

Putin: Russians, Ukrainians Are 'One People'

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin says he believes Russians and Ukrainians constitute one nation and that the countries should find a way to integrate. Putin made the comments in an interview with the American film director Oliver Stone on June 19; material from the interview was used in a Stone film about Ukraine and the full transcript was published by the Kremlin on Friday. "I believe that Russians and Ukrainians are one people ... one nation, in fact," Putin said. "When these lands that are now the core of Ukraine joined Russia ... nobody thought of themselves as anything but Russians."



In light of this bond, Putin said "we can use this as our competitive advantage during some form of integration." (AP)

Neighbor News

Imran Khan Visits Trump's White House Amid Hopes for A Reset in U.S.-Pakistan Ties

ISLAMABAD — When Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan arrives at the White House on Monday for his meeting with President Trump, the two leaders are expected to discuss counterterrorism, defense, energy and trade. But many in Pakistan's capital hope the visit accomplishes something more: a reset in Islamabad-Washington ties. Khan's first visit to Washington as Pakistani premier comes amid a chill in the allies' relationship. The two first-term leaders have sparred over social media, and Trump last year suspended \$300 million in aid to Pakistan over what the U.S. government said was Pakistan's failure to crack down on militancy within its borders. In what was seen as a move motivated by Khan's visit, police in Pakistan on Wednesday arrested Hafiz Saeed, a U.S.-designated terrorist who has lived openly in the country on and off for years. Trump praised the arrest on Twitter. The White House visit "offers the leadership of both countries new opportunities towards resetting the bilateral relationship," Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Pakistan's foreign minister, said in a speech in Islamabad on Tuesday. (Monitoring Desk)

UK Tanker Hit Iranian Boat, Ignored Its Distress Call Before Capture: Iran

TEHRAN - Iranian authorities say the British oil tanker seized in the Strait of Hormuz was involved in an accident with an Iranian fishing boat and ignored its distress call before capture. Allah-Morad Afifpoor, head of Ports and Maritime Organization in southern Hormozgan Province, said on Saturday that the 30,000-tonne UK-flagged Stena Impero tanker had "collided with a fishing boat on its route and, according to law, after an accident it is necessary that the causes are investigated." Following the collision, those on board the fishing boat "contacted the British vessel but didn't receive any response," so they informed the Hormozgan maritime organization "according to the legal procedures," he added. Afifpoor also noted that the tanker had been taken to Bandar Abbas port, where it and its crew will remain while a probe is carried out into the British vessel's conduct. The tanker was not carrying any cargo, he said, adding the crew members of the ship may be interviewed on technical matters. "The investigation into the cause of the accident has been started today," he said. "All its 23 crew members will remain on the ship until the probe is over." "If necessary, and at the request of judicial authorities, the crew may be summoned for technical and specialist interviews," Afifpoor added. (Press TV)

Pakistan, UAE Have Strong Relations: Ambassador

ISLAMABAD - The Ambassador of United Arab Emirates (UAE), Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi, has said that Pakistan and UAE have laid strong foundations of mutually beneficial relations, friendship and peaceful cooperation over the years. The ambassador, along with Consul General Bakheet Ateeq Al-Ro maithi and Ahmad Abdulla Albaloooshi, Adviser to ambassador paid a courtesy visit to Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX). They were received and welcomed at PSX by Muhammad Rafique Umer, Managing Director (Acting) of the Exchange. During the meeting they discussed on matters of mutual concerns, business prospects, friendship and peaceful cooperation between both the countries. According to the release of the embassy, the ambassador agreed and said that UAE has been appreciative of Pakistan's contribution to the evolution of key institutions in the Emirates. (Agencies)

Iran's Zarif Says US Will Get Nowhere with Its Excessive Demands

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says the United States "will get nowhere with its excessive demands" from Tehran, stressing that the Islamic Republic's landmark 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), has been "a rational agreement." Iran's top diplomat made the remarks at a press conference shortly before leaving Washington for the Venezuelan capital Caracas on Friday, reacting to US President Donald Trump's recent calls for the suspension of Iran's uranium enrichment and concluding a 100-year agreement with the country. "These remarks indicate that the JCPOA is a rational agreement," Zarif said. The accord was signed in Vienna in July 2015 between the Islamic Republic and the P5+1 group of countries comprising the United States, the UK, France, Russia, China, plus Germany. The JCPOA lifted nuclear-related sanctions against Iran in return for the country's voluntarily changing some aspects of its nuclear energy program. (Press TV)

Germany Marks 75th Anniversary of Plot to Kill Hitler

BERLIN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel has urged Europeans to confront populism, nationalism, racism and anti-Semitism as she paid tribute to the Nazi resistance in her own country. Speaking Saturday at a solemn ceremony marking the anniversary of the failed attempt to kill Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler, Merkel said the courage and sacrifice of the conspirator should serve as an example to people today. "They put human-

ity over their own human lives," she told the crowd at the site where plot leader Col. Claus von Stauffenberg and others were executed. Von Stauffenberg tried to kill Hitler with a briefcase bomb on July 20, 1944, during a meeting at his headquarters in what was then East Prussia. Hitler escaped the full force of the blast when someone moved the briefcase next to a table leg, deflecting much of the explosive force. The plot crumbled... (More on P4)... (15)

Lockheed Awarded \$1.48 Billion Saudi Missile Defense Contract: Pentagon

WASHINGTON — Lockheed Martin was awarded a \$1.48 billion contract to build the THAAD missile defense system for Saudi Arabia, bringing the total value of the deal to \$5.36 billion, the Pentagon said on Friday. The new contract was a modification to a previously awarded agreement to produce the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense interceptor for Saudi Arabia, the Pentagon said. In November 2018, Saudi and U.S. officials signed letters of offer and acceptance formalizing terms for Saudi Arabia's purchase of 44 THAAD launchers, missiles and related equipment. In April Lockheed was awarded a \$2.4 billion contract for THAAD interceptor missiles, some of which are slated to be delivered to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The latest contract is for interceptor support items. Lockheed Martin, the biggest U.S. arms



maker, builds and integrates the THAAD system, which is designed to shoot down short-, medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles. Raytheon, another U.S. firm, builds advanced radar. (Reuters)

US Pressure & EU Inaction Left Iran with 'Very Few Options' Except to Retaliate



TEHRAN - The seizure of British-owned oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz is the signal that Iran's patience has run out, due to European inaction for over a year after the US pullout from the nuclear deal, analysts told RT.

Prior to May, Iran exercised extreme restraint despite US sanctions and its frustration with Europe's failure to offset the losses they caused, Hamed Mousavi, political science professor at the University of Tehran, said. Eventually, Iran's patience ran out, but not before the US "made sure that Iran has very few options remaining." "For a year Tehran was not doing anything and was abiding by the nuclear deal to the letter in the hopes that the Euro-

peans would come up with a form of a mechanism... that would allow Iran to circumvent the US sanctions," Mousavi said. By refusing to hold back any longer, Iran wants to send a clear signal to the UK, "but especially to the Americans," that Tehran has "the means and the power to respond to pressure and to aggression." Iran's actions are also a response to the US military buildup at its Middle East doorstep, Mousavi said. ... (More on P4)... (13)

Hong Kong Police Seize Explosives Ahead of Weekend Protests

HONG KONG — Police in Hong Kong discovered a stash of a powerful homemade explosive as the semi-autonomous Chinese city readied for another major pro-democracy protest on Sunday. Police said they found about 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds) of TATP and arrested a man in a raid on a commercial building late Friday night. TATP, or tri-acetone tri-peroxide, has been used in terrorist attacks worldwide. Materials voicing op-

position to an extradition bill that has sparked more than a month of demonstrations in Hong Kong were found at the site, local media said, but a police spokesman said no concrete link has been established and that the investigation is continuing. In a rally that aimed to counter the pro-democracy movement, thousands of people filled a park in central Hong Kong on Saturday to support the ... (More on P4)... (16)

AU to Deploy More Healthcare Experts to Tackle Ebola Crisis

ADDIS ABABA - The African Union (AU) on Saturday said it will deploy more healthcare experts to respond to the Ebola virus outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The virus has caused 1,621 deaths in the DRC as of July 17 in an outbreak that is the second largest in the history of Ebola since it was discovered in 1976. "The AU will reactivate the African Voluntary Health Corps (AVoHC) and deploy them not just in the DRC but also in other countries within the region," an AU statement quoted John Nkengasong, Director of the ... (More on P4)... (17)

Taiwan's 2019 GDP Growth Forecast Further Lowered to 2.01 Pct

TAIPEI - Taiwan's economic growth forecast for 2019 has been further lowered to 2.01 percent, according to the island's Academia Sinica. Taiwan's outbound orders, exports and industrial production data have all showed sluggish performances due to the trade tensions between the Chinese mainland and the United States, the institution said. Consumption of durable goods such as automobiles, telecommunications products and household electrical appliances has become conservative while the wholesale industry has seen an obvious drop in sales, it said. The GDP growth rate for the first quarter of this year was only 1.71 percent year on year, it said. The institution has also forecasted the jobless rate for 2019 in Taiwan to be around 3.7 percent. (Xinhua)

'Something Fishy Here': Putin Doesn't Believe UK Poisoned Skripals

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin doesn't believe in conspiracy theories that say the British government poisoned former double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in Salisbury. The Skripal affair, which turned relations between the UK and Russia from bad to worse, was brought up by filmmaker Oliver Stone during an interview with Vladimir Putin. Stone asked the Russian leader if he believes in the theory that Sergei Skripal wanted to return to Russia and divulge some secrets but was stopped by the British government. "Honestly, I don't really believe it. I don't believe it," Putin replied.



The Russian president said if British intelligence wanted Skripal poisoned, they certainly had the ability to do so. "There is something fishy here," he noted, alleging that whoever was behind the attempted murder was more interested in the "scandal" that it triggered. Advising Stone not to take the conspiracy theory seriously, Putin said that Skripal, a former Russian intelligence officer who moonlighted for the Britons, hardly had anything to offer to Moscow in exchange for allowing him back. He was out of the game. What information could he possibly possess? Skripal was outed as a double agent and sentenced for treason in Russia, but his prison term was cut short by a spy swap in 2010, after which he moved to Salisbury. In March 2018, ... (More on P4)... (14)

Turkish Foreign Minister Discusses Defense, Syria with Pompeo

ISTANBUL - Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has discussed by telephone with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo the Russian S-400 missile defense system and the U.S. F-35 fighter jet program, a foreign ministry source said on Saturday. The source did not say when the conversation took place. Ankara's purchase of the S-400 system has infuriated the United States, its NATO ally, which has responded by removing Turkey from the F-35 stealth fighter jet program. In their call, Cavusoglu and Pompeo also discussed the situation in Syria, the source said. (Reuters)

Bids Invited for India's Grounded Airline Jet Airways

MUMBAI - The expression of interest has been invited to seek resolution proposals for India's grounded airline, Jet Airways, that may give creditors an opportunity to recover some of their dues. The last date for submitting the expression of interest is August 3 and the final list of prospective applicants will be issued on August 14 subsequent to which they will have to submit resolution plans by September 5, the notice issued in several newspapers by Ashish Chhawchharia, the resolution professional, said on Saturday. So far, India's National Company Law Tribunal appointed resolution professional has received 16,643 claims worth 3.6 billion U.S. dollars from financial and operational creditors of the airline of which only 33 claims worth 1.23 billion U.S. dollars belonging to financial creditors (banks) have been admitted while the rest are being verified. Details about the expression of interest have so far not been uploaded on the website, but a report by Livemint newspaper quoting an unnamed official said that a minimum net worth of 145 million U.S. dollars has been prescribed for the bidders to keep frivolous bidders away from the resolution process. Meanwhile, the Committee of Creditors of the beleaguered airline on Friday approved an interim funding of 10 million U.S. dollars to run the corporate insolvency resolution process ... (More on P4)... (18)