

Putin Looks Forward to Xi's Russia Visit in June

SOCHI - Russian President Vladimir Putin said Monday that he looks forward to Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Russia in June and the joint celebrations of the 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties with China.

Putin made the remarks here during a meeting with visiting Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

The Russian president asked Wang to convey his cordial greetings to Xi and congratulated China on the success of the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF) held last month in Beijing.

The comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination with China is Russia's diplomatic priority, Putin said, add-



ing that during his meeting with Xi in April, the two sides reached a new consensus on dovetailing between the Eurasian Economic Union and the Belt and Road Initiative.

Putin also noted that he and Xi exchanged views on major international and regional issues and further cemented strategic and political mutual trust between the two countries during the April meeting.

For his part, Wang conveyed Xi's good wishes to Putin and praised the Russian president's significant contributions to the success of the second BRF.

The important meeting between Xi and Putin last month in Beijing made a good start for the joint celebrations of the 70th anniversary of China-Russia diplomatic ties, Wang said, adding that bilateral ties have reached their highest level in history under the ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

UK Unemployment Rate Hits 45-Year Low

LONDON - British unemployment has fallen to a 45-year low, official data showed Tuesday, with the economy holding up despite prolonged Brexit uncertainty. The unemployment rate eased to 3.8 percent in the three months to March -- the lowest level since the final quarter of 1974, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said in a statement.

That compared with a 44-year low of 3.9 percent in the quarter to February. "The UK labour market has been remarkably resilient in the face of Bre-

xit-related uncertainty," Hargreaves Lansdown senior economist Ben Brettell said in reaction to the latest data. "These are really strong numbers given the headwinds the economy is currently facing." The ONS added that the UK employment rate was estimated at 76.1 percent, which was the joint-highest figure on record. "There are valid concerns that UK firms are hoarding labour instead of much-needed capital expenditure," said Brettell. ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

Pompeo Ahead of Meeting Putin: We Need to 'Find A Way Forward' in US-Russia Relations

MOSCOW - Ahead of his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said that it is their collective duty to "find ways for further development."

"During my meetings in Russia, a number of important topics will be discussed. For some of them we can agree, for others we can disagree, but when it comes to national interests, our duty is to find ways for further development," Pompeo



wrote on Twitter.

He is due to meet with the Russian leaders in Sochi on Tuesday to dis-

uss a wide range of issues. The US secretary of state canceled a planned meeting in Moscow to discuss escalating tensions between the US and Iran with European leaders in Brussels. (RT)

US Wants India to Swap Russian S-400s for THAAD & Patriots, But Will It Take the Bait?



NEW DELHI - The US has long vowed sanctions if India buys the S-400 from Russia, but now it is offering its THAAD and Patriot missiles as an alterna-

tive. But the sticks-and-carrots game won't help the US get its way, an analyst told RT. Washington has pitched Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)

and Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC-3) missile defense systems to India last month. Other details of the generous offer are shrouded in mystery, but it obviously comes to outweigh the \$5 billion deal India has signed with Russia to acquire the S-400 air defense systems. Simultaneously, the US seemed to have reeled back its threat of sanctions, choosing to go soft with India this time. This tactic looks particularly interesting when compared to the enormous

pressure Washington is piling on Turkey, another future operator of the cutting-edge S-400. Now, the American bait looks good at a glance but will India want to bite it? "I don't think it's going to work," Sreeram Chaulia, professor at India's Jindal School of International Affairs, told RT. India has decided long ago that the S-400, a successor to the time-proven S-300 family, "is the best available option" ...*(More on P4)...(11)*

US Targets \$300B of Chinese Goods for New Tariff Hikes

BEIJING - U.S. officials listed \$300 billion more of Chinese goods for possible tariff hikes while Beijing vowed Tuesday to "fight to the finish" in an escalating trade battle that is fueling fears about damage to global economic growth. The U.S. Trade Representative's Office issued its target list after Beijing announced tariff hikes Monday on \$60 billion of American goods in their spiraling dispute over Chinese technology ambitions and other irritants. Chinese authorities were reacting to President Donald Trump's surprise decision last week to impose punitive duties on \$200 billion of imports from China. "China will fight to the finish," said a foreign ministry spokesman, Geng Shuang. "We have the determination and capacity to safeguard our interests," Geng said. "China's countermeasures have shown our determination to safeguard the multilateral trade system." ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

Sudanese Union Says 6 Killed in Clashes with Security Forces

KHARTOUM, Sudan - Sudanese security forces shot and killed six people, including an army officer, in overnight clashes with protesters behind the uprising that drove President Omar al-Bashir from power last month, a medical union said Tuesday.

The killings took place after nightfall on Monday, when protests in Sudan usually swell during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan that is marked by dawn to dusk fasting.

Just hours earlier, Sudanese prosecutors had announced that they have charged al-Bashir with involvement in killing and incitement to kill protesters during the uprising, according to the state news agency SUNA. ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

UN Mission Urges Financial Isolation of Myanmar's Military

BANGKOK - A United Nations fact-finding mission urged Tuesday that countries cut off all business with Myanmar's military as part of efforts to hold the army accountable for human rights abuses.

The independent investigators, working under a mandate from the U.N. Human Rights Council, said in a statement that there has been no progress toward resolving the crisis over Myanmar's mostly Muslim Rohingya minority, more than 1 million of whom have fled military "clearance operations" in the northwest Rakhine region. "The situation is at a total standstill," said Marzuki Darusman, chairman of the Fact-Finding ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

US Plans to Deploy 120,000 Troops in Middle East to Counter Iran - Report

WASHINGTON - Donald Trump has reportedly been presented with a plan to send as many as 120,000 troops to the Middle East to counter the so-called Iranian threat, the New York Times reported. Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan disclosed the updated military plan at a meeting of Trump's top security aides on Thursday, the publication said, quoting anonymous sources inside the administration. Several options to tackle Tehran in the region were outlined to the president during the



briefing, while "the uppermost option called for deploying 120,000 troops, which would take weeks or months to complete," the Times said. While the revisions "ordered" by "hard-liners" do not promulgate a

land invasion of Iran, "the development reflects the influence of Mr. Bolton, one of the administration's most virulent Iran hawks," The Times reported. Bolton has been a long-time advocate of using ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

Trump Says It Would Be Big Mistake for Iran to Try Anything against U.S.

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump warned on Monday Iran would "suffer greatly" if it targeted U.S. interests after Washington deployed an aircraft carrier and more jet fighters at a time of rising tensions with Tehran.

"We'll see what happens with Iran. If they do anything, it will be a very bad mistake," Trump told reporters at the White House. "If they do anything they will suffer greatly."

Trump's comments came after the United Arab Emirates reported four

commercial vessels had been sabotaged on Sunday near Fujairah emirate just outside the Strait of Hormuz. Iran sought to distance itself from the incident.

Washington withdrew last year from a 2015 pact between Iran and global powers aimed at reining in Tehran's nuclear plans. Since then, the United States has ratcheted up sanctions on Iran, saying it wanted to reduce its oil exports to zero.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo canceled a trip ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

Chinese FM Calls for "Practical Roadmap" to Settle Korean Peninsula Nuclear Issue

SOCHI - A practical approach is key to solving the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said here on Monday.

The settlement of the nuclear issue has stagnated since the meeting between leaders of the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) late February in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi, said Wang at a press conference following talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

The main reason for the stagnation of the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue which has lasted for a quarter century is the lack of a practical and feasible roadmap accepted by both sides, Wang said.

However, he said, the fact that both the DPRK and the United States have not given up on the idea of resolving the issue through dialogue shows that the settlement process has not been derailed.

He noted that the leaders of the United States and the DPRK made a clear commitment in the Singapore Declaration last year to build a new type of relationship in order to achieve the twin goals of complete denuclearization of the peninsula and the signing of a peace treaty, both welcomed by the international community.

While the United States and the DPRK continue to seek common ground, China will also continue to play a ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

Neighbor News

FM Zarif Arrives in India as US-Iran Tensions Flare Up in Gulf

NEW DELHI - Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has visited India as both powers seek to cope with the impact of sweeping US sanctions aimed at cutting Iranian oil exports to zero.

Zarif arrived in New Delhi on Tuesday to meet with his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj. "India is one of our most important partners, economic, political and regional," the Iranian foreign minister said ahead of the talks.

The visit comes weeks after the US suspended temporary six-month waivers that had allowed several countries, including India, to continue buying Iranian oil without facing America's penalties. Unsurprisingly, the issue of sanctions is expected to be top of the meeting's agenda. India was Iran's second most important customer after China, but it put a halt to imports after the waivers expired in early May. (RT)

Chinese Deputy FM Conferred Pakistan Civil Award Hilal-e-Quaid-e-Azam

ISLAMABAD - The Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing Monday hosted a special investiture ceremony wherein Vice Foreign Minister of China Kong Xuanyou was conferred Hilal-e-Quaid-e-Azam, the civil award of Pakistan.

Ambassador of Pakistan in China Masood Khalid conferred the award, on behalf of the President of Pakistan, in recognition of Kong Xuanyou's services towards Pakistan and further strengthening of Pakistan-China relations, said a press release received here.

Kong Xuanyou is currently serving as Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs for Asia and Special Representative of the Chinese Government on the Korean Peninsular

Affairs in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. Earlier he was Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2015 to 2017. Kong Xuanyou has been a great friend of Pakistan and an ardent advocate of Pakistan-China friendship. He has earnestly worked to promote and reinforce all weather friendship between China and Pakistan and has cultivated good will for Pakistan in different spheres of influence in China. In his capacity as Assistant Minister and Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs for Asia, Kong led the Pakistan-China Strategic Dialogue aimed at promoting bilateral relations between the two countries. (Monitoring Desk)

Turkmenistan, Iran Discuss Cooperation in Caspian Sea

ASHGABAT - President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov received Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Trend reports referring to Turkmen Dowllet Habarlary (TDH) state agency.

One of the topics of discussion was cooperation in the Caspian.

"By implementing a foreign policy based on the principles of positive neutrality, good neighborliness and equal cooperation built on the balance of national and common interests, our country is for developing constructive partnership in the Caspian - both in a bilateral and a multilateral format", said the Turkmen head of state. The topic of the upcoming 1st Caspian Econom-

ic Forum, which will be held on August 12 in Turkmenistan's Awaza, was also touched upon during the meeting. Berdimuhamedov noted that the forum will facilitate the exchange of views on the implementation of the agreement between the governments of the Caspian states on trade and economic cooperation, along with cooperation in transport, which were signed following the 5th Summit of the Heads of Caspian Littoral States. Prospects for cooperation in the fuel and energy sector, where there are ample opportunities in the context of the favorable geographical position and the huge resource potential of both countries, were also discussed. (Trend)

Kyrgyzstan Ratifies Agreement with Turkmenistan on Elimination of Double Taxation

ASHGABAT - Kyrgyzstan has ratified an agreement between the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan on the elimination of double taxation and prevention of tax evasion with respect to taxes on income, Trend reports referring to the press service of the Kyrgyz Parliament.

The document was signed on August 23, 2018 in the Turkmen capital of Ashgabat. The agreement defines the rules for distinguishing the rights of each of the signatory states on taxation of subjects of one state that have a taxation object in another state, the information says.

The agreement protects a resident of one state from discrimina-

tory taxation in another signatory state, and prevents tax evasion or abuse of the provisions of the agreement by exchanging information between the competent authorities of the contracting states. It was reported earlier that Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan are discussing the prospects for cooperation in the creation of processing enterprises. The parties agreed to support the creation of joint ventures aimed at the markets of the EU, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and China. Kyrgyzstan is also negotiating with the state commodity and raw materials exchange of Turkmenistan to look for opportunities for increasing trade. (Trend)