

# DPRK Fires Multiple Ballistic Missiles into East Waters

SEOUL - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has fired multiple ballistic missiles into east waters as combined forces of South Korea and the United States launched their joint military exercises, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) of South Korea said Monday. The JCS was quoted by local media as saying that several ballistic missiles of an unidentified type were fired from Tongchan-ri in the DPRK's northwest region at about 7:36 a.m. local time (2236 GMT on Sunday). The missiles flew about 1,000 km



into the east waters. The Tongchang-ri is home to the DPRK's Sohae Satellite Launching Station where a long-range rocket was launched in February last year following the nuclear detonation the previous month. Japan's top government spokesperson, Chief Cabinet Secretary confirmed the missile launch, saying four missiles were fired and three fell into Japan's exclusive economic zone. The DPRK's missile launches came after Seoul and Washington kicked off the Foal Eagle field training exercise on March 1. (Xinhua)

## Russia Expresses Concern over DPRK's New Missile Launches

MOSCOW - Russia is concerned about new missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and urges all parties to show restraint, the Kremlin said Monday. "These are the steps that lead to a further increase of tension in the region," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted as saying by the RIA Novosti news agency in a comment on the DPRK's recent multiple missile launch. He added that Mos-

cow would conduct an exchange of views on Pyongyang's latest move with concerned countries. On Sunday, the DPRK fired four ballistic missiles of a new type into east waters. The missiles flew some 1,000 km eastward on average, and three out of the four fell into Japan's exclusive economic zone, according to a report by the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff. The DPRK's test-launches came in possible response to ...*(More on P4)...*(23)

## EU Approves New Military HQ

BRUSSELS - The European Union on Monday approved plans for a military headquarters to coordinate overseas security operations, foreign affairs head Federica Mogherini said. Mogherini, who has pushed hard for the EU to take on an increased military role, said foreign and defence ministers of the 28 member states "unanimously" backed the project. "Today we decided to establish a MPCC (Military Planning Conduct and Capability facility) which will command the EU's non-executive military

missions," she told reporters. The facility will initially run three operations -- civil-military training missions in Mali, the Central African Republic and Somalia -- which do not involve the use of force, other than in self-defence. The EU has also mounted Operation Sophia in the central Mediterranean, which can use force to stop migrant smugglers, and Operation Atalanta, part of international anti-piracy



forces off the Horn of Africa. These executive operations have their own command centres which will remain separate. Mogherini said the decision was a huge step forward for the EU after decades of division over what defence role the bloc should take on -- with exit-bound Britain having long opposed it. (AFP)

## 57,000 Civilians Flee Homes in Western Mosul Amid Fierce Clashes Against IS

BAGHDAD - The ongoing operations to free the western side of the city of Mosul from Islamic State (IS) militants have pushed up to 57,000 civilians to flee their homes, the Iraqi government said on Sunday. "Teams affiliated to the Iraqi ministry of migration have received more than 57,000 civilians" during the past 15 days of the military operation in the western side of Mosul, according to a statement by Jassim Mohammed al-Jaf, Minister of Migration and Displaced.

The migration ministry provided emergency supplies, including food and medicine to displaced people, Jaf said, adding that the Iraqi ministry is also ready to receive some 100,000 people in its camps near Mosul. The total number of displaced civilians reached to 286,000 people since the beginning of major offensive to liberate Mosul on Oct. 17, Jaf added. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who is also the commander-in-...*(More on P4)...*(24)

## Turkey's Constitutional Referendum Heightens Tension with Germany

ANKARA - Relations between Turkey and Germany, which have been tense since last year, worsened further lately as the two NATO allies and key economic partners are locked in acrimony over a ban preventing Turkish ministers from addressing expats inside Germany to campaign for constitutional reforms granting extended powers to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Turkish voters will go to the polls on April 16 to approve or reject constitutional amendments to transform the nation's

parliamentary system into a presidential one. Germany, home to over 3 million out of 5 million people of Turkish origin in Europe, is a key factor in the political campaign. With some 1.4 million voters, it is a must-go spot for members of the Turkish government. Erdogan, who had campaigned in Germany in 2011 and 2014, was reportedly planning another political rally to secure the important diaspora



before the referendum. The German government under Chancellor Angela Merkel is under increased pressure from the opposi-

## Nieghbor News

### China Rejects U.S. Criticism on Human Rights

BEIJING - China on Monday questioned the findings of a United States human rights report and cautioned against using the issue of human rights to interfere in China's internal affairs. The U.S. State Department released an annual report on global human rights Friday, which pointed a finger at China and some other countries. Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang voiced firm opposition to the "2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices," which he said was full of unfounded accusations and prejudice. China has lodged solemn representations with the

U.S. side, Geng said at a regular press conference. He said anyone free of political bias about China's human rights situation would not deny the remarkable improvements since the founding of the People's Republic of China. China holds that countries should have dialogue and exchanges with one another on human rights on the basis of equality and mutual respect, Geng said. He urged the United States to view China's human rights situation in an objective and fair manner and stop using the issue to interfere in China's internal affairs. (Xinhua)

### Zardari Announces PPP's 9 Recommendations for Military Court Extension

ISLAMABAD - Former president and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari on Monday announced his party's nine recommendations for an extension in the operation of military courts. Military courts had been disbanded this year on Jan 7 after a sunset clause under which the tribunals were established expired. No consensus was reached between the government and the opposition on an extension in their tenure despite frequent meetings on the

issue. On Feb 28, however, the majority of the political parties in power consented to an extension for another two years. The meeting, however, was not attended by leaders of the PPP, who had earlier called a multi-party conference on March 4 to discuss the matter with other politicians. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Zardari clarified that his party is "providing recommendations [for], not opposing [an extension in] military courts." (Monitoring Desk)

### Iran's Leader Blames Government Policy for Weak Economy

TEHRAN - Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has blamed the country's government for weak economy, saying a current economic challenge is the result of wrong governmental policies, especially the administration's foreign policy. "It was a mistake that some made people regarding the current big economic challenge that now afflicts the country. The mistake was that they expressed economic weakness. The enemy realized this was the place to exert pressure, and

they did just that," ayatollah Khamenei said, his official website reported March 6. The Leader's remarks seem to be a reference to President Hassan Rouhani's approach to economy, where he said the Iranian economy can be saved if and only if good relations were established with foreign countries, following which foreign investment would flow into Iran. "If you want to discourage the enemy from attacking, you should avoid expressing weakness," ayatollah Khamenei stressed. (Trend)

### Presidents of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan Praise Relations

ASHGABAT - Uzbek-Turkmen Presidents of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan today held talks on the Uzbek-Turkmen cooperation, reports the press service of the Turkmen leader. Welcoming the President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Ashgabat, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov noted that his state visit is the important step to the further strengthening and development of bilateral ties between the countries. Mirziyoyev thanked his Turkmen counterpart

and underlined the high level of the intergovernmental dialogue between the two countries. The agenda of the meeting included a wide range of cooperation issues, including implementation of the earlier reached agreements and the key areas of social and economic spheres of the countries. Following the meeting of the Presidents, the extended meeting began with participation of the official delegations of the two countries. (Trend)

### U.S. State Department Condemns Human Rights Violations in Tajikistan

DUSHANBEH - Tajikistan is an authoritarian state dominated politically by President Emomali Rahmon and his supporters, said the 2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices released by the U.S. State Department on March 3. According to the report, the constitution provides for a multiparty political system, but the

government has historically obstructed political pluralism and continued to do so during the year. A constitutional amendment approved in a national referendum on May 22 outlawed non-secular political parties and removed any limitation on President Rahmon's terms in office as the "Leader of the ...*(More on P4)...*(29)

## U.S. President Trump Demands Congress Probe into Alleged Wiretapping by Obama Administration

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday demanded Congress investigate the "potentially politically motivated" wiretapping of him ordered by his predecessor Barack Obama during the 2016 presidential race. The White House said in a statement that reports concerning such politically motivated investigations "are very troubling." "President Donald J. Trump is requesting that as part of their investigation into Russian activity, the congressional intelli-



gence committees exercise their oversight authority to determine whether executive branch investigative powers were abused in 2016," the statement said.

It added that neither the White House nor the president will comment further until such oversight is conducted. On Saturday, ...*(More on P4)...*(26)

## France Eyes to Further Strengthen Relations with Turkmenistan

ASHGABAT - French President Francois Hollande assured of his country's readiness to continue to strengthen relations with Turkmenistan, according to his letter to Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkmenistan and France. Hollande in his letter said that he is pleased to note the constant development of relations between France and Turkmenistan. He added that many projects of the Turkmen-French partnership were implemented due to the Turkmen president's active personal support. During the visit to Ashgabat on Apr. 28, 1994, the then French President Francois Mitterrand noted ...*(More on P4)...*(27)

## French Conservative Juppe Says Not to Stand for Presidential Election

PARIS - French moderate conservative Alain Juppe on Monday confirmed he would not stand for the upcoming presidential election, ending speculation over his late presidential bid to replace scandal-hit contender Francois Fillon. "I am not in a position today to carry out the necessary gathering around a unifying project. That's why I confirm once again and for all that I will not be a candidate," Juppe told a press conference in Bordeaux. "I don't embody the renewal... For me, it is too late, but it is obviously not too late for France," he added. Denouncing a political "muddle," the ex-foreign minister noted that Fillon's "defense system based on the denunciation of a so-called conspiracy and a political assassination led him to a stalemate." In the wake of the fake job scandal which clouded the conservative contender's outlook, the Republicans party's senior chiefs had called on Juppe to represent the right-center party in the due election. Pollsters said in a scenario where the veteran former top diplomat would run for president, he would make it into the run-off on May 7. So far, Fillon, once the front-runner, has refused to step down despite calls to do so from several senior members of the party, and even polls show him losing ground in favor of centrist independent candidate Emmanuel Macron who set to win confidence of disillusioned centrist and even right voters. (Xinhua)

## British Gov't Urged to Safeguard Rights of EU Nationals in Britain

LONDON - A committee of politicians in the House of Commons Sunday called on British Prime Minister Theresa May's government to make a unilateral decision to safeguard the rights of 3.2 million nationals from EU countries living in Britain. The cross-party Exiting the European Union Committee unanimously agreed in its report that May's government should act now. The Members of Parliament (MPs) called on the government to ensure British nationals already residing in other EU countries, and EU citizens already living in Britain, do not lose their rights to healthcare and pensions after Brexit. Veteran Labour ...*(More on P4)...*(28)

## Majority of Americans Give Positive Ratings of Trump's First Congress Speech: Poll

WASHINGTON - A solid majority of Americans who watched President Donald Trump's televised first speech to Congress Tuesday night said it was excellent or good, found a latest Gallup poll. It showed that 34 percent of the speech watchers say Trump's speech is excellent and 23 percent of them say it is good. Twenty-five percent say the speech is just OK, while only 7 percent say it is poor and 9 percent say it is terrible. As to the speech's impact on their confidence in Trump's abilities to carry out his duties as president, the poll found 36 percent say it made

them feel more confident, compared to 11 percent who say it made them feel less confident. Over half of the speech watchers, or 53 percent, say there is no change in their confidence in Trump, the poll discovered. Nielsen television ratings for Trump's speech showed 48 million American viewers tuned in live for the speech, slightly lower than the 52 million viewers for former President Barack Obama's first speech to the joint session of Congress in 2009. There is a partisan gap in the percentage of viewers in terms of their party affiliation. (Xinhua)