

India Joins Missile Technology Control Group

NEW DELHI - India Monday officially joined the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), more than a year after it had applied for a full membership to the group.

Indian Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar completed the formalities by signing the instrument of accession to the MTCR in the presence of the envoys of France, the Netherlands and Luxembourg in the national capital. "India has joined the MTCR this morning..."

India's entry into the regime as its 35th member would be mutually beneficial in the furtherance



of international non-proliferation objectives," the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement.

It added: "India would like to thank each of the 34 MTCR Partners for their support for India's

membership. We would also like to thank Ambassador Pieter de Klerk of The Netherlands and

Mr Robert Steinmetz of Luxembourg, co-Chairs of the MTCR." India's becoming a member of the

group will enable it to deal in high-end missile technology. Last year, it's entry was blocked by Italy over detention of two Italian marines by New Delhi on charges of killing two Indian fishermen off the coast of the southern state of Kerala. The two marines have, however, returned to Italy, pending trial in India, a development that encouraged Rome not to obstruct India's entry into the group that monitors the transfer of missile equipment and technologies for systems that can deliver weapons of mass destruction. (Xinhua)

Erdogan Apologizes to Putin for Downing of Russian Military Jet

MOSCOW - Turkey's president has apologized to Moscow for the downing of a Russian military jet at the Syrian border, a spokesman for Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Monday.

Putin has received a message from Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressing his "sympathy and deep condolences" to the family of the killed pilot and apologized, Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Russia reacted with ire after Turkey in November shot down a Russian Su-24 bomber at the Syrian border

for allegedly violating its airspace. The Kremlin said it wanted an apology which never came and last year imposed an import ban on selected Turkish foodstuff, halted package tours to Turkey and introduced other restrictive measures that hampered the flourishing bilateral trade and business.

The Kremlin on Monday released the excerpts of Erdogan's letter.

"I would like to express my sympathy and deep condolences to the family of the dead Russian pilot and..." (More on P4)...(17)

China Has Brexit Tools, Must Avoid Undue Intervention: AIIB

NEW YORK - China has ample fiscal space to cope with any market turbulence triggered by Britain's decision to leave the European Union (EU) but should limit intervention to alter the yuan's value, said the head of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

Policy-makers should also ensure sufficient liquidity to help manage fallout from Brexit, while avoiding a build up of inflationary pressures, Jin Lique, the new China-backed development bank's president, said in an interview



on Sunday with Bloomberg Television's Haslinda Amin. The yuan is at about fair value and policy makers should be tolerant of any market volatility,

he said in Beijing. "If you try to intervene too much, I think the volatility would be getting worse," said Jin, 66. "So you should be a little

bit more patient, allowing the market to correct itself, rather than taking drastic measures to keep the market down, which often..." (More on P4)...(18)

Syria Truce Violated for four Times on Sunday: Russia

MOSCOW - Casefire was violated for four times on Sunday in Syria, according to Russian Defense Ministry.

"Cessation of hostilities was respected in most of Syrian provinces. However, a total of four violations of the ceasefire regime have been registered in Damascus province in the past 24 hours," the ministry quoted Russian sources in Syria as saying.

The Jaysh al-Islam group, a local rebel group in the province, fired at government positions in several villages



of Arbil, Djobar, Haouch al-Farah and Harasta, it said.

The truce brokered by

Russia and the United State came into force on February 27 and was backed by the Syrian government as well as

dozens of opposition groups. However, rebels and government forces still clashed occasionally since then. (Xinhua)

UN Chief Lauds Israel-Turkey Reconciliation Deal

JERUSALEM - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Monday hailed a reconciliation agreement between Israel and Turkey as a "sign of stability" in the Middle East.

Ban, on a visit to Israel ahead the end of his term this year, welcomed the announcement Monday on the normalization of relations between the two countries.

"It is an important sign of stability to the region," Ban said ahead of his meeting with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin in Jerusalem. "It is a

symbol of hope." The agreement normalizes relations between Israel and Turkey, nearly six years after an Israeli raid on a Gaza-bound Turkish flotilla killed 10 Turkish pro-Palestinian activists in 2010.

Under the deal, Turkey will send humanitarian aid to the besieged Palestinian enclave, while Israel will pay 20 million U.S. dollars in compensation, and the two countries agree to begin negotiations on a deal to sell Israeli gas to Turkey. (Xinhua)

Kazakh Professor Lauds SCO's Outstanding Work

ALMATY - The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is a reputable, influential and appealing organization that has reduced transnational crimes and made people feel safe, a Kazakh professor has said.

Regional organizations such as the Eurasian Economic Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations hope to enhance cooperation with the SCO, Seylbeke Musataev, a professor from Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, said in an interview with Xinhua.

He said countries such as Belarus, Sri Lanka and South Korea also expect to hold dialogue with the SCO, which currently groups China, Kazakhstan, ... (More on P4)...(19)

First new York Pride March Since Orlando Shooting Puts Focus on Gun Control

NEW YORK - Two weeks after the worst mass shooting in U.S. history at a gay nightclub in Orlando, New York City held its 46th annual and largest Gay Pride Parade on Sunday with gun control as one of the core themes.

A record 32,000 marchers participated in this year's event, according to local media. The parade also came one year after a U. S. Supreme Court ruling made same-sex marriage legal in all 50 states.

The parade kicked off at around noon following a moment of silence for the victims in the Orlando shootings. A group of 49 people in white veils... (More on P4)...(22)

China-Russia Agree on Dispute Settlement Mechanisms: FM Spokesperson



BEIJING - A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson on Monday said that a China-Russia declaration on the promotion of international law showed that the two countries agreed on dispute settlement mechanisms.

The declaration reaffirmed the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes. Foreign ministers of the two countries signed the declaration on Saturday.

Spokesperson Hong Lei said the declaration will help the international community understand the true intention of Manila's South China Sea arbitration request.

China and Russia are permanent members of the UN

Security Council, and are both committed to upholding and developing international law, said Hong.

"It is crucial for the maintenance of international legal order that all dispute settlement means and mechanisms are based on consent and used in good faith and in the spirit of cooperation, and their purposes shall not be undermined by abusive practices," the declaration said.

In the declaration, the two countries emphasized the important role of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in maintaining the rule of law relating to activities in the oceans.

It is of utmost importance that the provisions of this universal treaty... (More on P4)...(20)

Former Top Sri Lankan Politician Arrested

COLOMBO - A former top Sri Lankan politician was arrested on Monday over allegations he extorted money from a businessman.

Former legislator Sajin Vass Gunawardena was arrested by the police Criminal Investigations Department (CID) and was remanded till July 5th.

The former Foreign Ministry monitoring legislator was also arrested by the CID in May last year over another case.

He was arrested over allegations then of mis-using vehicles belonging to the Presidential Secretariat.

But in September last year he was granted bail by the Colombo High Court. It was later reported that he was... (More on P4)...(21)

6 Missing after Boat Capsizes in Easternmost Indonesia

JAKARTA - A boat with 13 people on board was sunken in waters off Papua province of easternmost of Indonesia on Sunday night, leaving 6 people missing, rescuers said on Monday.

Huge waves resulted by stormy weather hit the boat when it was sailing from Biak Island to nearby Numfor Island, spokesman of National Search and Rescue Office Marsudi said.

"Seven people have been rescued safely and the rescuers are searching for the other 6," he told Xinhua by phone.

The rescued people are on good health condition, Marsudi added. Taking boats is a... (More on P4)...(23)

Neighbour News

Iran's Top Security Official in Russia for Talks on Syria

TEHRAN - Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani has arrived in Moscow to hold talks with senior Russian officials on major regional developments.

The SNSC secretary plans to discuss the current issues in the Middle East, particularly the latest developments in Syria, with top Russian officials.

Since the outbreak of foreign-backed crisis in Syria in March 2011, Iran and Russia have emphasized that the conflict in the Arab country should be resolved through diplomacy.

Syria is currently observing a ceasefire brokered by Russia and the US, which entered into force on February 27. The truce, which was reached between the Syrian gov-

ernment and dozens of militant groups operating in the country, does not apply to the Daesh and al-Nusra Front terrorist groups.

However, renewed violence in some parts of Syria, particularly around Aleppo, has left the ceasefire in tatters in recent weeks and torpedoed peace talks on the conflict.

Russia has long insisted that the so-called moderate opposition groups in Syria should leave the areas held by Daesh and al-Nusra terrorists targeted in the Russian air campaign. However, the United States claims that it is unable to remove the opposition groups and calls on Russia not to carry out airstrikes against the al-Qaeda-affiliated al-Nusra Front terrorist group.

... (More on P4)...(24)

China, UN Women Train Female Peacekeepers

BEIJING - A training course for female peacekeepers jointly sponsored by China's Ministry of National Defense and UN Women started in Beijing on Monday.

Forty female military officers will attend the 10-day course, which will cover peacekeeping and humanitarian action, protection of women and children and the use of force.

The officers, including nine from China, were selected by UN Women.

Su Guanghui, a senior officer of China's Defense Ministry, said that female representation in the military and police sectors in UN peacekeeping missions is much lower than that in the civil sector. He

hoped that the course will not only improve attendees capabilities but also encourage countries to offer female peacekeepers more opportunities to join mission assignments.

The event also shows China's good faith and commitment to fulfilling its international commitment to maintain peace and promote gender equality in peacekeeping, Su said.

China, in 2015, promised to train 2,000 peacekeepers from all over the world over the following five years. Over 30,000 servicemen from China have been dispatched to 24 UN peacekeeping missions so far. A total of 11 Chinese servicemen have been killed in the line of duty. (Xinhua)

Pakistani Clerics Declare Transgender Marriages Legal Under Islamic Law

LAHORE, Pakistan - A group of clerics in Pakistan has declared marriage between transgender individuals permissible in Islam, saying they have a right to be buried in Muslim ceremonies, according to a copy of a religious edict Reuters obtained on Monday.

Transgender people also have full rights under Islamic inheritance law, the Tazeeem Ittehad-i-Ummat Pakistan, a little-known clerical body in the eastern city of Lahore, said in its fatwa.

"It is permissible for a transgender person with male indications on his body to marry a transgender person with female

indications on her body," said the document, signed by 50 clerics and issued on Sunday.

"Also, normal men and women can also marry such transgender people as have clear indications on their body."

But it did not say what these indications were.

In 2012, Pakistan's Supreme Court declared equal rights for transgender citizens, including the right to inherit property and assets, preceded a year earlier by the right to vote. Pakistani marriage law remains murkier, however. It denies homosexual couples permission to marry, with male

... (More on P4)...(25)

EFSD Providing \$40 Mln to Tajikistan

Bishkek - The Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development (EFSD) has approved a US\$40 million loan to support economic development of Tajikistan.

This loan is an important argument for the process of integration of Tajikistan into the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Dmitry Pankin, Chairman of Eurasian Development Bank (EDB)'s Management Board, told Izvestiya on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

Experts believe that this loan is an important argument for the integration process against the backdrop of the strength-

ening of China's influence on Tajikistan.

Izvestiya reports the loan will be provided in two tranches 20 million U.S. dollars each. Tajikistan reportedly can receive the first tranche in the near future.

"We are currently considering conditions for implementation of requirements by the country to which the loan is provided," Pankin said, noting that Tajikistan has to remove many budgeting problems and problems existing in the banking system.

"We are most concerned over the large number of ungrounded tax exemptions, which are lobbied by..." (More on P4)...(26)