

(1) Ukraine, Iran...

microscope, as the lawmakers debate ways to crank up pressure on Moscow to halt its aggression, while leaving the door open for dialogue. Relations with Ukraine's new leadership will also be assessed," the statement notes.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, British government ministers, top military officers, and a host of experts are expected to join hundreds of delegates for the October 11-14 meeting in London to reaffirm NATO's core values as the world's most powerful defence alliance celebrates 70 years since its founding.

"As NATO marks its 70th anniversary, this session will be a key moment to celebrate the work of this vitally important institution, the bedrock of our security," NATO PA President Madeleine Moon said. (UKRINFORM)

(2) Afghanistan's ...

they understand and when they are ready to know I will tell them."

Dr Ahmad Sarmast is one of the driving forces behind Zohra and the Afghanistan National Institute of Music.

He fled to Australia as a refugee in 1994 and achieved his PhD in music at Monash University in 2005.

"I strongly believe in the soft and transformative power of music," Dr Sarmast said.

"For me, music isn't a type of entertainment. For me, music is a much bigger and greater vehicle and a very powerful vehicle for contributing to several aspects of any given nation."

In 2010 he decided to return to his homeland, to try and restore Afghanistan's music industry. (SBS News)

(3) MPs Meet ...

Narender Singh Khalsa, an MP representing Sikh and Hindu community in Afghanistan.

Mr. Khalsa further claimed the police forces harassed them by force and attacked Mariam Sulimankhail, a female lawmaker.

"Police special forces are trying to change the narrative and weaken the legal position of the parliament. They want to portray MPs as bullies," said Gul Rahman Hamdard, an MP from northern Balkh province.

However, an official in the interior ministry said that the incident is under investigation and the rule of law will be implemented equally.

"The law enforcement and public security is the main responsibility of police. Last night incident between police and lawmakers is under serious investigations," said Nasrat Rahimi, the Interior Ministry Spokesman. (ATN)

(4) Gold Price...

Kazakhstani flour for 1,620af, a 49-kg bag of sugar for 2,000af, 24-kg of Pakistani rice 2,500af, a 16-litre tin of ghee for 1,200af, one-kg of Indonesian green tea for 320af and the same amount of black African tea for 360af—higher than wholesale rates.

The prices of fuel remain stable.

Mohammad Akram, a liquefied gas seller in Taimani area of Kabul city, said that the price of a kilogram of the commodity was 50af.

Abdul Hadi, a worker at Wazirabad Fuel Station in Kabul said that the price of a liter of petrol was 52af and the same quantity of diesel 48af.

Haji Mir Hussian Sadaqat, a moneychanger at the Money Exchange Service in Sara-i-Shahzada, said one US dollar was accounted for 78.15af and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 500af.

On October 5, one US dollar was accounted for 78.25af and 1,000 Pakistani rupees 498af. (Pajhwok)

(5) EU to Afghan...

from the devices was supposed to be completed a day after the election, but now, about two weeks after the election, the process has not been completed.

Several members of the IEC have previously said that if the work of the IEC proceeds in the same way, the date of the announcement of the election results may be delayed.

Based on the timetable of the IEC, the preliminary results of presidential election are to be announced on October 19 and the final results will be announced on November 7.

Ambassador Pierre Mayaudon says the September 28 presidential election was good compared to the past elections.

"In the previous elections you had the ghost voters or fake ballots by hundreds of thousands if not by millions, this time... these frauds in such a dramatic dimension... have been avoided," Mayaudon said.

The EU ambassador in Kabul considers technical problems, insecurity and lack of interest as the main reasons for the low turnout. (TOLO News)

(6) Global Aid ...

remain broadly balanced over the medi-

um term reflecting the authorities' commitment to fiscal discipline.

Large trade deficits continue to be financed by substantial grants, allowing international reserves to remain at comfortable levels.

Discussions focused on policies and reforms that will help deliver the objectives of stronger growth, self-reliance and poverty reduction.

"To this end, continued macroeconomic policy discipline remains indispensable to underpin growth and job creation," the team believed.

"The IMF will remain closely engaged with the Afghan authorities to support economic policy design and implementation of economic reforms." (Pajhwok)

(7) Kandahar Residents...

to address people's demands and claimed nothing had been done for improving the quality of education in Kandahar in the past. (Pajhwok)

(8) Companies Welcome...

on paper but said, "We should be able to get that done over the next four weeks." China's government welcomed "substantial progress" but gave no details of possible agreements.

"I don't think it's a victory, but it eases the situation," said economist Yu Chunhai at Renmin University in Beijing. He said both sides want to restore business and consumer confidence.

There was no word of agreements on the core issues that sparked the dispute. Those include U.S. pressure on Beijing to roll back plans for government-led creation of global competitors in robotics, electric cars and other technologies.

"There remains significant work ahead to address many of the most important U.S. trade and investment priorities," Myron Brilliant, executive vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said in a statement. Still, he called Friday's announcement a "ray of hope."

Washington, Europe, Japan and other trading partners say China's plans violate its market-opening obligations and are based on stealing or pressuring companies to hand over technology. Chinese leaders see those tactics as the surest path to prosperity and global influence.

"With the key structural issues no closer to being resolved, we suspect that a mini deal would, at best, simply delay a breakdown in the negotiations," said Julian Evans-Pritchard and Martin Lyngje Rasmussen of Capital Economics.

Friday's announcement also made no mention of commitments by Beijing in sensitive areas including subsidies to industry and cyber security, or the status of telecom equipment giant Huawei, which faces damaging U.S. sanctions. (AP News)

(9) Heavy Rain...

said meteorological agency official Yasushi Kajihara, adding that areas usually safe from disasters may prove vulnerable.

"Take all measures necessary to save your life," he said.

Kajihara said people who live near rivers should take shelter on the second floor or higher of any sturdy building if an officially designated evacuation center wasn't easily accessible. He also expressed fears that disaster may have already struck in some areas.

Hagibis, which means "speed" in Filipino, was advancing north-northwestward with maximum sustained winds of 144 kilometers (90 miles) per hour on Saturday evening, according to the meteorological agency. It was traveling toward Tokyo and northern Japan at a speed of 35 kph (22 mph).

The storm brought heavy rainfall in wide areas of Japan all day ahead of its landfall, including in Shizuoka and Mie prefectures, southwest of Tokyo, as well as Chiba to the north, which saw power outages and damaged homes in a typhoon last month.

Under gloomy skies, a tornado ripped through Chiba on Saturday, overturning a car in the city of Ichihara and killing a man inside the vehicle, city official Tatsuya Sakamaki said. Five people were injured when the tornado ripped through a house. Their injuries were not life-threatening, Sakamaki said.

Public broadcaster NHK put the storm's toll at one dead, four missing and 51 injured in 19 prefectures.

The heavy rain caused rivers to swell, flipped anchored boats and whipped up sea waters in a dangerous surge along the coast, flooding some residential neighborhoods and leaving people to wade in ankle-deep waters and cars floating.

In Shizuoka, one of two men who went missing in the Nishikawa River was rescued, Gotemba city official Fumihiko Katsumata said. Firefighters said the two men were working at a river canal to try to control overflowing when they were swept away.

Yusuke Ikegaya, a Shizuoka resident who evacuated ahead of the storm, said

he was surprised that the nearby river was about to overflow in the morning, hours before the typhoon made landfall. "In the 28 years of my life, this is the first time I've had to evacuate even before a typhoon has landed," he said.

Authorities also warned of mudslides, common in mountainous Japan.

Shiroyama dam in Kanagawa prefecture, also southwest of Tokyo, and three other dams may release some of their waters, which were nearing limits, NHK reported. An overflowed dam is likely to cause greater damage, and so releasing some water gradually is a standard emergency measure.

Rugby World Cup matches, concerts and other events in the area were canceled, while flights were grounded and train services halted. Authorities acted quickly, with warnings issued earlier in the week, including urging people to stay indoors.

Some 17,000 police and military troops were called up, standing ready for rescue operations.

Residents taped up their apartment windows to prevent them from shattering. TV talks shows showed footage of household items like a slipper bashing through glass when hurled by winds.

Evacuation advisories were issued for risk areas, including Shimoda city, west of Tokyo. Dozens of evacuation centers were set up in coastal towns, and people rested on gymnasium floors, saying they hoped their homes were still there after the storm passed.

The typhoon disrupted a three-day weekend in Japan that includes Sports Day on Monday. Qualifying for a Formula One auto race in Suzuka was pushed to Sunday. The Defense Ministry cut a three-day annual navy review to a single day on Monday.

All Nippon Airways and Japan Airlines grounded most domestic and international flights at the Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya airports. Central Japan Railway Co. canceled bullet-train service between Tokyo and Osaka except for several early Saturday trains connecting Nagoya and Osaka. Tokyo Disneyland was closed, while Ginza department stores and smaller shops throughout Tokyo were shuttered.

A typhoon that hit the Tokyo region in 1958 left more than 1,200 people dead and half a million houses flooded.

Ageyama reported from Tokyo. Associated Press videojournalist Haruka Nuga in Tokyo contributed to this report. (AP News)

(10) Catalan Separatist...

and ABC newspapers. A Supreme Court spokeswoman declined to comment.

Major Spanish newspapers including El Pais, La Vanguardia and El Mundo have published similar information about the court's verdict, also citing sources. The ruling could provoke a strong reaction in Catalonia, where a secessionist push two years ago triggered Spain's biggest political crisis in decades.

It could also complicate Spanish politics in the run-up to the fourth national election in four years.

The charges stem from the leaders' role in an October 2017 referendum, which was held despite being ruled illegal by Spanish courts, and a short-lived declaration of independence that followed in Spain's most economically important region.

Nine of the 12 Catalan politicians and civic leaders have been in pre-trial detention for close to two years. The public prosecutor had accused all the nine jailed leaders of rebellion charges and sought the longest prison term, 25 years, for Oriol Junqueras, former deputy leader of the Catalan regional government at the time. But the court plans to sentence him to 13-15 years in jail, the judicial source said.

Sedition is considered a crime against public order, while rebellion implies stronger actions.

The sentencing years would be lower for the other eight leaders already in jail, the source said. The three politicians who are currently out of prison would be found guilty of disobedience, which does not lead to imprisonment, it added.

In the trial's final arguments in June, separatist leaders said they did nothing wrong and that they were being prosecuted for political acts, while some of their lawyers admitted that they could have been guilty of disobedience but denied the much more serious rebellion charge. (Reuters)

(11) Smaller Hong ...

but the crowd also included a few parents with young children and babies. One father marching with his young daughter, both in masks, said he was not concerned for their safety at the demonstration but is more worried about the possible repressive control of Hong Kong by the "Chinese government in the future."

Emergency measures

Saturday's turnout was less than last week's demonstrations, when tens of thousands came out, and much less than the nearly 2 million people that participated in anti-government protests in June.

For over four months, Hong Kong has been in the midst of an uncompromising standoff between increasingly defiant pro-democracy protesters and equally determined government forces backed by Beijing.

While China regained sovereignty over this former British colony in 1997, Hong Kong has maintained a degree of political autonomy and civil liberties including free speech and a free press that is not tolerated on the mainland.

The protests erupted over a failed extradition bill to China but has since grown into calls for direct elections for all Hong Kong officials, instead of the current system under which Beijing appoints the chief executive and committees representing Hong Kong business interests select a number of seats in the legislature. The protesters are also demanding a release of jailed protesters, an inquiry into police abuse and even the disbandment of the police force.

Hong Kong police have used increasing force to quell the protests, employing water cannons, tear gas, and rubber bullets, and last week an officer shot a young protester with lethal ammunition during a scuffle with activists.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam also invoked partial emergency powers in outlawing the use of face masks that protesters have used to hide their identities and to protect themselves from tear gas attacks by police.

Since June, Hong Kong police over apprehended over 2,000 demonstrators, and nearly one-third of those arrested are under the age of 18.

Pro-Beijing lawmaker Regina Ip, head of the New People's Party, credits the increased law enforcement measures with discouraging more people from risking arrest by participating in marches.

"Well in terms of the numbers of the so-called peaceful rational nonviolent protesters, those are the real peaceful demonstrators. The numbers are down a lot you know," she said.

Fire and gasoline

It is not clear, however, if the lower turnout at Saturday's march shows declining support for the democracy movement or is a temporary lull in activity. A march last Saturday attracted only about 1,000 protesters but support rebounded with a massive demonstration the next day.

Protesters who came out on Saturday said they would not be discouraged by the threat of arrest for participating in an illegal assembly or breaking the anti-masks law.

If "enough people break the law," one masked woman protester said, "it won't be illegal anymore."

The activist group Citizen's Press, in a statement, likened the Hong Kong emergency measures taken to suppress the protests "to extinguishing a fire with gasoline."

Gasoline bombs were ignited at a subway station in Kowloon, likely by pro-democracy activists who have been increasingly engaging in vandalism and clashes with police. No one was injured in the incident, according to the Hong Kong government.

The subway system, which had been shut down during past protest marches, was operating Saturday but scheduled to close early at 10 p.m.

Some young protesters were seen at one point changing from the black clothing associated with the protester into more colorful attire and blending into a crowd of shoppers after being told police were approaching.

Also on Saturday a group of senior citizens calling themselves the «Silver-Haired Marchers» began a 48-hour quiet sit-in at police headquarters to show support for the predominately young protesters and "uphold the core values of Hong Kong and defend the future of our younger generations," the group said in a statement. (VOA News)

(12) US to Send...

The Pentagon's announcement came just hours after Iranian officials said two missiles from an undetermined source hit one of its oil tankers that was traveling through the Red Sea about 60 miles off the coast of Saudi Arabia.

The explosions from the missiles damaged two storerooms aboard the oil tanker - identified as the Sibiti - and caused a brief oil leak into the Red Sea. The leak was later plugged, Iranian state television reported.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi described the incident as an

«attack» carried out by those committing «dangerous adventurism.» He said the incident was under investigation.

There has been no word from Saudi Arabia regarding the reported missile strikes.

That incident comes amid fraught tensions and charges by the U.S. that Iran has attacked oil tankers near the Strait of Hormuz, at the mouth of the Persian Gulf -- something denied by Tehran.

Right now, there are roughly 250 U.S. troops deployed to Saudi Arabia and more than 60,000 U.S. troops deployed throughout the Middle East, both within various countries and aboard warships.

This recent deployment is part of the response to the suspected Iranian missile and drone attack on Saudi oil facilities on Sept. 14. (Fox News)

(13) 4 Killed...

injured some others and those onboard the truck.

The truck driver was charged by the local police for negligent driving, the ministry's release said. (Xinhua)

(14) China, locked ...

But the question of Kashmir was not discussed during Saturday's summit and instead issues of trade and investment were taken up, Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said.

China, embroiled in a bruising trade war with the United States, was quite appreciative of the imbalance in its own trade with India and willing to address it, Gokhale told reporters.

"There was a good conversation on trade, an issue of concern; President Xi said China is ready to take sincere action in this regard and discuss in a concrete way how to reduce the deficit," he said.

Bilateral trade between China and India reached \$95.54 billion in 2018, with the trade deficit at \$53 billion in China's favor, the biggest India has with any country.

"One of the understandings the two leaders reached was that a new mechanism will be established to discuss trade, investment and services," Gokhale said. The high-level group will be led by Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Chinese Vice Premier Hu Chunhua.

Indian generic drugmakers have long sought greater market access to China, as have India's IT services. Xi said both were welcome.

China, for its part, has been urging India to take an independent decision on telecom equipment maker Huawei's bid for India's proposed 3G network and not be swayed by U.S. pressure.

The United States has asked its allies not to use Huawei equipment, which it says China could exploit for espionage. Beijing denies this accusation.

In his opening remarks, Xi said he had a free and frank discussion with Modi and would pursue proposals the two leaders discussed to improve bilateral ties. "Yesterday and today we have engaged in candid discussions and as friends," Xi said. "I look forward to further discussions; I may follow up on proposals discussed yesterday." Xi did not elaborate. (Reuters)

(15) Expo in ...

industry specialists representing a host of international corporations. USAID Director Gary Linden opened with an overview of their flagship Enterprise Competitive Project (ECP). Sabir Orumbaev, Portfolio Manager, at the U.S. Export Import Bank (EXIM), followed with a detailed presentation on the Bank's low-interest financial and risk insurance products, the U.S. Embassy reported.

From the private sector, U.S. entrepreneur Alex Mardikian led a discussion on waste-to-energy applications used by his firm Regreen Technologies. From the IT sector, Dell and Samsung demonstrated their latest products for cloud and B2B solutions. Tilek Toktugiev, founder of Nomad Greenhouse, led an industry panel discussion on agro-technologies. In closing, Vitaly Yen (Mailboxes, Etc), Aibek Mambetaliev (Tchibo), Jodar Saidilkhan (Novotel), and Sotiris Karagiannis (New York University of Prague) participated in a panel discussion entitled, "5 Things to Know About Franchising Major Brands."

The U.S. Embassy-supported International Franchise and Trade Expo was part of a two-day event to provide a platform for international companies to explore investment opportunities in Kyrgyzstan and across Central Asia. On October 11, U.S. Ambassador Donald Lu delivered remarks at the opening ceremony of the 3rd Bishkek Investment Forum, organized by Business Association JIA. The BIF is the premier platform in the Kyrgyz Republic that offers outstanding pioneering businesses the opportunity to showcase innovative projects and business plans for potential investors. (Time SCA)