

## US Warns India of 'Serious Implications' If It Picks Russian S-400 over American Defense Promises

NEW DELHI - The US-India defense ties will be put at risk should New Delhi purchase Russian S-400 air defense systems, a senior American diplomat warned, noting that India should think very carefully about making such strategic choices.

"At a certain point, a strategic choice has to be made about partnerships and a strategic choice about what weapons systems and platforms a country is going to adopt," Alice Wells, US principal deputy assistant secretary for South and Central Asia, said this week at the hearings on US interests in South Asia and the budget for the fiscal year 2020. India's procurement of the



S-400s "effectively could limit India's ability to increase our own interoperability," she said, explaining that Washington has "serious con-

cerns" about the implications of the \$5 billion deal signed with Russia in October on India-US defense ties.

There is no blanket waiver, or a country waiver when it comes to S-400.

Washington wants to capture India's arms market, the diplomat told House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee for Asia, noting that US is now willing to sell equipment that previous administrations had refused to consider.

"Under the Trump administration, we've been very clear that we're ready to help meet India's defense needs and we are seeking a very different kind of defense partnership building on the 'Major Defense Partner' designation that India has received from Congress," she said. Securing ...*(More on P4)...(11)*

### Brexit: Irish PM Says No Backstop as Bad for Ireland as No Deal

DUBLIN - Ireland will not allow the Northern Ireland "backstop" clause in Britain's EU withdrawal agreement to be dropped because doing so would be as big a threat to the country as Britain leaving without a deal, Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said on Saturday. While it is "alarming" that leading contenders to replace Theresa May as Britain's Prime Minister are increasingly threatening a no-deal Brexit, Ireland was 100 percent certain the

European Union would not allow the backstop to go, he said. Leadership contenders, including front-runner Boris Johnson, have called for the controversial Irish clause that is designed to avoid border checks between Ireland and Northern Ireland to be changed or scrapped. They have said Britain would be prepared to leave without a deal if there was no compromise. "To me no backstop is effectively the same as no-deal ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

### Russia Opposes Economic Wars & 'Fighting Dirty' in World Trade - Putin

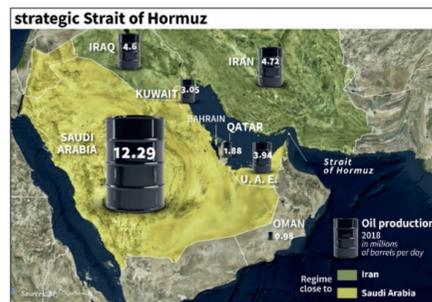
MOSCOW - Moscow stands firmly against trade wars and "fighting without rules" in international commerce, Russian President Vladimir Putin has said. There are "genuine trade wars" going on all across the world, Putin told the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, adding that restoring trust is essential among all countries. Unfortunately, [some nations] are fighting

without rules, [they] intimidate and eliminate competitors through non-market means. It is crucial to "find the way out of this situation" and "establish rules of fair economic cooperation," the Russian president said. "At the very least, social and humanitarian issues should be exempt from trade and economic restrictions, namely essential goods, medicine and medical equipment," he added. Just two days ago, Putin addressed trade wars



again, saying that while Russia keeps away from interfering in economic disputes of others, "our sympathy is with our strategic partners." Both comments came amid the ongoing standoff between the US and China. Earlier, President Donald Trump slapped ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

### Tanker Hit in Gulf Attacks Heads to Port



DUBAI - A Japanese tanker, one of two vessels attacked in sensitive Gulf waters this week, was heading to port on Saturday, its owners

said. The Kokuka Courageous was rocked by explosions as it passed through the Gulf of Oman on Thursday,

threatening its highly flammable cargo of methanol. The resulting blaze was quickly extinguished, although one crew member suffered minor injuries. US President Donald Trump said the twin attack, which also targeted a tanker owned by Oslo-listed company Frontline, had Iran "written all over it". The Japanese tanker's Tokyo-based operator Kokuka confirmed the vessel was heading to port in the United Arab

Emirates. "We still don't know if the tanker goes to Khor Fakkan or Fujairah as they are very close," said a spokesman, referring to two Emirati ports on the Gulf of Oman. As US-Iranian tensions soared, Trump dismissed Tehran's repeated threats that in case of conflict it could block the Hormuz Strait -- a narrow seaway vital to the world's oil supplies. Speaking hours after the US military released grainy footage it said ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

### Anti-Graft Crusader Sworn in as Slovakia's First Female President

BRATISLAVA - Anti-corruption campaigner Zuzana Caputova was sworn in as Slovakia's first female president on Saturday, vowing to fight impunity and champion justice in a country shaken by a journalist's murder last year. The killing of Jan Kuciak, who investigated high-level graft cases, and his fiancée at their home last February sparked mass street protests and hit the approval ratings of the governing leftist party

Smer. Smer is still the most popular party but Caputova's victory in the March presidential vote boosted the opposition liberal alliance Progressive Slovakia/Together, which backed her and aims to unseat the ruling party in a 2020 general election. The pro-European coalition already won the EU Parliament election last month. In her inauguration speech, Caputova, 45, ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

## Neighbor News

### Russia Says Interested in Energy Investment in Iran

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin have discussed expansion of business ties between the two states in a range of fields, particularly in the energy sector, despite Washington's unilateral sanctions. The two sides met on Friday on the sidelines of the 19th Summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. Rouhani hailed the "good pace" of the implementation of economic agreements between Tehran and Moscow, particularly in the field of energy. "The meeting of the Iran-Russia Joint Commission for Cooperation that is going to be held in Tehran next week will accelerate this process,"

he said. "By adopting a law on trade with Eurasia in the Parliament, we will provide the preparations as soon as possible, which will accelerate business cooperation," he noted. Putin, in turn, said his country "remains interested in being present and investing in the energy sector [of Iran] and is committed to cooperating in a wide range of areas of interest to the two countries." Back in late May, Russian energy giant Gazprom had suggested that it was evaluating potential participation in Iran's energy projects. "As of today we are at the stage of considering our participation in projects in Iran," Gazprom's deputy chief executive officer Vitaly Markelov said on May 28. (Press TV)

### Putin, Rakhmon Discuss Prospects for Russia-Tajikistan Strategic Partnership

DUSHANBE - Prospects for strategic cooperation between Tajikistan and Russia were in focus of talks between the two countries' presidents, Emomali Rakhmon of Tajikistan and Vladimir Putin of Russia, in Dushanbe, the press service of the Tajik leader said, Trend reports citing TASS. The Tajik president said that top-level contacts between the two countries "are essential for the development of interstate relations." "I am confident that our meeting today will have a great influence on this process," the press service quoted him as saying. The two leaders expressed satisfaction with the results of the Tajik president's visit to Russia in April 2019

and practical implementation of the existing agreements. They also exchanged views on issues of the international agenda. Putin arrived in Dushanbe earlier on Friday to attend a summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) on June 15. The summit will be attended by delegations from 27 member nations, as well as 13 observers, including representatives from such international organizations as the United Nations, the Arab League, the International Organization for Migration, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries. (Trend)

### DG ADB Werner Calls on Dr Hafeez Shaikh, Discusses Upcoming Operations in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD - Director General Asian Development Bank (ADB), Werner Liepach and Country Director ADB, Xiaohong Yang called on Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, here on Saturday and discussed matters relating to ADB's upcoming operations in Pakistan. The Director General briefed the Adviser that in addition to strong project portfolio, the Bank is also keen to provide balance of payment financing to sup-

port Government of Pakistan's structural reform agenda. This budgetary support is estimated to be about \$ 2 billion in the fiscal year 2020 and will broadly cover such policy reform areas as trade competitiveness, energy sector and capital markets development. Dr Hafeez Shaikh thanked the visiting Director General for strong support and reiterated Government's commitment to undertake the much-needed reforms to achieve stability and economic turnaround. (Agencies)

### Pakistan to Receive \$3.4 Billion from ADB in Budgetary Support

ISLAMABAD - Asian Development will give \$3.4 billion to Pakistan in budgetary support, said Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh. In a series of tweets, Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh said "ADB to give \$3.4 billion in budgetary support. I had a meeting with Mr. Werner Liepach, DG ADB today to agree on the program." He said "The ADB will provide \$3.4 billion in budgetary support to help with reforms

and stabilization of the economy." The adviser said "\$2.2 billion will be released this fiscal year, starting in the first quarter of FY 2019-20. This will help the revenue and the external account position." This support is in addition to the project portfolio with an estimated disbursement of upto \$1 billion in the coming years, he added. Dr Hafeez appreciated the commitment of the ADB to Pakistan's economic reform agenda. (Agencies)

### NATO Faces Big Bill If It Does Not Pick AWACS Successor Soon: Officials

PARIS - NATO faces significant costs if it does not act soon to choose a successor for its ageing fleet of 14 Boeing E-3A Airborne Warning & Control System (AWACS) surveillance aircraft, often called the alliance's "eyes in the sky", senior officials said. Michael Gschossman, general manager of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization agency that manages the AWACS fleet, said he expected to finalize by December a \$750 million contract with U.S. arms maker Boeing Co to extend the life of the aircraft through 2035, with \$250 million more ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

### Turkey Slams Moody's after Credit Rating Downgrading

ANKARA - Turkey on Saturday slammed Moody's decision of downgrading Ankara's sovereign credit rating into "junk" territory. Moody's downgraded Turkey's credit rating from Ba3 to B1 and maintained a negative outlook late Friday. The decision was not in accordance with the basic indicators of the Turkish economy, the Ministry of Treasury and Finance said in a statement, adding that many positive developments which show a clear sign of a recovery were ignored. The move by the credit ratings agency "raises questions about its objectivity and neutrality," it said. Moody's said the risk of a balance of payments crisis continued to rise, and with it comes the risk of a government default. "Turkey remains ...*(More on P4)...(19)*

### US Grants Energy-Hungry Iraq New Iran Sanctions Waiver: Source

BAGHDAD - The United States has granted Iraq another 90-day waiver to continue with vital energy imports from neighbouring Iran despite re-imposed sanctions, a government source said Saturday. The extension came after "long discussions" with Washington ahead of a looming deadline on a previous extension granted in December, the official, close to the negotiations, told AFP on condition of anonymity. The talks came amid spiking tensions between Iraq's two closest allies -- the US and Iran -- following a twin



attack on tankers in the Gulf that US President Donald Trump has blamed on Tehran. Iranian energy imports are vital to Iraq, one of the world's hottest countries, which faces chronic blackouts that often leave homes without power for up to 20

hours a day. Summer temperatures in Baghdad are already topping seasonal averages, boosting electricity consumption and raising fears of a repeat of last summer's mass protests over power outages. To ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

### Indonesia Returns Five Containers of Waste to The US

JAKARTA - Indonesia has returned five containers of rubbish to the United States and will not become a "dumping ground", officials said Saturday, the latest Southeast Asian country to return imported waste. The containers were supposed to contain only paper scrap, according to the customs documents. Instead they were loaded with other waste including bottles, plastic waste, and diapers, said senior environment

ministry official Sayid Muhadhar. "This is not appropriate and we don't want to be a dumping ground," Muhadhar told AFP. The five containers -- owned by a Canadian company -- were shipped from Seattle in the United States to Indonesia's second biggest city Surabaya in late March, Muhadhar said. It was not immediately clear where the rubbish originated from. Indonesia is ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

### China, Qatar Pledge to Deepen Political Trust, Boost Cooperation

DUSHANBE - Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani here on Saturday, pledging to deepen political mutual trust and boost cooperation between the two nations. Voicing his appreciation for Tamim's commitment to promoting the bilateral ties, Xi recalled the emir's state visit to China in January this year during which the two heads of state had an in-depth exchange of views and reached extensive consensus on developing the China-Qatar strategic partnership under new circumstances.

During Saturday's meeting on the sidelines of the fifth summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, Xi said China and Qatar should consolidate their political mutual trust and continue understanding and supporting each other on issues involving their core interests. The two sides should accelerate the all-round cooperation in energy, trade and economy, infrastructure construction, investment, the fifth-generation (5G) telecommunications and other areas, said the Chinese president. On the cooperation on fighting terrorism, Xi expressed gratitude to the Qatari side for its support for China's counter-terrorism and de-extremization efforts, stressing that the Chinese side stands ready to step up coordination and cooperation with Qatar in multilateral affairs. Tamim ...*(More on P4)...(20)*