

Pakistan to Downgrade Diplomatic Ties, Suspend Bilateral Trade with India: National Security Committee

ISLAMABAD - The National Security Committee (NSC) on Wednesday took several major decisions in view of the recent developments regarding occupied Kashmir, resolving to downgrade Pakistan's diplomatic relations and suspend all bilateral trade with India. The top security body's meeting presided over by Prime Minister Imran Khan was held to review the situation in the wake of India's shock decision to scrap the special status for occupied Kashmir. The meeting also decided to review the Pakistan-India bilateral arrangements, take the matter to the United Nations and observe the upcoming Independence Day on August 14 in solidarity with Kashmiris.



"PM directed that all diplomatic channels be activated to expose brutal Indian racist regime, design and human rights violations," a statement issued after

the meeting said. The meeting attended by the top civilian and military leadership also decided to recall Pakistan's ambassador from New Delhi and expel the Indian envoy. (Agencies)

Turkey Says Drill Ships Continue Work in Eastern Mediterranean, Another En Route

ABOARD THE YAVUZ DRILL SHIP, Eastern Mediterranean - Two Turkish drill ships are continuing operations in the eastern Mediterranean and another ship will join them this month, Energy Minister Fatih Donmez said, as a dispute over natural resources there fuels tensions between Turkey and Cyprus. EU member Cyprus and Turkey have argued for years regarding the ownership of fossil fuels in the eastern Mediterranean, where Ankara

says Turkish Cypriots are entitled to a share of the resources. Turkey rejects agreements the internationally recognized Cypriot government has reached with other Mediterranean states on maritime economic zones. Turkey has sent two drilling ships, Fatih and Yavuz, as well as an exploration vessel, to operate in waters off the divided island of Cyprus, prompting accusations from Greece that ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

US Carrier Drills in Disputed South China Sea as Beijing Closes Waters for Own Exercises

WASHINGTON - USS Ronald Reagan has conducted demonstrative flight operations training to promote 'peace through strength' in the South China Sea, next to disputed strategic atolls where China has been holding its own military drills. To showcase the strike group's capabilities, the US Navy has airlifted a small group of Philippine officers to the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier on Tuesday. The military brass of the island nation, which has

been reluctant to side with US in any open confrontation with China, were treated to maneuvers by the Reagan's air wing, comprised of about 70 F/A-18 jets, spy planes and helicopters. The provocative 'freedom of navigation' stunt in the area Beijing repeatedly warned Washington to stay clear of took place just as China launched its own two-day military exercises near the disputed Paracel Islands. China's Maritime Safety Admin-



istration issued multiple warnings about closed waters, but shared no additional details of the planned drills. China has repeatedly claimed sovereignty over certain islets and reefs and adjacent waters, and has taken steps to protect its claims by ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

Macron Did Not Invite Iran's Rouhani to G7 Summit: Diplomat



PARIS - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has not been invited to this month's G7 summit, a French diplomat said

on Wednesday, denying a media report published as European leaders seek a way to defuse a brewing confrontation

between Tehran and Washington. The official was responding to a report by Al-Monitor that French President Emmanuel Macron had invited Rouhani to the summit in Biarritz to meet U.S. President Donald Trump.

Rouhani rejected the proposal, according to the report. For months, France, Britain and Germany

Tunisian Defense Minister Zbidi Submits Bid to Run for President

TUNIS - Tunisian Defense Minister Abdelkarim Zbidi submitted his candidacy for a presidential election on Sept. 15 as an independent on Wednesday and said he would resign from government. Zbidi, 69, who has the support of secular parties including Nidaa Tounes and Afek Tounes, is likely to emerge as one of the frontrunners in the election, which was called early after the death of president Beji Caid Essebsi last month.

Zbidi, a technocrat and medical doctor by training, is considered by many to be above the party politics and infighting that has held back badly-needed economic reforms in Tunisia in recent years. He looks set to be the most serious rival to Prime Minister Youssef Chahed, who will run as a candidate for the liberal Tahya Tounes Party. On Tuesday, Tunisia's biggest political party Ennahda nominated its ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

Irish Minister Predicts Britain Will Crash Out of EU in October

DUBLIN - Britain will leave the European Union in October without a divorce deal, an Irish government minister predicted, causing a severe economic shock that could require pan-EU financial support for countries including Ireland. The remarks, among the most frank yet from an Irish minister, underscore the growing sense of alarm about a hard Brexit in Ireland, Britain's closest EU neighbour and one with whom it has important trading and historical ties. "Some people in the UK have convinced themselves that no deal is a good thing and that there are no circumstances that the European Union would allow the UK to crash out," Michael D'Arcy, the minister in charge of financial services, told Reuters. "The European Union has...moved the (Brexit) date on a number of occasions. I don't see any more flexibility. The deal will be done after the 31st of October," he said, referring to a deal for Britain's departure ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

North Korea's Kim Says Missile Launches Are Warning to U.S., South Korea Over Drill: KCNA

SEOUL - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his country's latest launch of tactical guided missiles was a warning to the United States and South Korea over their joint military drills that began this week, state media KCNA reported on Wednesday. Tuesday's missile launch, the North's fourth in less than two weeks, came amid stalled denuclearization talks with Washington and U.S.-South Korea military exercises, although Washington and Seoul played down the tests. Kim said the latest missile test was "an occasion to send an ad-



equate warning to the joint military drill now underway by the U.S. and South Korean authorities", according to KCNA. The "new-type tactical guided missiles", launched from the western area of North Korea, flew across the peninsula over the capital and the central inland region to "precisely hit the targeted islet" in the sea off the North's east coast, KCNA said. Its report confirmed the South Korean military's analysis of their trajectories on Tuesday. The launches "clearly verified the reliability, ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

Chinese, Egyptian Experts Discuss Revival of Confucianism

CAIRO - Chinese and Egyptian experts stressed the importance of reviving the principles of the Chinese philosopher Confucius and its role in reforming the Chinese cultural identity during a lecture held in Cairo on Tuesday night. The lecture was held at Egypt's Supreme Council of Culture in cooperation with the Chinese Cultural Center in Cairo with the presence of two Chinese researchers. Shi Yuelwen, the Chinese cultural counselor to Egypt and head of the Chinese Cultural Center, confirmed that Confucianism still impacts the Chinese and Asian people and some of the world citizens. "Confucianism calls for rapprochement among mankind, spreading peace, renouncing war, promoting cooperation and coordination for building an international community," said Shi. We still need to follow those principles that would help us in enhancing development and achieving international peace, the Chinese envoy said. Meanwhile, Chen Na, researcher of Fudan Development Institute at Fudan University in China, believes that principles of Confucius are still an essential part of the Chinese culture in general. He pointed out that the term "harmony" is considered the most prominent definition of Confucianism, which refers to the harmony among the people as well as between human and nature. "According ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

Opening Ceremony of 'Masters of Artillery Fire' Contest Held in Kazakhstan

NUR-SULTAN - A solemn opening ceremony of the "Masters of Artillery Fire" contest was held as part of the International Army Games-2019 in Kazakhstan on August 7, Trend reports referring to Defense Ministry of Azerbaijan. During the ceremony, a concert was arranged for the members of the teams competing in the contest, and representatives of delegations and officials from the participating countries. (Trend)

NATO Needs to Address China's Rise, Says Stoltenberg

SYDNEY - NATO needs to understand the implications of China's rise as Beijing expands its power around the world, including areas that may challenge members of the North Atlantic security body, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said on Wednesday. China's increasing assertiveness, including in the South China Sea, has raised concerns about its intentions, and the United States has called on NATO to recognize and adapt to new

emerging threats, including China. "This is not about moving NATO into the Pacific, but this is about responding to the fact that China is coming closer to us," Stoltenberg told Reuters in an interview in Sydney. "Investing heavily in critical infrastructure in Europe, increased presence in the Arctic and also increased presence in Africa, and in cyberspace," he added. "So all of this makes it important for NATO to ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

Neighbor News

Iran Calls on India, Pakistan to Use Peaceful Means to Settle Kashmir Dispute

TEHRAN - Iran expects India and Pakistan, as two of its regional partners, to use a peaceful approach and dialogue to settle the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday. Iran's Foreign Ministry reacted to the current developments concerning the disputed Jammu and Kashmir regions, saying in a statement on Wednesday that "the Islamic Republic of Iran is closely following the recent decision by the Indian government regarding Jammu and Kashmir, and will take into careful consideration the explanations presented by both Indian and Pakistani officials about the recent developments." The Spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Abbas Mousavi, went

on to add "the Islamic Republic of Iran expects India and Pakistan, as its friends and regional partners, to take effective steps in line with the interests of the people of the region by using dialogue and adopting peaceful means." On August 5, India, through a presidential decree, revoked the special autonomy status of disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir to fully integrate its only Muslim-majority state with the rest of the country. The move has erupted protests all over Pakistan, while the Indian controlled Kashmir region is under lockdown. Pakistan and India both have a claim over Kashmir in its entirety and had three wars over the disputed territory. (MNA)

Turkmenistan Holds Discussions with Representatives of UNHCR

ASHGABAT - A meeting with representatives of the regional representative office of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for Central Asia was held at the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan, Trend reports referring to the representative office. The parties expressed confidence in expanding the partnership between Turkmenistan and UNHCR. "As a full member of the global community, Turkmenistan adheres to generally accepted norms of international law and as a neutral

state puts forward peace-loving and humanistic initiatives, supporting international principles for the development of friendly and good-neighborly relations," the information reads. It is also emphasized that as a permanent member of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR, Turkmenistan pursues its state policy in accordance with its obligations under the conventions. As stated, the UNHCR expressed gratitude to Turkmenistan for the work done to reduce the number of stateless persons. (Trend)

Turkish President Discusses Future Co-Op with Uzbek FM

TASHKENT - Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Trend reports citing the Foreign Ministry of Uzbekistan. Kamilov arrived in Ankara at the head of the delegation of Uzbekistan to participate in the first meeting of the bilateral Joint Strategy Planning Group, co-chaired by the foreign ministers of the two countries and the XI Annual Ambassadors' Conference of Turkey. The minister conveyed the warm greetings and best wishes of the head of Uzbekistan to the President of Turkey. In turn, Erdogan praised the state and prospects of bilateral strategic partnership between

Uzbekistan and Turkey, emphasized the key role of the initiatives of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev in the process of bringing relations between our countries and peoples to a new level. During the conversation, an exchange of views took place on the progress in the practical implementation of the agreements reached within the high-level contacts based on the results of the meetings of the Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation and the Joint Strategy Planning Group. Moreover, other aspects of the bilateral agenda were considered, including the schedule of key joint events. (Trend)

Iran to Resume Building Its Longest Cross-Sea Bridge

TEHRAN - Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mohammad Eslami says Iran plans to resume the construction of its longest cross-sea bridge, linking the Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf to Bandar Abbas. "Negotiations have been held with the investor of the Persian Gulf Bridge to see the construction resume," Eslami told reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony on the Qeshm Island to unveil a homebuilt catamaran. The minister said the construction of a bridge has been halted for various reasons,

most notably due to "environmental considerations". Eslami described the Persian Gulf Bridge as the "symbol of advanced engineering", saying it will contribute to the region's economic boom, providing easy access to the Qeshm Free Zone and a transit corridor. The transit corridor stretches all the way to the Caspian Sea and the Central Asia. The Persian Gulf Bridge is made up of 2.4 kilometers of bridge and a two-lane causeway as well as a railroad section. (Press TV)