

# New Zealand Parliamentary Leader Aims for Clearer Signals with China

WELLINGTON - The Leader of New Zealand's Parliamentary Opposition will be looking to clear the air around recent issues regarding Chinese investment during high-level talks with Chinese leaders in Beijing this month. Chinese investors had been suffering from the New Zealand government's failure to be frank, said Andrew Little. Little, leader of the Labour Party which agreed the New Zealand-China Free Trade Agreement (FTA) when it was last in power in 2008, said on Tuesday that he wanted to explain the long-running and often heated debate in New



Zealand over the foreign ownership of houses and productive land. The Labour Party policy was to restrict large sales, par-

ticularly of productive land, and it was important to have a respectful discussion with China, Little told Xinhua in an

interview. "The role of land and productive land is very important to us because a large chunk of our economy and our national

income are based on what we produce off the land," said Little. "I think the problem with the present (New Zealand)

government is that they don't front up and say to countries like China 'New Zealanders are getting very sensitive about this and this is the reason why there is this demand for some restrictions,'" he said. "If you have that discussion with the Chinese, I'm confident they will respect it and understand it." He cited the New Zealand government's decision last month to reject a Chinese bid to buy the 13,800-hectare Lochinver Station in the central North Island, which came after a series of other large farm sales were approved. (Xinhua)

## Nieghbor News

### Sixteen Investment Agreements Signed by Tajikistan

DUSHANBE - Sixteen investment projects for a total amount of 281.1 million U.S. dollars have been signed between relevant Tajik government bodies and partners for development over the first nine months of this year, according to the State Committee on Investment and State-owned Property Management (GosKom-Invest). Grants have reportedly accounted for 38.5 percent (108.2 mil-

lion US dollars) of the total amount.

Tajikistan's investment project portfolio now includes 54 projects for a total amount of 2.25 billion US dollars, with loans accounting for 43.6 percent, grants accounting for 48.1 percent, government's share accounting for 6.4 percent and share of Tajik state-run companies and others accounting for 1.9 percent, the source said. (Asia-Plus)

### Pakistan, Denmark Launch Defence Cooperation Program

ISLAMABAD - Denmark has launched a wide-ranging defense cooperation program with Pakistan, the Danish Embassy in Islamabad said on Tuesday.

The new defense program includes support to Pakistan's military and civil security forces to counter the threat from Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and improve Pakistan's border management control related to drugs, movement of militants and general smuggling.

The Embassy of Denmark said the program will also focus on strengthening the rule of law in Pakistan by improving legislative frameworks and technical capacities that support police, prosecutors and judges to maintain the rule of law, free and fair trails, provide access to justice for citizens and ensure that trust is developed between the state and its citizens. The

program was launched by the Danish Vice Chief of Defense, Lieutenant General Per Ludvigsen, who is currently visiting Pakistan for the program along with delegation members from the Royal Danish Defense College.

"The Danish-Pakistani cooperation program will also address the maritime threats to Pakistan's stability and security, which range from drug smuggling through illegal fishing to maritime pollution," the embassy said.

The cooperation program will also include skill training courses on counter-narcotics, environmental protection and search and rescue operations.

The new program is part of an overall regional program which is under planning and aims to contribute to stability in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, a statement from the Danish Embassy said. (Xinhua)

### EU, Turkey Remain Divided, Despite Shared Migrant Challenge

BRUSSELS - Never waste a crisis, the political adage goes. The European Union and Turkey may be doing so right now, failing to build a closer partnership while facing a common challenge in the Syrian refugee crisis.

Instead of bringing the two sides together, the past few weeks have mainly highlighted why the relationship has been troubled for decades. Even if the EU persuades Turkey to keep refugees from spilling into Europe — in exchange for money and political sweeteners — the deep-seated causes of the antagonism will remain.

In recent days, Cyprus has thrown water on rekindled hopes for speeding up Turkey's EU membership bid, and France and Holland stressed the need for stringent conditions before visa-free travel for Turks becomes a reality. An angered Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan responded by accusing the EU of being "not sincere" about bringing Turkey into the European fold. Meanwhile, the two sides are bickering over how much money Turkey should get for helping to keep migrants out of Europe. (AP)

### UN Chief to Travel to Palestine, Israel to help Defuse Current Tensions

UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is travelling to the Middle East on Tuesday to meet Palestinian and Israeli leaders in a bid to help defuse the current tensions in the region, a UN spokesman told reporters here. "The secretary-general has repeatedly expressed his anguish and deep concern at the escalating violence in Israel and Palestine," the spokesman said in a message emailed to the press here. "In an effort to help defuse the current tensions, he is travelling to the region today (Tuesday 20 October 2015) to meet with (Israeli) Prime Minister (Benjamin) Netanyahu and (Palestinian) President (Mahmoud) Abbas, and other senior officials." "The secretary-general is expected to meet with Israeli and Palestinian victims of the recent hostilities and terror attacks," the spokesman added.

The visit comes amidst a wave of Israeli-Palestinian violence, which has so far seen the death of at least 40 Palestinians and eight Israelis. A series of deadly clashes between Palestinians and Israelis, including Israeli security forces, has marked much of October, with incidents reported in more than 50 different locations, including in East Jerusalem. (More on P4)...(21)

### Liberal Party Wins Canadian Federal Election

OTTAWA - The Canadian Liberal Party, under the leadership of Justin Trudeau, on Monday defeated the ruling Conservative Party headed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper to win the 42th federal parliamentary election in 2015 with 184 of 338 seats. The 43-year-old Justin Trudeau, eldest son of Pierre Trudeau, Canada's 15th prime minister (1968-1984), will become Canada's 23rd prime minister when he forms his government by the end of this year.

Trudeau pledged to raise taxes on the richest Canadians and lower them for the middle class during the 11-week... (More on P4)...(22)

### Turkey Ready to Accept Six-Month Transition Period for Syria's Assad

ANKARA - Turkey is ready to accept a political transition in Syria in which President Bashar al-Assad stays in symbolic power for six months before leaving office, and is discussing the plan with Western allies, two senior government officials said on Tuesday.

NATO member Turkey has long been one of Assad's fiercest critics, insisting that no lasting peace can be achieved in Syria without his removal from power. "Work on a plan for Assad's departure is under way... (Assad) can stay for six months and we accept that because there will be a guarantee of his departure," one of the officials told Reuters, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"We have moved forward on the issue to a certain degree with the United States and our other allies. There is not an ex-



act consensus on when the six-month period would begin, but we think it won't be too long." The United States will put the proposal to Russia, one of the Turkish officials said, but it was not clear whether Moscow would entertain the idea. Three weeks ago, Russia launched air strikes in support of Assad against insurgents fighting him.

European nations have struggled to find a common posi-

tion on the role Assad should play in the solution of the Syrian crisis. France is keen to see Assad go as soon as possible, while Germany would prefer to have him involved in the transitional phase before he quits. Britain wants Assad to leave power "at some point" as part of any deal by world powers to end the four-year-old conflict, Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said on Tuesday. (Reuters)

### Russian Airstrikes Reportedly Kill 45 in Syria's Latakia

DAMASCUS - A pro-opposition monitor group said Tuesday that Russian airstrikes on rebel-held areas in the countryside of Syria's coastal city of Latakia on Monday killed 45 people and wounded dozens of others, including rebel commanders. The Russian air force targeted several areas in al-Akrad Mountain in the northern countryside of Latakia on Monday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said, adding that the dead also included civilians. The London-based Observatory, which says it depends on activists on the ground inside Syria to garner information, said the death toll could rise due to the large



number of people stuck under the rubble. The Observatory's account on the death of civilians in the recent airstrikes could not be verified independently. In a separate development, the Observatory said 16 Syrian soldiers were killed in battles in al-

Ghab Plains area in the central province of Hama. Meanwhile, state news agency SANA said on Tuesday that government forces killed 20 rebels in the northern province of Aleppo. Battles in Syria have flared... (More on P4)...(20)

### NATO Shows off its Military Muscle in 30-Nation Exercise



PINHEIRO DA CRUZ - U.S. Marines and other NATO troops have staged a mock amphibious assault on Europe's coastline as part of the alliance's biggest exercise in 13 years. The Trident Juncture training event being held through November in Portugal, Spain and Italy involves about 36,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen from more than 30 countries. It's a show of strength designed to send a message to potential foes, organizers and analysts say, that NATO possesses the power to deter potential attackers, and it hasn't forgotten about southern Europe despite pressing concerns on its eastern border. The maneuvers are testing the flagship NATO Response Force — quick-deployment units created in 2014 and due to be ready by next year. Troops stormed a section of the southern Portuguese shoreline Tuesday, using hovercraft and helicopters. (AP)

### Kiev, Insurgents Start Second Phase of Weapons Withdrawal

KIEV - The Ukrainian army and pro-independence insurgents said Tuesday that they have begun the second phase of pulling back their heavy weapons from the front line in eastern Ukraine.

"The second stage of withdrawal of tanks, artillery of less than 100 millimeters of caliber and mortars with caliber of up to 120 millimeters has begun," government military spokesman Leonid Matyukhin told a media briefing. Meanwhile, the self-styled defense ministry of the self-claimed Donetsk republic said that the pullback, which has started in the direction of Debaltsevo town in Donetsk region, was well under way.

"The withdrawal of weapons is proceeding according to plan," the self-styled defense min-



istry said in a statement. The second stage of withdrawal, which envisages weapons pulled back to a distance of at least 15 km from the contact line in Donetsk region, is due to be completed within 14 days. The first phase of the pullout, which started in the neighboring Lugansk region on Oct. 3, was completed last week. The conflicting sides have already withdrawn the artillery of over 100

mm of calibre from the boundary line in accordance with a peace plan agreed in Minsk, capital of Belarus. Almost 8,000 people have been killed and around 17,800 others wounded since the confrontation started in April 2014 in eastern Ukraine. On Sept. 1, a comprehensive cease-fire was established in the restive areas, which brought peace to the conflict-torn region. (Xinhua)

### Destructive Saudi Policies Lead to Nowhere: Iranian Diplomat

TEHRAN - Iran says Saudi Arabia's "destructive" policies "lead nowhere", and that a country bombing its southern neighbor is not in a position to talk about the Islamic Republic's role in the region.

Having understood the Islamic Republic of Iran's "constructive and stabilizing role," the international community is calling for Iran's further participation in the international arena, but Saudi Arabia is "unfortunately the only country that is still looking at the regional developments with the win-lose approach and is insist-

ing on the removal of others," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Marzieh Afkham said on Monday, adding that the unconstructive approach is doomed to failure.

Afkham made the remarks in response to recent comments by Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir, who threatened to confront Iran if the Islamic Republic does not give up what he called "continuous aggression" against the kingdom.

"It is difficult to have positive relations" with Tehran "when Saudi Arabia and its people... (More on P4)...(23)

### China's Growth Still Impressive, Services Activity Picks up: U.S. Experts

NEW YORK - The Chinese economy is slowing to a six-year low in the latest quarter, but beating market expectations and still impressive, U.S. experts have said. While the industrial sector continues to weaken, the services sector, however, has actually accelerated over the past year.

China's economy posted a 6.9-percent growth year on year in the third quarter of 2015, lower than the 7 percent in the first half of the year, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) announced on Monday.

"This is the lowest growth rate seen in China since 2009, but (and this is a big but), this

figure is also better than what was expected," said Stephen Guilfoyle, managing director at Deep Value, Monday.

Global market reaction seems muted. Moreover, the Chinese benchmark Shanghai Composite Index edged down 0.14 percent on Monday after the release of the gross domestic product (GDP) figure.

"China's GDP is growing off of a very large base, so even 6 percent growth is more than 10 percent growth five years ago," Brendan Ahern, chief investment officer of U.S. fund company KraneShares, told Xinhua on Monday. (More on P4)...(24)