

## World Bank, South Korea Announce 3.8-Mln USD Grant to Boost Science in Africa

NAIROBI - The World Bank and South Korea on Friday signed a 3.8 million U.S. dollar grant agreement to facilitate development of cutting edge skills in scientific and technological fields in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The World Bank said the grant is part of the 9 million dollar pledge by South Korea to support the Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (RSIF) aimed at building world class capacity in science and technology across Africa.

"Africa's scientific and technical capacity will be key drivers for its economic growth and the RSIF is an important initiative on the continent that will help build



highly qualified local talent as well as strong institutional capacity in a sustainable manner," said Sajitha Bashir, World

Bank's Education Practice Manager for eastern and southern Africa in a statement issued in Nairobi.

The Korean grant that will be managed by the World Bank as a Trust Fund will be implemented by the Nairobi-based International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) to support technical skills upgrade in Africa under the Partnership for Skills in Applied Sciences Engineering and Technology (PASET) initiative.

"PASET is delighted to receive this contribution from the government of Korea, which marks the launch of new phase for the RSIF," said Amina Mohamed, Kenya's cabinet secretary for education and chairperson of the PASET governing council. (Xinhua)

## Neighbor News

### Iranian Accused of Procuring Parts for Ieds Used on US Troops; \$3M Reward Offered for Capture

TEHRAN - U.S. authorities this week announced a \$3 million reward for the capture of an Iranian man accused of procuring parts from a Minnesota company later used to make roadside bombs targeting U.S. military forces in Iraq.

Hossein Ahmad Larjani went on the run after a federal grand jury in Washington, D.C., indicted him in 2010 on charges related to the shipment of 6,000 radio transceiver modules made in the state, an FBI news release states. The reward is being offered by the State Department.

According to the release, Larjani, 55, was assisted by companies

in Iran and Singapore, along with four co-conspirators in Singapore, from 2007-08 in transporting the modules from the Minnesota company --referred to in court documents as Company A -- to Iran. Singapore-based Corezing International deceived the firm into shipping the devices to Singapore by telling it the components would be used in a local telecommunications project, the FBI said.

Once the shipments arrived in the state, they were allegedly shipped illegally to Iran and used to make remote detonation systems for improvised explosive devices (IEDs). (Fox News)

### Pakistan Arrests 300 Supporters of Detained Cleric

MULTAN, Pakistan - Police in Pakistan have arrested some 300 supporters of a detained radical Islamic cleric who disrupted daily life with nationwide rallies following the acquittal of a Christian woman sentenced to death for blasphemy.

Senior police officer Tahir Mahmood said Saturday that supporters of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik party were picked up in sweeps across Punjab province following the arrest of its leader, Khadim Hus-

sain Rizvi. Police also arrested scores of Rizvi's supporters as they took to streets to protest his overnight arrest.

Rizvi's supporters held violent rallies against the Supreme Court's Oct. 31 acquittal of Aasia Bibi. He has called for more protests on Sunday in the capital, Islamabad.

Pakistan's hard-line Islamists have threatened to kill anyone who insults Islam or who speaks out against the blasphemy law. (AP)

### Dolce&Gabbana Founders Make Video Apology to China

BEIJING - The co-founders of Dolce&Gabbana apologized Friday in a video on Chinese social media after promotional videos seen as racist and subsequent Instagram messages stoked a furor in one of the world's largest markets for luxury goods.

Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana appeared in a nearly 1 1/2 minute video posted on Weibo, a Chinese version of Twitter, saying they hope to be forgiven and will do their best to better understand and respect

Chinese culture. "We have always been in love with China," said Dolce. "We love your culture and we certainly have much to learn. That is why we are sorry if we made mistakes in the way we expressed ourselves."

The Italian fashion house has been in hot water for the videos and subsequent insulting remarks made by the Instagram accounts of both the company and Gabbana. It blamed hackers for the Instagram comments. (AP)

### China, Croatia to Enhance Cultural Exchanges

ZAGREB - China and Croatia said Friday that they will enhance cultural exchanges and further promote the relations between China and the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries.

The remarks were made during a meeting between Visiting Chinese Vice Premier Sun Chunlan and Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic.

Sun said that since the establishment of diplomatic relations, China and Croatia have been treating each other equally, with mutual respect and mutual trust,



and have witnessed steady progress in bilateral ties and practical cooperation. Led by such mechanisms as the Belt and Road Initiative,

China-EU cooperation and 16+1 Cooperation, the two countries have seen comprehensive expansion of cooperation, growing people-to-people exchanges and deepening mutual understanding and friendship, said Sun. (Xinhua)

### Saudi Royal Says Crown Prince Is Here to Stay



DUBAI, United Arab Emirates - A prominent Saudi royal said Saturday that whether or not heads of state gathered in Argentina next week for the Group of 20 sum-

mit warmly engage with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, he is someone "that they have to deal with."

Prince Turki al-Faisal told The Associated Press the

killing of Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi in the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul last month is "an unacceptable incident that tars and mars the long record of Saudi Arabia's own standing in the world." "We will have to bear that. It's not something that should not be faced. And we do face it," he said. Intelligence officials and analysts say the operation to kill Khashoggi, who wrote critically of the crown prince for The Washington Post, could not have happened without Prince

Mohammed's knowledge. The kingdom, which has offered several conflicting accounts of the killing, denies the crown prince had any involvement. The crown prince embarked late Thursday on his first foreign tour since the Oct. 2 killing with a visit to the United Arab Emirates. He's expected to visit other Mideast countries before going to Buenos Aires Nov. 30 for the start of the two-day G-20 summit, where he'll come face to face with world leaders. (Fox News)

### UN Grants Sanctions Exemption for Korea Railway Survey

SEOUL - The UN Security Council has granted a sanctions exemption for the two Koreas to jointly conduct a survey on reconnecting railways across their border, a spokesman for the South Korean presidency said Saturday.

The two Koreas last month agreed to start the survey no later than late October and to hold the groundbreaking ceremony sometime between late November and early December, as the countries pursue a reconciliation drive.

But the possibility of the project running up against

UN sanctions imposed on North Korea over its nuclear programmes has caused delays.

"It is significant that this project has received support from the United States and international community", said Kim Eui-Gyeom, spokesman for the presidential Blue House in Seoul.

Railway experts from both sides will criss-cross the country on survey trains together, Kim said in a statement, adding that the process will "bring inter-Korean cooperation to a new level". (AFP)

### IOC Chief 'Impressed' at Fukushima Recovery Progress

TOKYO - Olympics chief Thomas Bach said Saturday he was impressed at the "great progress" made in the reconstruction of Fukushima, in a visit to the region devastated by the 2011 tsunami and nuclear disaster. Amid hopes that hosting events will help revive the region, International Olympic Committee President Bach visited a stadium set to hold baseball and softball matches during the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. During his visit, he told Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that he was "very much impressed" by the "great progress". (AFP)

### U.S. Black Friday Online Spending Expected to Hit 6.4 Bln USD

WASHINGTON - Online spending is expected to hit more than 6.4 billion U.S. dollars on Black Friday, said Adobe Analytics, which tracks 80 percent of online transactions at 100 of the largest retailers in the United States. On Black Friday, consumers are likely to save 16 percent for computers, 33 percent for tablets and 22 percent for televisions, making it a preferable time for consumers to buy electronic products, Adobe said in a report Friday.

Thanksgiving Day online sales totaled a record 3.7 billion U.S. dollars, up 28 percent from a year ago, Adobe Analytics said. Smartphones drove 54 percent of traffic to retail sites and made up 37 percent of all e-commerce sales. The top three online selling products on Thanksgiving include Nintendo Switch game consoles, Beats headphones and Hot Wheels toys, Adobe said. (Xinhua)

### Israeli Defense Minister Met with Syrian Rebels, Former IDF Commander Reveals in A First

DAMASCUS - In a bombshell admission, a former senior Israeli commander has said that former Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon personally met with Syrian rebels at the height of the Syrian war. Maj. Gen. Gershon Hacoen was speaking at an Israeli Democracy Institute conference when he made a stunning claim - Ya'alon, who was Israel's chief of defense from 2013 to May 2016, held a meeting with a group of Syrian rebels during his tenure. Hacoen, who was Israeli Defence Forces Staff Corps Commander before retiring in September 2014, said that he was



also present at the never-before-reported meet-up. Hacoen refused to specify when the meeting took place and or the subject matter of the discussions. He, however, offered a brief portrayal of his three Syrian 'counterparts,' saying that Ya'alon asked

one if he was a Salafist because the minister "wanted to understand who they were."

The rebel Ya'alon addressed was apparently somewhat perturbed by the prospect of cooperation with Israel. (Russia Today)

### France to Return African Treasures to Benin

PARIS - French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday agreed to return 26 cultural artefacts to Benin "without delay", a move that could put pressure on other former colonial powers to return African artworks to their countries of origin.

The decision - which Macron said should not be seen as an isolated or symbolic case - came as the president received the findings of a study he commissioned on repatriating African treasures held by French museums.

Macron agreed to return the 26 works, mainly royal statues from the Palaces of Abomey - formerly the capital of the kingdom of Dahomey - taken by the French army during a war in 1892 and now in Paris' Quai Branly museum.

In addition, he proposed gathering African and European partners in Paris next year to define a framework for an "exchange policy" for African artworks.

The president "hopes that all possible circulation of these works are considered: returns but also exhibitions, loans, further cooperation", the Elysee palace said.

Ousmane Aledji, director of the Benin cultural centre Artistick Africa, said he was pleased to see "a new form of cultural exchange" with France.

Britain has also faced calls to return artefacts, including the Elgin Marbles to Greece and the Benin Bronzes to Nigeria, while museums in Belgium and Austria house tens of thousands of African pieces. (AFP)

### Erdogan's AKP Gets Local Election Boost from Nationalists

ISTANBUL - Turkey's nationalist MHP will support President Tayyip Erdogan's AK Party candidates in local elections in three key cities next year, the MHP leader said on Saturday, in a boost to the AKP's election prospects.

The AK Party and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) formed an alliance before presidential elections last June, but were subsequently at loggerheads over a disagreement about the MHP's call for an amnesty for some jailed criminals. A month ago MHP leader Devlet

Bahceli said his party would not seek an alliance with the AK Party in the March 2019 municipal elections which are being held across Turkey.

At the time his comments triggered a weakening of the lira over concerns that it would lead to political instability.

However, Bahceli announced a change of position on Saturday saying the MHP would not put forward city mayoral candidates for Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, Turkey's three biggest cities. (Reuters)

### Azerbaijani Company Eyes Exporting Confectionery to Uzbekistan, Russia, UAE

TASHKENT - The Azerbaijani confectionery company Can-Pa intends to establish export of products to Russia, Uzbekistan and the United Arab Emirates in 2019, marketing director of the company, Gunay Khalafzade, told Trend.

According to her, Can-Pa currently does not have any supplies abroad, but the company actively participates in exhibitions to promote its products and sign export contracts.

Khalafzade reminded that the Can-Pa products, Turkish delight, marmalade, dragees, and other locally made sweets are currently presented at the UZPRODEXPO food exhibition, being held in Tashkent. (Trend)

"Uzbekistan is a close country for us, so we want to establish exports in that direction. We contacted the organizers of UZPRODEXPO and opened our stand at the exhibition, which will be active from Nov. 21 through Nov. 23," the company representative said.

She underlined that the company plans to significantly increase local production in 2019 in order to enter the markets of Russia and the UAE as well.

"On Feb. 5-9, 2018, our company, with the support of AzPromo, took part in the ProdExpo exhibition in Moscow. We plan to take part in the 24th Gulfood exhibition in Dubai on Feb. 17-21, 2019," Khalafzade said. (Trend)