

## China, Europe on Path of Expanding Belt and Road Cooperation

FRANKFURT - Anastasiya Sizikova, a young woman who lives in Germany's western city of Dusseldorf, could have hardly imagined a few years ago that her career and life would be so closely linked to China. Speaking three languages including English and Russian, she is now a director of logistics and business development at DBO Bahnoperator company, a firm established against the backdrop of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to handle container shipments from the European Union (EU) to China using block trains. "I'm a happy person, because I truly love my job and enjoy doing it," Sizikova told Xinhua. "Through the example of China Rail Express, we can see how fast the cooperation between



China and Europe is growing, we are proud to be part of this process," Sizikova said. Following the principle of consultation and collaboration for shared benefits, the BRI is increasingly embraced by European countries

and people, who have already benefited from the development opportunities the initiative offers. In the meantime, the BRI co operation has been playing an increasingly important role in

deepening China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership, which has come a long way since its establishment in 2003. (Xinhua)

### Swedish Right-Wing MP Proposes... Building Mosque & Muslim Center to Draw Immigrants

STOCKHOLM - A local council member shocked his populist, anti-immigration party by suggesting the town build a mosque and cultural center to attract "enterprising" immigrants to save itself from decline. Mark Collins, a 63-year-old member of the Sweden Democrats (SD), said that drawing immigrants to Kramfors, a small coastal municipality in the north, could help revive it. "My idea is that if you have a mosque and a

cultural center, then you empower the Muslims to be responsible for our town and the area up here," he told the Local. Kramfors, a town of 6,000 people, has been losing around 100 residents a year, and the newcomers would breathe new life into the area, Collins said. "Hopefully we will get a lot of them to come up and stay," he said, defying what his right-wing, anti-immigration party typically stands for. ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

### Serbia President Vows to Defend Law and Order Amid Protests

BELGRADE, Serbia - Serbia's president has pledged to defend the country's law and order a day after opposition supporters stormed the national TV station protesting what they say is his autocratic rule. As Aleksandar Vucic held a news conference in the presidency building in downtown Belgrade on Sunday, hundreds of opposition supporters gathered in front demanding his resignation. Skirmishes with police were reported.

During his televised address, Vucic repeatedly branded opposition leaders as "fascists, hooligans and thieves." Riot police on Saturday night removed hundreds of people, including opposition leaders, who stormed the TV headquarters to denounce the broadcaster, whose reporting they consider highly biased. This was the first major



incident after months of peaceful protests against populist leader Vucic. The demonstrators are demanding his resignation, fair elections and a free media. (Fox News)

### Hungary Leader Grapples with EU as Corruption Concerns Rise



BUDAPEST, Hungary - As the Hungarian prime minister's conflicts with the European Union appear headed to a breaking point, calls are increasing for

greater scrutiny of his government's spending of the bloc's funds. An opposition lawmaker in Hungary has gathered more than 470,000 signatures to pressure

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán into joining the budding European Public Prosecutor's Office as Orbán's Fidesz party may be suspended or expelled this com-

ing week from the main center-right group in the European Parliament. The EU has allocated Hungary 25 billion euros (\$28.3 billion) in the 2014-2020 budget period, but critics say funds are often spent on overpriced or unnecessary projects padding the pockets of the allies of Orbán, whose anti-EU campaigns over migration policies and national sovereignty have gotten him into trouble with European People's Party. (Fox News)

### At Ethiopia Flight Memorial, White Roses Mark Passing of Lives

ADDIS ABABA - Bouquets of white roses surrounded aviation staff as they gathered at Bole International Airport on Sunday to remember the two pilots and six crew, who perished along with 149 passengers in the Ethiopia Airlines crash a week ago. Weeping women held slender single stems in their shaking hands. Banks of the white flowers, the traditional color of mourning, were placed in front of a row of empty coffins at the ceremony.

A band - some of the musicians in tears - temporarily stopped playing as band members ran to comfort bereaved relatives who lunged forward, wailing in grief over the coffins. "Our deep sorrow cannot bring them back," an Orthodox priest in a traditional black turban and black robes told the crowd gathered outside an airport hangar. "This is the grief of the world," he said, as Ethiopian Airlines staff sobbed in each other's arms. ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

### As Xi Heads to Italy, Vatican Says China Should Not Fear Church

VATICAN CITY - A top Vatican official says China's government should not fear "distrust or hostility" from the Roman Catholic Church, writing amid speculation over whether President Xi Jinping will meet Pope Francis this week. Senior Vatican sources have said Francis is willing to meet Xi and that intermediaries had made overtures to the Vatican, but the Chinese side had not yet formally asked for a meeting. Any encounter would be the first between a Chinese leader and a pope, starting Thursday, is his first to Italy following a historic agreement in September between the Vatican and the Chinese government on the appointment of bishops in China. ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

### Over 60,000 People, Mostly Civilians, Have Fled from Last Islamic State Syria Enclave: SDF

BAGHOUZ, Syria - The U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said on Sunday over 60,000 people, mostly civilians, had flooded out of Islamic State's last enclave in eastern Syria since a final assault to capture it began over two months ago. SDF spokesman Kino Gabriel told journalists that 29,600 people, the majority of whom were families of fighters of the militant group, had surrendered since the U.S.-backed forces led by the Kurdish YPG laid siege to the town of Baghouz and its hinterland on the Euphrates River. Among them were 5,000 militants, the SDF said. Another 34,000 civilians were evacuated from Baghouz, ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

### Price of Liberty: 'Sober' US Soldiers Fined \$400 for Urinating on Freedom Monument in Latvia

LATVIA - Some US troops who come to Latvia for drills don't seem to have too much respect for their hosts, as two of them were caught peeing on the landmark Freedom Monument in Riga. They were stone-cold sober while doing so. The surveillance center of the Riga Municipal Police noticed two men urinating on the Freedom Monument in the center on the city on March 8. Patrolling officers were immediately sent on site and detained the perpetrators. When their papers were checked it turned out



that those responsible for the bizarre act were American troops, who arrived in the country for wargames. Latvia had been hosting NATO's Dynamic Front exercises between March 2 and 9. Their motivation for using a 42-meter-tall monument as a toilet is yet unclear. But Riga police spokesman, Toms Sadovskis, told LETA news agency that the US servicemen were sober during the act. ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

### If New Gene-Edited Cooking Oil Is a Scientific Marvel Just Say So - But Don't Secretly Feed It to Us

WASHINGTON - With a new generation of genetically-altered foods, manufacturers are still trying to gain public acceptance by stealth. If they are sure of their product, they should convince people to buy it, not sneak it into the food chain. This week, Minnesota biotech firm Calyxt announced the first commercial gene-edited product on the US market - a soybean oil "for frying and salad dressing, as well as sauce appli-

cations." It boasts that the oil contains less saturated fatty acids, no trans fats, and can keep three times as long without going rancid. But from the Associated Press article that served as a virtual press release, one part jumps out: "Calyxt said it can't reveal its first customer for competitive reasons, but CEO Jim Blome said the oil is 'in use and being eaten.'" That's one way to launch a product. ...*(More on P4)...(11)*

### Bangladeshi FIFA Council Member Jailed

DHAKA, Bangladesh - A Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate on Saturday sent FIFA council member Mahfuz Akhter Kiron to jail after rejecting her bail application in a defamation case filed over derogatory remarks about Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Kiron, who also heads women's football at the Bangladesh Football Federation, had reportedly told a TV talk show last month that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was less interested in football than cricket. Kiron's lawyer Liakat Hossain told The Associated Press that police arrested her at her residence. She then appeared before the court of magistrate Abu Sufian Noman, who rejected her bail request. "We sought bail for her after she was taken to the court. But our prayer was rejected," Hossain said. Kiron was arrested after an arrest warrant was issued against her on Tuesday. The warrant was prompted by sports organizer Abul Hasan Chowdhury Prince, who filed a defamation claim against her on the same day. Kiron was elected to the FIFA Council in 2017. She previously served as a member of the organizing committee for the FIFA Women's World Cup Canada 2015 and the last two FIFA U-20 Women's World Cups - Canada 2014 and Papua New Guinea 2016. She is also a member of the AFC's Executive Committee and Women's Committee. (AP)

## Neighbor News

### World's 1st Remote Brain Surgery Via 5G Network Performed in China

BEIJING - A Chinese surgeon has performed the world's first remote brain surgery using 5G technology, with the patient 3,000km away from the operating doctor.

Dr. Ling Zhipei remotely implanted a neurostimulator into his patient's brain on Saturday, Chinese state-run media reports. The surgeon manipulated the instruments in the Beijing-based PLAGH hospital from a clinic subsidiary on the southern Hainan island, located 3,000km away. The surgery is said to have lasted three hours and ended successfully. The patient, suffering from Parkinson's disease, is said to be feeling well after the pioneering operation.

The doctor used a computer connected to the next-generation 5G network developed by Chinese tech giant Huawei. The new device enabled a near real-time connection, according to Dr. Ling. "You barely feel that the patient is 3,000 kilometers away," he said. Conventional 4G networks do not allow surgical operations to be performed due to video lag and remote control delays. The new technology seems to have resolved these issues, the surgeon says. Medical institutions worldwide have made an array of experiments with robotic "telesurgery," the most striking example being American da Vinci Surgical System. (RT)

### Iran's Military Chief Holds Counter-Terror Talks in Damascus

DAMASCUS - Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Mohammad Baqeri arrived in Syria Sunday to hold counter-terror talks with Syrian and Iraqi military officials, local reports said. Heading an Iranian military delegation, Baqeri arrived in Damascus on Sunday morning. The report said the visit of Baqeri aims at developing the military defense cooperation and

making consultations regarding counter-terror between Iran, Syria and Iraq. His visit also included a tour to the areas where Iranian military advisors are located. Throughout Syria's eight-year-long war, Iran has emerged as a key regional backer of the Syrian government as Iranian-backed forces aided the Syrian forces to retrieve key areas from foreign-backed rebels. (Xinhua)

### Railways Retrieve 89 Kanals Encroached Land Worth Rs 526 Mln

RAWALPINDI - The Pakistan Railways (PRs) Police retrieved over 89 kanals encroached land including 610 marla commercial, 57 marla residential and 1120 marla agriculture worth Rs 526 million during last two months. Talking to APP, Senior Superintendent Railway Police, Raja Zaheer Arshad informed that Railways Police on the directive of the High Court and special instructions of Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid launched a grand operation to retrieve encroached

land in Rawalpindi division. He said strict action in accordance with the law was taken without discrimination against the encroachers. To a question he informed that in the first step, the authorities concerned carried out a detailed survey to identify the details of encroached land, occupied by individual encroachers and some government departments and then an anti-encroachment campaign was started by the Railways Police under the supervision of senior officers of Pakistan Railways, he said. (Monitoring Desk)

### Iran Sends Naval Group to Bab El-Mandeb Strait

TEHRAN - Iran's Navy has dispatched its 61st naval group, comprising a destroyer and a logistical vessel, on a mission to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait to ensure the security of the shipping routes used by Iranian vessels. Rear Admiral Afshin Tashak, the commander of the Navy's Southern Fleet, told IRNA on Sunday that the fleet was comprised of the Navy's Sabalan destroyer and the Bandar Abbas logistical vessel and had set sail from the country's southern port city of Bandar Abbas on Saturday. "The naval group is on a mission to provide security for the routes used by the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) in the area of the Gulf of Aden and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait," he said. The strait, which lies at the mouth of the Red Sea, connects it to the

Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. The vessels sailing through the strait and the body of water can next enter the Mediterranean via the Suez Canal. Also on Saturday, the Navy's 60th naval group consisting of two logistical vessels docked at the country's southern port of Bushehr after completing a 5,600-nautical-mile mission. "6,000 tankers escorted" Over the past decade, the Navy's naval groups have escorted 6,000 oil tankers in international waters, the commander said. The missions, he added, were undertaken in line with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's remarks considering the Navy to be a strategic force and advising it to expand its operating range and to confront piracy. (Press TV)