

Pakistan, China to Take Part in Russia's Military Drills

BEIJING - China and Pakistan besides some regional countries will participate in the "Centre 2019" Russia Military Exercise scheduled to be held from Sept. 16 to 21, according to a Chinese defence ministry spokesperson. Chinese Senior Colonel Ren Guoqiang said at a regular press conference that China will send around 1,600 soldiers from the PLA West Theatre Command, around 300 pieces of military equipment and almost 30 fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters to join the "Centre 2019" exercise in Orenburg, the largest one Russia is holding this year. Focusing on "multinational combined forces conducting group counter-terrorism missions to protect military secu-



ity in Central Asia," the exercise will also be joined with six other nations including Pakistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Participating in the upcoming Russian exercise is designed to strengthen Sino-Russian comprehen-

sive strategic partnership of coordination, deepen pragmatic and friendly cooperation in the military sphere. The exercise will enhance the capability of participating multinational combined forces to deal with security threats and safeguard regional peace and stability, Ren said. It is not targeted to any third party or related to any specific regional situation, he added. (Agencies)

Japan Holds Drill for Assumed 7.3-Magnitude Earthquake on Disaster Prevention Day

TOKYO - Japanese authorities held a drill to prepare for a mega earthquake striking the Tokyo metropolitan area for the National Disaster Prevention Day on Sunday, based on the assumption that a 7.3-magnitude quake hit the capital. Sept. 1 is Japan's National Disaster Prevention Day to commemorate the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake, which left more than 100,000 people dead in and around Tokyo. This year's exercise was

based on the scenario of a 7.3-magnitude quake occurring around 7:00 a.m., with an epicenter within the Tokyo's 23 central wards, and registering 6 or 7 on the Japanese seismic intensity scale, which peaks at 7, in the southern Kanto region. It was assumed that the damage would be extremely serious when the earthquake occurred on a windy winter evening, in which about 610,000 buildings would be completely ... (More on P4)... (18)

WARSAW, Poland - The presidents of Germany and Poland opened daylong observances of the 80th anniversary of the start of World War II on Sunday with a ceremony filled with the spirit of reconciliation and Germany's humility in the face of suffering it inflicted during the war. The ceremony was held in Wielun, a central Polish town that was the first target of Nazi Germany's deadly bombings. German President

Polish, German Presidents Open WWII Anniversary Observances

Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Polish counterpart Andrzej Duda attended the observances, which started at 4:40 a.m., the exact hour that, according to survivors, the war's first bombs fell, killing civilians. The presidents, local officials and residents, among them survivors of the bombings, observed a minute of silence in memory of an estimated 2,000 victims. Speaking in German and Polish, Steinmeier asked for forgiveness. "I bow my head before



the victims of the attack in Wielun, I bow my head before the Polish victims of German tyranny and I ask forgiveness," Steinmeier said. "We are deeply grateful for Poland's hand extended in a gesture of forgiveness." "As the president of ... (More on P4)... (14)

North Korea Says Pompeo's Remarks Make Talks with U.S. More Difficult



SEOUL - A recent remark by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo about "North Korea's rogue behavior" will

make talks with the United States more difficult, the North's KCNA news agency on Saturday quoted its vice for-

ign minister, Choe Son Hui, as saying. "We recognized that North Korea's rogue behavior could not be ignored," Pompeo said on Tuesday, while speaking at the American Legion National Convention in the state of Indiana. Pompeo's comment was unreasonable and provocative, Choe said, according to the news agency.

"Pompeo has gone so far in his language and it made the opening of the expected DPRK-U.S. working-level negotiations more difficult," Choe said in statement. Choe also warned that North Korea's expectations of talks with the United States are gradually disappearing and the country is being pushed to reexamine all measures. "The U.S. had better not put our patience to the test any longer with such remarks irritating us if it doesn't want to have bitter regrets afterwards," Choe said. North Korea has stepped up its criticism of ... (More on P4)... (15)

North Korea Denies It Amassed \$2 Billion Through Cyberattacks on Banks

SEOUL - North Korea denied on Sunday allegations that it had obtained \$2 billion through cyberattacks on banks and cryptocurrency exchanges, and accused the United States for spreading rumors. A United Nations report seen by Reuters last month said North Korea had used "widespread and increasingly sophisticated" cyberattacks to steal from banks and cryptocurrency exchanges, amassing \$2 billion which it used to

fund weapons of mass destruction programs. "The United States and other hostile forces are now spreading ill-hearted rumors," North Korea's state-run KCNA news agency reported, citing a statement from the spokesperson for the National Coordination Committee of the DPRK for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism. "Such a fabrication by the hostile forces is ... (More on P4)... (19)

UK Lawmakers Opposed to No-Deal Brexit to Bring Forward Legislation

LONDON - British lawmakers opposed to no-deal Brexit will attempt to pass a law this week to stop Prime Minister Boris Johnson allowing Britain to crash out of the European Union on October 31, the opposition Labour Party's Brexit spokesman Keir Starmer said. Senior minister Michael Gove, however, refused to guarantee the government would abide by any such legislation, saying it needed to see what it said. Johnson has pledged to deliver Brexit with or ... (More on P4)... (20)

Pope Gets Stuck in Vatican Elevator, Freed by Firefighters

VATICAN CITY - Pope Francis spent 25 minutes in a stuck Vatican elevator Sunday until firefighters were able to free him. The mishap kept Francis from arriving on time for his weekly prayer in St. Peter's Square. He was a few minutes late for the traditional noon appointment. "I have to apologize for being late," a smiling Pope said at the start of his address, the BBC reported. He then asked the crowd for a round of applause for the firefighters, BBC reported. Francis explained there had been a "drop in voltage and the elevator stopped." "Thank goodness, the fire officers arrived, and I thank them so much; and after 25 minutes of work they managed to get it started again," he said, according to the BBC. During the address, Francis said he would appoint ten new Roman Catholic cardinals next month. (Fox News)

Israeli Military Orders Extra Forces to Lebanon Border Area

JERUSALEM - Israel's military said on Saturday it had ordered extra forces to deploy to its northern command and postponed a training exercise as tensions remained high with Lebanon's heavily armed Shi'ite movement Hezbollah.

The army said that over the past week its "ground forces, air, navy and intelligence forces improved their preparedness for various scenarios in the northern command area." It posted on Twitter footage of tanks and ground forces being deployed.



Israel and Hezbollah, which last fought a war in 2006, are on high alert after drones were used on Sunday to attack what a security official in the region described as a target linked to precision-guided missile projects. Hezbollah has blamed Israel for the rare strike in Beirut, and said it will retaliate. The heavily armed Shi'ite movement has denied harbouring such missile facilities. Lebanon has accused Israel of seeking pretexts for aggression. Without claiming responsibility for the drone attack, the Israeli military published ... (More on P4)... (16)

Spain's Sanchez Hopes New Program with Podemos Can Avoid New Election

MADRID - Spain's acting prime minister Pedro Sanchez will lay out plans on Tuesday that he hopes will convince the far-left Unidas Podemos to support his last-ditch attempt to form a government and avoid a repeat election, he told El Pais newspaper. Sanchez, whose Socialist Party finished first in an inconclusive national election in April, has been trying to rally support among parliamentarians to confirm him as premier. "We don't have to go to the polls," Sanchez said in an interview pub-

lished on Sunday in El Pais. In July, Sanchez twice failed to be confirmed as premier by parliament after talks to form a coalition government with Podemos collapsed. He now has until Sept. 23 to get parliament's backing. Failing that, a new ballot will be called for Nov. 10. Sanchez told El Pais that there was an alternative to elections and a coalition, which was a government with a common progressive program, "a different option than the one initially proposed ... (More on P4)... (17)

Netanyahu Repeats Pledge to Annex Israeli Settlements in Occupied West Bank

JERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu intends to annex all Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, he said on Sunday, reiterating an election promise made five months ago but again giving no timeframe.

Settlements are one of the most heated issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Palestinians have voiced fears Netanyahu could defy international consensus and move ahead with annexation with possible backing from U.S. President Donald Trump, a close ally. "With God's help we will extend Jewish sovereignty to all the settlements as part of the (biblical) land of Israel, as part of the state of Israel," Netanyahu said in Sunday's speech in the West Bank settlement of Elkana, where he attended a ceremony opening the school year. He did not say when he planned to make such a move.

Nabil Abu Rdainah, a spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said Netanyahu's announcement was a "continuation of attempts to create an unacceptable fait accompli that will not lead to any peace, security or stability". Netanyahu, who heads the right-wing Likud party, made a similar pledge days before an Israeli general election in April. After the vote, he failed to form a governing parliamentary majority and the country will hold a new election on Sept. 17. His ... (More on P4)... (21)

Neighbor News

Iran's Rouhani Warns Macron of Looming Nuclear Step

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani spoke with French counterpart Emmanuel Macron on Saturday, warning him Iran would take the next step in reducing its nuclear commitments unless Europe lives up to its own undertakings. Tensions have spiked in the Gulf since May last year when President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from a nuclear deal between Iran and world powers -- known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The escalation has seen ships attacked, drones downed and tankers seized in the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint for around a third of the world's sea-borne oil. At the height of the

crisis, Trump ordered strikes against Iran on June 21 before cancelling them at the last minute. Macron has been leading efforts to de-escalate the situation, and expressed hopes at a G7 meeting last week of bringing Rouhani and Trump together for a meeting. But Rouhani has played down the likelihood of that happening unless the United States first lifts crippling sanctions that it has slapped on Iran since pulling out of the deal. "If Europe cannot operationalise its commitments, Iran will take its third step to reduce its JCPOA commitments," Rouhani told Macron in a phone call, quoted by the government website. (Agencies)

Alvi for Religious Harmony

ISLAMABAD - President Dr Arif Alvi has said that to become an ideal society, we have to adopt traits like unity, forbearance and religious harmony. He congratulated Muslims on commencement of the new Hijrah calendar 1441 and wished them well. "This government is for change, every mile-

stone will be achieved soon and people will have a prosperous life," he said. He further said that the month of Muharram reminds us of sacrifices and how one should serve the religion. It teaches us to face hardships without complaining and to keep fighting the injustice, he added. (Agencies)

Uzbekistan Explores New Areas of Partnership with Indian States on Independence Anniversary

TASHKENT - Uzbekistan and India are exploring new areas of cooperation including state level cooperation as the Central Asian state entered 28th year of its independence on Sunday. An India-Uzbekistan regional investment forum will be held in Andijan next month where Indian delegation will be led by Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani. The resource rich Central Asian State wants to expand state level partnership with various states. In July first IT park of Uzbekistan, set up with India's assistance, was opened in Tashkent. IT Park includes business incubation, acceleration and venture financing programs, as well as

a complex of facilities, buildings, structures and equipment designed to ensure the launch and launch of promising start-up projects on the market. Speaking at the ceremony in Tashkent the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev stressed that over the past period the country made through challenging but glorious path of independent development. Currently Uzbekistan has entered a new stage of its national development main principles of which enshrined in the National Development Strategy for 2017-2021. Its priority motto: "From National Reconstruction - to National Progress". (Agencies)

Iran Unveils High-Speed Tracking, Long-Haul Strike Drones

TEHRAN - Iran has unveiled a drone in two different versions, for swift tracking and identification and for precision strikes on distant targets. The unmanned aerial vehicle, dubbed Kian, was inaugurated in the presence of Commander of the Iranian Army's Air Defense Force Brigadier General Alireza Sabahi-Fard and other senior commanders on Sunday. Speaking at the unveiling ceremony, Sabahi-Fard said that Kian had been designed in two types: one with high-speed capability for tracking and identification purposes and the other built for long-haul flights to conduct precision-strike operations. Sabahi-Fard said the drone was designed, produced, and tested by experts at the drone

unit of the Iranian Army's Air Defense Force. The long-haul vehicle, he said, is capable of hitting targets far from Iran's borders and engaging in defense on hostile territory. Iran has made major breakthroughs in its defense sector and attained self-sufficiency in producing military equipment and hardware despite facing sanctions and Western economic pressure. The Islamic Republic says its military power is solely for defensive purposes and does not pose any threat to other countries. On June 20, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) shot down an advanced US-made RQ-4 Global Hawk over the territorial waters off the coastal province of Hormozgan. (Press TV)