

## Death Toll from Indonesia Floods, Mudslides Rises to 89

JAYAPURA, Indonesia - The death toll from flash floods and mudslides triggered by torrential downpours in eastern Indonesia has risen to 89, with dozens of others missing.

National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho says the worst-hit area from the flooding was Sentani subdistrict, where tons of mud, rocks and trees from a landslide on a mountain rolled down to a river that burst its banks, sweeping away residents. He said Tuesday that 89 bodies had been pulled from the mud and wreckage of crumpled homes and 159 people were injured. Rescuers were searching for 74 residents reportedly missing.



Papua military spokesman Col. Muhammad Aidi said more than 1,600 rescuers,

including police and soldiers, were facing due to shortages of heavy difficulties clearing huge piles of debris equipment. (Fox News)

## Neighbor News

### Turkmenistan Invites Bahrain to Participate in TAPI Gas Pipeline Project

ASHGABAT - Bahraini companies have been invited to participate in the implementation of a promising project to build the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline (TAPI), Trend reports via the State News Agency of Turkmenistan.

Talks on the matter were held in Ashgabat between President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and King of Bahrain Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa. It was also noted that

the construction of the TAPI gas pipeline is currently continuing at a high pace. Bahraini companies were invited to participate in this promising project. The fact that the both countries have fuel, energy and processing facilities, and their favorable geographical location will serve as a platform for mutual exchange of experience, implementation of large-scale projects for the delivery of energy resources to international markets. (Trend)

### Uzbekistan Introduces 30-Day Visa-Free Regime for UAE Citizens

TASHKENT - Uzbekistan has introduced a 30-day visa-free regime for citizens of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) starting from March 20, according to a Uzbek presidential decree published on Tuesday.

The decree issued by Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev also instructs the Uzbek foreign office to issue multiple-entry visas for up to one year to UAE citizens visiting Uzbekistan for business purposes.

According to the decree, the decision is aimed at further enhancing political, trade, economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation between Uzbekistan and the UAE, creating a favorable investment climate and developing

the country's tourism potential. Uzbekistan's government has been taking a set of measures to boost tourism. The government's aim is to attract more than 9 million foreign tourists by 2025 and increase the share of the tourism industry in the gross domestic product from 2.3 percent in 2017 to 5 percent in 2025. In February, the Central Asian nation has offered 45 more countries 30-day visa-free travel and the list of countries eligible for Uzbekistan's e-visa system was expanded to 76 countries.

According to the state tourism committee, the number of visitors to Uzbekistan hit 5.3 million in 2018, nearly double that of 2017. (Xinhua)

### President Calls for Participation of Educated Youth in Country's Socio-Economic Development

ISLAMABAD - President Dr Arif Alvi Tuesday urged the country's educated youth to participate in the government's efforts of achieving the goal of socio-economic progress and development in the country.

"It is not the government alone which has to work towards the progress and development of country, but your participation is a must to achieve the goal of socio-economic development", he told the graduating students while speaking at a convocation of Iqra University here at the Convention Centre. The president said it was the duty of young graduates to serve the country and society, which

contributed in their education. "Please do not forget the people of Pakistan, who brought you here", he remarked. He also highlighted and lauded the role of parents and teachers in the upbringing and grooming of youth so that they could play a positive role in the society after getting their education completed. He said Pakistan by improving its standards of education could become a role model for other countries. The president said since there was no dearth of education and knowledge in this digital era, there was a need to ensure the access of people to the modern resources of research and knowledge. (Monitoring Desk)

### Investment in Human Capital Imperative for Development: Asad Umar

ISLAMABAD - Finance Minister Asad Umar here on Tuesday said investment in human capital was very imperative and central to development of the country.

"Educating youth and investing in their development is both means to an end and end in itself," the finance minister said this while addressing the Human Capital Summit here.

The minister said that investing in education and human capital was actually investing in economy as it yields high economic dividends, hence investments in these sectors was actually investing in economy. He said the government was fully committed to work in this direction.

The minister said that there was need for going beyond monetary statistics when dealing with human development and poverty alleviation, adding that over the years success had been made in terms of poverty reduction and developing human capital as indicators were better today as compare to 20 years back. However, the pace with which these developments have taken place in the other parts of the world have not taken place same way in Pakistan. He said that Pakistan would be using multi-dimensional approach for measuring poverty and help alleviate it. (Monitoring Desk)

### 'NATO Solidarity Clause Is Called Article 5, Not Article F-35' - French Defense Minister

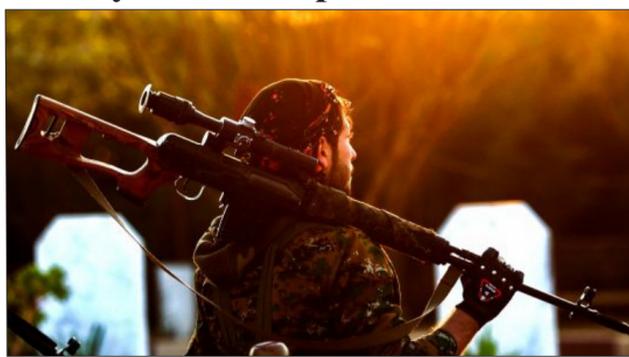
PARIS - Europe must move away from full dependency on American weapon supplies, the French defense minister stressed, slamming President Donald Trump's "conditional" approach towards NATO and his European allies.

Expressing concern that Trump's idea of NATO's solidarity is "conditional on allies buying this or that equipment," the French Minister of the Armed Forces, Florence Parly, wondered if the US commitment to the military block will continue

to be "perennial." Despite the White House pushing their allies to buy more American weapons, developing European autonomous capabilities in the military field is crucial to national security and essential to moving away from Washington's dominance, Parly argued, noting the US arms industry currently supplies NATO with 100 percent of its strategic bombers and missile defense systems, 92 percent of its drones, and 91 percent of its air tankers. ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

### US-Backed Force Says It's in Control of IS Syria Encampment

BEIRUT - A spokesman for U.S.-backed forces fighting the Islamic State group in Syria says his fighters are in control of an encampment in the village of Baghouz where IS militants have been besieged for months. Mustafa Bali, of the Kurdish-led force known as the Syrian Democratic Forces, says clashes however are continuing elsewhere in the village in eastern Syria as IS militants continue to fight back. Bali says on Twitter on Tuesday that controlling the encampment in Bag-



houz marks "significant progress" in the fight but that it's "not a victory announcement."

The area held by IS in Baghouz is the last pocket of territory in Syria controlled by the extremist group, which once held a vast area of Syria and Iraq, calling it an Islamic "caliphate." (Fox News)

### Cuban Doctors on Mission in Venezuela Say They Were Forced to Tie Medical Treatments to Votes for Maduro



HAVANA - Cuban doctors dispatched to Venezuela as part of Cuba's mission to help the South American nation's medical needs were pressed by the host government

to tie crucial treatments and medication to a patient's promise to vote for President Nicolas Maduro and his candidates in last year's elections, according to The New York

Times. The Times reported that in interviews, 16 doctors involved in Cuba's medical missions said they were pressured to do such things as deny treatment to patients who supported Maduro's political opponents and to go door-to-door in poor areas and offer medicine and treatment to those who voted for the socialist leader. One doctor described how he was told not to treat a 65-year-old patient who sought emergency care because of heart failure because the

oxygen tanks needed to respond to his condition were being saved for manipulating would-be voters closer to the election. "These are the kinds of things you should never do in your life," said one Cuban doctor who requested anonymity. Others expressed similar frustration and outrage over being coerced to handle people in dire need of medicine and treatment in a way that went against everything they had been taught in their medical training. ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

### Merkel on Huawei: Germany Won't Exclude 5G Providers Just Because They Come from China

BERLIN - Angela Merkel has said that her government will not exclude Huawei or any other company from helping to develop 5G in Germany simply because they come from China, in a clear rebuke of Washington's stance on the issue. "The government has said our approach is not to simply exclude one company or one actor, but rather we have requirements of the competitors for this 5G technology," Merkel said at the annual Global Solutions Summit in Berlin

on Tuesday. The chancellor explained that regulations related to 5G development in Germany would be laid out in new telecommunications legislation. "And then we shall then talk to our partners, because they have their ideas as well," she added. Merkel's comments come a week after she stated that Germany would define its own security standards for a new 5G mobile network. In recent months, Washington has been pressuring ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

### North Korea Must Abandon Nuclear, Missile Programs: U.S.

GENEVA - A senior U.S. arms control official said on Tuesday that the only way for North Korea to achieve security and development is to abandon all of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs.

Yleem Poblete, Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, urged countries to halt any weapons or military cooperation with North Korea. "You are violating U.N. Security Council resolutions that explicitly prohibit such transfers," she said.

There was no immediate reaction from North Korea's delegation at the United Nations-sponsored Conference on Disarmament. (Reuters)

### Turkey Escalates Crackdown on Dissent Six Years after Gezi Protests

ISTANBUL - Unzile Aksakoglu struggles to explain to her seven-year-old daughter why her father Yigit has spent four months in jail and may never leave, because of his alleged role in mass protests against Turkey's government when she was just a year old.

After all, the people originally prosecuted over the 2013 protests - which began against the redevelopment of central Istanbul's Gezi Park and grew into nationwide anti-government unrest - were acquitted.

A Turkish judge ruled in 2015 that the protesters were exercising the right of freedom of assembly in what turned out to be the biggest popular challenge to Tayyip Erdogan's rule. ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

### India's Aircraft Carrier & Nuclear Subs Deployment A 'No-Nonsense' Message to China, Not Pakistan?

NEW DELHI - China is using Pakistan as a tool to contain India, so the redeployment of an aircraft carrier, warships and nuclear-powered submarines to North Arabian Sea is a clear signal to Beijing, rather than Islamabad, analysts told RT.

Despite the heated tensions around the Kashmir region, "India does not base its defense preparedness on what Pakistan does or does not do," Gopalaswami Parthasarathy, former Indian envoy to Pakistan, said. The country is much more concerned about "what China does to contain In-



dian influence in the Indian Ocean," he told RT. "Pakistan, by itself, does not worry us. We can more than match and manage Pakistan," he reiterated. Indian military journalist, Shiv Aroor, also said that the naval forces of the two neighbors "aren't

near peers in terms of numbers, strength or capability - Pakistan, for instance, doesn't operate nuclear submarines or aircraft carriers." However, "if maritime hostilities [between India and Pakistan] ever did break out in whatever ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

### Russia, US Set to Search for LIFE TRACES on Venus - Scientist

MOSCOW - There is a good chance that simple bacteria populate the atmosphere of Venus, a Russian scientist told local media. A joint US-Russian space mission planned for 2026 is expected to look for life traces in the planet's clouds. Venus is the hottest planet in the solar system as temperatures on its surface can reach a staggering 465 degrees Celsius (870 degrees Fahrenheit). However, simple forms of life may still have survived in the atmosphere, according to

Ludmila Zasova, co-chair of the joint Russian-US 'Venera-D' ("Venus-D") project.

Clouds on Venus are mostly made of sulfuric acid but there's also 15-20 percent of water in them, the scientist said, adding that temperature and atmospheric pressure in the lower layer of the cloud cover is similar to those on Earth. Not a single robot has managed to land on Venus for more than 30 years, when the Soviet ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

### Physicist Marcelo Gleiser: 'Science Does Not Kill God'

WASHINGTON - The annual Templeton Prize, which recognizes outstanding contributions to "affirming life's spiritual dimension," was awarded Tuesday to Brazilian Marcelo Gleiser - a theoretical physicist dedicated to demonstrating science and religion are not enemies.

A physics and astronomy professor whose specializations include cosmology, 60-year-old Gleiser was born in Rio de Janeiro, and has been in the United States since 1986.

An agnostic, he doesn't believe in God - but refuses to write off the possibility of God's existence completely.

"Atheism is inconsistent with the scientific method," Gleiser told AFP Monday from Dartmouth College, the New Hampshire university where he has taught since 1991.

"Atheism is a belief in non-belief. So you categorically deny something you have no evidence against."

"I'll keep an open mind because I understand that human knowledge is limited," he added.

The prize is funded by the John Templeton Foundation - a philanthropic organization named after the American Presbyterian who made his fortune on Wall Street, and who set on "seeking proofs of divine agency in every branch of science", as The Economist put it.

Gleiser joins Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama and dissident Soviet author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn as recipients of the prize, first awarded in 1973. At £1.1 million (\$1.5 million), the prize money ...*(More on P4)...(18)*