

# Guterres, Trump Hold First Meeting

UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres met with U.S. President Donald Trump for the first time at the White House on Friday, said a UN spokesperson. The UN chief had an "interesting and constructive conversation on cooperation between the United States and the United Nations," UN Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told a daily briefing. "The secretary-general and the president agreed to meet again in the near future," said Dujarric. Guterres, who took up the reins of the United Nations in January, also met



with U.S. National Security Advisor, General H.R. McMaster.

Guterres traveled to Washington on Thursday to attend the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

On Friday morning, after the meetings at the White House, Guterres participated in a panel discussion entitled "Financing for Peace: Innovations to Tackle Fragility." He said the best and the most necessary investment is the investment in prevention and in addressing the problems of fragility before it turns into conflict. (Xinhua)

## Russia Probe will Help US Allies: Ryan

TALLINN, Estonia - U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan says one of the reasons the U.S. Congress has launched a thorough investigation into Russia's alleged meddling in the 2016 U.S. election is to "prevent the same kind of thing happening" to its NATO and other allies. Ryan spoke Saturday at a news conference with Estonian Prime Minister Juri Ratas during a visit by a bipartisan congressional delegation to the Baltic NATO member and

staunch Washington ally. The Republican speaker said though Russia's alleged meddling didn't affect the outcome of the election its actions "cannot be tolerated." He stressed the U.S. has a responsibility to share the results of the Russia investigation with countries like Estonia, which in recent years has faced Russia's aggressive disinformation campaigns along with Baltic neighbors Latvia and Lithuania. (AP)

## Assad Says Chemical Attack "Fabricated"

DAMASCUS - Syrian President Bashar al-Assad stressed that the alleged chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun town was fabricated, and a bunch of lies.

The president made the remarks during an interview he made with Russian media outlets, namely Ria Novosti and Sputnik, published on Friday, and released by state news agency SANA as well.

There was no toxic attack in Khan Sheikhoun town, Assad said, charging that the United States and the Western powers have prevented an investigation team from coming into Syria to look into the allegation, "because the team will find that all

the narrative about what happened in Khan Sheikhoun was mere lies." Two weeks ago, the U.S. launched 59 missiles on a Syrian air base in Homs province in central Syria, in retaliation to an alleged chemical attack launched by the Syrian air force on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib province, during which over 70 people were said to have been killed.

The Syrian government completely rejected the accusations, saying it is not in possession of chemical weapons and that there was no need to resort to such option as the Syrian army was advancing and using such ... (More on P4)...(20)

## Russia, Iran, Turkey Continue Joint Work on Syria Ceasefire: Lavrov

MOSCOW - Russian Foreign Minister said that Russia, Iran and Turkey continue their cooperation on consolidating a nationwide ceasefire in Syria. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says Moscow, Tehran, and Ankara are continuing cooperation on consolidating a nationwide ceasefire in Syria, adding that the trio are working on joint mechanisms to punish those violating the truce.

Lavrov made the remarks at a news conference following a meeting of the Council of Foreign Minis-



ters of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the Kazakh capital, Astana, on Friday.

Facilitated by Russia, Iran, and Turkey, the ceasefire took effect between Syria's warring parties last De-

## Russian FM Presses US's Tillerson over Syria Probe

MOSCOW - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov voiced "regret" in a phone call with his US counterpart at Washington's opposition to a Moscow-backed plan to investigate an alleged chemical attack in Syria. In the call with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson which "took place at US initiative," Lavrov raised the probe proposal made by Russia and Iran at the global chemical arms watchdog, the OPCW, said the Russian foreign ministry. Western nations have accused the Syrian regime of carrying out the suspected April 4 air strike. But Moscow and Tehran, allies of Syrian President ... (More on P4)...(24)

## Iran, Pakistan Call for Boosting Economic, Security Ties

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif stressed the importance of the strengthening of economic cooperation between Tehran and Islamabad, saying Tehran is ready to export gas and electricity to Pakistan. Zarif made the remarks in a meeting with Speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in Tehran on Saturday. He added that Iran and Pakistan enjoy very good relations not only in the diplomatic arena but also in parliamentary, security and economic sectors, expressing the Islamic Republic's readiness to further expand such ties.

## Russia, EU to Discuss Ways to Restore Cooperation

MOSCOW - Russia hopes to have a substantive discussion of ways to restore its cooperation with the European Union (EU) during EU foreign policy chief's visit to Moscow, the Russian Foreign Ministry said Friday. EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and European Commission Vice President Federica Mogherini is scheduled to visit Moscow on Monday.

"We are ready for a full-fledged resumption and active support of channels

for cooperation with the EU in various fields," the ministry's Information and Press Department said in a commentary ahead of Mogherini's visit. Currently, EU remains Russia's key trade and economic partner, accounting for almost 45 percent of the country's foreign trade, according to the commentary.

Noting that Russia-EU relations are going through a difficult period, the ministry said cooperation still continues in a number of areas, such as regular bi-



lateral talks on countering terrorism and organized crime, as well as regional cooperation.

"We are ready to build mutually beneficial relations with the EU and its

## Pentagon Chief Says Syria Still Holds Chemical Arsenal

JERUSALEM - United States Defense Secretary James Mattis said during a visit to Israel on Friday that there is "no doubt" Syria still possesses chemical weapons. Mattis' remark was made at the beginning of a one-day round of talks with senior Israeli leaders in Jerusalem, which voiced a strong support to the U.S. airstrike on an airbase in Idlib in the wake of President Bashar Assad's forces' alleged chemical attack.

"There can be no doubt in the international community's mind that Syria

has retained chemical weapons in violation of its agreement and its statement that it had removed them all," Mattis told a press conference held jointly with Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman.

"It's a violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions, and it's going to have to be taken up diplomatically, and they'd be ill-advised to try to use any again. We've made that very clear with our strike," Mattis said.

Later, during comments at the start of a meeting with Israel's Prime Minis-



ter Benjamin Netanyahu, Mattis hailed the "long-time" alliance between Israel and the U.S. Mattis echoed Netanyahu, referring Iran-backed militant Islam and Sunni extremists led by the Islamic State

group as the major threats to the region.

"The two dangers that face Israel and all of the other nations in the region that are trying to maintain a stable and peaceful and... (More on P4)...(21)

## Pence Discusses Korean Peninsula with Australian PM

SYDNEY - U.S. Vice President Mike Pence met Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on Saturday, as U.S. aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson steamed toward the Korean Peninsula.

"The (U.S.) president wanted me to be here early in this administration to reaffirm the strong and historic alliance between the United States of America and Australia," Pence told Turnbull.

Pence thanked Turnbull for his support on the highly contentious situation on the Korean Peninsula.

"While all options are on the table, let me assure you the United States will continue to work closely with Australia, our other allies in the region and China" to bring pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Pence said. Meanwhile, the ... (More on P4)...(23)

## Chinese FM Urges SCO Members to Boost Political, Security, Economic Cooperation

ASTANA - Facing new opportunities and challenges, the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) should promote all-round cooperation in areas of politics, security, economy and people-to-people exchanges, said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi here on Friday.

Cooperation is vital for the SCO to remain a strong and reliable supporter for the stability and development of its member states, said Wang at an SCO foreign ministers meeting held in the capital city of Kazakhstan.

This year marks the 15th anniversary of the signing of the SCO charter, which represents the Shanghai Spirit of equal treatment, win-win cooperation and open and inclusive attitudes, creating a brand new model for international relations, said Wang.

The SCO is an inter-governmental organization founded in Shanghai in 2001. It groups China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Since its establishment, the SCO has maintained a robust momentum of development and strongly protected the security and development interests of its member states, demonstrating its unique strategic value, said the top Chinese diplomat.

In June 2016, India and Pakistan signed the SCO's Memorandum of Obligations, kick-starting the process of their accession to the group. The two South Asian countries were expected to get full membership at a SCO Summit in Astana later this year. (Xinhua)

## Nieghbor News

### Pakistan PM Underlines Muslim Unity in Fight Against Terrorism

ISLAMABAD - Speaker of National Assembly of Pakistan Sardar Ayaz Sadiq called for taking steps aimed at Muslim unity, and said confrontation with terrorism should be seriously dealt with.

Pakistan PM underlines Muslim unity in fight against terrorism. He made the remarks here on Saturday after holding press conference with Parliament Speaker Ali Larjani.

Sadiq said that today's meeting with Majlis speaker had special importance for us and 'we discussed expansion of bilateral ties and mutual cooperation between the two parliaments'.

A number of complaints were proposed, which were not in direction of weakening relations, but to strengthening them, because 'we are like a family and we move in direction of family benefit and nev-

er allow small differences turn to big problem', Sadiq said.

In today's meeting, 'we discussed issues concerning fight against terrorism' as well as talking about reciprocal interests of both countries in the fields of trade, economy and transportation.

'We also discussed issue concerning Iran's membership in China-Pakistan Corridor,' Sadiq said.

He reiterated that two sides also talked about strengthening parliamentary relations and it is due to holding regular meetings by the two countries' security officials and the expansion of relations between the two countries' armed forces.

Sadiq reminded that the two sides also underlined that the two countries go beyond talks and in direction of national interests to execute negotiations. (IRNA)

### U.S. Not Living up to Nuke Deal: Zarif

TEHRAN - The United States has so far failed to comply with the Iranian nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) internationally, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Friday.

"We'll see if the United States is prepared to live up to letter of the JCPOA, let alone its spirit. So far, it has defied both," Zarif tweeted.

Zarif's comments came as a reaction to the U.S. President Donald Trump's remarks on Thursday who accused Iran of "not living up to the spirit" of the nuclear deal. "They (Iranians) are doing a tremendous disservice to an agreement that was signed. It

was a terrible agreement. It shouldn't have been signed," said Trump at a joint press conference with visiting Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni.

Iran has reiterated that the U.S. "hostile" policies, after the nuclear deal, towards Iran have cautioned major international investors and banks to cooperate with the Islamic republic, and Iran has not enjoyed the benefits of the deal. During his campaign, Trump repeatedly criticized the Iran nuclear deal, calling it "the worst deal ever negotiated." He also suggested that he would force Iran to return to the negotiation table or risk the accord being dismantled. (Xinhua)

### Chinese FM Urges China, Uzbekistan to Boost SCO Cooperation, Strategic Partnership

ASTANA - Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi proposed Friday that China and Uzbekistan step up cooperation by focusing on the Belt and Road Initiative and deepening communication and coordination within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) so as to open up a new chapter for their comprehensive strategic partnership.

Wang made the remarks while meeting his Uzbek counterpart, Abdulaziz Kamilov, on the sidelines of an SCO foreign ministers meeting.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of China-Uzbek-

istan diplomatic relations, said Wang, adding that China welcomes Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Beijing for the upcoming Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation next month, and for a state visit to China.

He said that President Mirziyoyev has actively pushed for domestic reforms, achieved steady economic progress, and consolidated the comprehensive strategic partnership with China.

For his part, Kamilov said Mirziyoyev's attendance at the Belt and Road forum and his China visit ... (More on P4)...(25)

### Turkmenistan, EU Discussing Prospects of Co-Op

ASHGABAT - Ashgabat hosted a seminar on issues of Turkmenistan's relations with the European Union, the Turkmen Foreign Ministry said in a message Apr. 22.

The seminar was organized with the participation of EU Special Representative for Central Asia Peter Burian. The seminar was focused on the priorities of foreign policy and development in Turkmenistan and the EU's participation in the following areas: political, security and economic issues. Such topics as the development of private

sector, establishment of Ombudsman Institute, issues of education, sustainable development of agriculture and others were discussed during the seminar. "The results of the seminar will be summarized in order to prepare conclusions and recommendations for strengthening bilateral and regional cooperation and will serve as material for the current mid-term review of EU assistance for development in the region and for the review of the EU Strategy for Central Asia," says the message. (Trend)