

G20 Agrees to Tackle Ocean Plastic Waste

KARUIZAWA, Japan - Group of 20 environment ministers agreed on Sunday to adopt a new implementation framework for actions to tackle the issue of marine plastic waste on a global scale, the Japanese government said after hosting the two-day ministerial meeting.

Environment and energy ministers of the Group of 20 major economies met this weekend in Karuizawa, northwest of Tokyo, ahead of the G20 summit in Osaka, western Japan, on June 28-29.

One of the top issues was ocean plastic waste as images of plastic debris-strewn beaches and dead animals with stomachs full



of plastic have sparked outrage, with many countries banning plastic bags outright. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has said

he wants his country to lead the world in reducing marine plastic trash, including developing biodegradables and other innovations. (Reuters)

The new framework is aimed at facilitating further concrete action on marine waste, though on a voluntary basis, after the G20 Hamburg Summit in Germany adopted the "G20 action plan on marine litter" in 2017.

Under the new framework, G20 members will promote a comprehensive life-cycle approach to prevent and reduce plastic litter discharge to the oceans through various measures and international cooperation.

They will also share best practices, promote innovation and boost scientific monitoring and analytical methodologies. (Reuters)

7.2 Quake Off New Zealand Triggers Brief Tsunami Scare

WELLINGTON - A powerful 7.2 magnitude earthquake has struck some 100km off L'Esperance Rock, north of New Zealand, briefly triggering a tsunami warning for multiple coasts within a 300km radius.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center issued an alert for the coasts of New Zealand, American Samoa, the Cook Islands and Fiji, noting however that the waves were not expected to reach more than 0.3

meters above the tide level. Niue, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu were warned as well, in addition to Wallis and Futuna.

The local governments were advised to separately assess the potential threat and inform the public. "Persons located in threatened coastal areas should stay alert" and follow instructions from the local relief agencies, the PTCW warning stated. (RT)

LONDON - The environmental activist group Extinction Rebellion has postponed a plan to shut down London's Heathrow Airport with drones after it was criticized by politicians and police.

The anti-climate change group said Sunday it would "not be carrying out any actions at Heathrow Airport in June or July this year."

Details of the group's plan were leaked last month. British Aviation Minister Charlotte Vere warned that "using drones to deliberately put people's

Extinction Rebellion Postpones Heathrow Drone Protest Plan



safety at risk carries a maximum life sentence." Extinction Rebellion said the allegation it was willing to endanger people's

lives "is a depressing and predictable smear." The group still aims to target the airport, Europe's busiest, but said it would not

fly drones within flight paths, and would give two months' notice so travelers could make other plans. (Fox News)

U.S. Does Not Want War with Iran, Continues Diplomacy: Pompeo



WASHINGTON - While it is "unmistakable" that Iran was responsible for the attacks on two tankers last week, the United States does not want to

go to war with Tehran, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Sunday.

In an interview with "Fox News Sunday", Pompeo

said, "President Trump has done everything he can to avoid war. We don't want war." But he added that Washington will guarantee free navigation through vital shipping areas.

"The United States is going to make sure that we take all the actions necessary, diplomatic and otherwise that achieve that outcome," Pompeo said.

U.S.-Iran tensions are high following accusations by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump that Tehran carried out attacks

last Thursday on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman, a vital oil shipping route. Iran has denied having any role.

"The intelligence community has lots of data, lots of evidence. The world will come to see much of it," said Pompeo, who headed the Central Intelligence Agency before becoming secretary of state.

Pompeo said he did not want to discuss possible next steps the United States might take in response to last week's developments. (Reuters)

We're Not a Dumpster! Indonesia Sends Plastic, Shoes & DIAPERS Disguised as Paper Waste Back to US

JAKARTA - Indonesia says it won't become yet another world "dumping ground" after it returned five containers of waste back to the US, joining the growing number of Asian nations to recently turn away Western 'recyclables.'

The waste arrived in Indonesia from Seattle back in March. The cargo, shipped by a Canadian company, was supposed to contain paper recycling material, but the Environment and Forestry Ministry discovered

"impurities" inside five containers and ordered them to be "re-exported."

The containers were filled with "significant amounts" of various plastic waste and shoes, in addition to other rubbish such as wood scraps, fabrics and even diapers. "Although the containers were originally from Canada, the country of departure was the US," said Waste and Hazardous Waste Management Directorate General Secretary Sayid Muhadhar. (RT)

Backing Stewart, Junior Defense Minister Ellwood Says Johnson Needs to be Tested

LONDON - Boris Johnson, the frontrunner to replace Prime Minister Theresa May, should be tested in the leadership contest and the person to challenge him is international aid minister Rory Stewart, junior defense minister Tobias Ellwood said on Sunday.

"Who will actually test Boris and get him to raise his game? ... I believe Boris Johnson in one corner and Rory Stewart in another, that is a competition that would be exciting, so bring that on," Ellwood told Sky News. (Reuters)

France Launches Trial of Macron's New National Service for Teens

PARIS - Nearly two decades after France phased out conscription for men, some 2,000 teenagers Sunday began trialling a new national service, a pet project of French President Emmanuel Macron.

For a fortnight, the 15- and 16-year-olds will leave home for training in first aid and other basic skills, followed later by another two weeks of volunteering. Macron caused surprise on the campaign trail in 2017 by promising to introduce a month-long compulsory national service, saying he wanted to give girls and boys "a direct experience of military life".

The proposal got a cool response from the army, which balked at the prospect of having to put millions of teens through their paces, prompting the government to come back with proposals for a compulsory civic service instead. (AFP)

Libyan Navy Says It Intercepted 91 Europe-Bound Migrants

CAIRO - Libya's coast guard says it has intercepted a rubber vessel carrying 91 Europe-bound migrants, including women and children, off the country's Mediterranean coast.

Spokesman Ayoub Gassim said Sunday that three women and two children were among the African migrants intercepted a day earlier off the coast of the western town of Garaboli, 60 kilometers (37 miles) east of the capital, Tripoli.

He says the migrants



were given humanitarian and medical aid and then taken to a refugee camp in Tripoli. Libya became a major conduit for African migrants and refugees fleeing to Europe after the 2011 uprising

that ousted and killed longtime ruler Moammar Gadhafi.

Libyan authorities have stepped up efforts to stem the flow of migrants, with European assistance. (Fox News)

Argentina, Uruguay Work to Restore Power after Major Failure

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina - Argentina's main energy company said it was "slowly beginning to restore" electricity after a massive power failure left large swathes of the country and neighboring Uruguay without power.

It was unclear how many people had been affected by the blackout, but the South American countries have a combined population of more than 45 million.

Edesur said on Twitter that power had been returned to 34,000 custom-

ers as of Sunday morning.

"The return of electricity generation to the interconnected system of the Federal Capital and Greater Buenos Aires has begun," it said.

It also noted the process would take several hours.

Uruguayan energy company UTE tweeted that the system was being reinstated from scratch.

"There are already coastal cities with service and work continues toward general restoration," it said. (Fox News)

Turkey's Erdogan Says S-400s Delivery for Early July

ANKARA - Turkey expects the delivery of the controversial Russian S-400 missile defence system to begin in July, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was quoted as saying in Turkish media on Sunday.

"I believe (S-400s) will begin to arrive in the first half of July. Colleagues in charge of the schedule are following the issue," Erdogan said according to CNN Turk broadcaster.

Ankara's deal with Moscow has been a major source of tension between Turkey and the United States, with Washington threatening consequences including sanctions against its fellow NATO member.

Acting US Defence Secretary Patrick Shanahan sent a letter earlier this month warning Turkey it must renounce the S-400 system by July 31 or Turkish pilots currently training on the F-35 fighter jet programme would be expelled from the US. Turkey plans to buy 100 US F-35s while a number of Turkish manufacturers are making parts and equipment for the warplane.

Ankara has yet formally to respond to Shanahan's letter but Erdogan said that "within a short time, perhaps sometime this week, a letter in response will be sent".

He was adamant the deal with Moscow was not one which Turkey would walk away from.

"The issue of the S-400 is completed. There are no difficulties," Erdogan said, speaking to Turkish journalists on his plane to Turkey after a visit to Tajikistan for a summit. (AFP)

Neighbor News

Iran Slams France's Inaction to Save JCPOA, Says INSTEX Still 'On Paper'

TEHRAN - Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani has criticized France for its inaction in preserving the 2015 nuclear deal, saying a European-proposed financial mechanism meant to protect trade ties with Iran against the US sanctions is still "on paper".

"Despite the multiple negotiations that were held, the French president's promise to Iran's president to save the JCPOA was not fulfilled," Larijani said in a meeting with Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly Marielle de Sarnez in Tehran on Saturday, referring to the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"In fact, it should be said that the INSTEX mechanism has remained on the paper," he said, referring to the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges which the UK, France and Germany -- the three European signatories of the JCPOA --

unveiled in January to protect trade with Iran from harsh US economic sanctions.

Larijani further underlined the significance of economic relations with France, saying that Paris can play a role in the region.

The French lawmaker, for her part, highlighted the importance of parliamentary ties between Iran and France, saying the lawmakers of the two nations can play a significant role in tough times.

Expressing Europe's support for the nuclear deal, de Sarnez said her country is determined to achieve the objective of saving the JCPOA.

Later in the day, de Sarnez also held talks with Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araqchi.

Araqchi said that "the economic war that America has launched against the Iranian people has targeted the security and stability of the entire region and caused tension in the region." (Press TV)

Center for Pakistan Studies Launched in Kunming, China

BEIJING - The Center for Pakistan Studies, Chinese Academy of South and Southeast Asian studies was launched in Kunming, China.

Mahmood Akhtar Mahmood, Consul at Consulate General of Pakistan in Chengdu, and Chinese officials from Publicity Department of Yunnan

Provincial Party Committee of the CPC, and the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences, unveiled the plaque for Center during the opening ceremony of the 7th China - South and Southeast Asia Think-Tank Forum held in Kunming, China. Economic Net reported. (Monitoring Desk)

Pakistan Blooms in China's 'Spring City' with 200 Stalls Set Up at Commodity Expo

KUNMING - From textiles to leather, gems and handicraft - Pakistan's indigenous products showcased at the ongoing South and Southeast Asia Commodity Expo and Investment Fair (SSA-CEIF) in China's Kunming city have hit the mark, attracting huge number of local and

international entrepreneurs.

By setting up 200 stalls, Pakistani businessmen are making headway in highlighting country's trade potential amongst 3,300 corporate entities from 74 countries at the week-long expo, being held in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province. (Monitoring Desk)

Iran to Detail Measures Taken to Reduce Obligations Under Nuclear Deal

TEHRAN - Iran will release important details about the measures it has taken so far to sus-

pend some of its commitments under a 2015 nuclear deal, in reciprocation of a move by the United States to unilaterally scrap that deal.

Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday that the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) would in a press briefing on Monday release "very important information" regarding the "limitless increase of Iran's enriched uranium stockpile" as well as measures taken to prepare for the second phase of the scaling back of its obligations.

The briefing will be held at the Arak heavy water reactor facility on Monday, with more than 70 media personnel in attendance.

The latest measures undertaken by Iran to re-design the Arak research reactor and to increase the production of heavy water at the facility would also be de-

tailed during the Monday session, the Tasnim report added.

The US imposed a series of sanctions on Iran after it withdrew from the deal. Those sanctions have inhibited Iran's access to the economic benefits promised under the agreement.

On May 8, one year since Washington's exit from the agreement, Tehran announced a decision to scale back its own commitments and gave a 60-day deadline for the other parties to the deal to ensure that Iran would be able to receive the economic dividends.

Tehran said at the time that it would stop exporting excess uranium and heavy water during that period.

'60-day deadline will not be extended'

On Saturday, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araqchi stressed that Iran's 60-day deadline would by no means be extended. (Press TV)