

China Contributes To the Global Economy and Peace, Chinese FM Says

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has said the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a platform for international cooperation and follows market principles. Wang made the comment in a press conference on Thursday morning on the sidelines of first session of the 13th National People's Congress of China amid global interests in BRI. "It is a transparent initiative launched by China. It follows the golden rules of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits," Wang said adding that scores of projects carried out under the initiative will speed up the economic and social development of host countries. Pointing out that role of China in regional and global issues, Wang said that China would



help to resolve hot issues among states through peaceful way and deny the use of force or imposing its views on others. "Today, China is in a much better position to help resolve various regional and international issues. We are ready to play our part.

Indeed, the world expects no less from us," he said. Chinese FM said that China seeks to build a global community of shared future and it is concerned with the welfare of all individuals. According to him, China will stand up for small and weak countries

and help less developed countries gain better growth. China will play active role to fulfill the global expectations and approach global governance on the basis of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits, Wang said. Based on his statement, China has annually contributed more than 30 percent of global economic growth and accounts for more than 70 percent of poverty relief efforts worldwide. He also said that his country will host Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in June and work with other members with the intention of achieving three goals at the SCO summit: making the SCO more cohesive, effective, and influential. *by Hujjatullah Zia*

Western Tech Used For Hacking In Turkey, Syria

PARIS — A Canadian company's hardware is being used to hack internet users along Turkey's border with Syria, researchers said Friday, adding that there were signs that Kurdish forces aligned with the United States might have been targeted. The revelation comes as Turkey presses its offensive against the Kurds dug in along the country's frontier with northwestern Syria — a conflict that threatens to disrupt the American-led effort to extinguish the Islamic State group. The apparent use of Ca-

nadian technology to target a U.S. ally was an irony underlined by Ron Deibert, the director of the internet watchdog group Citizen Lab, which published a report on the spying. "These companies are not closely regulated — and that can lead to a lot of unintended consequences, including consequences that harm our foreign policy interests and human rights interest as well," said Deibert. "It's a strong argument for government control over this kind of technology." (AP)

U.N. Rights Boss Calls for Referring Myanmar to ICC for Rohingya Crimes

GENEVA — The top United Nations human rights official called on Friday for alleged atrocities committed against the Muslim Rohingya minority in Myanmar to be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for prosecution. Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, also urged Myanmar's government to allow monitors into northern Rakhine state to investigate what he called suspected "acts of genocide" against



the Muslim minority. "We are saying there are strong suspicions that

yes, acts of genocide may have taken place. But only a court can confirm this," Zeid told a news conference in Geneva. (Reuters)

President Trump Plans to Meet Kim Jong UN for Nuke Talks



SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump plan to meet in May for nuclear disarmament talks, a whiplash de-

velopment that would put two leaders who've repeatedly insulted, threatened and dismissed each other in the same room, possibly in the North Korean capi-

tal of Pyongyang. It would have been an unthinkable suggestion just a few months ago, when the insults were at their peak — Trump was a "senile dotard" and Kim was "Little Rocket Man" — and the North was snapping off regular weapons tests in a dogged march toward its goal of a viable nuclear arsenal that can threaten the U.S. mainland. Liberal South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who some believe has maneuvered the two

leaders to this position, reflected the hope and relief many here feel about the planned summit when he declared Friday that it will be a "historical milestone" that will put the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula "really on track." But there's also expressed resentment at suggestions Moscow was behind the attack on Sergei Skripal. The ex-agent was found unconscious on a bench in the English city of Salisbury on Sunday alongside his daughter Yulia. The pair are in a

UK Military Aiding Spy Probe; Russia Says It's Not To Blame

LONDON — British police asked the military on Friday to help investigate the nerve-agent poisoning of a former spy, as investigators' attention increasingly focused on the victim's house in a quiet suburban street. Meanwhile, Russia's foreign minister said his country might be willing to help with this investigation, but expressed resentment at suggestions Moscow was behind the attack on Sergei Skripal. The ex-agent was found unconscious on a bench in the English city of Salisbury on Sunday alongside his daughter Yulia. The pair are in a

Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to Sign Contracts worth Some \$140M

TASHKENT — Uzbekistan and Tajikistan will sign 27 documents during the official visit of Uzbek president Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Dushanbe on March 9–10, 2018, Uzbek President's Press Secretary Komil Allamzhonov said. The most important among the documents will be the Joint statement of the state presidents, the Agreement of certain parts of the Uzbek-Tajik state border and the Agreement on mutual transit of the citizens, Allamzhonov noted. Reportedly, contracts worth some \$140 million are expected to be signed during the Uzbek-Tajik business forum and the Uzbek National Exhibition in Dushanbe. The press secretary added that the number of agreements may increase. "The president of our country [Uzbekistan] works constructively and tends to solve many issues in situ," he said. Tashkent hosted the meetings of working groups of government delegations of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan from Feb. 24 to March 1, during which, the negotiations on delimitation and demarcation of the state border were held. (Trend)

Indefinite Rule for China's Xi Snuffs Out Activists' Reform Hopes

BEIJING — During Chinese President Xi Jinping's first years in office, rights activists tried to remain buoyant despite shrinking opportunities to organize. They staged small-scale protests, switched messaging platforms to avoid surveillance, supported the families and friends of those jailed, and pledged to continue their rights work come what may. But a move to end presidential term limits, enabling Xi to remain in office indefinitely, may well have slammed the door shut on any hopes for a resurgence of grassroots activism and pressure for democratic political reform. On Sunday, delegates at the annual meeting of China's largely rubber-stamp parliament are expected to ratify the necessary constitutional amendment to make Xi

US Trading Partners, Businesses Say Tariffs Will Backfire

BRUSSELS — The Trump administration's decision to impose tariffs on aluminum and steel imports drew warnings Friday from businesses and U.S. trading partners that the measure could backfire, provoking a trade war without resolving the problems it's intended to address. President Donald Trump said the tariffs, due to take effect in 15 days, are needed to protect U.S. workers. Businesses say the 25 percent tariff on imported steel and 10 percent levy on aluminum will jack up costs, raising prices for consumers and potentially putting people out of work. Trump has long singled out China as being unfair in its trade practices and for dumping cheap steel on the global markets, depressing prices. (AP)

Britain Sends Specialist Troops to City Where Russian Double Agent Poisoned

SALISBURY, England — Britain deployed specialist troops on Friday to help remove potentially contaminated objects from the small English city where a Russian double agent and his daughter were poisoned. Sergei Skripal, 66, who once passed Russian secrets to Britain, and his daughter Yulia, 33, have been in intensive care since they were found slumped unconscious on a bench on Sunday afternoon in the cathedral city of Salisbury. Britain's interior minister Amber Rudd, who visited Salisbury on Friday, said they were both still in a very serious condition, five days after collapsing. About 180 troops including some with chemical expertise had been sent to the city to remove ambulances and other vehicles involved in the incident and other objects, Britain's ministry of defense and police said. "The public should not be alarmed," counter-terrorism police, who are leading the investigation, said in a statement. (Reuters)

Italy's 5-Star Readies Proposals to Other Parties for Government Deal

ROME — The leader of Italy's anti-establishment 5-Star Movement said on Friday his party was preparing economic policy proposals for other parties as a way of finding common ground to form a government after Sunday's inconclusive election. 5-Star emerged as by far the leading party at the election but does not have enough seats to govern on its own. Its leader Luigi Di Maio says the president should give 5-Star the right to try to form a government, but the center-right coalition parties that got most seats combined say the job should fall to them. In an interview in daily Corriere della Sera, Di Maio said his party



would soon present proposals to be incorporated in the outgoing government's multi-year economic plan, which must be presented by April 10. "We want to move quickly ... if the other parties want to propose other measures that will help people then we are ready to discuss them," Di Maio said. The prospects for coalition building have dominated the Italian political debate since the election, with most commentators focusing on the possibility of a tie-up between 5-Star and the center-left Democratic Party (PD). (Reuters)

New German Government Takes Shape as SPD Names Ministers

BERLIN — Germany's Social Democrats on Friday named two seasoned politicians to key posts in a new government, with Hamburg Mayor Olaf Scholz to become finance minister in Europe's largest economy and the justice minister becoming foreign minister. The SPD's designated leader Andrea Nahles and Scholz announced the party's six ministry appointments at a news conference. Justice Minister Heiko Maas would replace Sigmar Gabriel as foreign minister, Nahles said. The SPD on Sunday said two-thirds of its members had voted in

favor of a repeat of the 'grand coalition' with Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives that has governed Germany since 2013, with the new government to be sworn in on March 14. Nahles said Scholz, a 59-year old lawyer who backs closer European integration, would also be vice chancellor. Merkel's conservatives are upset that she agreed to give the SPD the key finance post to secure the coalition deal after eight years under budget hawk Wolfgang Schaeuble, who was known for his insistence on austerity for indebted euro zone states. (Reuters)

EU Seeks Clarity on Whether It Will Be Hit By US Tariffs

BRUSSELS — The European Union is still seeking clarity from Washington about whether the 28-nation bloc will be exempt from President Donald Trump's steel and aluminum tariffs, the EU's top trade official said Friday. "We hope that we can get confirmation that the EU is excluded from this," EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström told policy makers, experts and reporters at a German Marshall Fund event in Brussels. But she warned that if the issue can't be resolved bilaterally or through the World Trade Organization, then "we will have to protect our industry with rebalancing measures." Trump announced Thursday that he was slapping tariffs of 25 percent on imported steel and 10 percent on aluminum, but he temporarily exempted big steel producers Canada and Mexico — provided they agree to renegotiate a North American trade deal to his satisfaction. He said that other countries could be spared if they can convince the administration that their steel and aluminum exports don't threaten American industry. The EU has warned that it stands ready to slap retaliatory tariffs on U.S. steel, agricultural and other products, like peanut butter, cranberries and orange juice. "Everything you have for breakfast," Malmström said. She noted that under WTO rules, the EU has 90 days to enact the measures. Malmström underlined that the EU is committed to open, global trade, and also to working with Washington on what the EU believes is the cause of the steel industry's problem — an oversupply on global markets. (AP)

Neighbor News

Pakistani Court Allows

Islamist Party to Enter Elections

ISLAMABAD — A Pakistani court has ordered the country's elections oversight body to register an Islamist party backed by a radical cleric who carries a U.S. bounty on his head for alleged involvement in terror attacks in India. Pakistan's election commission on Friday said it was examining the order, which clears the way for the Milli Muslim League party to take part in this year's parliamentary elections in July. Thursday's court order comes months after the commission rejected a request from the party to take part in elections. Under Pakistani law, all parties must get clearance from the commission to participate in elections. The Milli Muslim League has the backing of Hafiz Saeed, who carries a \$10 million U.S. bounty on his head for alleged involvement in 2008 terror attacks in India. (AP)

Iran: Arab Quartet Statement 'Completely Worthless'

EGYPTIAN CAPITAL CAIRO — Iran has dismissed a recent statement by the Arab Ministerial Quartet Committee, which questioned Tehran's commitment to the 2015 nuclear deal, urging the authors to abandon attempts meant to "please" Israel. Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Thursday the statement issued by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain "is completely worthless, unacceptable and illogical", adding the countries have no jurisdiction over the issue. In its statement issued at the conclusion of an Arab League meeting on Wednesday, the committee condemned Iran's missile program and expressed concerns about what it called Tehran's lack of seriousness in complying with the nuclear agreement. "Iran must comply with implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 with regard to its missile program, and the world community needs to carry out an effective mechanism to verify Iran's implementation of the resolution, inspection and monitoring," the statement read. Resolution 2231 was adopted by the UN Security Council in July 2015 to endorse the nuclear deal between Iran and six other countries. The Arab Ministerial Quartet Committee also demanded a re-imposition of sanctions if Iran violated the resolution, and condemned what it called Iran's interference in Arab internal affairs. "The countries that bear the main responsibility for the invasion, destruction and a humanitarian crisis in Yemen, as well as the spread of terrorism and extremism in the region, should abandon their disgraceful political dance to please the Zionist regime," Qassemi said. (Press TV)