

Turkish President Accuses Europe of Backing Terrorism

ISTANBUL - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday accused European countries of backing the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) outlawed by Turkey. In a televised speech marking the 101st anniversary of the Gallipoli Battle in Turkey's western city of Canakkale, the president criticized Belgium for allowing PKK supporters to pitch tents behind the European Council building in Brussels prior to a summit between the European



Union and Turkey. "This terrorism," he said, warning that there is no reason to believe that a bomb that exploded in Ankara, Turkey's capital, will not explode in Brussels. "Despite

this clear reality, European countries are paying no attention, as if dancing in a minefield," the Turkish leader said. "You can never know when you are stepping on a mine, but it is clear that this is an inevitable end." A car laden with explosives exploded on Sunday at the heart of Ankara, killing 37 people. The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons, a radical Kurdish group linked to PKK, has claimed responsibility, as it had for another car bombing... (More on P4)... (24)

Nieghbor News

Tajikistan, Uzbekistan Look to Boost Trade Ties

DUSHANBE - A two-month period has fallen 12.2 percent. A two-way trade between Tajikistan and Ukraine has fallen 54 percent, a two-way trade between Tajikistan and Belarus has fallen 50 percent, a two-way trade between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan has fallen 40 percent, a two-way trade between Tajikistan and Russia has fallen by 14 percent, a two-way trade between Tajikistan and Turkmenistan has fallen 14 percent, and a two-way trade between Tajikistan and Kazakhstan has fallen 8.0 percent. (Asia-Plus)

North Korea Fires Ballistic Missile into Sea, Japan Protests

SEOUL - North Korea fired at least one ballistic missile which flew about 800 km (500 miles) before hitting the sea off its east coast, South Korea's military said on Friday, as the isolated state stepped up its defiance of tough new U.N. and U.S. sanctions. A U.S. official told Reuters in Washington it appeared to be a medium-range missile fired from a road-mobile launcher. That would mark North Korea's first test of a me-

dium-range missile, capable of reaching Japan, since 2014. The missile, launched from north of the capital, Pyongyang, flew across the peninsula and into the sea off the east coast early Friday morning, South Korea's Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. It appeared the North may have fired a second missile soon after from the same region, with a ... (More on P4)... (25)

Syrian Government Says has 'Useful' Talks on Substance at U.N.

GENEVA - The head of the Syrian government delegation at peace talks in Geneva said he had a useful meeting with U.N. mediator Staffan de Mistura on Friday, focusing on a government position paper on the "basic elements of a political solution" of the crisis. "The approval of this paper which we called the basic elements will lead to a Syrian-Syrian dialogue that is serious and will contribute to the building of our country



Syria. "Approving these principles will open a serious dialogue under Syrian leadership without foreign intervention and without preconditions," Ja'afari told reporters, making the shortest media appearance after the longest session of the talks so far. (Reuters)

EU, Turkey Clinch Deal to Return Migrants

BRUSSELS - European Union leaders approved a controversial deal with Turkey on Friday intended to halt illegal migration flows to Europe in return for financial and political rewards for Ankara. The accord aims to close the main route over which a million migrants and refugees poured across the Aegean Sea to Greece before marching north to Germany and Sweden in the last year. But deep doubts remain about whether it is legal or workable. After a morning of talks with Turk-

ish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, European Council President Donald Tusk recommended that the 28 EU member states approve the text without changes and they rapidly agreed at a summit lunch in Brussels. "Agreement with Turkey approved. All illegal migrants who arrive to Greece from Turkey starting March 20 will be returned!" Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka tweeted from inside the meeting. A senior EU official said Davutoglu had ... (More on P4)... (26)

Close to 155,000 Maritime Migrants Reach EU in 2016

GENEVA - Some 154,886 migrants and refugees have reached EU soil by sea in the first 10 and a half weeks of 2016, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said Friday. At least 467 people have lost their lives when attempting to do so. On the eastern sea passage separating Turkey and Greece, 362 individuals have perished this year. About 105 have died on the central and western Mediterranean routes

linking North Africa with Italy and Spain. With the influx of migrants into Europe showing no signs of abating, the IOM reported that some 1.4 million migrants and refugees have entered Europe via Greece, Italy, Spain, Cyprus and Malta since the start of 2014. "Through March 16 of this year, IOM counts over 997,000 seaborne arrivals just to Greece," the organization said in a statement. As was the case



last year, most maritime migrant arrivals this year have taken place in Greece (143,886), with the remaining 11,000 reaching Italy. (Xinhua)

Iran Urges Immediate Humanitarian Aid Delivery to Syria



TEHRAN - A senior Iranian official says humanitarian aid must immediately be dispatched to conflict-stricken Syria, particularly the northern towns of Kafriya and Fu'ah in Idlib Province, which remain besieged by terrorists. In a Friday telephone conversation, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and the UN special envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, discussed the latest developments in Syria following the conclu-

sion of the latest round of Syria peace talks in the Swiss city of Geneva. Amir-Abdollahian also commended the UN envoy's bids to solve the Syrian crisis through political approaches and stressed the importance of holding intra-Syrian dialog. The Iranian diplomat further criticized efforts by some known terrorist figures to attend the Geneva talks, saying such moves would be detrimental to the political process in Syria. (PressTV)

China Warns DPRK not to Escalate Tension Following Missile Launch

BEIJING - China urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to comply with UN resolutions and stop any action that might escalate the tension on the Korean Peninsula, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Friday. Lu Kang made the remarks when asked to comment on the DPRK firing of what the Republic of Korea's military assessed as a Rodong ballistic missile on Friday morning. The UN Security Council resolutions have clear provisions relating to the DPRK's ballistic missile launch, Lu said at a regular news briefing. The Security Council adopted a resolution earlier this month to curb the DPRK's nuclear and missile program following its nuclear test and satellite launch. "We hope all parties can exercise prudence and work together to maintain regional peace and stability," Lu said. (Xinhua)

'Lack of Substance' Preventing Putin's Visit to Pakistan: Russian Ambassador

ISLAMABAD - Moscow believes that there are still not enough reasons to justify Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Islamabad. "The problem is that usually the purpose of the visit is not participation in ceremonies. The visit should have some substance," Russian Ambassador Alexey Deodov said at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), where he was delivering a lecture on Pak-Russia relations. "As soon as the substance is ready we can discuss the visit," he said. Mr. Deodov defined the substance as "signing of documents" for cooperation, "preparation of plans" for expanding ties, and "declarations". No Russian or even Soviet president has ever visited Pakistan. President Putin had planned a visit to Islamabad in October 2012 for attending a quadrilateral summit between Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, but cancelled it at the eleventh hour. (Agencies)

Without Peace in Ukraine, NATO's Chief Says Russia Sanctions Must Remain

BRUSSELS - NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on Friday urged the United States and the European Union to maintain their economic sanctions on Russia until Moscow does its part in bringing an end to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. "We have seen actions, we have seen economic sanctions from the United States, from the EU and I think it is important that we continue with the important sanctions," Stoltenberg told a German Marshall Fund event in Brussels. European Union foreign ministers are trying to stay united on keeping sanctions in place but the measures will expire in July if the bloc cannot agree to prolong them. Hungary and Italy said on Monday they will not allow any automatic extensions. (Reuters)

Jerusalem Marathon Takes Place under Heavy Security

JERUSALEM - About 30,000 people took part in a marathon in Jerusalem on Friday despite the threat of attacks amid an ongoing wave of violence, the Jerusalem municipality said. The winner of the sixth annual Jerusalem marathon is 25-year-old Kipkogey-Shadrack from Kenya, with a time of 2:16:33. Shadrack's compatriot Ronald Kimly Korgat, finished second in 2:16:35, and the third place went to another Kenyan, Morris Mutinda Musiyoki, who clocked two hours, 21 minutes and six seconds. The marathon routes included several tracks - a full 42-km marathon, which was attended by



1,600 people. About 5,000 people ran half marathon, and those remaining ran in either the 10k race, 5k race and special families 1.7 km route. More than 1,800 soldiers and policemen were de-

U.N. Says Saudi-Led Bombing of Yemeni Market may be International Crime

GENEVA/RIYADH - The Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen may be responsible for "international crimes", a category that includes war crimes and crimes against humanity, the top U.N. human rights official said on Friday. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, condemned an air strike in Yemen this week and added that the coalition was "responsible for twice as many civilian casualties as all other forces put together". More than 6,000 people have been killed since the coalition campaign began a year ago to fight Iranian-allied Houthis and forces loyal to ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh and to restore the president they ousted, Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. Coalition spokesman Brigadier General Ahmed ... (More on P4)... (28)

Singapore Rolls out New Security Measures to Counter Terrorism

SINGAPORE - Singapore will step up security measures, including more CCTV coverage in major spots and an upgrade in firepower as well as deployment methods for the Singapore Police Force (SPF), in a bid to counter potential terror threats, local media reported on Friday, citing Shanmugam. "ISIS wants to establish a caliphate in this region, encompassing Singapore... We are in the epicenter of the caliphate that ISIS wants to establish... There are multiple layers of threats in this region: complex, interwoven, fusing religion with domestic political grievances," Home Affairs Minister K Shanmugam was quoted, ... (More on P4)... (31)

Azerbaijan Expects Improvement of Russia-Turkey Ties

BAKU - Azerbaijan is eager to see improvement of relations between Russia and Turkey, local media Friday quoted Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov as saying. Baku is reaching out to both Moscow and Ankara, hoping to push the two countries to normalize their relations as soon as possible, Mammadyarov told local media APA. Mammadyarov said Baku enjoys good relations with both Moscow and Ankara, allowing it to play an intermediary role between the two adversaries. Relationship

between Russia and Turkey hit a freezing point in November after Turkey downed a Russian warplane in Syria near the border with Turkey, citing airspace violation. Russia said the jet was on an anti-terrorism task and was flying in Syrian airspace when it was attacked by Turkey. Russian President Vladimir Putin called Turkey's action a "stab in the back," and vowed to punish Ankara with sanctions. Both Russia and Turkey have heavily invested in the prolonged Syrian... (More on P4)... (29)

Georgian Parliament Leader Reiterates EU, NATO Bid

TBILISI - Georgian Parliament Speaker Davit Usupashvili on Friday reaffirmed Georgia's bid to joining the European Union (EU) and NATO. In an interview with local media, Usupashvili said that politicians in the country have made consensus on the issue and "Georgia considers itself as part of the European civilization." "Therefore, there is no debate on this issue," he

added. Georgia has been seeking NATO membership for several years, but some NATO member countries warn of an adverse reaction by Russia in such a case. At NATO's 2008 summit in Bucharest, NATO indicated the future possibility of Georgia's admission if it meets the necessary conditions. In 2014, the EU signed association agreements with Georgia, Ukraine ... (More on P4)... (30)