministry.

The diplomat delivered two original documents confirming Turkmenistan's accession to the ICAO important international protocols. (Trend)

The parties also discussed the issues related to Turkmenistan's participation in the 40th session of the ICAO Assembly, to be held in Montreal from September 24 to October 4, 2019.

Turkmenistan is a full member of the ICAO - the specialized UN agency. ICAO establishes the standards necessary to ensure the safety, reliability and efficiency of air traffic. (Trend)

China Halts Canadian Meat Exports over False Certificates

OTTAWA - China asked Canada on Tuesday to suspend all meat exports after discovering false veterinary health certificates attached to a batch of pork, while Canadian federal police launched a criminal probe.

The allegations against Frigo Royal Inc. come amid frosty relations between the two nations following Canada's arrest of a senior Chinese telecoms executive on a US warrant and China's detention of two Canadian nationals in apparent retaliation.

In days, the US and China could also seek to relaunch talks to settle a trade dispute that may be key to resolving the Canada-China row. China's embassy in Ottawa said a customs investigation -- launched after the discovery of traces of a banned feed additive -- revealed up to 188 false documents had been submitted to Chinese officials. "In order to protect

the safety of Chinese consumers, China has taken urgent preventive measures and requested the Canadian government to suspend the issuance of certificates for meat exported to China since June 25," it said on its website.

"We hope the Canadian side would attach great importance to this incident, complete the investigation as soon as possible and take effective measures to ensure the safety of food exported to China in a more responsible manner," it added.

A Canadian government official confirmed that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) had been called in to investigate. Meanwhile, according to Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has reached out to its Chinese counterpart for more information about the allegations. (AFP)

Bahrain Conference: Peace Critical for US Plan for Mideast

MANAMA, Bahrain — The Trump administration's \$50 billion economic support plan for the Palestinians cannot succeed without addressing the political elements of a Middle East deal, international financial chiefs and global investors said Wednesday in comments that pushed back on the U.S. insistence that the two must be separated.

Panelists at the two-day conference in Bahrain welcomed the proposal's ambitious invest-

ment and development goals, but warned it would fall short without good governance, rule of law and realistic prospects for lasting peace through a political vision, which they noted is missing from the initiative.

Their views were aired at the Palestinians repeated their outright rejection of the so-called "Peace to Prosperity" plan because it ignores their political demands, including an end to the Israeli occupation and the ... (More on P4)...(20)

NEW DELHI — The U.S. secretary of state and his Indian counterpart downplayed growing disagreements over trade and tariffs on Wednesday, arguing that the two countries can work through their issues.

Mike Pompeo held meetings in India's capital with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and later with foreign minister S. Jaishankar amid growing tensions over trade that have strained bilateral ties.

Pompeo acknowledged

that the two countries have some differences.

"Great friends are bound to have disagreements," Pompeo told reporters after meeting with Jaishankar. "The United States has been clear we seek greater market access and the removal of trade barriers."

Jaishankar said there was a "need to filter through the noise and get down to the basics of the relationship."

Pompeo arrived in New Delhi late Tuesday after visiting Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emir-

Pompeo Meets Indian Leaders amid Trade Tensions, Iran Crisis



ates and Afghanistan on a trip aimed at building a global coalition to counter Iran. His visit is the first by a high-level U.S. official since Modi's reelection last month. The countries call each other strategic ... (More on P4)...(16)

South Korea, Saudi Sign \$8 Bln Economic Co-Operation Pact



SEOUL - South Korea and Saudi Arabia signed an \$8.3 billion economic co-operation pact Wednesday during

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's first visit to Seoul, as the oil-rich kingdom looks eastward following Western

criticism over journalist Jamal Khashoggi's murder.

Saudi Arabia is resource-poor Seoul's biggest oil supplier and most of the agreement is accounted for by a \$6 billion deal between oil giant Saudi Aramco and Korean firm S-Oil to build refinery and downstream facilities in South Korea. A giant banner welcoming the crown prince was hung on the Seoul headquarters of S-Oil, South Korea's third-biggest refiner, which is majority owned by Saudi

di Aramco. Saudi Arabia is South Korea's "biggest construction market overseas, the largest investor in the country among countries in the Middle East and also the biggest trading partner in the region," President Moon Jae-in said at a meeting with Prince Mohammed. The welcome offered to the crown prince in Seoul sits in contrast to the global outcry over the Khashoggi killing, and is part of Saudi Arabia's ... (More on P4)...(17)

Boris Johnson's Model Bus Hobby Drives Frenzy of Reaction

LONDON - British prime minister hopeful Boris Johnson prompted puzzlement, amusement -- and some skepticism -- with the unexpected admission that he makes model buses by painting up wooden wine boxes. The former London mayor, battling with Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt to be the next Conservative Party leader and prime minister, said he partakes in the pastime to relax. "I make things," the 55-year-old told

TalkRadio in an interview Tuesday when asked how he winds down.

"I get old wooden crates, right? And I paint them," the former foreign secretary added, noting the boxes would have typically contained two wine bottles.

"It will have a dividing thing, and I turn it into a bus and... I paint the passengers enjoying themselves on the wonderful bus."

The unusual hobby ... (More on P4)...(21)

Sri Lankan Elections Commission Mulls Introducing NOTA Option

COLOMBO - Sri Lanka's Elections Commission said on Wednesday that it was looking at the possibility of introducing the NOTA option in the island's electoral process which would provide voters an option of selecting none of the political candidates contesting the polls.

Director General of Elections Saman Rathnayake told Xinhua that there was a large public request to introduce the NOTA option, which means none of the above, for voters if they are not satisfied with the political candidates contesting. "Last week we met all political party secretaries and informed them of the public request to introduce the NOTA option, as similar to India," Rathnayake said. (Xinhua)

Qatar donates 4 mln USD to UNHCR for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

BEIRUT, June 26 (Xinhua) — The Qatar Fund for Development donated four million U.S. dollars to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to support Syrian refugees in Lebanon, local media reported. The donation's agreement was signed on Wednesday between the Qatari Ambassador to Lebanon Mohammad Hassan Jaber Al-Jaber, representative of the fund, and the UNHCR Representative in Lebanon Mireille Girard, according to Elnashra, an online independent newspaper. The agreement aims at providing housing for 8,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees and medical services to 3,000 Syrian refugees in Bekaa, Lebanon.

"Qatar is committed to providing Syrian refugees with their needs amid their harsh living conditions in Lebanon," Al Jaber said. (Xinhua)

Merkel: We Stand by the 'Spitzenkandidat' System, But It's Complicated

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Wednesday she still fully supported the 'Spitzenkandidat' system for choosing who should lead the European Commission but acknowledged that it would be difficult as the European Parliament was so fragmented.

French President Emmanuel Macron has said the three so-called Spitzenkandidaten - or lead candidates - had each failed to receive enough support among EU leaders in Brussels. He wants to block Merkel's candidate, conservative Manfred Weber.

Under the 'Spitzenkandidat' principle, the



lead candidate of the party with the most seats has a claim on the European Commission presidency. Weber was top candidate of the party that won the most seats but is opposed by several national leaders and party groups.

"We have a responsibility together for Europe," Merkel said of her fellow

national leaders and legislators of the European Parliament. "So I hope we can come to a solution that doesn't reject the Spitzenkandidat process but also lets Europe be effective. For that everyone has to move a bit."

Last week a summit of European leaders failed to ... (More on P4)...(18)

Oman to Open First Gulf Arab Embassy in Palestinian Territories

MUSCAT - Oman said Wednesday that it will open an embassy in the Palestinian territories in support of the Palestinian people, in a first for a Gulf Arab state.

The announcement coincided with a US-led economic workshop in Bahrain to unveil a Middle East peace plan which is not expected to recognize an independent Palestinian state.

"In continuation of Oman's support for the Palestinian people, the Sultanate of Oman has decided to open a diplomatic mission at the level of embassy in the State of Palestine," the foreign ministry said on Twitter.

A delegation from the ministry will travel to Ramallah, the seat of the Palestinian Authority, to take the necessary ... (More on P4)...(19)

Ukraine President's Party Leads Poll Ahead of July Election

KIEV - A party set up by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who took office last month, continues to lead in an opinion poll published on Wednesday ahead of a snap parliamentary election due on July 21.

The survey conducted by research group Reiting from June 20 to June 24 showed Zelenskyy's party, Servant of the People, had the support of 37.3% of people who said they would vote. In its previous poll, done in a period of June 8-12, Zelenskyy's party got 36.9%.

A good showing next month would cement the former television comedian's meteoric rise to upend Ukrainian politics.

The outgoing parliament, dismissed by Zelenskyy after his landslide election victory in April, is dominated by loyalists of his defeated predecessor Petro Poroshenko. Servant of the People, campaigning on a pro-European, anti-corruption ticket, has no lawmakers at present.

Another new party - Voice - established last month by Ukrainian rock-singer Sviatoslav Vakarchuk - managed to increase its support: 6.9% versus 6.4% according to the previous poll, and got to the third place after Opposition Platform with 9.9%.

Among other political forces seen able to overcome the five-percent threshold, there are Poroshenko's European Solidarity party with 5.9% and the party of former prime minister and presidential candidate Yulia Tymoshenko, which scored 5.8%. (Reuters)