

Concentration of CO2 in Atmosphere Hits Record High: UN

GENEVA - The concentration of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere has hit a new high, the UN said Monday, warning that drastic action is needed to achieve targets set by the Paris climate agreement.

"Concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere surged at a record-breaking speed in 2016 to the highest level in 800,000 years," the World Meteorological Organization said.

"Globally averaged concentrations of CO2 reached 403.3 parts per million in 2016, up from 400.00 ppm in 2015 because of a com-



ination of human activities and a strong El Nino event," it said.

The Greenhouse Gas Bulletin, the UN weather agency's annual flagship report, tracks the content of dangerous gasses in the atmosphere in the post-industrial era (since 1750). Researchers have "reliable, direct measurements" of CO2 concentrations rates going back 800,000 years using air bubbles preserved in ice in places like Greenland and Antarctica, the head of WMO's atmospheric environment research division, Oksana Tarasova, told reporters in Geneva. (AFP)

Saudi Arabia to Extract Uranium for 'Self-Sufficient' Nuclear Program

ABU DHABI - Saudi Arabia plans to extract uranium domestically as part of its nuclear power program and sees this as a step towards "self-sufficiency" in producing atomic fuel, a senior official said on Monday.

Extracting its own uranium also makes sense from an economic point of view, said Hashim bin Abdullah Yamani, head of the Saudi government agency tasked with the nuclear plans, the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy (KACARE). In a speech at an in-

ternational nuclear power conference in Abu Dhabi, he did not specify whether Saudi Arabia seeks to also enrich and reprocess uranium - steps in the fuel cycle which are especially sensitive as they can open up the possibility of military uses of the material. The world's top oil exporter says it wants to tap atomic power for peaceful purposes only in order to diversify its energy supply and will award a construction contract for its first two nuclear reactors by the end of 2018. (Reuters)

Vatican Aims to Head off US-North Korea Nuclear Standoff

VATICAN CITY - The Vatican is hosting a conference next week aimed at trying to head off a threatened nuclear confrontation between the U.S. and North Korea, bringing together 11 Nobel peace laureates and top U.N. and NATO officials as well as ambassadors from key countries.

Vatican spokesman Greg Burke said Monday that the Nov. 10-11 conference was part of the Vatican's long-standing effort to promote a nuclear weapons-free world. But he denied that the conference, first reported by La Repubblica



newspaper, represented a mediation effort by Pope Francis. Francis has already urged Washington and Pyongyang to step

back from the brink of war and urged mediation efforts by others.

It wasn't immediately clear if North Korea or

China would be represented at the conference. Neither has diplomatic relations with the Holy See. (AP)

Nieghbor News

Chinese COs Urged to Work with More Enthusiasm to Convert CPEC Dream into Reality

ISLAMABAD - Chargé d' Affairs of Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, Zhao Lijian on Monday urged Chinese-funded enterprises and Chinese Overseas (COs) to work with more enthusiasm and cooperate closely to convert China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) a dream into reality.

He was addressing a ceremony held here in connection first anniversary of construction machinery company XCMG's operations in Pakistan. The Company has also launched ritual for 10,000 Quality Service Activities.

A large number of Chinese and Pakistani companies' higher officials were present on the oc-

casional and expressed keen interest in XCMG products displayed. Besides Chargé d' Affairs Chinese Embassy, General Manager XCMG Group Asia-Pacific, Ma Zhongyi, Vice President of Shandong Heavy Industry Group Xu Zichun, representatives of Chinese construction enterprises in Pakistan, China and Pakistan mainstream media gathered for curtain raising of service line activities.

Zhao Lijian affirmed the XCMG Group in Pakistan market achievements, and XCMG mechanical products to help construction of China Pakistan Economic Corridor put forward higher requirements. (Monitoring Desk)

Iran Skips UN Conference on Nuclear Energy in Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates - Iran's nuclear deal with world powers may hang in the balance, but you wouldn't know it at the United Nations conference on atomic energy held Monday in the United Arab Emirates. Iran decided to skip the Abu Dhabi conference, leaving its seats empty as Yukiya Amano, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, avoided speaking about the nuclear deal at all in his address at the venue.

Officials at the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran did not respond to a request for comment. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi said he had "no

information" on the decision.

At a later news conference, Amano himself declined to discuss it.

"This conference is open to all the countries and we welcome the participation of all the countries," Amano said. "But of course it depends on each country whether to attend or not. I do not comment on Iran's participation. It is (up to) Iran to decide."

During a visit to Iran the day before, Amano told reporters that Tehran was still honoring the 2015 nuclear accord. President Donald Trump has declined to re-certify the 2015 nuclear deal, sending it to Congress to address. (AP)

Skilled Youth Backbone of National Economy: Mamnoon

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain Monday termed youth the backbone of national economy said even the progress of developed countries would never have been possible without the contribution of their talented and skilled youth.

Addressing at the prize distribution ceremony of Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Programme organized by National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTC) here at the Awwan-e-Sadr, the President called upon the youth to engage in their respective fields with full enthusiasm to contribute towards the development of country.

President Mamnoon said the societies which comprehended the requirements of changing times excelled amongst the contemporary na-

tions by dint of their hard work, while those which remained oblivious to changing requirements faced downward trajectory in economy.

He expressed satisfaction that the government had devised an excellent programme to hone the skills of youth and a large number of the youth trained by NAVTC had succeeded in acquiring decent and respectable jobs in Pakistan and abroad. He said it was his desire that every youth of the country gets an opportunity to utilize his capabilities and become able to contribute in the progress and development of their motherland. The President mentioned the saying of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) who said "The one who earns by struggle is a friend of Allah". (Monitoring Desk)

Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China Pilot Automobile Rally Starts in Tashkent

TASHKENT - The opening ceremony of the international pilot automobile rally on route "Tashkent - Andijan (Uzbekistan) - Osh - Irkeshtam (Kyrgyzstan) - Kashgar (China)" was held in Tashkent on Monday, the Uzbek Ministry for Foreign Trade said.

During the rally, the heads of the delegations of Uzbekistan, China and Kyrgyzstan made a solemn speech, stressing the importance of a new automobile corridor in terms of diversifying foreign trade routes. "Today we all witness

a truly historic event, namely, commissioning of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan new automobile corridor," Uzbek Minister of Foreign Economic Affairs, Investments and Trade Elyor Ganiev said.

Nine cars from three countries are participating in the pilot car race. The creation of the automobile corridor is also part of the intergovernmental agreement between Uzbekistan and China signed during Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's visit to China in early May. (Trend)

Trump, Japan's Abe Agree to Work Together on N. Korea before Asia Visit



TOKYO - President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe agreed to work together on steps to coun-

ter North Korea's nuclear and missile development, ahead of the U.S. leader's visit to Asia, the Japanese government said late on

Monday. In a 20-minute phone call, Trump and Abe discussed the schedule of the president's coming visit, which includes

a Nov. 5-7 stop in Japan, and agreed to remain in close contact over North Korea, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasutoshi Nishimura told reporters. Trump told Abe "he is looking forward to his visit to Japan, that Japan and America are 100 percent together and there is no room to doubt the Japan-U.S. alliance," Nishimura said.

"They agreed to deepen their discussions on the North Korean situation and other matters" during Trump's visit, he said. (Reuters)

Second Woman Enters Russian Presidential Race, Campaigning for Single Mothers

MOSCOW - A journalist became the second woman to enter Russia's presidential race, saying on Monday she wanted to use the election to campaign for the rights of single mothers and children. The presidential election takes place in March next year. President Vladimir Putin is expected to stand and win, but has yet to confirm his plans.

Some opposition activists believe the Kremlin's aim is to crown the field with candidates designed to distract and entertain in order to boost turnout

and divide the liberal opposition.

The Kremlin denies that, saying anyone who meets the legal criteria to run can take part.

On Monday, mother-of-two Ekaterina Gordon, 37, who has worked as a TV and radio talk show host, said she was putting herself forward as an independent presidential candidate.

She said she had never voted, but had become disillusioned by both the liberal opposition and pro-Kremlin politicians. (Reuters)

India's Anti-Terror Agency Gets New Head

NEW DELHI - Yogesh Chander Modi Monday took over as a new head of India's anti-terror agency National Investigation Agency (NIA), officials said. "Today Yogesh Chander Modi, an IPS (Indian Police Service) officer took over as the Director General, National Investigation Agency (NIA)," a statement issued by the agency said.

Modi succeeded Sharad Kumar on completion of his tenure. Last month Modi joined NIA as an officer on special duty. Modi is likely to hold the post until his superannuation on May 31, 2021. The NIA is entrusted with the job of investigating terror related incidents in India. (Xinhua)

Catalan Leader's Party to Take Part in Election

BARCELONA, Spain - A spokeswoman for the main Catalan party ousted from the regional government for pushing ahead with an independence bid has vowed to defeat pro-union political forces in an election at the end of the year.

PDeCAT party coordinator Marta Pascal told reporters during a news conference following a meeting of party officials that "Mr. Rajoy, we will see you at the ballot boxes." Pascal was referring to Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, whose government has taken control of Catalonia.

Ousted regional president Carles Puigdemont didn't attend the meeting. Puigdemont is in Brussels, according to a Spanish government official, but Pascal didn't confirm his whereabouts.

Spain's top prosecutor is seeking rebellion, sedition and embezzlement charges against Puigdemont. (AP)

Spanish Prosecutor Announces Legal Action against Former Catalan Leaders

MADRID - Spanish State Prosecutor Jose Manuel Maza on Monday announced that former Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont and the members of his government who were responsible for last Friday's declaration of independence will be investigated for a series of crimes including rebellion, sedition and the misappropriation of public funds.

Puigdemont and his government were sacked on Friday by Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy following the approval of Article 155 of the Spanish Constitu-



tion, which suspended the autonomy of the Catalan region and handed control of key institutions to Madrid pending new elections on Dec. 21.

The former leader and his deputy Oriol Junqueras will be investigated by the Spanish High Court, while other former mem-

bers of Puigdemont's government face action in the Spanish Supreme Court. Former Catalan Economy Minister Santi Vila is among those under investigation, despite resigning from the government a day before the independence vote. (Xinhua)

China, Russia Agree to Advance Pragmatic Cooperation

CHONGQING - Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin on Monday agreed to expand cooperation.

Wang and Rogozin co-chaired the 21st meeting of the Joint Commission for the Regular Prime Ministers' Meetings of China and Russia in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality.

The meeting is preparation for the 22nd regular meeting of Chinese premier and Russian prime minister. Wang is a member of the Standing Committee of the

Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee Political Bureau. During the meeting, Wang said under the guidance of Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, bilateral ties are better than ever. He said the Joint Commission mechanism had been efficient and bilateral cooperation had yielded fruitful results. Wang said Sino-Russian trade has continued to improve this year with cooperation in nuclear energy, civil aviation, aerospace, and cross-border infrastructure construction advancing steadily. (Xinhua)