

## Merkel: European Mission in Strait of Hormuz Likely to be Discussed in Finland

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Wednesday she believed the idea of a European naval mission in the Strait of Hormuz would be discussed again at informal meetings of European foreign and defense ministers in Finland later this month.

"I think the question of a European mission will be discussed there again because this discussion has not yet taken place everywhere and so I believe that the Finnish presidency will play a coordinating role on that," Merkel told a news conference after meeting visiting Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda.

EU foreign ministers and defense ministers are due



to hold informal meetings in Helsinki in late August. Finland took over the EU's rotating presidency on July 1.

Britain last week joined the United States in a maritime security mission in the Gulf to protect merchant vessels traveling through the Strait of Hormuz after Iran seized a British-flagged vessel. Two weeks beforehand, Britain had called for a European-led naval mission. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has said that Germany will not join a U.S.-led naval mission in the Strait of Hormuz and that it favors a European mission but he has also warned it was rather difficult to make progress on that. (Reuters)

### President-Elect Says Guatemala Can't Do Migrant Deal with US

GUATEMALA CITY - A Guatemalan immigration agreement signed with the Trump administration won't work because the Central American nation does not have the resources, the country's new president-elect says.

Alejandro Giammattei, a conservative who was chosen overwhelmingly by voters in a weekend runoff election, said in an interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday that Guatemala is too poor to tend to its own people, let alone

those from other countries.

The agreement signed in July by the outgoing administration of President Jimmy Morales would require migrants from other countries who cross into Guatemala to apply for asylum here rather than in the U.S.

"In order to be a safe country, one has to be certified as such by an international body, and I do not think Guatemala fulfills the requirements to be a third safe country. That definition ... (More on P4)...(12)

### Hong Kong Native Jackie Chan Takes Part in Pro-Beijing Campaign to Protect National Flag

HONG KONG - Chinese megastar Jackie Chan said he was heartbroken by the mass unrest in his native Hong Kong, and supported the state TV's initiative to protect the national flag "desecrated" by protesters.

World-famous actor and Kung Fu master Jackie Chan has thrown his weight behind Beijing over the mass protests that have swept the semi-autonomous city since March. In an interview with Chinese state broadcaster CCTV, the Hollywood celebrity

said it is "heartbreaking and worrying for many" to witness the violence gripping the former British colonial outpost. Chan said he immediately joined the social media campaign launched by CCTV after a group of protesters took down a Chinese flag flying over Victoria Harbour and threw it into the sea. The incident took place earlier in August and saw the demonstrators replacing the red banner with flags sporting the words 'Hong Kong independence'.



The incident has sparked outrage in mainland China and prompted the former Hong Kong chief executive to put up a HK\$1 million (US\$127,000) reward for information leading to the suspects' arrest. The campaign is called 'Five-Star red flag has up a HK\$1 million 1.4 ... (More on P4)...(9)

## Neighbor News

### Iran's Rouhani Says Gulf Countries Can Protect Region's Security

DUBAI - President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday Iran and other Gulf states could protect the region's security and foreign forces were not needed, state TV reported, repeating a longstanding rejection

of a U.S. maritime security mission in the region. The United States has launched a maritime security mission in the Gulf backed by Britain after Iran seized a British-flagged vessel there last month. (Reuters)

### Pakistan Requests U.N. Security Council Meeting on Kashmir

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has asked the United Nations Security Council for an urgent meeting on the contested Kashmir region also claimed by India, according to a letter released by Pakistan's foreign ministry on Wednesday.

Foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi made the request in a letter to UNSC President Joanna Wronecka, seeking to participate in the meeting under the agenda item 'India-Pakistan question'. (Reuters)

### IFC to Expand Co-Op with Uzbekistan in Energy Sector, Agriculture

TASHKENT - To support greater private sector participation in Uzbekistan, International Financial Corporation (IFC) intend to expand operations with Uzbekistan in areas such as energy, manufacturing, services, and agriculture business, IFC Country Officer for Uzbekistan Zafar Khashimov told Trend in an interview.

In the financial sector, IFC focus on financial institutions engaged in lending and leasing operations to support small- and medium-sized enterprises, microfinance, agribusiness, and food processing.

"Together with the World Bank, we are also supporting Uzbek government's privatization programs in the banking and chemicals sectors. We also stand ready to support the government in establishing a strong pipe-

line of public-private partnerships," Khashimov noted.

There is great potential in the power, transport, healthcare, and education sectors of Uzbekistan—and public-private projects can help realize that promise.

"We welcome Uzbekistan's wide-ranging reforms to boost the economy and we are committed to supporting the reform agenda by expanding our activities in the country," Khashimov said.

To help improve the investment climate and remove barriers to greater private sector investment, IFC and the World Bank have already worked closely with the government to develop a new tool called the Country Private Sector Diagnostic. It identifies constraints to creating markets and unleashing private investment in selected areas. (Trend)

### The Government of Tajikistan Has Extended the Term for Re-Registration of SIM cards for ID-passports

TASHKENT - The Government of Tajikistan decided to extend the deadline for re-registering SIM cards on ID-passports until December 31, this was reported by a source in the government.

Earlier, the Tajik Interior Minister Ramazon Rakhimzoda said at a meeting with reporters that despite the fact that the working hours of passport offices were extended until 22:00, they do not have time to issue ID-passports to all citizens before the deadline - by August 15 so that residents re-register their sim cards. "Passports of 1996 sample are valid, no one canceled their validity. By order of the government, only subscribers

of mobile companies must re-register existing SIM cards with ID passports", - stressed the minister.

The communications service used to say that it could extend the deadline for re-registering SIM cards with ID-passports. According to a previously adopted government decree "On the Procedure and Requirements for Connecting to Electrical Communication Networks and the Provision of Services Related to It" (dated April 30, 2016), which entered into force on February 15, all mobile operators subscribers must re-register their SIM cards with ID passport sample 2014. (Agencies)

### Turkmenistan Discloses Data on State Budget Execution

ASHGABAT - The execution of the revenue part of the Turkmen state budget reached 10.95 billion manats, while the execution of the expenditure part reached 10.8 billion manats in January-July 2019, Trend reports referring to the Turkmen government.

The revenue part of the budget is formed mainly through such major sectors of the production sphere as oil and

gas, chemical, electric power industry and construction. The agro-industrial complex, the sphere of transport and communications, the textile and food industries will be further developed as well.

Turkmenistan holds one of the key positions for the supply of natural gas in the region. The gas is exported to China and Russia. (Trend)

## Trump Faces Election Reality on Trade War Pain



WASHINGTON - Want to receive this post in your inbox every day? Sign up for the Balance of Power newsletter,

and follow Bloomberg Politics on Twitter and Facebook for more. Did U.S. President Donald Trump just blink in

his trade war with China? His move to delay new tariffs on a wide range of consumer products such as smart-phones, laptops and toys until December suggests an awareness of the impact the penalties are having on American consumers, companies and markets, and potentially on his campaign for re-election next year.

Tellingly, he said the decision was made "so it won't be relevant to the Christmas shopping season" - a swing from

his previous position that China alone bears the cost of the tariffs. Still, that doesn't mean there's a sudden improvement in the atmosphere surrounding the trade talks. While the announcement came after senior officials spoke by phone - "very productive," Trump said - few expect any breakthrough soon. Indeed, Beijing may sense its best option is to wait Trump out as the election approaches and his farming base feels the ... (More on P4)...(10)

### Italian PM Vows New Genoa Bridge Will be Ready by April

ROME - Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has pledged that a new bridge for the Italian port city of Genoa will be ready by April, replacing the Morandi bridge that collapsed one year ago, killing 43 people. An emotional ceremony was held Wednesday in Genoa marking the anniversary of the tragic collapse in 2018. Conte said that reconstruction works for the new infrastructure are moving forward "seven days out of seven ...

and, according to forecasts, the new bridge will be accessible by April 2020."

A year later, the cause of the collapse hasn't been determined yet, but prosecutors are investigating poor maintenance and possible design flaws in the 51-year-old structure.

Hometown architect Renzo Piano has designed the new bridge, which resembles the bow of a ship in homage to Genoa's seafaring traditions. (AP)

### U.S. Senator Warns China on Hong Kong Trade Status If It Intervenes in Protests

WASHINGTON - A prominent U.S. senator warned China on Tuesday Hong Kong could lose its special U.S. trade status if Beijing intervenes directly to crack down on increasingly violent pro-democracy protests in the city.

A leading Republican also said the Trump administration must make clear to Beijing it would face "profound consequences," including sanctions, if it intervened directly.

"I can assure you that if China comes down hard on the protesters that there will be action in Congress to enforce the autonomy agreements that were entered into that are part of the special recognition of Hong Kong," Senator Ben Cardin told Reuters. ... (More on P4)...(13)

### UK Court Blocks Bid to Prosecute PM Johnson over Brexit Bus Claim

LONDON - A campaigner who wanted to prosecute British Prime Minister Boris Johnson for allegedly lying about the benefits of Brexit before the 2016 European Union referendum, on Wednesday lost his bid to take the case to Britain's top court.

Marcus Ball, 29, wanted to bring the crowd-funded private prosecution against Johnson for misconduct in public office over a claim emblazoned on his bright red "Leave" campaign bus that Britain would be 350 million pounds (\$445 million) a week better off outside the EU.

In May, a magistrate agreed that Johnson should be summoned to court to face the charges. ... (More on P4)...(14)

### Putin to Visit Finland for Bilateral Cooperation, Russia-EU Ties



MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin will pay a working visit to Finland at the invitation of Finnish President Sauli Niinistö on Aug. 21, the Kremlin said Wednesday. Besides bilateral coop-

eration, the leaders will discuss international and regional issues, including Russia's relations with the European Union (EU) in the context of Finland's current presidency of the EU Council, a Kremlin statement said.

Last time, Putin and Niinistö met at the International Arctic Forum in Russia's St. Petersburg in April. Putin visited Finland in July 2018, when he held talks with U.S. President Donald Trump in Helsinki. (Xinhua)

### German Recession Fears Weigh on Stocks after Relief Rally

LONDON - Fears that Germany could slip into a recession weighed hard on European stock markets Wednesday, a day after a modest relief rally prompted by the U.S. decision to delay some tariffs on Chinese imports.

The key downward driver in markets on Wednesday was news that Germany, Europe's biggest economy, contracted 0.1% in the second quarter of the year from the previous three-month period as global trade conflicts combined with troubles in the

auto industry.

"The relief rally inspired by the Trump administration delaying tariffs on some Chinese imports was short lived - blink and you missed it," said Fiona Cincotta, senior market analyst at City Index.

"Data showing that the German economy contracted in the second quarter reignited fears of a global recession, dampening demand for riskier assets such as equities." In Europe, Germany's DAX was down 1.5% ... (More on P4)...(11)

### Cryptocurrency Campaign Seeks to Help Iran Flood Victims

TEHRAN - An independent campaign has been launched in Iran in order to attract international aid in cryptocurrency for flood victims in the face of US sanctions which have choked off foreign funds.

The campaign is hoped to provide an alternative route after US sanctions prevented the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) from obtaining any foreign financial aid to assist victims of the flooding that started in early March and carried through April.

A statement released by the local cryptocurrency community on Tuesday said it had decided to launch the campaign because the international bank accounts of the IRCS have been blocked due to the US sanctions.

"The choking US economic sanctions, put in place in several tranches after President Donald Trump in May 2018 unilaterally withdrew from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, have cut off the flow of international aid to Iranian flood victims," the statement said.

"This is while humanitarian causes are deemed non-sanctionable under international law." At least 76 people were killed after the heaviest rains recorded in the country in 70 years more than two-thirds of the country in 28 provinces. Surging rivers burst their banks, sending an avalanche of floodwaters into villages and towns which drove hundreds of thousands of people from their homes.

The flooding caused an estimated \$2.5 ... (More on P4)...(15)