

Like Father, Like Son: US Authorities Offer \$1mn Reward for Capture of Bin Laden Jr.

WASHINGTON - The US State Department is offering \$1 million as a reward for the "identification or location" of Hamza bin Laden - son of notorious Al-Qaeda terrorist Osama - warning he's following in his dad's footsteps. Hamza bin Laden "is emerging as a leader in the [Al-Qaeda] franchise," a State Department spokesperson tweeted, noting that the son of the most famous man in state-sponsored terrorism has been releasing "audio and video messages on the Internet calling on his followers to launch attacks against the United States and its Western allies" - even threatening attacks of his own against the US "in revenge for the May 2011 killing of his father by US service members." Bin Laden the Younger was named a "specially design-



ated global terrorist" in 2017, meaning US citizens are banned from interacting with him economically or otherwise, and he's on the UN's terror sanctions list - meriting an arms embargo, asset freeze, and travel ban. ...*(More on P4)...(9)*

Neighbor News

Pakistan Hands Over Captured Pilot to India

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan handed over a captured Indian pilot to Indian authorities Friday afternoon as a goodwill gesture to de-escalate tensions between the two neighbors, local media reported. However, there is no official confirmation about the development. According to the reports, the Indian pilot Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman was handed over to Indian officials at the Wagah border crossing near Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore.

Pakistani and Indian officials completed the handover process in the presence of some independent international observers, the reports said. Some reports said the pilot is with the Indian officials on the Pakistani side and they will enter to Indian territory after the sunset. The Indian pilot was arrested by Pakistani forces in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir after his fighter jet was shot down by Pakistan in Pakistani airspace Wednesday morning. (Xinhua)

Zarif Says 'Doubly Motivated', Thanks Gen. Soleimani, Rouhani

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says all Iranian people are on the same boat and must stand united against "hegemonic powers" seeking to cause division among the nation. "Iranians, regardless of their political, religious or ethnic inclinations, are aboard the same boat," Zarif said in a Thursday post on his Instagram. The Iranian top diplomat said national "unity and sympathy is the secret behind the victories of and progresses made by the great nation of Iran over the past four decades."

powers still believe they can secure their interests by "exporting arms to regional states, destabilizing West Asia and exerting maximum pressure on the great nation of Iran." However, he added, these unwise powers will achieve nothing by exerting pressure on Iran thanks to the "mutual trust between the Iranian nation and government as well as the growing will on the side of the Iranian officials to fulfill their duties within the law." Zarif further thanked the Iranian nation for their great support for him following his Monday resignation, and appreciated the supportive remarks made by IRGC Quds Force Commander Major General Qassem Soleimani and President Hassan Rouhani. (Press TV)

"It is also the main reason behind the failures of hegemonic powers, who seek to secure their interests by creating division among the Iranian society," he went on to say. Zarif said the hegemonic

WB to Help Uzbekistan Airlines Become Regional Leader

TASHKENT - The World Bank and Uzbekistan Airways are developing a business plan to make the airline a leader in the air transport market in Central Asia, Trend reports via the Uzbek media. Taking into account the recommendations of the World Bank Group and in accordance with the country's priorities for modernizing the economy, the Government of Uzbekistan has already begun the process of reforming the air traffic sector. International practices

are currently being introduced at the Uzbek national airline, the bank said. WB experts state that in the long run these reforms will bring significant benefits, improve competitiveness and ensure high level flight safety. To this end, the company is focusing on increasing its budget revenues and reducing costs, the WB reported. Moreover, Uzbekistan Airways continues to timely repay debts and fulfills its contractual obligations in full. (Trend)

EU Welcomes Turkmen Policy on Diversification of Energy Supplies

ASHGABAT - At the meeting of Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov with representatives of international organizations accredited in the country, Charge d'Affaires of the EU Liaison Office in Turkmenistan Lubomir Frebort expressed gratitude for supporting the development of relations with the EU, Trend reports with reference to the Turkmenistan State News Agency. The representative of Brussels also expressed appreciation for the initiatives taken by Turkmenistan on universal energy security and the ongoing policy of diversifying energy supplies, adding that Europe can become one of the directions for diversifying energy supplies with the implementation of a promising project to lay a gas pipeline across the Caspian Sea. The EU and Turkmenistan are committed to implementing a pro-

ject designed to bring Turkmen hydrocarbon energy carriers to European markets. The negotiations have been underway since 2011. The project of laying a 300-kilometer gas pipeline along the bottom of the Caspian Sea to the shores of Azerbaijan is optimal for the delivery of Turkmen gas to the European market. Further, the Turkmen gas can be delivered to Turkey, which borders with European countries. At the German-Turkmen business forum held recently in Berlin, the issue of the prospects for Turkmen gas to enter the EU markets was raised. Head of the Turkmen-gaz State Concern Myrat Archayev said that the East-West gas pipeline that was commissioned in 2015 connected the gas-rich eastern regions of Turkmenistan with the west of the country and the Caspian coast. (Trend)

Grounded Ship Leaks 80 Tons of Oil Near Pacific UNESCO Site

WELLINGTON, New Zealand - An environmental disaster is unfolding in the Pacific after a large ship ran aground and began leaking oil next to a UNESCO World Heritage site in the Solomon Islands, Australian officials said Friday. Footage taken this week shows little progress has been made in stopping the Solomon Trader ship from leaking oil since it ran aground Feb. 5, according to the Australian High Commission in the Solomon Islands. Australian experts esti-

mate more than 80 tons of oil has leaked into the sea and shoreline in the ecologically delicate area and that more than 660 tons of oil remains aboard the Hong Kong-flagged ship, which is continuing to leak. The ship was chartered by the Bintan Mining company in the Solomon Islands to carry bauxite, which is used in aluminum production. Bintan Solomon Islands chief executive Fred Tang was not immediately available for comment Friday. ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

Kim Jong Un Willing to Sit Down with Trump again, North Korea State Media Says

HANOI - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is willing to sit down again with President Trump for denuclearization talks in the near future despite the two leaders not reaching a deal this week during their highly anticipated Hanoi summit, North Korean state media reported Friday. The summit ended abruptly Thursday after Trump refused to agree to Kim's demands that U.N.-imposed sanctions on North Korea be lifted in exchange for partial denuclearization - an



outcome that would have been short of a U.S. goal of full denuclearization. According to Bloomberg, Trump believed it was

best to call off the Hanoi talks rather than agree to a deal that wouldn't work for the U.S. "[W]e couldn't do that,"

Trump said of Kim's request. Nevertheless, North Korean state news agency ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

Eurotunnel Withdraws Suit after \$43 Million Brexit Deal



LONDON - Eurotunnel struck a 33 million-pound (\$43 million) agreement Friday with the British government

to ensure that vital medicine and other critical goods keep flowing to the country in the event Britain crashes out of the

European Union without a deal. As part of the arrangement, the company withdrew its lawsuit

against the government over a claim of being unfairly excluded from bidding for contracts being offered to run ferry services after leaving EU. "While it is disappointing that Eurotunnel chose to take legal action on contracts in place to ensure the smooth supply of vital medicines, I am pleased that this agreement will ensure the Channel Tunnel is ready for a post-Brexit world," Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said. ...*(More on P4)...(11)*

US Plans to Buy Arms Incl Mortars in E. Europe, Send Them Close to Venezuela Border

MOSCOW - Washington plans to buy weapons including mortars and portable air-defense systems in an Eastern European country and send them close to Venezuela's border, Russian FM Sergey Lavrov said citing internal sources. It looks like the US is considering a military intervention in Venezuela, Moscow's top diplomat said during a press conference with Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodriguez on Friday. In this scenario, Washington

would be buying arms in Eastern Europe and sending them via cargo plane to locations near Venezuela's borders. On Thursday, Washington proposed a UNSC draft resolution blaming President Nicolas Maduro for causing an "economic collapse" in the country and calling for new elections. The bid was vetoed by Russia and China who accused the US of interfering in Venezuela's internal affairs. A rival Russian draft also failed. ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

Belarus President Lukashenko Says Likely to Run for Another Term

MINSK - Belarus president Alexander Lukashenko told reporters on Friday he was likely to run for re-election. His presidential term ends in 2020, and he said he would decide on the date of the next election in the next couple of months. (Reuters)

Minister Urges Vatican to Aide French Investigation into Papal Envoy

PARIS - France's European affairs minister suggested on Friday that the Vatican should lift the diplomatic immunity granted to its papal envoy in France, Archbishop Luigi Ventura, who is under investigation after accusations of sexual molestation.

French prosecutors opened an investigation in January after a junior official at Paris City Hall accused Ventura, 74, of molestation. Authorities have been unable to question Ventura because of the diplomatic immunity he enjoys as papal nuncio, equivalent to ambassador. The Vatican has said that it is aware of the investigation and is awaiting the outcome of the inquiry. Ventura has not commented on the allegations, and his office in Paris declined to comment on Friday on the allegations. Speaking to France's CNews, European Affairs Minister Nathalie Loiseau said it was incumbent on the Vatican to do what it could to allow French prosecutors to pursue their enquiries, saying the goal should be to establish the truth. "At this point, ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

Stoltenberg: Nato Doesn't Want A New Cold War

SOFIA, Bulgaria - NATO's secretary-general has warned that Russia's violation of a key Cold War-era treaty is one of the most pressing security challenges for the alliance.

Jens Stoltenberg urged Russia to return to compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, which has been the cornerstone for arm control for decades.

Stoltenberg said Friday after talks with Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov in Sofia that



"NATO does not want a new cold war, we don't want a new arms race and we call on Russia to come back into compliance with the INF Treaty." He added that at the same time NATO needs to be

prepared for a world without the INF Treaty and with more Russian missiles. Stoltenberg was in Bulgaria for the 15th anniversary of the country joining NATO. (Fox News)

Berlin: We've Had No Recent Talks with Beijing on Cybersecurity

BERLIN - The German government has not held talks with Beijing about cybersecurity issues in recent weeks, a spokesman said when asked about a report that Chancellor Angela Merkel was seeking a no-spying deal with China over the Huawei issue. WirtschaftsWoche had on Tuesday cited security sources as saying Merkel was seeking such an agreement. Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei is facing intense scrutiny in the West over its relationship with the Chinese government

and allegations of enabling state espionage, which it denies. German government spokesman Steffen Seibert said Germany and China regularly held talks on how to prevent malicious cyber activities and had agreed that they would protect confidential company data and ensure safe cross-border data transfers when making and implementing cyber laws. "Negotiations on a further agreement in this area have not happened in recent weeks," Seibert told a news conference on Friday. (Reuters)

India's Growth May Decelerate Further Despite Election Spending

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI - Billions of dollars of pre-election spending by the Indian government and political parties in the next two months is unlikely to stop the nation's economy from slowing further, economists said.

Asia's third-largest economy lost momentum in the final quarter of 2018, as the annual rate of growth slipped to 6.6 percent, much lower than expected and the slowest pace in five quarters.

But the worst may not be over. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who will be seeking a second term in elections due to be held by May, in an interim budget last month introduced populist spending measures worth 1.8 trillion rupees (\$25.37 billion) and modest tax cuts in the current fiscal year ending March 31 in an attempt to win the votes of farmers and the urban middle class. That is on top of additional spending at state government level.

The political parties are also likely to spend nearly 500 billion rupees during the election campaign, according to estimates of CMS, a Delhi-based think tank. But weakening global growth, rising oil prices in recent weeks, slowing growth in government spending on infrastructure and delays in investment decisions because of uncertainty about who will form the next government could more than offset the extra election-related spending. ...*(More on P4)...(15)*