

“Our Goal is not War”: Mattis

PANMUNJOM, South Korea - U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis emphasized diplomatic efforts to resolve the North Korean missile and nuclear crisis as he stood at the tense and heavily fortified border between North and South on Friday, saying: “Our goal is not war.” His remarks came before U.S. President Donald Trump - who has threatened to destroy the North if necessary - leaves on his first trip to Asia next week, including a stop in South Korea to meet President Moon Jae-in. For his part, Moon, after talks with Mattis, said the “aggressive deployment” of U.S. strategic assets in the region, which have included overflights by U.S. bombers, had been effective in deterring the North Korean threat.



Tension between North Korea and the United States has been building after a series of nuclear and missile tests by Pyongyang and bellicose verbal exchanges between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, stoking fears any miscalculation could lead to an armed confrontation. “North Korean provocations continue to threaten regional and global security despite unanimous condemnation by the United Nations Security Council,” Mattis said in prepared remarks as he visited the demilitarized zone (DMZ). “As Secretary of State Tillerson has made clear, our goal is not war, but rather the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.” (Reuters)

U.S. Imposes New Sanctions on DPRK Individuals, Entities

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Treasury on Thursday issued new sanctions on seven individuals and three entities of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) over what it called human rights abuses. “Today’s sanctions target the North Korean (DPRK) military and regime officials engaged in flagrant abuses of human rights,” U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement. Pyongyang’s financial facilitators “who attempt to keep the regime afloat with foreign currency

earned through forced labor operations” were also targeted, Mnuchin added. Among the sanctioned individuals were DPRK’s military security officials and Labor Minister Jong Yong Su. DPRK’s consul general in Shenyang, China, and a diplomat at its embassy in Vietnam were also targeted. As a result of the sanction, any property or interests of the designated persons in the U.S. will be blocked and transactions by Americans involving these persons are generally prohibited. (Xinhua)

Catalonia Declares Independence from Spain, Direct Madrid Rule Looms

BARCELONA/MADRID - Catalonia’s parliament declared independence from Spain on Friday in defiance of the Madrid government, which at the same time was preparing to impose direct rule over the region. Although the declaration was in effect a symbolic gesture as it will not be accepted by Spain or the international community, the moves by both sides take Spain’s worst political crisis in four decades to a new level. Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy immediately called for calm and said



the rule of law would be restored. The motion passed in the regional parliament in Barcelona - which was boycotted by opposition parties - said Catalonia constituted an independent, sovereign and social democratic state. It called on other countries and institutions to recognize it. (Reuters)

Nieghbor News

China will Not Change Determination to Deepen Relations with Russia: Xi

BEIJING - Russia is China’s comprehensive strategic partner of coordination, and whatever volatile changes may take place in the international arena, China will not change its determination to deepen relations with Russia, Chinese President Xi Jinping said Thursday. Xi made the remarks during a phone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin. China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world, Xi said. And China is willing to work with Russia to advance bilateral relations to achieve more tangible fruits so as to benefit the two peoples as well as people from all other countries. During the conversation, Putin congratulated Xi on his reelection as the general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC). Putin also extended congratulations on the successful conclusion of the 19th CPC National Congress. Expressing appreciation for Putin’s congratulations, Xi said that the just-concluded congress formulated an overall principle and an action guideline for the future development of the CPC and China, which reflected the strong consensus reached by all the 89 million party members. (Xinhua)

Present-Day Pakistan is Peaceful, Stable: Mamnoon

KARACHI - Peace and stability have been largely restored across the country, paving way for fresh economic activities, said President Mamnoon Hussain here Thursday. Talking to the people, following the formal inauguration of the International Trade Fair organised by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), the president said present-day Pakistan is much more stable as compared to a few years ago. “Representation from more than 20 countries in today’s event reflects growing confidence of local, as well as foreign, traders and investors,” he remarked. Emphasising that Pakistan offers best investment opportunities, he urged locals to benefit from the same. President Mamnoon on the occasion also appreciated the business community of the country for being steadfast in times of difficulties. “You are being provided with series of opportunities through China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC),” said the president, while mentioning that it has opened a vista of prosperity for the entire region. He also advised the local traders to follow the international rules of business so as to boldly face the fast emerging global challenges. (Monitoring Desk)

U.S. House Approves Senate-Version Budget, a Step toward Tax Reform



WASHINGTON - U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday approved the Senate’s version of budget resolution for fiscal year 2018, a big step toward pushing tax reform forward. In a vote of 216-212 primarily along party line, the House passed the budget resolution that will allow Republicans’ tax plan to add up to 1.5

trillion U.S. dollars to the deficit over a decade. The budget resolution also helps unlock a procedure that could allow the passage of the tax reform plan without support from Democrats. It includes billions more for defense spending, while calls for 5 trillion dollars in spending cuts over the decade, including cuts to Medicare and Medicaid. The Senate passed the resolution last week and the House approved it without changes, a step that will allow Republicans to speed up its push for tax reform. “President Donald J. Trump applauds Congress for passing its pro-growth FY 2018 joint budget resolution and fulfilling its obligation to the American people,” said a statement from the White House’s press secretary on Thursday. “This resolution sets the stage for Congress to put America first by providing economic relief for the American people in the form of tax cuts and tax reform,” the statement added. (Xinhua)

India, France Hold Defense Minister-Level Talks in Delhi



NEW DELHI - India and France held defense minister-level talks here on Friday, aimed at bolstering bilateral strategic ties. Sources said Indian Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her visiting French counterpart Florence Parly discussed several key issues, including regional security situation and transfer of crucial technology for various defense projects, during the talks. “Ways to bolster bilateral defense and security ties, including maritime cooperation, also figured in the talks between the two countries,” the sources said. The French defense minister’s two-day visit to India is seen as a ground-building exercise for French President Emmanuel Macron’s forthcoming trip to the country. (Xinhua)

US Leaders ‘Ignorant’, Tillerson Remarks ‘Deceptive’: Iran

TEHRAN - Iran has lashed out at “impudent, deceptive and interventionist” remarks of US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson about what he called the need for the Iranian people to take back control of their government. Qassemi said Tillerson’s remarks “once again depicted the true face of the United States for the Iranian people.” Iranians got furious this month after US President Donald Trump called the country a “terrorist nation” and used “Arabian Gulf” to refer to the body of waters which is internationally known as the Persian Gulf. The outrageous remarks prompted Iranians of all stripes to take to social media and state that they were united in defending their country after Trump refused to certify a landmark nuclear agreement and hinted at consequences. (Presstv)

Brexit Talks Can’t Move on without Clarity over Border: Ireland

DUBLIN - Britain’s talks on exiting the European Union cannot progress, as London wishes, to trade relations until it give more clarity on what will happen at its border with Ireland, Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said on Friday. The border with Northern Ireland, which will be the UK’s only land frontier with the EU after its departure, is one of three issues Brussels wants broadly solved before talks on trade can start in December at the earliest. “On the border issue, I’m sorry but we need more clarity than we have right now. We cannot move ahead to phase two on the back of a promise that we don’t see any delivery mechanism to make a reality,” Coveney told a conference. “We don’t need all the answers but we certainly need to have more assurance than we have today and we need some understanding that if the trade negotiations collapse, which could happen, that the Irish issues will still be resolved and prioritized.” With close trading links to Britain, Ireland is considered the EU member most at risk when its neighbor leaves the bloc. That means it needs to plan “for all eventualities” and is already doing so, Coveney said. Ireland has called for Britain and the EU to reach a bespoke customs union partnership to eliminate the risk of a “hard” border returning between it and Northern Ireland, which until a 1998 peace deal was separated by military checkpoints because of 30 years of sectarian violence in the province. (Reuters)

Assad Says Victory against Terrorism Sets Ground for Political Work

DAMASCUS - Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said Thursday that the Syrian army’s victory in the fight against terrorism set the ground for more political work. The president made the remarks during his meeting with a Russian delegation headed by Sergei Lavrentyev, the special envoy of Russian President Vladimir Putin. During the meeting, the president discussed with the delegation over the preparations for the upcoming talks in Astana, according to media office of the Syrian president’s



office. Stressing that the victory of the Syrian army over the terrorist groups in Syria prepares the ground for political action, Assad said his government was still looking “positively” to any political initiative that could curb the bloodletting in Syria. The president also emphasized that the war on terrorism would continue along with the political development through encouraging dialogue and reconciliation until reaching an amendment to the constitution and holding new parliamentary elections. (Xinhua)

Russia Conducts Military Drills to Test Combat Readiness of its Strategic Nuclear Forces

MOSCOW - Russia on Thursday conducted large-scale military drills to test the combat readiness of its strategic nuclear forces, including launches of multiple ballistic missiles, Russian Defense Ministry said. “Practical combat actions of the personnel of command-and-control centers of the Russian Strategic Missile Forces, crews of the nuclear-powered submarines of the Northern and Pacific Fleets, strategic missile carriers and long-range bombers of the Aerospace Forces were tested during the training,” the ministry said in a statement. According to the ministry, a nuclear submarine of the Pacific Fleet

carried out a salvo launch of two ballistic missiles from the Okhotsk Sea towards the Chizha test range in northern Russia, while a Northern Fleet nuclear sub launched a ballistic missile from the Barents Sea towards the Kura test range in Russia’s Far East. In addition, a unit of the Strategic Missile Forces also fired a Topol intercontinental ballistic missile from Russia’s Plesetsk cosmodrome towards the Kura test range, the statement said. Long-range bombers Tu-160, Tu-95MS and Tu-22M3 also fired air-based cruise missiles at ground targets at Kura, Pemboj (Republic of Komi) and Terek (Kazakhstan), it said. (Xinhua)

Countries Urge EU to Cut Cars’ CO2 Emissions by More Than Planned

BRUSSELS - Seven EU nations called on the European Commission this week to set stricter limits on tailpipe carbon emissions, in last ditch lobbying ahead of its proposal next month. The EU executive is expected to introduce new CO2 standards for cars and vans for beyond 2020 to help the bloc meet its goal of cutting overall greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. As the Commission puts the finishing touches to the proposals, those calling for more ambitious climate goals face off with industry representatives who say too stringent emission standards could become a burden for the industry. Reuters exclusively reported that the Commission plans to set a target for reducing emissions of passenger car fleets between 25-35 percent by 2030. The seven governments, whose small stake in Europe’s powerful car industry is dwarfed by big carmakers France, Germany and Italy, called for a 40 percent cut. Without ambitious targets, the EU will struggle to meet its climate goals, they wrote in a letter to the Commission on Oct. 25, seen by Reuters. The transport and environment ministers of Luxembourg, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, Ireland and Slovenia signed the letter. Since Volkswagen admitted to cheating on emission tests in the United States, large car manufacturing nations have also been under greater pressure to accept tougher EU regulation of the industry. (Reuters)

Russia Ready to Partake in Joint Oil & Gas Projects with Turkmenistan

ASHGABAT - President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov received Chairman of the Union of Oil and Gas Producers of Russia Yuri Shafranik, the Turkmen Dovlet Habarlary state news agency reported Friday. During the meeting, it was noted that Russia intends to expand its presence in the promising Turkmen market by actively participating in new joint projects. “In particular, this concerns the exploration, production and processing of hydrocarbons, as well as other minerals,” says the report. President Berdimuhamedov emphasized that in the modernization of the oil and gas industry, Turkmenistan relies on the introduction of innovative technologies, advanced achievements of scientific and technical progress, and asked Russian partners to present concrete proposals on cooperation in this area. Turkmenistan is one of the biggest suppliers of natural gas in the Caspian region. There are about 190 companies with Russian capital in Turkmenistan. (Trend)