

Russia Decides Where it Deploys its Missiles, Kremlin Says After Kaliningrad Rebuke

MOSCOW - Russia said on Tuesday it had the right to put weapons anywhere it chose on its own territory, after reports that Moscow had deployed nuclear-capable Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad drew criticism from its neighbors and NATO.

From Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave on the Baltic Sea, the missiles would be able to reach large swathes of territory in NATO-members Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The president of Lithuania, which neighbors Kaliningrad, and a senior Russian lawmaker, both said the missile systems had been deployed to the region. Russia has not con-



firmed the deployment. Asked about reports of the deployment on a conference call with reporters, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "The deployment of one weapon or another, the deployment of military units and so forth on Russian territory, is exclusively a sovereign issue for the Russian Federation. "Russia has never threatened anyone and is not threatening anyone. Naturally, Russia has this sovereign right. It should hardly be cause for anyone to worry." (Reuters)

UK Will Consider Pardons for Convicted Suffragettes

LONDON - Britain will consider pardons for suffragettes convicted during the struggle for women's right to vote, the interior minister said Tuesday, a century to the day since some female voters were allowed to go to the polls. Home Secretary Amber Rudd said she would "take a look at" the cases of women who were prosecuted during the pro-suffrage campaign more than 100 years ago. Suffragettes used public protests, civil disobedience and occasionally violence in their campaign for women's votes. More than 1,300

were arrested, and many were jailed. Some endured force feeding during prison hunger strikes. Campaigners have called for convicted suffragettes to receive posthumous pardons, citing the precedent of pardons given to gay men who were convicted of now-abolished offenses for homosexuality. Speaking on the BBC, Rudd cautioned that "it is complicated because if you're going to give a legal pardon for things like arson and violence, it's not as straightforward as people think it might be." (AP)

Erdogan Says U.S. Has 'Calculations' Against Turkey, Iran, Russia in Syria

ANKARA - The United States is working against the interests of Turkey, Iran and maybe Russia in northern Syria, where it is sending in military supplies to an area controlled by Kurdish-dominated forces, President Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday. "If the United States says they are sending 5,000 trucks and 2,000 cargo planes of weapons for the fight against Daesh (Islamic State), we don't believe this," Erdogan told members of his ruling



AK Party in parliament. "It means you have calculations against Turkey

and Iran, and maybe Russia," he said, repeating a call for U.S. troops to withdraw from the Syrian town of Manbij. (Reuters)

Neighbor News

Turkmen President Sends Condolences to Pakistani Counterpart Over Swat Attack

ASHGABAT - President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov has sent a message of condolences to Pakistan's President Mamnoon Hussain and Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi over the terrorist attack on a military unit in Swat district, which resulted in numerous casualties. The Turkmen president noted that his

country strongly opposes any manifestations of terrorism and extremism. On behalf of the people and government of Turkmenistan, President Berdimuhamedov conveyed empathy and support to the families, relatives and friends of the terror victims and wished speedy recovery to the injured people. (Trend)

Iran, Russia Opposed to Unauthorized Foreign Military Presence in Syria

TEHRAN - Presidents Rouhani and Putin held a telephone conversation on Tuesday, discussing a range of topics, mainly Syria. "The Islamic Republic of Iran is opposed to the presence of foreign forces on Syrian soil without the permission of the [Arab] country's government and nation," the Iranian president said. Referring to renewed tensions in northern Syria, where Turkey has launched an unauthorized incursion, President Rouhani said, "The continuance of tensions is in no one's interest, and we hope all regional countries would respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Syria," without naming Turkey. Turkey launched the so-called Operation Olive Branch in Syria's northwestern city

of Afrin on January 20 in a bid to eliminate the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), which Ankara views as a terror organization and the Syrian branch of the outlawed Kurdish Workers Party (PKK). Turkey has warned that the Afrin offensive could expand to the nearby Syrian city of Manbij. Elsewhere in his remarks, Rouhani underlined the importance of continued cooperation between Iran, Russia, and Turkey to fight terrorism and restore peace to Syria, saying that the joint efforts had to be reinforced until the final victory of the Syrian people. A United States-led coalition, too, is operating in Syria without authorization from the Damascus government. (Presstv)

Poland's President Says Will Sign Holocaust Bill, Defying Critics



WARSAW - Poland's president said on Tuesday he will sign into law a bill imposing jail terms for suggesting the country was complicit in the Holocaust, defying criticism from Israel, the United States and activists. Andrzej Duda said in a televised address the legislation would ensure

Poland's "dignity and historical truth". Poland's right-wing government says the law is needed to protect the reputation of its citizens and make sure they are recognized as victims not perpetrators of Nazi aggression during World War

Two. Israel has said the law would curb free speech, criminalize basic historical facts and stop any discussion on the role that some Poles played in Nazi crimes. Activists say the passage of the bill has encouraged a rise in anti-Semitism. More than three million of Poland's 3.2 million Jews were murdered by the Nazis, accounting for about half of the Jews killed in the Holocaust. Jews from across the continent were sent to be killed at death camps built and operated by Germans in Poland, including Auschwitz, Treblinka, Belzec and Sobibor. (Reuters)

DPRK Slams Abe for Trying to Sow Disputes Among Koreans

PYONGYANG - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Tuesday slammed Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for trying to sow disputes among Koreans by planning to attend the opening ceremony of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. The official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said in a commentary that Abe made up his mind to take part in the opening ceremony of the Olympics because he wanted to pressurize Seoul to maintain maximum pressure on the DPRK for the latter's nuclear and missile programs. "Meanwhile, he asserted that he would not accept the demand of the South Korean authorities for additional steps related to the 'agreement' on the issue of sexual slavery for the Imperial Japanese Army," said the official daily of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea. Accusing Abe of attempting to "chill the warming climate of inter-Korean dialogue and turn the theater of Olympics into a ground of confrontation between compatriots," the daily said his participation is "pursuant to the scenario of the U.S. to bind South Korean authorities to the chains for tightening sanctions against the north." (Xinhua)

Turkmenistan Completes Construction of Gas Turbine Power Plant

ASHGABAT - Set-up work on two 262-megawatt gas turbines is carried out on combined type gas turbine power plant being built in Mary city in southern Turkmenistan, local newspaper Neutral Turkmenistan reported. Hi-tech installation consisting of two power units with a total output of 1,574 megawatts, will be set in operation for the first time in history of energy industry of the country. Four gas turbines, four utilizing tanks and two steam turbines will operate in the structure of the power plant. The object is to be set in operation till the end of 2018, according to contract.

"Combination of two cycles of electricity output allows to significantly increase efficiency index (EI) of the power plant. During the regular cycle of output the EI is 25-35 percent, whereas during the combined cycle it exceeds 54 percent," the article reads. The project is implemented by Turkish Chalyk Energy jointly with American General Electric. The project is expected to provide for increasing power consumption of the country and boost energy export. Turkmenistan currently supplies electricity to Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey. (Trend)

PM Offers Connecting CPEC With Six Routes of SCO

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Tuesday offered to connect China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with six approved routes of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to enhance region's connectivity. This would become a conduit linking Eurasian landmass, China, Russia and Central Asia with the Arabian Sea, the Prime Minister said in his meeting with Secretary General of SCO Rashid Alimov here at the PM Office. This is the first visit of SCO Secretary General after attainment of Pakistan's full membership of SCO. The Prime Minister expressed support for various SCO's initiatives including establishment of SCO Development Bank, SCO Development Fund, SCO Business Council, SCO Interbank Consortium and its Small and Medium Enterprises. (Monitoring desk)

Bitcoin price falls below \$6,000 as banker signals crackdown

The price of bitcoin fell below \$6,000 (£4,300) for the first time this year as a leading central banker said it posed a threat to financial stability and signalled a global clampdown on the crypto currency.

The new head of the Bank for International Settlements, Agustín Carstens, said bitcoin had become a combination of "a bubble, a Ponzi scheme and an environmental disaster" that threatened to undermine public trust in central banks.

"If authorities do not act pre-emptively, crypto currencies could become more interconnected with the main financial system and become a threat to financial stability," he said, speaking at Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany. (The Guardian)

Brexit Uncertainty to Stay Bank of England's Hand

LONDON - There can rarely have been a more complicated time to set interest rates for the U.K. economy. While high inflation, low unemployment and stable growth would usually prompt the Bank of England to raise interest rates again soon, concerns over Brexit are likely to stay the hand of its Monetary Policy Committee, whose decision is due Thursday. "Uncertainty over how Brexit talks will pan out means that the MPC won't want to make a strong commitment regarding the timing of the next rate hike," said Samuel Tombs, chief U.K. economist at Pantheon



Macroeconomics. Chief among the concerns is the terms of a transition period that Britain wants in place after it is due to leave in March 2019 in order to smooth out its exit and give it time to adjust to a new economic relationship with the EU. Bank of England Governor Mark Carney has

said that the outlines of the transition deal should be agreed upon by the end of this quarter so that firms across sectors - particularly in the crucial financial services industry - can start planning. Doing so, he has said, will limit the risks of a shock on Brexit day: "The sooner the better." (AP)

Pence Won't Rule out N Korea Meeting, Will 'See What Happens'

TOKYO - U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said he has not ruled out the possibility of meeting with North Korean officials at the upcoming Olympics in South Korea. "Let me say President Trump has said he always believes in talking, but I haven't requested any meeting," Pence said before departing Monday on a six-day Asia trip. "But we'll see what happens." Pence arrived Tuesday in Japan, where he will meet with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and U.S. service members. The vice president's trip will be highlighted by

his stop at the Pyeongchang Games. He said no plans have been made for him to meet with any members of the North Korean delegation. North Korea is sending its nominal head of state, Kim Jong Nam - the highest-level visitor to the South from the North in recent memory. Pence said his message, if he met any officials from the North, would be the same as it has been in public. "And that is that North Korea must once and for all abandon its nuclear weapons program and ballistic missile ambitions," he said. (AP)

Air India Mops Up 445 Cr from Land Assets Since 2012

NEW DELHI - Air India has been able to mop up 445 crore from monetisation of its land assets since 2012, the government informed Parliament today. The amount collected by Air India so far is a tenth of the target that was set for it under the Turn Around Plan approved by Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) in 2012. As per the plan, the national carrier had to monetise its assets and generate 5,000 crore over a ten-year period until 2021 by way of sale, leasing or developing an asset as a joint venture.

"Air India has monetised a sum of 445.31 crore from 2012-13 to 2017-18," Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha told Rajya Sabha in response to a question. The minister explained that the national carrier was not able to meet its target because of problems with land titles. Land title is a document that determines the ownership of land or an immovable property. "Air India was unable to meet the target under the asset monetisation plan due to problem with land titles. The high value properties allotted to AI for specific purpose had end use restrictions and did not have clear marketable titles as they were allotted on perpetual lease basis," Sinha said. (Agencies)

Uzbek FM to Visit China

TASHKENT - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov will pay an official visit to China, the press service of the ministry said. "On 6-7 February 2018, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov will pay an official visit to the People's Republic of China," the report said. It is noted that the programme of the visit includes the meet-

ings and negotiations with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Wang Yi, the heads of a number of ministries and departments, where it is planned to discuss the prospects for further activating of the Uzbek-Chinese dialogue in the political, trade-economic, investment, cultural, humanitarian and other spheres, and also to exchange views on regional and international issues. (Trend)