

# Russia Quits Int'l Criminal Court, Cites "Incompetence"

MOSCOW - Russia has decided to withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC) due to the court's "incompetence," the Russian Foreign Ministry said Wednesday.

The ministry said in a statement that the court "did not justify hopes assigned to it," and failed to act as a "truly independent authoritative body of international justice."

Earlier on Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed an order sending a notification to the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to state that Russia refused to participate in the ICC. The ministry said



the UN General Assembly and its Security Council have noted "a one-sided and ineffective work" of the court, which in the 14 years since its inception passed just four sentences, while having spent over 1 billion U.S. dollars. On Monday, the ICC published an annual report on the preliminary examination activities of its prosecutor's office, in which it alleged that the incorporation of Crimea into Russia "amounted to an international armed conflict" between Russia and Ukraine. The court added that the situation in the peninsula "factually amounts to an on-going state of occupation." (Xinhua)

## Turkey Slams Germany, Belgium for Inaction on Terrorism

ANKARA - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan criticized Germany and Belgium on Wednesday for their inaction against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and Fethullah Gulen's movement in their countries.

He accused Belgium of being an essential center for supporters of both groups, reported the local Hurriyet daily news agency.

"They always give their expressions about the fight against terror. However, we will not open up to these expressions anymore,

we want implementation," Erdogan said during a press conference in Ankara. Erdogan also called on Egyptian authorities to release deposed former Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi, after an Egyptian court overturned a death sentence against him. "A fair process is not implemented for Morsi and his friends. They should not only immediately be released, but also should pave the way for the retrial of Morsi and his



companions," Erdogan told reporters. "Nobody should regard it as intervening Egypt's interior affairs," he said, adding that there had never been "a democratic approach" on the issue of a coup to a president "who was elected with 52 percent of the votes." (Xinhua)

## Merkel Calls for Refugee's Employment, Integration into Labor Market

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel called on employers on Tuesday to hire more refugees and help improve their integration into the labor market.

Merkel made the remarks at the annual meeting of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations, which was attended by 1,500 representatives from politics, businesses and society.

Merkel thanked the business community for their engagement in and dealing with the refugees' inte-

gration, saying "we don't have to worry about our country, if new situations could be handled and resolved with passion."

The improvement measures include the legal protection for refugees in vocational training and the possibility of refugees' temporary employment, etc.

Merkel has also called for better mobility of the labor force within Europe and advocated the free trade agreements with Canada and the United States. (Xinhua)

## Assad Expresses Skepticism over Trump's Ability to Fulfill Anti-Terror Promises

DAMASCUS - Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said in his interview published on Tuesday that his administration is still skeptic about the ability of the U.S. president-elect, Donald Trump, to fulfill his previous promises on the need to fight terrorism in cooperation with Russia.

In an interview with Portugal's RTP national TV, Assad said he is being extremely cautious about judging Trump's stance, "particularly that he hasn't occupied any political position before,

and thus we cannot say anything about what is he going to do." Assad's skepticism emanates from the fact that Trump is not alone in control of the United States. "What about the dominant forces within the U.S. administration? What about the mainstream media against him? How would he handle it? And thus we remain skeptic on whether he can fulfill his promises or not," Assad said. Before winning the elections, Trump expressed ... (More on P4)... (18)

## Chinese, Indian Armies Stage Joint Anti-Terror Drill

PUNA, India - Chinese and Indian army troops started their joint anti-terror exercises in the Western Indian city of Puna on Wednesday.

Code named "Hand in Hand 2016," the drill involves 139 troops from the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) units stationed in Tibet and the same number of Indian army troops.

During the drill, which is to last 11 days, the troops will be mingled and regrouped into two companies, and conduct exhibitions, training and

exercises of joint counter-terrorism reconnaissance operations, removing improvised explosives and combating terrorists in semi-urban environment. The soldiers will also stage some recreational and cultural activities during the intervals of



their training to enhance friendship and communication. This is the 6th joint anti-terrorism exercise held by the Chinese and Indian armies, and the third conducted in India. (Xinhua)

## China, U.S. Begin Joint Disaster Relief Drill

KUNMING - China and the United States started a joint humanitarian aid and disaster relief drill on Wednesday in southwest China's Kunming City.

The three-day drill involves 134 military personnel from China and 89 from the United States, employing helicopters, pontoon bridges and engineering and medical aid equipment.

The drill will simulate a joint rescue mission in response to a strong earthquake in a fictional plateau country. They will also conduct a tabletop exercise focusing on sharing information and joint decision-making, as well as field maneuvers focusing on evacuation of victims, and ... (More on P4)... (19)

## Iraqi Forces Continue Anti-IS Operation near Mosul

MOSUL, Iraq - The Iraqi security forces on Tuesday continued their advance in south and west of the city of Mosul, as fierce battles continued in the city to drive out the Islamic State (IS) militants from their last major stronghold in Iraq.

In west of Mosul, the Shiite Hashd Shaabi paramilitary units continued their advance in the vast rugged land in west of Mosul toward the town of Tal-Afar, some 70 km west of Mosul, and managed to recapture six villages after clashes with the IS militants, Lieutenant General Abdul-Amir Yarallah from the Joint Operations Command said in a statement.

The paramilitary units fought fierce clashes with the IS militants during the advance, killing dozens of them... (More on P4)... (21)

## Security Challenges on Agenda as South-East Asia's Defence Ministers Meet in Laos

VIENTIANE - Security threats and challenges were on the agenda as ministers of defence of 10 South-East Asian countries met in the capital of Laos Wednesday.

"Our region is still faced by both traditional and non-traditional security threats and challenges, which no single country can handle alone, meeting chair, Lao Minister of National Defence Lt. Gen. Chansomone Chanyalath said in his opening remarks of ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Retreat. "In general, regional and international environments continue to un-



dergo complex and rapid changes, ASEAN and the international communities continue to be concerned about challenges and developments across regions of the world, Lt. Gen. Chansomone said. "Terrorism and extrem-

ism are posing threats to regional and global peace and stability as demonstrated by the brutal attacks in many parts of the world including in our region," he said. "Natural disasters and climate ... (More on P4)... (20)

## UNICEF Leads Convoy into Iraq's Mosul with Emergency Supplies

UNITED NATIONS - A multi-agency humanitarian convoy led by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) was on Sunday the first to enter the Iraqi city of Mosul together with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF said in a press release issued here Tuesday. "UNICEF has entered Mosul city for the first time in over two years," UNICEF Iraq Deputy Representative Hamida Ramadhani said in the press release. "Our teams

are moving quickly to provide immediate support to communities affected by the fighting."

A 14-vehicle convoy including eight cargo trucks filled with aid, arrived in the Gogachly neighborhood in eastern Mosul at around 9:30 (local time) in the morning. The trucks were filled with enough emergency supplies to last 15,000 children and their families -- a total of 30,000 people -- for a month. Supplies included ... (More on P4)... (22)

## Kerry Arrives at Climate Negotiations Overshadowed by Trump

MARRAKESH, Morocco - U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry hoped his presence at a Marrakesh conference to decide the finer points of an historic climate agreement would be a victory lap, capping off a year of negotiations that resulted in global agreements to stave off the worst effects of climate change.

Instead, he finds himself having to reassure delegates from almost 200 nations they can count on the United States to abide by the 2015 Paris agreement, despite U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's promise to withdraw the United States from the climate treaty.

"The president-elect is going to have to make his decision," Kerry said on Tuesday. "What I will do is speak to the assembly about our efforts and what we're engaged in and why we're engaged in it, and our deep commitment as the American people to this effort."

He added: "I can't speak to the (next) administration, but I know the American people support this overwhelmingly." Trump has called climate change a hoax, and said he would rip up the Paris deal, halt any U.S. taxpayer funds for U.N. global warming programs, and revive the U.S. coal sector.

If he follows through on his promises, he would undo the legacy of President Barack Obama, who has made climate change one of his top domestic and foreign policy priorities and called the trends of rising temperatures and other fallout from climate change "terrifying." (Reuters)

## Nieghbor News

### President Xi Stresses Int'l Cooperation in Cyberspace Governance

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday called for increased international cooperation in cyberspace governance and the building of a cyberspace community of common destiny.

Noting that Internet development has no boundaries, Xi said China is willing to work with the international community for the common welfare for all people, to uphold the concept of cyberspace sovereignty and to make the global cyberspace governance system fairer and more reasonable. Xi made the remarks while giving a speech via video at the opening ceremony of the third World Internet Conference (WIC) in the riverside town of Wuzhen, east China's Zhejiang Province.

Liu Yunshan, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, attended the opening ceremony of the WIC and delivered a speech.

The Internet is changing the global economic and security situation, so that building a cyberspace community of common destiny is a pressing demand in an information-led world, Liu said.

China is willing to strengthen policy coordination and cooperation with other countries, Liu said, calling for the improving of cyberspace governance rules, respecting cyberspace sovereignty and safeguarding all countries' equal rights in developing, joining and governing cyberspace. (Xinhua)

### Germany will Try to Ensure Iran Nuclear Deal Survives with Trump

BERLIN - Germany said on Wednesday it would try to ensure a landmark nuclear deal between Iran and the United States, Europe and Russia reached last year would remain in place under a new U.S. administration led by President-elect Donald Trump.

"You can be sure that we will try to convince this (Trump) administration that what we agreed one and a half years ago and

have since implemented, both in words and deeds, remains, from our point of view, the right policy," a foreign ministry spokesman told a regular government news conference.

Earlier, an Iranian central bank official said he expected no longer-term negative effects from the election of Trump despite the anti-Iranian stance he showed in the U.S. election campaign. (Reuters)

### Erdogan Arrives in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in Islamabad Wednesday evening on a two-day visit.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Kulsoom Nawaz, Maryam Nawaz, and Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif welcomed the Turkish president upon arrival at Nur Khan airbase in Rawalpindi. Erdogan is accompanied by his wife Emine and a high-level entourage including ministers, senior officials, and members of the Turkish business community, Radio Pakistan reported.

The Turkish president is expected to hold meetings with President Mamnoon Hussain and

PM Nawaz during his visit.

The exchange of views between the leaders will cover a range of bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues.

He will also address a joint session of parliament on Thursday. The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf 'leadership' has decided to boycott Erdogan's address saying the party will not attend a joint session held under a "controversial" prime minister facing charges of corruption.

This will be Erdogan's third address to a joint session of parliament in Pakistan, Dawn News reported. (Monitoring Desk)

### S&P Affirms Ratings on Uzbekistan-Based Davr-Bank

TASHKENT - S&P Global Ratings affirmed its 'B-/C' long- and short-term counterparty credit ratings on Uzbekistan-based Davr-Bank. The outlook remains stable.

S&P expects that the bank will maintain its capitalization and asset quality near the current levels over the next 12-18 months. However, the agency notes that the fast lending growth may constrain asset quality and can be sustainable only if the bank continues to develop its IT and risk management systems.

S&P revised assessment of the bank's risk position to moderate from weak to reflect view that the bank has expanded its lending book while maintaining good asset quality. (Trend)

As of Sept. 30, 2016, non-performing loans (NPLs; loans overdue more than 90 days) accounted for 0.8 percent of the total loan book. The agency expects NPLs will likely increase but not exceed 1.5 percent of total loans in the next 12-18 months. Davr-Bank's lending concentrations compare favorably with domestic peers. Exposure to the 20-largest borrowers accounted for about 30 percent of the total loan book (or 85 percent of common equity) as of Sept. 30, 2016.

At the same time, the agency revised assessment of capital and earnings of Davr-Bank to adequate from strong to reflect the bank's decreased capital adequacy due to rapid asset growth. (Trend)