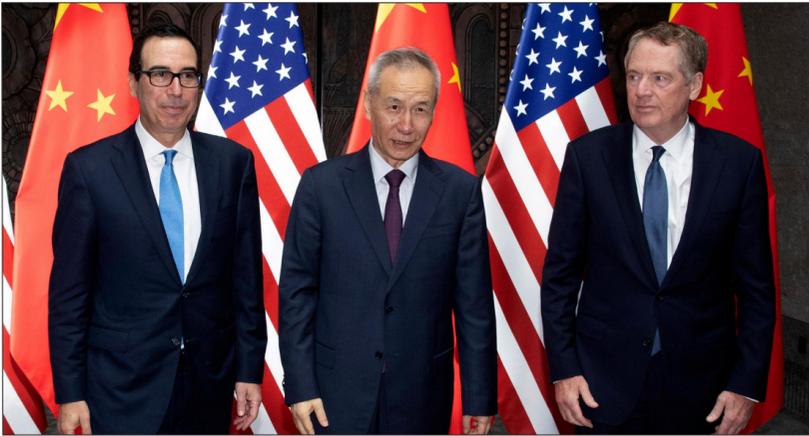


## US, China End New Round of Trade Talks; No Word on Progress

SHANGHAI — U.S. and Chinese envoys met Wednesday for talks aimed at ending a tariff war after President Donald Trump rattled financial markets by accusing Beijing of trying to stall in hopes he will fail to win re-election in 2020. The meeting ended about 40 minutes ahead of schedule. Neither delegation spoke to reporters before U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin left for the airport. Economists had said quick breakthroughs were unlikely because the two governments face the same disagreements over China's technology policy and trade surplus that caused talks to



break down in May. Trump and President Xi Jinping agreed in June to resume negotiations but neither has given any sign of offering big concessions.

The dispute over U.S. complaints that Beijing steals or pressures companies to hand over technology has battered exporters on both sides and disrupted trade in goods from soybeans to medi-

cal equipment. Trump has raised tariffs on \$250 billion worth of Chinese imports while Beijing responded by taxing \$110 billion of U.S. products. Chinese leaders are resisting U.S. pressure to roll back plans for government-led development of industry leaders in robotics, artificial intelligence and other technologies. Washington complains those efforts depend on stealing or pressuring foreign companies to hand over technology. For their part, American negotiators are reluctant to cede to Chinese demands that punitive U.S. tariffs be lifted immediately. Trump wants to keep some penalties ... (More on P4)...(13)

### China Warns Outsiders Not to 'Sow Distrust' in South China Sea

BANGKOK - China's top diplomat on Wednesday warned outside countries not to amplify disputes in the South China Sea, where recent Chinese maneuvering in the energy-rich waters has rattled regional states and drawn condemnation from the United States. Chinese Councillor Wang Yi touted progress on an eventual Code of Conduct with the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) after meeting counterparts in

the Thai capital. Tensions have risen in the South China Sea over recent incidents between Chinese and Vietnamese and Philippine ships, the latest confrontations in a potential global flashpoint where the United States challenges China's sweeping maritime claims. Wang, who is scheduled to meet U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Bangkok, reiterated after meeting ASEAN foreign ministers that ... (More on P4)...(17)

### US Wants Germany for Gulf Mission, but It's Choice between 'War Room' & 'Negotiating Table'

BERLIN - Germany is currently considering a joint maritime operation with the US and UK in the Persian Gulf. Even at the risk of angering Washington by refusing, Berlin has no appetite for conflict with Iran, analysts told RT. The US has formally asked Germany to join a mission aimed at "protecting" maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, along with Britain and France, the US Embassy in Berlin said on Tuesday. Building up a 'coalition of

the willing', Washington and London aim to combat so-called "Iranian aggression" as they slam Tehran's seizure of the British-flagged Stena Impero oil tanker. Earlier, an Iranian supertanker was captured by the British Royal Marines in Gibraltar. It was accused of transporting crude to Syria in violation of EU sanctions, although Tehran refuted the allegations and likened the case to piracy. Though the proposed operation has the support of some politicians and



shipping industry figures in Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel will likely face the wrath of opposition parties on all sides of the political spectrum if she agrees to back it. On Wednesday, Vice-Chancellor ... (More on P4)...(14)

### North Korea Fires 2 Short-Range Missiles Off Its East Coast



PYONGYANG - Two missiles have been fired from a launch point in the Hodo Peninsula, in the eastern part of North Korea, the South Korean military has said. The projectiles are believed to be short-range ballistic missiles.

The launch took place early Wednesday morning, Yonhap reported citing South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff. The JSC said that the missiles were test-fired within a span of 20 minutes at the Wonsong area. Both flew for about 250 kilometers at an altitude around 30 kilometers before plunging into the sea. While it was initially reported that the missiles might be of a new type never deployed by the North before, a JSC official later said that the projectiles appear to be

similar to those Pyongyang launched last week. The South Korean military is now studying the flight path to identify them. The authorities in Seoul have convened the National Security Council (NSC) to look into the incident. The JSC said the South Korean military maintains a "readiness posture" in case of any further launches. The reported missile tests come less than a week after Pyongyang test-fired a couple of ... (More on P4)...(15)

### Israeli Settlers Outraged as Permits for 715 Palestinian Homes Approved before Kushner Visit

JERUSALEM - Just days before Jared Kushner is due to visit, Israel has made an unusual move by approving permits for 715 homes for Palestinians in the West Bank, leading irate settlers to accuse the government of bowing to US pressure. Israel's security cabinet unanimously approved the construction permits for units in Area C of the West Bank on Tuesday, the first such move since 2016. It is unclear whether the permits are for existing structures or for new construction. Significantly Haaretz is reporting that 6,000 Jewish settlement housing unit permits in the area were also approved. Israeli settlers reacted to the news with outrage, despite getting approval for more than eight times as many units as the Palestinians. A joint statement from the Mateh Binyamin Regional Council and Samaria Regional Council accuses the Palestinian Authority of ... (More on P4)...(18)

## Neighbor News

### Polythene Bags to be Banned in Capital from Aug 14: Zartaj Gul

ISLAMABAD - Minister of State for Climate Change Zartaj Gul Wednesday said polythene bags would be banned in the federal capital from August 14 and the day would be observed as "Plastic Bags Se Azadi". She was addressing the awareness campaign ceremony "Plastic Bags Se Azadi" (Free from Plastic Bags) arranged at National Highway Authority (NHA) head office here, a press release said. She said 55 billion plastic bags were being used annually in the country that amounts to consumption of 275 bags, per person per year. (Monitoring Desk)

### US Poised to Renew Anti-Iran Nuclear Sanctions Waivers in Blow to Hawks: Report

TEHRAN - The US is reportedly expected to extend waivers from sanctions that allow the remaining signatories to a 2015 nuclear deal to continue their nuclear cooperation with Iran, in what would be a blow to ardent Iran hawks in the White House. Citing six unnamed officials, The Washington Post reported on Tuesday that US President Donald Trump had in an Oval Office meeting last week sided with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin who backed renewing the waivers that the hawks want eliminated. The US State Department last extended the sanctions waivers in May and the expected renewal will give five Iranian nuclear projects another 90 days of immunity. The sources further said Mnuchin had prevailed over the objections of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Adviser John Bolton — two staunch sponsors of economic pressure and tough action against Iran. Mnuchin "argued to Trump that if the sanctions were not again waived as required by law by August 1, the United States would have to sanction Russian, Chinese and European firms that are involved in projects inside Iran that were established as part of the 2015 nuclear deal," the officials added. The five programs include modifying the heavy water reactor in Arak, converting the Fordow enrichment facility as well as fuel exchanges at the Bushehr nuclear power plant and the Tehran research reactor, The Washington Post reported. (Press TV)

### Declaration On Economic Cooperation to be Discussed at Summit of CIS Heads of State in Turkmenistan

ASHGABAT - A draft declaration on strategic economic cooperation of the CIS will be presented for consideration during the summit of the CIS heads of state scheduled to be held on October 11 in the Turkmen capital of Ashgabat, Trend reports referring to the CIS Executive Committee. In addition, foreign ministers of the CIS countries will soon come to a preliminary agreement on a number of other documents submitted for consideration by the presidents of the CIS member states. This primarily includes a draft appeal to the peoples of the CIS countries and the global community in connection with the 75th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War, as well as documents regulating cooperation in countering corruption, combating terrorism and other violent manifestations of extremism, among other things. It is expected that an action program on intensifying the partnership between the foreign affairs institutions of the CIS member states will be adopted on the eve of the summit. In addition, issues revolving around the assurance of information security in the CIS member states, the creation of a joint (unified) communication system of the armed forces, combating illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors will be considered during the summit. (Trend)

### Iran to Definitely Scale Back More JCPOA Commitments Under Current Circumstances: Zarif

TEHRAN - Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says Iran is determined to go for the third stage of suspending its commitments under a 2015 multilateral nuclear deal if the European co-signatories keep failing to uphold their end of the bargain. Speaking on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting in Tehran on Wednesday, Zarif complained that the European parties to the Iran deal — France, Britain and Germany — have failed to abide by their commitments, both those within the framework of the agreement itself and their obligation to respond to the consequences of America's exit from the accord. He pointed to a non-dollar direct payment channel designed by the Europeans to offset the American sanctions that have returned in place against Iran, saying the financial mechanism — known as INSTEX — is still in its preliminary stage and is yet to become operational. "INSTEX should not be turned into a tool for carrying out US orders and [enable] them (Americans) to decide how this mechanism can function," Zarif said. "INSTEX is a vehicle for Europe to fulfill its commitments after America's pull-out" from the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The mechanism, he added, should guarantee that Iran would be able to sell its oil and collect the revenue. (Press TV)

### Stoltenberg Says No NATO Mission Requested in Strait of Hormuz

BRUSSELS - NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on Wednesday there had been no formal request for the military alliance to launch a mission in the Strait of Hormuz. The United States has proposed stepping up efforts to safeguard the vital oil route at a time of heightened tension between Washington and Tehran. (Reuters)

### More Than 20 Charged with Rioting Appear in Hong Kong Court

HONG KONG — Charges were read Wednesday against more than 20 Hong Kong protesters who have been accused of rioting — the most serious charge brought since mass demonstrations began in the city last month. Standing in a heavy rain, supporters rallied outside the court and chanted "Reclaim Hong Kong, revolution of our times," in what has become a familiar refrain. They are protesting China's influence in the city, a semi-autonomous Chinese territory with its own laws and legal system. Police said late Tuesday that 44 people had been charged with rioting and one other with possessing offensive weapons. The accused set up roadblocks, broke fences, damaged street signs and attacked police officers with bricks and iron rods, law enforcement said in a statement.

Only 23 appeared in court Wednesday, and all were released on bail. They have to hand over their travel documents and are not ... (More on P4)...(19)

### Britain Seeks to Unite Europeans Over Iran's Threat to Shipping in Strait of Hormuz

LONDON - Britain has invited military representatives of the US, France and other European countries to a meeting in Bahrain on Wednesday in an attempt to create an international mission to safeguard shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. Whitehall sources told The Guardian that the British proposal was to create a European-led mission to prevent future tanker seizures by Iran and was still alive despite the dismissal of Jeremy Hunt as foreign secretary in Boris Johnson's cabinet reshuffle. Earlier, the US had stepped up diplomatic pressure on Germany to send warships to



the Persian Gulf as the Western allies remained divided over how to respond to Tehran. Germany has so far been reluctant to contribute to any naval mission in the Middle East and the US embassy took the unusual step of publicly challenging Berlin to make a commitment. "Members of the Ger-

man government have been clear that freedom of navigation should be protected," the US embassy said in a statement. "Our question is, protected by whom?" The US statement said that both the UK and France had committed to sending warships to "secure the Strait of ... (More on P4)...(16)

### Lebanon's PM Launches National Campaign to Support Industry

BEIRUT - Prime Minister Saad Hariri launched Wednesday a national campaign to support the industry sector in Lebanon, the National News Agency reported. "This campaign aims at encouraging Lebanese consumers to purchase local products instead of buying imported items which will boost and strengthen the local industrial sector," Hariri said. The prime minister said that local fac-

ories can increase their businesses by focusing on industries with high added value and competitive advantage in the local and foreign markets such as jewelries, fashion items, furniture, food and medical products, and art crafts. Hariri said that the government can create 50,000 new job opportunities in the next five years if it implements the needed reforms. (Xinhua)