

China's Xi Gets Tougher on Trump after New Tariff Threat

BEIJING — Facing another U.S. tariff hike, Chinese President Xi Jinping is getting tougher with Washington instead of backing down. Beijing fired what economists called a “warning shot” at Washington by letting its yuan currency weaken in response to President Donald Trump's latest threat of more punitive import duties on Sept. 1. Chinese buyers canceled multibillion-dollar purchases of U.S. soybeans. Regulators are threatening to place American companies on an “unreliable entities” list that might face curbs on their operations. Both sides have incentives to settle a trade war that is battering exporters on either side of the Pacific and threatening



to tip the global economy into recession. But Xi's government is lashing out and might be, in a revival of traditional Chinese strategy, settling in for prolonged wrangling in response to what it deems American bullying and attempts to handicap Chi-

na's economic development. Negotiators are to meet in September in Washington, but China's political calendar makes progress unlikely. The ruling Communist Party is preparing to celebrate its 70th anniversary in power on Oct.

1 — a nationalism-drenched milestone that puts pressure on Xi, the party leader, to look tough.

“The downside risk of no deal has increased,” said Raoul Leering, chief trade analyst for Dutch bank ING. Six months ago, Chinese negotiators were discussing possible concessions including more purchases of American farm goods, market opening and changes in business rules. But by May, Chinese leaders had turned skittish in the face of what they saw as constantly shifting American priorities on a list of demands that range from narrowing their trade surplus to opening markets to possibly scrapping their economic development strategy. (AP)

In New Migrant Standoff, Italy's Salvini Blocks Two Ngo Boats

ROME - Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini said on Tuesday he was working to prevent two rescue ships operated by French and Spanish charities from bringing more than 500 migrants to Italy in the latest Mediterranean stand-off. The Ocean Viking, which is run by French non-governmental groups (NGOs) Doctors Without Borders and SOS Mediterranean, has picked up some 356 migrants off the coast of Libya since Friday, while Spanish boat Open

Arms has saved some 160 people. Both vessels are in the central Mediterranean, within easy sailing distance of the Italian island of Lampedusa and are seeking a safe port to disembark the mainly African migrants. But Salvini, the leader of the far-right League who has seen his popularity in Italy soar since he took office last year and launched a fierce anti-immigration crackdown, said on Tuesday the boats were not Rome's problem. (Reuters)

BRUSSELS — The United Nations refugee agency urgently appealed to European governments Tuesday to let two migrant rescue ships disembark more than 500 passengers who remain stranded at sea as countries bicker over who should take responsibility for them. The people rescued while attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea from North Africa are on ships chartered by humanitarian aid groups, which the Italian government has banned from its territory. The archipelago nation of

Malta has refused to let the ships into the country's ports. It's unclear where they might find safe harbor, even though the Italian island of Lampedusa appears closest. About 150 of the rescued passengers have been on the Spanish-flagged charity ship, the Open Arms, since they were plucked from the Mediterranean 13 days ago. “This is a race against time,” Vincent Cochetel, UNHCR special envoy for the Central Mediterranean, said in a statement.



“Storms are coming, and conditions are only going to get worse.” While the number of migrants reaching Europe by sea has dropped substantially so far this year, UNHCR says nearly 600 people have died or gone missing in waters between Libya, Italy and Malta in 2019. (AP)

UN Urges Reluctant EU Nations to Help Stranded Migrants

Neighbor News

Dollar Rate in Uzbekistan Exceeds 8,800 Soums for First Time

TASHKENT - The Central Bank of Uzbekistan has published new foreign exchange rates, which are effective since August 13, 2019, Trend reports with reference to the Central Bank. The US dollar rose by 177.13 soums to 8,882 soums, thus exceeding the rate of 8,800 soums for the first time since the beginning of currency liberalization in September 2017.

The euro increased by 259.8 soums and amounted to 9,928.3 soums. At the same time, the ruble has increased by 2.53 soums and costs 136.38 soums. Currency rates are set by the Central Bank on a weekly basis for accounting, statistical and other reporting on foreign exchange transactions, as well as the calculation of customs and other obligatory payments. (Trend)

Rouhani Calls for Enhanced Ties with Azerbaijan

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani has stressed the need for the promotion of bilateral relations between Iran and its northern neighbor Azerbaijan in all areas. Rouhani made the remarks in a phone conversation with his Azeri counterpart Ilham Aliyev on Tuesday. During the conversation, the Iranian president extended congratulations to the Azeri government and nation on the occasion of Eid al-Adha (the Feast of Sacrifice), which marks the culmination of the annual Hajj pilgrimage. He described Azerbaijan as a “friendly and

brotherly” country to Iran, voicing confidence that the amicable ties would further deepen. The Iranian chief executive highlighted the importance of exchanging visits by officials of the two countries in efforts to expand mutual cooperation. He also expressed hope for the speedy implementation of the agreement already signed between the two countries. Aliyev, for his part, said Tehran-Baku ties were growing thanks to the efforts made by the two sides, expressing certitude that the trend would continue. (Press TV)

Kyrgyz Ex-President Arrested, Accused of Coup Plan: State Media



BISHKEK - The head of Kyrgyzstan's security forces on Tuesday accused ex-president Almazbek Atambayev

on Tuesday of planning to stage a coup, state news agency Kabar said, following a deadly clash last week with police sent

to his house to arrest him. Atambayev surrendered on Thursday when police raided his home and detained him for questioning over a corruption case, laying bare a power struggle with his successor Sooronbai Jeenbekov that has pushed the Central Asian nation to the brink of political crisis. Atambayev's supporters had repulsed a similar raid the previous day in which a deputy commander of a special forces unit was killed. In an indictment related to the botched raid,

prosecutors on Tuesday charged him with murder, hostage-taking and causing mass unrest, Kabar said. Atambayev has dismissed criminal investigations against him as politically motivated and illegal. National security chief Orobek Opumbayev on Tuesday accused the former president of seeking bloodshed. “Then, blaming it on the authorities, he would have been able to stage a coup,” Kabar quoted Opumbayev as saying. (Reuters)

Ukraine's President Offers Citizenship to Russian Political Refugees

KIEV - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy signed a decree on Tuesday offering citizenship to Russians suffering political persecution, and also to foreigners who fought on Kiev's side in the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Zelenskiy had announced such a move last month in response to a Russian decree expanding the number of Ukrainians who can apply for fast-track Russian passports. Separately Ukraine's

state security service declared a Russian consular officer in the western city of Lviv as persona non grata, accusing him of spying. The officer had already left the country, a statement said. Relations between Kiev and Moscow plunged after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its support for fighters in the eastern Donbass region in a conflict that has killed 13,000 people despite a notional ceasefire. (Reuters)

Industrial Sector Can Play Effective Role to Mitigate Climate Calamities

ISLAMABAD - Welcoming Prime Minister Imran Khan's ‘Clean and Green Pakistan’ initiative, Chairman Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (FIEDMC) Mian Kashif Ashfaq Tuesday termed it a step in the right direction that would prove to be a big success to mitigate environmental challenge through plantation to make Pakistan safe from climate calamities. Talking to a delegation

of 7th semester of ‘Advance Reporting’ students of the Institute of Communication Studies (ICS) Punjab University said FIEDMC is fully poised to take all concrete and result-oriented steps to spread awareness in order to protect the environment besides making the sustainable utilization of our resources for the further successive generations as excessive pollution shortens life expectancy by 11 years on average. (Monitoring Desk)

Turkmenistan, Iran Discuss Prospects of Business Partnership

ASHGABAT - President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov held a meeting with First Vice-President of Iran Eshaq Jahangiri in the Turkmen city of Awaza, Trend reports referring to a source from Turkmen government. During the meeting, an exchange of views took place on the prospects for cooperation in trade and economy. Both sides confirmed their intention to promote intensified mutually beneficial business contacts, increase bilateral trade and stimulate investment activity. The parties looked at the prospects for cooperation in the fuel and energy sector, where there are great opportunities in the context of the favorable geographical location of the two countries and their huge natural resources. “This justifies a bilateral effective partnership in ensuring energy security,” the information reads. Particular attention was paid to matters of enhancing cooperation in the transport sector to form regional and international transport and communications infrastructure. An exchange of views

also took place on a number of topical issues of the regional and global agenda of mutual interest, and both sides expressed their readiness for further cooperation on the global arena. Turkmenistan and Iran border on the Caspian Sea and have a long land border. Over the years of long-term cooperation, they have implemented a number of large-scale joint projects including, among others, the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway and the creation of international Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman corridor, which is intended to contribute to increasing trade and economic cooperation between Central Asian and Middle Eastern states. In addition to border gas pipelines, the Dostluk (Friendship) dam was built with joint efforts of both countries. As of February 1, 2018, 89 investment projects have been registered in Turkmenistan with the participation of Iranian companies, the total value of which makes up \$1,310.95 million, 0.8 million euro and 0.81 million Turkmenistan manats (TMT). (Trend)

Scottish Court to Hear No-Deal Brexit Suspension Case Next Month

LONDON - A legal bid to prevent British Prime Minister Boris Johnson suspending parliament to stop lawmakers blocking a no-deal Brexit will be heard at a Scottish court next month. A group of about 70 lawmakers from opposition parties are backing a bid to have Scotland's highest civil court rule that Johnson cannot ask Queen Elizabeth to prorogue, or suspend, parliament before Britain leaves the European Union on Oct. 31. The case had its first court outing on Tuesday at which the Court of Session decided that a substantive hearing would take place on Sept. 6, said lawyer Jo Maughan from the Good Law Project which is supporting the challenge. (Reuters)

'1st Ever': Italian Astronaut Will DJ for Ibiza Ravers from SPACE

ROME - A DJ set from space will be broadcast to thousands of Ibiza ravers from the International Space Station (ISS), with Italian astronaut Luca Parmitano spinning the decks in a truly out of this world performance. Parmitano will make his debut as the first space DJ from the ISS's Columbus module where he will use music “as a way of connecting across cultures,” the European Space Agency (ESA) said. The astronaut will “speak to music lovers in Ibiza” when his set is transmitted to the World Dome Club Dome cruise filled with thousands of ravers when it is docked at the party island on Tuesday. (RT)

Hong Kong Airport Continues to See Delays; Thousands of Protesters Occupy Terminals for Fifth Day

HONG KONG - More than 100 flights were canceled at Hong Kong International Airport Tuesday as thousands of demonstrators flooded the airport's main terminal for the fifth consecutive day, prompting Chinese officials to liken the pro-democracy movement to “terrorism.” The airport reopened Tuesday, just one day after protesters were able to successfully shut down all operations, only to see further delays as two separate arrival halls and one departure area were clogged by thousands of demonstrators. The black-clad protesters held up signs in



Simplified Chinese and English to appeal to travelers from mainland China and other parts of the world. “Democracy is a good thing,” said one sign in Simplified Chinese characters, which are used in mainland China instead of the Traditional Chinese script of Hong Kong. For more than two

months, Hong Kong has experienced mass protests urging democratic reforms and an investigation into police conduct. The shutdown of one of the world's busiest transport hubs added to what authorities say is already a major blow to the financial hub's crucial tourism industry. (Fox News)

Russia Says Radiation Levels Rose by 4-16 Times in City after Accident: Tass

MOSCOW - Radiation levels in the Russian city of Severodvinsk rose by up to 16 times on Aug. 8 after an accident that authorities said involved a rocket test on a sea platform, Russia's state weather agency said on Tuesday, the TASS news agency reported. The defense ministry initially said background radiation had remained normal after the incident on Thurs-

day, but city authorities in Severodvinsk in northern Russia said there had been a brief spike in radiation levels. Greenpeace has said radiation levels rose by 20 times. Russia's state weather agency, Rosgidromet, said on Tuesday that it believed radiation levels had risen by four to 16 times. (Reuters)

'Imam of Peace' Tells Pakistan to 'Be Honest' about Kashmir Belonging to India

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI - An Islamic scholar has weighed in on the Kashmir issue with a tweet telling Pakistan to “be honest” and admit that the divided region never belonged to Islamabad. Australian Imam Mohamad Tawhidi tweeted that “both Pakistan and Kashmir belong to India,” adding, “Muslims converting from Hinduism to Islam doesn't change the fact that the entire region is Hindu Land.” Tawhidi, who calls himself the “imam of peace,” said that India is older than both Islam and Pakistan, and called on Pakistan to “be honest.” Tawhidi's comments were met with mixed reaction on social media. Many applauded his take and thanked him for siding with India, while others were enraged by his claims, saying, “land cannot belong to a religion.” Tensions between India and Pakistan have been heightened since New Delhi revoked a constitutional provision that gave the Indian-administered region of Kashmir and Jammu a level of autonomy last week. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the move was meant to integrate Kashmir with the rest of India and bring stability and investment to the area. Kashmir and Jammu will now be federally controlled, and India has sent troops there to prevent potential terrorist attacks and violence. (RT)