

2015, 12, 31 Arab Times

Taiwan, China launch hotline: The first hotline between China and Taiwan was launched Wednesday, in a move designed to build ties between the two sides following a historic summit between their leaders.

Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou and Chinese President **Xi Jinping** agreed to set up the hotline between senior officials during a landmark meeting in Singapore in November.

The talks reflected a rapprochement between the two sides since Ma came to power in 2008, but which has stoked fears of growing Chinese influence in Taiwan.

Andrew Hsia, chairman of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), talked with China's top Taiwan affairs official Zhang Zhijun on Wednesday morning, according to a statement from his office.

"Chairman Hsia said in the phone call the hotline is an important concrete outcome from the meeting of the leaders of the two sides. He expects the two sides

can communicate more smoothly in urgent matters through the hotline," the statement said.

It described the hotline as "another important step forward" in exchanges between China and Taiwan.

Ma Xiaoguang, spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, confirmed the call had taken place, Beijing's state news agency Xinhua reported.

"We hope the two authorities will make efforts to maintain and promote peaceful

development of cross-Strait relations," Xinhua quoted Ma as saying.

November's summit was the first time leaders from the two sides had met since their traumatic 1949 split.

No agreements were announced

between the two, which still refuse to formally recognise each other's legitimacy, and Ma Ying-jeou's participation faced significant opposition at home. (AFP)

1040000 > 5 FOR