

Russian, Venezuelan Foreign Ministers to Meet in Moscow

MOSCOW - Russian state news agencies say Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is to meet with his Venezuelan counterpart on Sunday, a day before Lavrov is to meet the U.S. secretary of state amid growing tensions over the Venezuela crisis.

The meeting with Jorge Arreaza will take place in Moscow, state news agency Tass cited the foreign ministry as saying.

Russia supports Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, while the United States regards opposition leader Juan Guaidó as the country's interim president. Washington and Moscow accuse each other of interfering in Venezuela's internal affairs, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has raised the prospect of U.S. military interven-



Lavrov and Pompeo are to meet Monday in Finland on the sidelines of an Arctic Council session. (Fox News)

Neighbor News

China Focus: China Promotes Green Development Along Belt and Road

BEIJING - Wearing a white safety helmet, 26-year-old Egyptian engineer Ahmed Mansour works outdoors eight hours a day, braving temperature above 40 degrees Celsius in Egypt's southern province of Aswan.

Checking the running state of all holders and recording data from solar inverters, Mansour has been dedicated to maintaining solar panels in Aswan since 2017 when the photovoltaic power (PV) generation project he works on started its trial run.

"It is meaningful that we are using environmentally friendly ways to produce precious electricity," Mansour said. The project is part of the overseas solar development of China's green

energy company TBEA Sunoasis Co., Ltd., which officially started building four solar power stations last year at the Benban Solar Energy Park in Aswan.

The stations, with an output of 186 megawatts, are part of the giant Benban Solar Plant which aims to generate up to two gigawatts of utility-scale solar capacity through a total of 40 projects.

So far, three of the four stations have been completed.

Mansour said he was impressed by TBEA's measures to protect the environment. "During construction, waste such as garbage and sewage were disposed of by adhering to strict standards," he said. *... (More on P4)... (20)*

Pakistan Warns against 'Reckless Measures' to Reform UNSC, Suggests Step-By-Step Approach

UNITED NATIONS - Pakistan has warned that attempts by the aspirants of permanent seats on the UN Security Council to bluster through the ongoing process to reach to an agreement on reforming the 15-member body would obstruct efforts to make it more democratic, representative, accountable, transparent and efficient.

"Given fundamental divergences that are evident, the gap that exists between respective positions cannot be papered over or worse, blustered through," Ambassador Maleeha Lodi said in the course of discussions in the long-running Inter-governmental Negotiations (IGN) aimed

at restructuring the Security Council. Ambassador Lodhi stressed that the gaps between the positions of the parties should be bridged through an incremental and step-by-step approach and that non-consensual measures must be avoided. "Any reckless measures could not only threaten the gains made in the IGN, but also set back efforts for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council," she said.

Despite a general agreement on enlarging the Council, as part of the UN reform process, member states remain sharply divided over the details. (Monitoring Desk)

Iran Urges Bahrain to 'Know Its Place' before Making Threats

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman has downplayed the Bahraini foreign minister's claim that Iran will not be allowed to close the Strait of Hormuz "even for a single day", urging the Manama regime to "know its place" before making threats.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran underlines the security of the Strait of Hormuz as a lifeline for the supply and transit of global energy, so long as the Iranian nation's interests are secured through the important and vital strait," Seyyed Abbas Mousavi said Friday. He then referred to Bahrain as a "tiny de-

pendent country", and advised its officials "to know their place when threatening those bigger than themselves." Mousavi made the comments after Bahrain's Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifah claimed Iran "will not be allowed to close for one day the Strait of Hormuz".

In an interview in Paris with Asharq Al-Awsat, Sheikh Khalid lashed out at the Iran nuclear deal, claiming that it dealt with Tehran's nuclear program but did not address its missile program and what he called its "interventions in regional countries". (Press TV)

Kazakhstan Resumes Transit of Turkmen Gas to Russia

ASHGABAT - KazTransGas JSC has resumed the transit of Turkmen marketable gas through Kazakhstan to Russia via the Central Asia-Center (CAC) gas pipeline, Trend reports referring to the company's press service.

The transportation volume on this route is 15 million cubic meters per day. More than 220 million cubic meters of gas have already been transported since the beginning of the resumption of transit through the territory of Kazakhstan. KazTransGas was able to resume the transit through its gas pipeline system in record time. Thanks to modern tech-

nologies and modernization of the CAC gas pipeline, the mode of transportation of Turkmen gas was formed (launched) in a matter of days. As was reported by the Turkmen side, the deliveries to Russia were resumed on April 15 under the current 25-year contract from 2003 after a commercial pause taken by Gazprom in early 2016. Russia receives Turkmen gas from the CAC pipeline through the territory of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Until 2009, Gazprom was the largest buyer of Turkmen natural gas, purchasing up to 40-42 billion cubic meters of natural gas. (Trend)

North Korea Fires Short-Range Projectiles Eastward - S. Korea

WONSAN - North Korea has fired several short-range projectiles eastward from the city of Wonsan on its east coast, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, which initially misidentified the objects as missiles.

The projectiles went off at 9:06 a.m. on Saturday from the east coast town of Wonsan in the direction of the Sea of Japan (known in the Koreans as the East Sea), Yonhap news agency reported, quoting South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), which initially

misidentified the objects as ballistic missiles. The projectiles flew between 70 and 200km.

South Korean and US authorities are reportedly analyzing the firing. Disarmament talks between North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and US President Donald Trump collapsed in Hanoi earlier this year when the US leader refused to relax sanctions without Pyongyang's unconditional denuclearization.

Following a summit in Vladivostok last month, *... (More on P4)... (15)*

Japan's New Emperor Urges World Peace in First Public Speech

TOKYO - Emperor Naruhito urged Japan to work together for world peace as he made his first public appearance Saturday in front of a cheering, flag-waving crowd of tens of thousands.

"I sincerely wish that our country, hand-in-hand with foreign countries, seeks world peace and further development," said the 59-year-old Naruhito, who ascended the Chrysanthemum Throne Wednesday. Japan's 126th emperor wore a morning coat to

make the brief appearance on a glass-covered balcony of the Imperial Palace in central Tokyo, along with other adult royals including Empress Masako.

Masako donned an elegant yellow, long-sleeved dress with a matching hat and pearl necklace.

Emperor and empress emerita, Akihito and Michiko, did not join their children as they have decided to withdraw from official duties after their three-decade reign.



Akihito, 85, was the first Japanese emperor to abdicate in more than two centuries. The royal family were

scheduled to make a total of six appearances throughout the day, with some 50,000 people *... (More on P4)... (12)*

Indonesia Sinks 51 Foreign Boats to Fight against Poaching



JAKARTA - Indonesia - Indonesian authorities have resumed their tough stance against illegal fishing in the country's water by sink-

ing 51 foreign ships. Maritime and Fisheries Minister Susi Pudjias-tuti says the ships were sunk Saturday at five ports across the archi-

pelago, which has some of the world's richest fishing grounds. The boats had been seized from Chinese, Malaysian, Filipino, Thai and

Vietnamese fishermen. The move comes a week after an Indonesian navy ship was rammed by two Vietnamese coast guard vessels after intercepting a boat it says was fishing illegally.

Last year, the ministry sunk 125 mostly foreign vessels, including 86 Vietnamese-flagged ships, 20 Malaysian and 14 from the Philippines. Indonesia says it has sunk more than 500 illegal fishing vessels since October 2014. (Fox News)

Damascus Accuses Kurd-Led Alliance of 'Treason'

DAMASCUS - The Syrian government has accused Kurdish leaders of "treason" for organizing a conference with allied Arab tribes to plot out the political future of territory under their alliance's control. The Kurds and their Arab allies control a vast swathe of the north and northeast that makes up around a third of Syrian territory, much of which they captured in the long and costly campaign against the Islamic State group. Buoyed by its recap-

ture of most of the rest of Syria, Damascus is now demanding that alliance-held areas too return to central government control. Weakened by the decision of its main ally Washington to withdraw most of its troops following the defeat of the last vestige of IS's "caliphate" in March, the Kurdish-led alliance has opened talks with Damascus. But its leaders are determined not to accept the negotiated surrender of a "reconciliation *... (More on P4)... (16)*

US Seeks to Sell \$39 Mn Mansion Tied to Malaysia Scandal

KUALA LUMPUR - US authorities are seeking to sell a \$39-million luxury mansion in Los Angeles allegedly bought by a Malaysian financier with money looted from scandal-hit state fund IMDB, court documents showed. Billions of dollars were purportedly pilfered from the Malaysian sovereign wealth fund by former prime minister Najib Razak and his cronies, and spent on everything from high-end real estate to artworks.

Financier Low Taek Jho is suspected of playing a central role in the fraud and has been charged in absentia in Malaysia and America, *... (More on P4)... (17)*

'I Shall Reign with Righteousness': Thailand Crowns King in Ornate Ceremonies

BANGKOK - Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn on Saturday completed Buddhist and Brahmin rituals to symbolically transform him into a living god as the Southeast Asian nation crowned its first monarch in nearly seven decades.

The coronation of King Vajiralongkorn, 66, took place inside the Grand Palace throne hall in Bangkok after a period of official mourning for his revered father, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who died in October 2016 having reigned for 70 years.

The king sat on a golden throne under a nine-tiered umbrella to receive royal regalia including a gold-enameled, diamond-tipped crown in ceremonies that mixed glittering *... (More on P4)... (18)*

'Heavy Barrage of Rockets': IDF Says 100+ Missiles Launched from Gaza, Dozens Intercepted

GAZA - A "heavy barrage" of rockets has been launched at the territory of southern Israel, the country's defense forces (IDF) said in a tweet, claiming the projectiles were fired from Gaza.

Warning sirens blared in Israeli border communities on Saturday morning amid reports of multiple projectiles being launched from Gaza. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said the attack lasted for 10 minutes.

Residents in the towns of Ashkelon and Ashdod reported hearing blasts in the area. Meanwhile, several



rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome above Ashkelon, the Jerusalem Post reported, citing local authorities. The IDF also posted footage apparently showing the "incoming" missiles. The launches come one day after two Israeli

troops were shot and injured during patrol along the border in Gaza. In response to the shooting, the Israeli Air Force bombed a Hamas target, killing two people. Hamas confirmed they were members of its *... (More on P4)... (13)*

Europe Living in Peace Thanks to Turkey Hosting Millions of Refugees - Erdogan

ISTANBUL - Europe would not enjoy the same level of peace and security that it does today if it weren't for Turkey's willingness to host waves of refugees pouring in from numerous countries, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has claimed.

"If European countries are living in peace today, it is thanks to Turkey for hosting 4 million refugees," Erdogan said on Friday, as quoted by Anadolu.

In 2015, the EU agreed to pay Turkey €3 billion (\$3.3 billion) in exchange for housing refugees and preventing them from entering the bloc. A year later, a formal deal was reached between Ankara and Brussels, stipulating that all migrants arriving illegally on European shores would be returned to transit country Turkey. In exchange, the EU promised to speed up deliberations over Turkey's bid to *... (More on P4)... (14)*

'Miracle': Plane Crashes into Florida River, But No Deaths

CUBA - A charter plane carrying 143 people from the U.S. military base in Cuba to north Florida ended up in a river off the end of a runway Friday night, and while some passengers were hospitalized, no critical injuries or deaths were reported, officials said.

A Boeing 737 arriving at Naval Air Station Jacksonville from Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, with 136 passengers and seven aircrew slid off the runway into the St. Johns River, a NAS Jacksonville news release said.

The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office posted on Twitter that a marine unit responded to assist. The plane was in shallow water and not submerged. Everyone on the plane was alive and accounted for, the agency posted, with 21 adults transported to local hospitals in good condition.

A photo posted by deputies shows a Miami Air International logo on the plane. The company didn't immediately respond to messages from The Associated Press.

Capt. Michael Connor, the commanding officer of NAS Jacksonville, said during a news conference that passengers were a mix of civilian and military personnel. Some were staying in the area, while others were set to fly on to other parts of the country. While the crash certainly wasn't ideal, Connor acknowledged that it could have been much worse. "I think it is a miracle," Connor said. *... (More on P4)... (19)*