

Trump Calls for Firm Response to North Korea, Targets Seoul on Trade

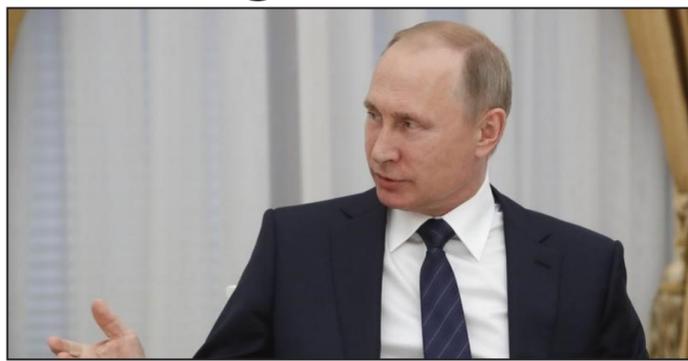
WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump called for a determined response to North Korea after talks with South Korea's President Moon Jae-in on Friday where he stressed the importance of their alliance but took aim at Seoul over trade and sharing the cost of defense. Trump said the United States was renegotiating what he characterized as a "rough" trade deal with South Korea agreed to five years ago by his predecessor, Barack Obama, and reiterated that an era of "strategic patience" over North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs had ended.



"Together we are facing the threat of the reckless and brutal regime in North Korea," Trump said as he stood alongside Moon in the White House Rose Garden. "The nuclear and ballistic missile programs of that regime require a determined response." Despite the tough rhetoric, it remains unclear how Trump will find a way forward on North Korea, which is working to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the United States. U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has warned the consequences of any military solution would be "tragic on an unbelievable scale." (Reuters)

Putin Discusses Qatar Dispute with Bahrain King: Kremlin

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the dispute between Qatar and several other Arab states with Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa in a telephone call, the Kremlin said on Saturday. Putin stressed the need for direct dialogue between all governments involved in the dispute, which is exerting a negative influence on the Middle East, the Kremlin said. Last month Saudi Ara-



bia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt severed diplomatic and travel links with Qatar, accusing it also of courting regional foe Iran. Qatar denies the accusations. (Reuters)

U.N. Boss Strikes Upbeat Note as Cyprus Talks Continue

GENEVA - A "clear understanding" has been reached at talks between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders and their backers on what is needed to reach a comprehensive agreement to reunite the island, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Saturday. Guterres, who arrived on Friday on the third day of negotiations in the Swiss resort of Crans-Montana, has lent his weight to the effort to unite Cyprus under a federal umbrella. He gave no details, but said in a statement that he had held a "positive, results-oriented" meeting with Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci, as well as Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu that evening. "A clear understanding emerged of the essential elements of a package that might lead to a comprehensive settlement in Cyprus," Guterres' spokesman said in a statement issued on Saturday as political-level talks continued after Guterres left. (Reuters)

Thousands in London Protest Against Austerity, PM

LONDON - Thousands of people marched through London on Saturday to protest at austerity and demand Prime Minister Theresa May's government resign after its disastrous showing in last month's election. Demonstrators converged in front of the BBC headquarters in central London to demand an end to belt-tightening that has led to cuts in spending for public services. Signs read "No More Austerity", "Cuts Cost Lives" and "Tories Out." After holding a minute's silence in honour of the

victims of a deadly fire in London, which killed at least 80 people, and staging a round of applause for the emergency services, protesters headed towards Parliament Square. Main opposition Labour party leader Jeremy Corbyn was expected to address the rally. The union-backed march was organised a day after the June 14 Grenfell Tower inferno in west London. An investigation into the fire is underway, but critics blame lax standards and cost-cutting, which they say is a consequence of austerity. (AFP)

UN Refugee Chief Says Italy Needs Support Helping Migrants

GENEVA - Italy needs more international support to cope with a wave of migrants that has flooded its shores since the start of the year, UN refugee chief Filippo Grandi said on Saturday. "What is happening in front of our eyes in Italy is an unfolding tragedy," Grandi said in a statement. "In the course of last weekend, 12,600 migrants and refugees arrived on its shores, and an estimated 2,030 have lost their lives in the Mediterranean since the beginning of the year."

He added: "Italy is playing its part in receiving those rescued and providing asylum to those in need of protection. These efforts must be continued and strengthened. But this cannot be an Italian problem alone." Separately, a source in Paris said the interior ministers of France, Germany and Italy will meet in the French capital on Sunday to discuss a "coordinated approach" to help Italy. Faced with rising numbers of migrants risking the perilous sea crossing to reach Europe, Italy last



week threatened to close its doors to people arriving on boats with foreign flags. Europe had to get fully involved through an "urgent distribution system" of migrants and should widen legal channels so that migrants can be admitted, Grandi added. He also called for greater international efforts to tackle the causes of the migration, protect people and fight trafficking. (AFP)

Erdogan, Trump Discuss Gulf-Qatar Dispute over Phone

ANKARA - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump held on Friday a phone conversation over the resolution of the dispute between Qatar and other Gulf countries. The two leaders agreed that the ongoing tension should be reduced for the sake of the region's security and stability, state-run Anadolu Agency reported, citing Turkish presidency's press office. Erdogan and Trump also discussed bilateral ties, and agreed to strengthen cooperation in the fight against terrorism. Trump emphasized the importance for all allies and partners to increase efforts to fight terrorism and extremism in all its forms, the White House said in a written statement on Friday. (Xinhua)

New WHO Director from Ethiopia Begins Work

GENEVA - The new director general of the World Health Organisation, Tedros Adhanom, took over managing the UN health agency on Saturday, the WHO said. A specialist in malaria, Tedros served as health minister and later as foreign minister for Ethiopia. The 52-year-old is the first African to head the global health organisation and he takes over from Margaret Chan of China, who led the WHO for nearly 10 years. Tedros was elected to the post in May in what was the first time the WHO director-general was chosen by the World Health Assembly from among multiple candidates. Previously a single nominee had been chosen by the executive board. The Geneva-based WHO, with some 8,000 employees worldwide, is responsible for coordinating global action to disease outbreaks and epidemics, such as Ebola, and to set the norms for health systems in all countries. (AFP)

NATO Member Turkey, Russia Agree on Strengthening Air Defense

ANKARA - Moscow and Ankara have reportedly agreed upon a deal for the supply of S-400 long-range surface-to-air missile systems to Turkey, which experts say should not alarm NATO. No other NATO country has bought the advanced air defense systems before, believed to be incompatible with the alliance's systems. The deal was confirmed on Thursday by Russia's presidential advisor Vladimir Kozhin. "The contract has been agreed and everything is understandable there but the issue of a



loan, funds, has not been settled yet," he said, quoted by the Russian press. Recently, top Turkish authorities have voiced an official interest in purchasing advanced S-400 air and missile defense systems from Russia. Turkey's ef-

Iraqi Forces Recapture Bridge Amid Advance to Clear Western Mosul from IS Militants

MOSUL, Iraq - Iraqi government forces on Saturday recaptured a bridge across the Tigris River from Islamic State (IS) militants in the old city in the western side of Mosul, a security source told Xinhua. "The federal police carried out a push at dawn in the southern part of the old city and managed to seize the foot of a strategic bridge across Tigris, locally known as Old Bridge," a federal police colonel said on condition of anonymity. All of Mosul's five bridges, spanning the Tigris River to the city's eastern bank, were destroyed by airstrikes last year. The troops also seized the commercial area of Arbiaa Market in the southern part of the old city, as heavy house-to-house clashes with assault rifles, machine guns, sniper rifles and hand grenades were underway against the extremist militants in the densely-populated old city, the officer said. "The federal police recaptured the mosques of Ka'ab bin Malik and Omariyah as well as the surrounding residential areas, killing dozens of IS terrorists, including three snipers, and defusing more than 50 roadside bombs," the officer told Xinhua. Also in the day, the federal police and the interior ministry's Rapid Response special forces freed the northern part of al-Shifaa neighborhood, the last neighborhood which remained outside the major IS redoubt of the old city center, after heavy clashes with the extremist militants, Abdul-Amir Yarallah from the Joint Operations Command (JOC) said in a statement. (Xinhua)

Nearly 500,000 Syrian Refugees Return Home in 2017: UN

UNITED NATIONS - The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) said that more than 440,000 internally displaced people and over 31,000 Syrian refugees overseas have returned to their homes in Syria so far in 2017, UN Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told a daily briefing here on Friday. UNHCR noted that due to the notable trend of spontaneous returns of refugees to and within Syria, it has started scaling up its operational capacity inside the country, said Dujarric. Since 2015, some 260,000 refugees have spontaneously returned to Syria, primarily from Turkey into northern Syria, ac-

ording to UNHCR. The Syrian war, now into its seventh year, has taken a toll on the country's population with hundreds of thousands being killed, around 6.3 million being displaced within the country, and 5.1 million being forced to flee as refugees outside its borders. Over the past months, the situation is particularly dire in Raqqa, where an offensive was launched to take the city from the Islamic State. About 25,000 have reportedly fled the city since military operations started, however as many as 100,000 civilians could still be trapped there. (Xinhua)

Nieghbor News

Russia, China, U.S. Could Pool Efforts to Tackle Global Problems: FM

MOSCOW - Russia, China and the United States are able to come to terms on cooperation in addressing international problems, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Friday. The three countries should work together instead of making alliances and competing with one another, Lavrov said at the Primakov Readings International Forum. "It is impossible to say that the model in which the United States and China unite against Russia, or Russia and China unite against the United States will be productive," he said. "But I believe it is quite realistic for our three countries to understand, taking into account their influence on world affairs and the world economy, how they can help solve

international problems," he added. Lavrov also expressed hope that Russia and the United States could "clarify" their bilateral relations during a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his U.S. counterpart, Donald Trump, at the G20 summit to be held next week in the German city of Hamburg. "We expect that the meeting between our presidents in Hamburg, which was announced, will bring clarity to the issue of the prospects of Russian-U.S. cooperation," he said. The Primakov Readings International Forum, which started in 2015 in memory of late former Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, kicked off Thursday and is due to conclude later Friday. (Xinhua)

Pakistan PM Hails Pak-China Strategic Ties

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has expressed satisfaction over the status of all-weather strategic partnership with China, the launch of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and Pakistan's membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Speaking at the foreign ministry, the prime minister appreciated China's role for improving Pak-Afghan relations, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement on Friday. Sharif visited the ministry the day to undertake a comprehensive review of Pakistan's foreign policy priorities in the wake of the recent developments in and around Pakistan and the emerging global and regional scenarios.

"The Prime Minister appreciated China's role for improving Pak-Afghan relations and also recalled his recent meeting with President Ashraf Ghani on the sidelines of SCO Summit and their agreement to evolve a bilateral and quadrilateral mechanism for controlling cross-border terrorism," the statement said. He directed the ministry to prepare initiatives on Afghanistan and also on building economic and trade linkages to promote Pakistan's development. Sharif underscored the importance of securing peace and stability in the region through sustained dialogue and the high importance that Pakistan attached to its continued partnership with the United States. (Xinhua)

Rouhani to be Inaugurated as Iran's President on August 5

TEHRAN - Hassan Rouhani, who was reelected Iran's president back in May, is to be officially inaugurated for another four years as the country's chief executive next month. Iran's Parliament (Majlis) announced on Friday that the swearing-in ceremony for President Rouhani would be held at the Parliament on August 5, with Speaker Ali Larijani, Judiciary Chief Sadeq Amoli Larijani, and members of the Guardian Council to be among the attendees. Before the ceremony, a decree by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei would be handed to President Rou-

hani to officially assign him his duties. Rouhani, first elected Iran's president in 2013, re-ran for office in the May 2017 election, garnering 57 percent of the popular votes to defeat his main rival Ebrahim Raeisi, the current custodian of the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH). More than 55 million Iranians were eligible to vote in the election. Over 73 percent of the electorate cast their ballots. Within two weeks of his inauguration, the president will have to name his cabinet members. The assignees to the portfolios will then face a vote of confidence at the Parliament. (Presstv)

Ashgabat, Tokyo Preparing Investment Agreement

ASHGABAT - Turkmen Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov and Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Hiroshige Seko mullied preparation of a bilateral investment agreement in Tokyo, the Turkmen Foreign Ministry said in a message July 1. The sides also discussed the issues of intensifying trade and economic cooperation between Turkmenistan and Japan. The message said that during the visit to Japan, the Turkmen delegation took part in a joint meeting of the committees on economic cooperation. Also, a meeting was held with Japanese

Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida. "During the talks, the sides discussed a wide range of issues of cooperation in political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres," reads the message. Moreover, the Turkmen delegation was received by Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary of Japan Nogami Kotaro. The parties exchanged views on the bilateral cooperation in political, trade and economic spheres. In particular, the progress of construction of high-tech enterprises in Turkmenistan with participation of major Japanese companies was mullied during the meeting. (Trend)