

DPRK Declares Successful Test of H-Bomb to be Carried by ICBM

PYONGYANG - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Sunday successfully detonated a hydrogen bomb capable of being carried by an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), official media announced.

The DPRK Central Television said the test was carried out at the order of top leader Kim Jong Un, who chaired a meeting of the standing committee of the political bureau of the Workers' Party of Korea on the Korean Peninsula situation and decided to conduct the H-bomb test. The TV report showed still photos of the document signed by Kim ordering the



test, which was the sixth nuclear test conducted by the DPRK so far. "The Presidium of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea was convened in the morning on Sept. 3, 2017," said the State-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

After analyzing the current international political situation and "the military tension created on the Korean peninsula," the meeting adopted a decision "on carrying out a test of the H-bomb for the ICBM as part of efforts to attain the final goal of completing the State nuclear force," according to the KCNA. (Xinhua)

Abe, Trump Reaffirm to Step up Pressure on DPRK

TOKYO - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Sunday that he and U.S. President Donald Trump had agreed to step up pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) during telephone talks held earlier in the day.

Abe told reporters that he and Trump had agreed that they must thoroughly coordinate with each other and with South Korea, and cooperate closely with the international com-

munity, to increase pressure on the DPRK. He also said that he and Trump discussed the latest situation in the DPRK and "how to respond" after the DPRK said that it has produced a hydrogen bomb to be loaded on intercontinental ballistic missile.

It was the third time that the two held telephone talks since the DPRK fired a ballistic missile that flew over Japan on Aug. 29. (Xinhua)

EU Repeal Bill Best Way to Avoid Brexit 'Cliff Edge' May

LONDON - British Prime Minister Theresa May warned lawmakers that Britain could be faced with a Brexit "cliff edge" if they failed to back her EU repeal bill, as reports suggested momentum was growing within her party to unseat her.

With British lawmakers readying for their first full parliamentary debate on the legislation that will sever the country's ties with the European Union, the minister responsible for overseeing the divorce proceed-

ings admitted on Sunday that some payments would continue to Brussels after Britain left.

May failed to win a clear mandate at a snap election in June and only has a slim majority in parliament that rests on an agreement with a smaller party. She remains vulnerable if pro-European lawmakers in her Conservative party team up with other parties to vote down legislation or support amendments.



In Thursday's debate, the main opposition Labour Party is planning to propose several changes to the repeal bill with a view to keeping Britain in the single market and customs union during a Brexit transition period after 2019, according to The Times. (Reuters)

Alarming West, Turkey Nudges Closer to Russia Arms Deal



ISTANBUL - Turkey and Russia are inching towards an accord for the first major Turkish weapons purchase from Moscow, troubling An-

kara's allies in NATO even though the deal may not ultimately materialise. According to Turkish and Russian officials, all preparations have been made for

the purchase of a sophisticated S-400 missile defence system, Ankara's most significant accord with a non-NATO supplier. But despite confident proc-

lamations, the deal has yet to be officially inked. Analysts remain sceptical over whether Turkey will ever take delivery of the surface-to-air missile defence batteries. Some argue the message sent to the West matters more than the actual acquisition.

The Pentagon has already sounded alarm, saying bluntly that "generally it's a good idea" for NATO allies to buy inter-operable equipment. But President Recep Tayyip Erdogan boasted that "God willing we will see the S-400s in our country". (AFP)

Merkel, Macron Call for Tougher EU Sanctions Against North Korea

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday jointly condemned North Korea's biggest nuclear test to date and called for tougher sanctions against Pyongyang.

The German government said in a statement that Merkel and Macron spoke on the phone, with both strongly condemning the new nuclear test in North Korea. "This latest provocation by the ruler in Pyongyang has reached a new dimension," it added.

Merkel and Macron agreed that North Korea was violating international law and that the international community must react decisively to this new escalation, Berlin said.

"In addition to the United Nations Security Council, the European Union also has to act now. The Chancellor and the President expressed their support for a tightening of EU sanctions against North Korea," the statement said. (Reuters)

North Korea Nuclear Test 'Extremely Regrettable': UN Watchdog

VIENNA - North Korea's latest nuclear test is "extremely regrettable" and violates the international community's repeated demands, the head of the UN atomic watchdog said Sunday.

"Today's nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is an extremely regrettable act," International Atomic Energy Agency head Yukiya Amano said in a statement.

"This new test, which follows the two tests last year and is the sixth since 2006, is in complete disregard of the repeated demands of the international community," Amano said. UN Security Council resolutions have reaffirmed that Pyongyang should not conduct any further nuclear tests and abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, Amano added. Amano said that the Vienna-based IAEA, whose inspectors were kicked out of North Korea in 2009, "remains ready" to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the situation. (AFP)

150 Killed as IS Group Fighting for Last Bastion with Syrian Troops

DAMASCUS - Fierce clashes between the Islamic State (IS) group and pro-regime forces in central Syria have left over 150 fighters dead, local media cited a monitor source as saying on Sunday. The report said 120 IS fighters "were killed in clashes in and around the town of Uqayribat in the eastern Hama countryside, along with at least 35 regime troops and loyalist militiamen," according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The town is the jihadist group's last bastion in the central province apart



from a handful of small villages. Pro-government forces seized Uqayribat on Friday night, but IS responded with a counter-offensive on Saturday that left it in control of most of the town, Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said. An intense barrage

of artillery fire and Syrian and Russian air strikes on jihadist positions allowed pro-regime forces on Sunday morning to push the jihadists back out of the town and advance on villages to the west that remain under IS control. (Xinhua)

Russia Summons U.S. Diplomat to Protest Search of Washington Facility

MOSCOW - Russian Foreign Ministry summoned Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy Anthony Godfrey Saturday and protested U.S. intentions to search a Russian diplomatic property in Washington.

The Russian ministry said U.S. authorities sought to search the Russian trade representative compound, which was closed on Saturday, in addition to the Russian Consulate General in San Francisco and a consular office in New York City.

"We consider the planned illegitimate search of the Russian diplomatic facil-

ity without the presence of Russian officials and a threat to break down its front door as an unprecedented, aggressive action," said the ministry in a statement.

The ministry also expressed worries that U.S. intelligence agents during the search may plant items in the Russian compound and organize an anti-Russian provocation.

It urged the United States to stop the "gross violations" of international law and the encroachment on the immunity of Russia's diplomatic institutions. (Xinhua)

US Closure of Diplomatic Sites a 'Blatantly Hostile Act': Russia

MOSCOW - Moscow denounced the American decision to close three Russian diplomatic facilities in the United States as a "blatantly hostile act" that violated international law and demanded Washington reverse the order on Sunday.

The United States has ordered the closure of the Russian consulate in San Francisco and two buildings housing trade missions in Washington and New York. It is the latest broadside in a tit-for-tat exchange between the countries that has helped push relations towards a new post-Cold War low. Russian diplomats were working to vacate the properties over the weekend, including the six-story consulate.

"We treat these developments as a blatantly hostile act, a grave violation by Washington of international law," the Russian foreign ministry said of the U.S. order, which was made in late August in retaliation for Moscow cutting the United States' diplomatic presence in Russia.

"We urge the U.S. authorities to come to their senses and immediately return the Russian diplomatic facilities," the ministry added on its website. "Otherwise the USA will bear total blame for the ongoing degradation of the relations between our countries."

Maria Zakharova, a spokeswoman for the foreign ministry, said that U.S. authorities had told Moscow that they expected Russia to sell the facilities, TASS state news agency reported. (Reuters)

Trump, Top Advisers to Meet on North Korea on Sunday: White House

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump will meet with his national security advisers on Sunday to discuss North Korea's nuclear test, the White House said.

"The national security team is monitoring this closely," White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said in a statement. "The president and his national security team will have a meeting to discuss further later today. We will provide updates as necessary." (Reuters)

Neighbor News

Xi Says Belt and Road Initiative Not Geopolitical Tool

XIAMEN - Chinese President Xi Jinping said Sunday the Belt and Road Initiative is not a tool to advance any geopolitical agenda, but a platform for practical cooperation.

It is not a foreign aid scheme, but an initiative for interconnected development which calls for extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, Xi said while delivering a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the BRICS Business Forum scheduled for Sept. 3-4 in the southeastern coastal city of Xiamen. (Xinhua)

"I am convinced that the Belt and Road Initiative will serve as a new platform for all countries to achieve win-win cooperation and that it will create new opportunities for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," he said.

China hosted the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in May which was attended by 29 heads of state or government and more than 1,600 representatives from more than 140 countries and 80-plus international organizations. (Xinhua)

Iran Warns to Destroy U.S. Reconnaissance Aircraft over Airspace

TEHRAN - Iran's air defense base has sent two stern warnings to U.S. spy aircraft in the last six months, which approached Iranian airspace, Iran's Arabic language TV station Al-Alam reported on Sunday.

The TV's website quoted the country's chief of air defense, Brig. Gen. Farzad Esmaili, as saying Iran warned a U2 reconnaissance aircraft on March 21. He did

not mention the location. He also said the country's air defense warned a U.S. drone on Aug. 26.

Gen. Esmaili said "we do not allow such rabid aircraft to enter our territory and if necessary, we will not hesitate to destroy them."

Iran has repeatedly announced such activities over the past years to demonstrate the capabilities of the country's armed forces. (Xinhua)

Pakistan Deeply Concerned over Forced Displacement of Rohingya Muslims

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan is deeply concerned over reports of growing number of deaths and forced displacement of Rohingya Muslims.

Foreign Office spokesperson said, such reports, if confirmed, are a source of serious concern and anguish on the eve of Eid-ul-Azha.

Pakistan urges authorities in Myanmar to investigate reports of massacre, hold those in-

involved accountable and take necessary measures to protect the rights of Rohingya Muslims.

In line with its consistent position on protecting the rights of Muslim minorities worldwide, Pakistan will work with the international community in particular the OIC to express solidarity with the Rohingya Muslims and to work towards safeguarding their rights. (Monitoring Desk)

Uzbekistan Marks Remembrance Day of First President

TASHKENT - Uzbekistan marks the Day of Remembrance of Islam Karimov, the first president of the country, Uzbekistan National News Agency (UzA) reported Sunday.

Islam Karimov served as Uzbek president for more than 25 years. He passed away Sept. 2, 2016 at the age of 78 after suffering a stroke.

Islam Karimov was buried in Samarkand city, his hometown. In early December 2016, presidential election was held in Uzbekistan, and Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who previously served as prime minister, gained victory at the election.

At the end of January this year, Mirziyoyev signed a decree on commemorating the first president of Uzbekistan. According to the document, Karimov's birthday will be celebrated every year on Jan. 30, and the day of his remembrance - on Sept. 2.

In accordance with the

decree, the Tashkent International Airport, the car plant in the city of Asaka, Tashkent State Technical University, the Palace of Arts in the city of Fergana were named after the first President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov. Streets in several cities of the country were also named after the first Uzbek president.

Today, Samarkand also hosted a ceremony of opening a monument to the first president of Uzbekistan.

A monument to Islam Karimov was erected in a park near Registan Square, not far from the house where he grew up. The monument was opened by Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who arrived to attend the ceremony, and Tatyana Karimova, widow of the first president.

Flowers were laid at the foot of the monument, and the national anthem of Uzbekistan was played. (Trend)