

Trump Meets with Former CIA Head as Search for Top Diplomat Steps up

WASHINGTON - U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Monday met with former CIA Director David Petraeus as he ratcheted up efforts to search for a new U.S. secretary of state. Speaking to reporters after their one-hour meeting, Petraeus indicated to reporters that he was impressed by Trump's knowledge about international affairs. "He (Trump) basically walked us around the world. Showed a great grasp of a variety of the challenges that are out there and some of the



opportunities as well. Very good conversation and we'll see where it goes from here," said Petraeus. Meanwhile, Trump said on Twitter that he was "very impressed" after his meeting with Petraeus. According to local media report, Petraeus, together with 2012 Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney and former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, are strong competitors for the position of U.S. secretary of state in the ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

Syrian Troops Make Major Breakthrough in Aleppo Offensive: Russian Military

MOSCOW - The Syrian government troops have made a "major breakthrough in their anti-terrorist operation" in eastern Aleppo, with nearly half of the eastern part of the city cleared of militants, the Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday. "The situation has radically changed in the last 24 hours due to well prepared and very precise actions by the Syrian troops," the ministry's spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said.

More than 80,000 Syrians, including tens of thousands of children, have been freed and provided with water, food and medical care in humanitarian centers, the spokesman added. With the help of Russian war planes, the Syrian army has intensified the offensive on rebel positions in eastern Aleppo over the past two weeks to break their defense lines. Aleppo, Syria's former commercial center, has been bitterly ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

France Calls for UN Meeting on Syria's Aleppo after Fighting Worsens

PARIS - French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault on Tuesday called for an immediate United Nations (UN) Security Council meeting to discuss the situation in the Syrian city of Aleppo after escalated fighting there. "More than ever before, we need to urgently put in place means to end the hostilities and to allow unhindered humanitarian aid," Ayrault said in a statement. The top French diplomat, in a separate communique, expressed deep concerns

over the massive offensive by the Syrian government forces, which he said "has killed a large number of civilians and forced thousands of inhabitants to flee the city." France will in December host a meeting attended by representatives of countries that have been demanding the resignation of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, according to the French Foreign Ministry. After a ceasefire accord collapsed in September,



the security situation has worsened rapidly in Aleppo, a strategically-located Syrian city bitterly contested by both the government forces and the rebels.

The Syrian government forces are now controlling all of northeast Aleppo in northern Syria, as rebel defenses in the city have collapsed. (Xinhua)

Turkey has not "Closed Book" with EU: Erdogan

ISTANBUL - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday that his country has not yet "closed book" with the European Union (EU), but is considering other alternatives after European lawmakers voted lately to freeze talks over Ankara's accession to the bloc. "At the moment, we have not yet closed book with EU," Erdogan said at a meeting in Istanbul. "But the picture ahead us does not allow us to have positive expectation." "We could move on in considering one of these alternatives," he said, without elaborating. The presi-

dent recently talked of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a Eurasian political, economic and security organization, as an option for Turkey. Last Thursday, the European Parliament voted in favor of a non-binding motion on suspending membership talks with Turkey, sparking strong reactions from the country. Following the vote, Erdogan had threatened to open borders for illegal migrants to flood into Europe. Turkey has moved to reduce significantly the illegal flow of migrants under a deal reached with the EU in March. (Xinhua)

Human Rights Violations Rife as Battle for Mosul Rages: OHCHR

GENEVA - The Islamic State (IS, or ISIL) militants defending the Iraqi city of Mosul are committing serious human rights violations as operations to recapture one of the extremist group's last strongholds continue, the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) warned Tuesday. "We continue to receive reports of serious breaches of international human rights and international humanitarian law by ISIL in and around Mosul," the UN human rights body



explained in a statement. "ISIL has been installing rocket launchers and placing snipers on the rooftops of civilian houses. Those who refuse to allow their houses to be used in

this way are threatened or killed," it added. Reports received by OHCHR reveal that 12 people were executed on Nov. 11 in the eastern Bakir neighbourhood after

civilians refused to allow IS combatants to install and launch rockets from the rooftop of their houses. According to OHCHR, such families are effectively used as human shields since they are caught between IS front line troops and Iraqi Security Forces responding to rocket and sniper attacks. The UN human rights body also voiced concern as to the whereabouts of hundreds of civilians allegedly abducted by IS and moved to secret locations. (Xinhua)

Nearly 4,700 Maritime Migrants Die Attempting to Reach Europe: IOM

GENEVA - Nearly 4,700 migrants and refugees have drowned crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe this year, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said Tuesday. This death toll is significantly higher than the number of fatalities documented over the same period last year, when 3,565 men, women and children were reported dead through Nov. 30. It also means that 2016 has been a particularly deadly



year for migrants seeking to reach European shores. While deaths this year are considerably higher, the number of arrivals is much lower. According to latest IOM figures, 348,664 migrants

and refugees have arrived in Europe by sea this year, compared to 883,393 arrivals recorded at this point in 2015. By far the most dangerous sea route for migrants, the central ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

Challenger to Brexit Expects Supreme Court to Clarify UK Parliament's Role: Advisor

BRUSSELS - The chief challenger to the British government's exit plan from the European Union (EU) expects the Supreme Court to clarify the parliament's role in the exit process, an advisor to the challenger told Xinhua in an exclusive interview. The Supreme Court announced on Nov. 8 that the crucial Brexit hearing will start on Dec. 5 in London and last four days. The Supreme Court set the timetable after it received a formal notification of the British government's intention to appeal a ruling of the High Court over the triggering exit process from the EU. The High Court ruled on Nov. 3 that British Prime Minister Theresa May's government cannot use a royal prerogative to trigger Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty that starts the Brexit process. ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

Local Vote in London Becomes Brexit Battleground

LONDON - A local by-election for parliament in the posh London suburb of Richmond on Thursday is threatening to turn into a mini-referendum on Brexit, with the defending MP a Brexiteer in a pro-EU heartland. Liberal Democrat challenger Sarah Olney, whose party wants a second referendum on Brexit, is hoping the result will shock Downing Street, as the government ploughs on towards the EU exit door. Olney is running against Zac Goldsmith, who held the seat for Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party but quit in protest after the government backed expanding the nearby Heathrow Airport. He is now standing as an independent candidate.

"Speaking to voters, what was becoming increasingly clear was that while some people feel very strongly about Heathrow expansion, lots more people feel much more strongly about Brexit," Olney told AFP. "That's really alarmed and upset people and they want to use this opportunity to send a message." In the June referendum on Britain's membership in the European Union, 52 percent nationwide voted to leave. But in the well-heeled borough of Richmond in southwest London, 69 percent voted to remain in the bloc, the 19th highest of 326 voting areas. The 82 percent turnout, one of the highest in the UK, showed it was an issue locals felt passionate about. (AFP)

UN Chief Calls for Immediate End to Renewed Violence in CAR

UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Monday said that he "is deeply concerned over renewed violence last week" in the Central African Republic (CAR) and urged "the armed groups to immediately stop the violence" in the war-torn country. Two armed groups, both factions of the ex-Seleka -- the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) and the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) -- have clashed in Bria, Haute Kotto prefecture, with dozens reportedly killed and wounded and over 11,000 persons displaced, ...*(More on P4)...(19)*

With 500,000 Children Living Under Siege in Syria, UNICEF Calls for Humanitarian Access

UNITED NATIONS - As the number of children living under siege has doubled in less than one year to nearly 500,000 amid escalating violence across Syria, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has called for lifting sieges and allowing immediate humanitarian access. As violence continues to escalate across Syria, the number of children living under siege has doubled in less than one year, UNICEF said in a press release, adding that nearly 500,000 children now live in 16 besieged areas across the country, almost completely cut off from sustained humani-



tarian aid and basic services. "For millions of human beings in Syria, life has become an endless nightmare -- in particular for the hundreds of thousands of children living under siege," said Anthony Lake, the UNICEF ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

Nieghbor News

China, Neighbors Arrest Thousands in Drug Crimes Joint Operation

KUNMING - A six-nation joint operation to crack down on rampant drug crimes along the Lancang-Mekong region has seized 12.7 tonnes of narcotics, arrested 9,927 suspects and confiscated a huge number of firearms over three months, Chinese police said Monday. Also seized were 55.2 tonnes of chemicals to be used in drug manufacturing, police announced at a ceremony held in southwest China's

Yunnan Province to mark the end of the latest anti-doping joint operation launched by China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. Police said the coordinating command center set up by the six nations played a key role in sharing information to help police conduct raids. In one prominent case, 1.73 tonnes of ice -- crystal methamphetamine -- was seized in Myanmar due to a ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

General Bajwa Takes Charge as Pakistan's 16th Army Chief

ISLAMABAD - Outgoing Pakistani military chief Gen. Raheel Sharif on Tuesday handed over the command of the army to Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa. He passed the baton of command to Gen. Bajwa at a ceremony held in the Army Hockey Stadium, close to the General Headquarters (GHQ). The command stick of the Pakistan Army is made of traditional Malacca Cane. In his final speech as army chief, Gen Raheel Sharif stressed the need for institutions to work together for the nation's progress, and cautioned India against adopting

an aggressive stance in the region. "It is important that all institutions work together against external threats and internal threats. For this, we will need to follow the National Action Plan in letter and spirit," Gen Raheel said. "I thank the federal government and political leadership for cooperating with us... I had the entire country's cooperation, for which I thank the army and the nation," he said. However, he said, "Our challenges are not yet over. We have made gains over the past year. It is necessary that we ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

Iran, Russia Presidents Discuss Mideast Crises, Energy Ties

TEHRAN - Presidents of Iran and Russia have discussed the latest developments in Syria and agreed to coordinate efforts concerning global oil and gas markets, the Kremlin says. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin held a telephone conversation on Monday. "The presidents ... agreed to coordinate the steps on the global hydrocarbons markets, including in the

framework of the energy dialogue between Russia and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)," a statement by the Kremlin read. "The presidents discussed the situation in the Middle East...and agreed to continue close cooperation aimed at ensuring long-term normalization of the situation in Syria," the Kremlin said. Syria has been hit by deadly militancy, which ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan Discuss Railway Cooperation

ASHGABAT - First Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Askar Mamin was received by President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov on the sidelines of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference in Ashgabat. They discussed development of the North-South rail corridor, which is an important part of the new railway Kazakhstan - Turkmenistan - Iran. In December 2014, the Presidents of Kazakh-

stan, Turkmenistan and Iran opened the railway line Uzen - Bereket - Gorgan connecting three states. The sides noted the importance of the international road for the development of the regional economy, as well as the prosperity and strengthening of mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries. In addition, the sides exchanged views on the development of the Kazakhstan - Turkmen cooperation ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

Election Campaign in Uzbekistan Held at High Level

TASHKENT - Election campaign in Uzbekistan is taking place in a calm atmosphere, in the spirit of open competition and at a high organizational level in accordance with international standards, said an interim report of the CIS monitoring mission, published on Tuesday. The report covers a period from November 17, when the mission began its monitoring, to No-

vember 28. The mission performs its functions freely and independently, guided by the legislation of Uzbekistan, without interfering in the electoral process and the internal affairs of the state, said the report. The mission noted that amendments were introduced to the electoral legislation of Uzbekistan in order to improve the practice of organizing and ...*(More on P4)...(25)*