



Rescuers work at the accident site of the collapsed building in Helwan, Egypt, Dec. 1, 2010. Five people died and six others were injured Wednesday after a wall of a club collapsed in a district of Egypt's Helwan governorate, witnesses said.

Club wall collapse kills five in Egypt

CAIRO, — Five people died and six others were injured Wednesday after a wall of a club collapsed in a district of Egypt's Helwan governorate,

witnesses said.

The wall in the Arab Gohom area of Helwan, south of Cairo, fell at around 6:30 p.m., according to nearby residents.

Workers were still using bulldozers to clear rock debris to search possible missing persons late Wednesday night. (Xinhua)

Mutual gains to drive China-Africa relations

By David Musyoka and Ben Ochieng

NAIROBI, — China-Africa relations are expected to grow further in the next decade fuelled by strong commitments from the both sides and Africa's need to protect infrastructure development and related gains it has achieved through friendship with China.

Kenya's government officials and foreign policy analysts told Xinhua that China has been able to build in relations with Africa and advance its development aid and loans without political conditions that dominated the EU and the U. S. economic and political dealings with the continent. "China has become the alternative partner for Africa. In the last 10 years, Africa with assistance from China has been able to do much more with less because Chinese technology is much cheaper compared to that of the West that Africa relied on before," said Leonard Kimani, the director of the economic sector at the National Economic Social Council (NESCC), the think-tank that advises the Kenyan cabinet.

Speaking as China marks the 10th anniversary of Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Kimani said overall, gains from cooperation with China especially in the areas of infrastructure and tourism is huge for Africa.

According to regional economic analysts, there was still room for more infrastructure investment in the East Africa which has been instrumental in regional integration.

They say Beijing should use the China-Africa Development

fund (CAD), which was launched after the 2006 summit, to help channel more Chinese investment into Africa to identify suitable projects in Kenya. Kimani said the decision by Chinese to concentrate on development in their relations with Africa has been a blessing for both entities. It is "visibly clear that the relations have benefited the common people in countries like Kenya," said Kimani.

He said however Africa should invest more in its trade negotiation skills, so that it is able to make the maximum benefit out of the growing relations. "Our negotiators must be able to use a lot of data, which is not the case today. Data is important because it facilitates simulation of a discussion point and this enables the negotiators to have a clear picture of how an issue may affect or benefit them," he said. "We have seen trade negotiators using this data simulation and it's time for Africa to do the same."

Chris Abong'o, an expert on diplomacy and international studies who teaches at the University of Nairobi, said the fact that China has kept its word for Africa has led to the continent having more confidence in the world's second largest economy. "The way China has handled its relations with Africa has shocked the U. S. and EU and they are now re-examining how they handled their relations with the continent," he said.

The relations with China, he said, have generally won favor among the population because

of the gains being experienced in the construction of what are seen as better quality roads and hospitals.

Dr Alfred Omenya, an adviser for the African Union on environmental and climate change issues, said he sees China-Africa relations improving further, adding that China should help Africa in negotiations on technology transfer during the climate change conference in Mexico and subsequent talks.

He said Africa should learn from the Chinese experience of investing in many climate change investment projects. "Africa should emulate China because such investments will also help to alleviate poverty in the continent."

Speaking at a forum organized by the Institute of Security Studies in Ethiopia, Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia Gu Xiaojie said China's partnership with Africa, unlike some say, is not simply resources specific approach. "China is a real partner of Africa in many respects.

It is a South-South cooperation based on win-win and mutual benefit. We are more of a friend by experiencing more or less similar situations," he said.

Regarding use of Chinese labor in Africa, the ambassador explained that the reason why this is sometimes done is because of time-bounded activities such as the construction of the African Union Convention Centers.

University don Prof. Edward Oyugi says China's has been geared to infrastructure, trade and education sectors and in direct budget support, which gives Kenya the necessary latitude to direct the received resources to where they are needed and not where the donor thinks they are needed.

"Chinese aid should continue to grow in size and scale up in favor of strategic sectors that are key for equitable economic development in Africa," Oyugi told Xinhua recently. (Xinhua)

India denies visa to former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf

NEW DELHI, — India has denied visa to former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf who sought to visit the Indian national capital to attend a conference this weekend, local media reported Thursday. The decision was taken by the Ministry of External Affairs after the Ministry of Home Affairs expressed reservations over the visit of the former Pakistani military ruler due to his recent anti-India statements, The Indian Express newspaper quoted sources as saying.

It is learnt that the government of India also did not want Indian soil to be used for any propaganda against the present government of Pakistan, the report said.

Musharraf, who is at present living in self-imposed exile in



Former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf

Britain, had recently said that India was responsible for creating unrest in Pakistan's Balochistan province and

claimed that Islamabad had "solid evidence" in this regard. (Xinhua)

S Korean military denies reports of imminent firing exercises

SEOUL, — South Korean military officials denied Thursday media reports that the military will soon resume routine live-fire exercises.

"Our position is that the drills will be resumed at an appropriate time," an official at the defense ministry in Seoul told Xinhua. He declined to further divulge. Local reports said the

military will restart shooting drills, originally slated for Nov 23-24 but suspended after Pyongyang's artillery bombardment on a South Korean border island last Tuesday, as early as Thursday afternoon. The exercises are expected to be conducted from 29 sites around the country.

Reports come after Seoul and

Washington wrapped up their latest naval drills in the Yellow Sea Wednesday, where the two Koreas traded fire near a disputed western sea border.

Pyeongyang, claiming its bombardment of the western island was for self-defense, denounced the war games for bringing the region closer to war. (Xinhua)

NATO soldier killed in Afghanistan

KABUL, — A soldier with the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was killed Thursday, bringing to two the number of the military alliance casualties over the past two days.

"An International Security Assistance Force service member died following an improvised explosive device (IED)

attack in eastern Afghanistan today," a press release of ISAF said.

The nationality of the victim had not been revealed in the press release. "It is ISAF policy to defer casualty identification procedures to the relevant national authorities."

Another ISAF soldier was killed in similar attack in

Afghanistan's restive southern region on Wednesday.

More than 660 NATO soldiers, most of them Americans, have been killed in Afghanistan since the beginning of this year.

Taliban militants have often attacked Afghan and NATO-led forces with IEDs and roadside bombs but the lethal weapons also inflict casualties on civilians. (Xinhua)

Russia supports dialogues with DPRK, Iran: Putin

MOSCOW, — Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin on Thursday reiterated Russia's support for continuing dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Iran.

Asked for his assessment of the current relationship between Pyongyang and Seoul by CNN anchor Larry King, Putin called the situation "acute and very worrying." He said Moscow would like to see the six-party talks continue.

"In principle, we should do everything to normalize the situation," Putin said.

He once again repeated that the common approach is a very important precondition for overall success "in this fairly complicated negotiating process."

"We sincerely hope that

reason will prevail, that emotions will take the back seat and that a dialogue will begin," Putin said, noting that he very much hoped "this positive work will be back on track."

Answering King's question about Russia's feelings concerning Iran's nuclear program, Putin said Moscow had no grounds for suspecting Iran of seeking to possess nuclear weapons.

He said Iran indicated its readiness for engagement in dialogue with the international community and with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

He admitted that Russia shared the IAEA's desire for exhaustive answers on the questions of concern and said that, so far, Moscow agreed with the decisions taken.

"Our position is open and Iran is aware of it," Putin said.

He said Russia was concerned about any indication of "even a theoretical possibility" for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and reiterated that Moscow would continue to cooperate with all participants in this process until the problem was resolved.

"This is in the interests not only of Israel and the other parties involved in this process but also those of Iran and the Iranian people," he said.

"I see nothing to fear here, but at the same time I am still of the opinion that Iran has the right to pursue nuclear programs under the supervision of international organizations," Putin said. (Xinhua)