

Pentagon Thanks Denmark for 14 Anti-ISIS Therapists in Syria but... Can't They Sell Greenland Instead?

WASHINGTON - The Pentagon's announcement that Denmark would be sending troops to Syria to fight ISIS was met with bemusement and derision as a 14-member medical support team was framed as a fearsome terrorist-fighting force.

Denmark will make a "military deployment to Syria in support of Operation Inherent Resolve" and "continue to share the burden and responsibilities of this important mission," Pentagon spokesperson Jonathan Hoffman boasted in a statement released on Friday, praising "our Danish partners" for volunteering their efforts in northeast Syria to "support stability and security." Nowhere in the Pentagon



statement did it mention that the Danish "deployment" consisted of just 14 medical staff, including doctors, nurses, therapists, and support personnel to provide "advanced trauma and medical care"

to one of the US-led coalition's outposts in Syria, operating outside international law. Twitter found the Danes riding to Uncle Sam's rescue in Syria puzzling. "It appears Denmark is

trying to get back in Trump's good graces, after the Greenland row, by sending troops to US-occupied Syria," one user suggested.

"US is lucky to have allies such as Denmark. Just two weeks ago Trump was shunning them over Greenland and now they are sending people to aid PKK affiliates in Syria," another noted.

Others imagined how the conversation might have gone down between Washington and Copenhagen. Some took a more pragmatic view of the situation, while others took it more seriously. "Mighty Vikings will be illegally in the Syrian desert? We will see about that," one commented. (RT)

Climate Change Activists Storm Red Carpet at Venice Film Festival

VENICE, Italy - Several hundred demonstrators took over the red carpet at the Venice Film Festival on Saturday, demanding action to fight climate change and a ban on cruise ships entering the lagoon city. Wearing white boiler suits over their clothes, the roughly 300 protesters sat on the red carpet where Hollywood stars such as Brad Pitt, Scarlett Johansson and Joaquin Phoenix have premiered their latest films during the 11-day event. Waving banners that read 'Our home is on fire'

and 'No to cruise ships', the protesters sat outside the main festival venue and chanted slogans, surrounded by police. "We want to address the topic of the climate crisis, we think that it is more important than anything that we can see in the world now," said Chiara Buratti, a member of the Venice anti-cruise ship committee. "And we also ask (celebrities) to take a position. We are on the red carpet today, we will stay here (and) ask them to join us on the red carpet," she said. (Reuters)

NUR-SULTAN - A delegation from the European bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Board of Directors will visit Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic from 8 to 14 September 2019, Trend reports with reference to EBRD. The visit will help the Directors to assess the progress of reforms taking place in the two Central Asian states, familiarize themselves with the Bank's investments and meet a range of stakeholders.

EBRD Board Directors to Visit Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

Representatives from the Board of Directors will include:

- David Avarello, Director for Belgium, Slovenia and Luxembourg
- José Brito, Director for Portugal and Greece
- Doug Nevison, Director for Canada, Morocco, Jordan and Tunisia
- Per Sanderud, Director for Norway, Finland, Latvia and Lebanon
- Taskin Temiz, Director for Turkey, Romania, Azerbaijan, Moldova and the Kyrgyz Republic
- Leander Treppel, Di-



rector for Austria, Israel, Cyprus, Malta, Kazakhstan and Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Frans Weekers, Director for The Netherlands, China, Mongolia, North Macedonia
- Alain Beauvillard, Alternate Director for France ... (More on P4)... (11)

'Only Animals Can Live Here': Storm Victims Await Evacuation



ABACO, Bahamas - Carrying their meager possessions in duffel bags and shopping carts, hundreds of desperate storm victims

gathered at the port in Grand Abaco on Friday in hopes of getting off the hurricane-devastated island, amid signs of rising frustra-

tion over the pace of the disaster-relief effort. "It's chaos here," said Gee Rolle, a 44-year-old construction work-

er who waited with his wife for a boat that could take them to the capital, Nassau. "The government is trying their best, but at the same time, I don't think they're doing a good enough job to evacuate the people. It ain't livable for nobody. Only animals can live here." The Bahamian Health Ministry said helicopters and boats were on the way, but officials warned of delays because of severe flooding. (AP)

Relief Efforts Ramped Up for Bahamas Where 'Staggering' Dorian Death Toll Feared

NASSAU, Bahamas - Charities, government agencies and even cruise ships loaded with supplies and volunteers rushed emergency aid to the storm-ravaged Bahamas on Saturday amid fears of a "staggering" death toll left in the wake of Hurricane Dorian. Bahama leaders believe hundreds and perhaps thousands remained missing in the archipelago nation of about 400,000 people, even as the official death toll rose only to 43 as of late on Friday.

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration requested airlift and logistical support from the Defense Department on Friday to support relief efforts for the Bahamas, the Miami Herald and other media reported. The U.S. Coast Guard and other agencies have already provided help with U.S. Northern Command chief General Terrance O'Shaughnessy arriving in Nassau on Friday to assess the needs. (Reuters)

Polish Pis Promises Voters Even More Cash Ahead of October Election

WARSAW - Poland's ruling national Law and Justice (PiS) party will offer pensioners regular annual cash bonuses and will almost double the minimum wage for workers, its leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski said ahead of parliamentary elections next month. "At the end of 2020 the minimum pay will amount to 3,000 zlotys, at the end of 2023 it will be 4,000 zlotys," Kaczynski told his party congress on Saturday. At present the minimum wage is 2,250 zlotys a month. "In 2021 most pensioners will get two thirteen pay (cash bonuses)," Kaczynski added. This year pensioners were paid a so-called thirteenth payment, as the extra cash handout is known. (Reuters)

India Loses Contact with Spacecraft on Mission to The Moon

BENGALURU/MUMBAI - India lost contact with a spacecraft it was trying to land on the moon on Saturday, its space agency said, in a setback for the nation's ambitious plans to become the first country to probe the unexplored lunar south pole.

The lander of the Chandrayaan-2 moon mission was attempting a "soft," or controlled, landing near the south pole of the moon where scientists believe there could be water ice. Communication was lost just as it was about to touch down. "Data is being analyzed," K Sivan, chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), told distraught scientists at the agency's tracking center in Bengaluru. (Reuters)

Johnson and Salvini: 2 Soaring Stars Lose Big Political Bets

ROME - Who would have bet that two soaring stars of European politics would have gambled so badly on strategic power plays? Both British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Italian right-wing politician Matteo Salvini found themselves in corners this week, each in his own way having lost bets that their popularity would carry the day. Instead, analysts and fellow politicians say, both men badly miscalculated the crucial role of democratic institutions like parliament in the age of populist politics and underestimated the time-tested tactic of



bitter enemies ganging up together in counter-moves. "They confused their popularity with power, and they thought because of their popularity they would be able to ram through their plans," said Wolfango Piccoli, an analyst and co-president of Teneo intelligence, based in London.

The circumstances for each leader in these waning weeks of summer are decidedly different. In London, the unpredictable Johnson is still in power, although his gambit to sideline Parliament in his iron-clad determination to ensure Britain exits the European Union on Oct. 31 backfired. (AP)

Pope Denounces Exploitation of Madagascar's Unique Resources

ANTANARIVO, Madagascar - Pope Francis denounced the illegal logging and exploitation of Madagascar's unique natural resources on Saturday as he opened a visit to the Indian Ocean nation with a plea for the government to fight the corruption that is ravaging the island's environment and keeping its people in "inhumane poverty." Francis urged President Andry Rajo-

elina to provide Madagascar's people with jobs and alternative sources of income so they aren't forced to cut down trees to find fertile soil, poach the island's wildlife and engage in contraband and illegal exportation of its diverse flora, fauna and mineral resources. "The deterioration of that biodiversity compromises the future of the country ... (More on P4)... (12)

'Historical Humanitarian Action': Prisoner Exchange Between Russia and Ukraine Completed

MOSCOW/ KIEV - Planes with former detainees landed in Moscow and Kiev, concluding the long-awaited prisoner swap. The action was hailed as the first step in mending the 'dead-end' relations between the neighbors and was praised internationally. Despite many delays and setbacks, the swap finally happened on Saturday. The government plane carrying the released Russians landed in Moscow this afternoon. The jet with the freed Ukrainians earlier touched down in Kiev.

The long-awaited prisoner exchange "has been completed," Russian Human Rights Commissioner Tatyana Moskalkova confirmed. She hailed the event as "a historical mass-scale humanitarian action," confirming the swap was "35-for-35." It followed months of painstaking behind-the-scenes negotiations at various levels. At one point, even the presidents of the two nations were involved, as Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the matter with his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelensky over the phone. There were some "provocations" and other challenges throughout the talks, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Maria Zakharova said. But in the end, "the political will and meticulous work delivers results."

Who was swapped Ukrainian ... (More on P4)... (13)

Neighbor News

Iran Activates 40 Uranium-Enrichment Centrifuges in Latest Erosion of Nuclear Deal

TEHRAN - Iran has started up 40 advanced centrifuges at its uranium enrichment facility, an Atomic Energy Organisation spokesman said Saturday, in a third step to scale back its commitments under the threatened nuclear deal. "We have started lifting limitations on our research and development imposed by the [nuclear] deal," Behrouz Kamalvandi told reporters, adding it would include the "development of more rapid and advanced centrifuges." Kamalvandi said "all these steps are reversible if the other side fulfils its promises" set

out in the 2015 nuclear agreement, or JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) with China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK, and EU. The nuclear chief said Iran's scaling down of its commitments is only in response to the US' unilateral exit from the agreement last year, which was followed by its reissuance of crippling sanctions. The latest move comes as the Europeans failed to meet a 60-day deadline imposed by Tehran to fulfill their commitments under the deal and offset the effects of the sanctions with economic support. (RT)

PM Imran, Gen Bajwa Visit Loc, Meet Troops and Martyrs' Families

RAWALPINDI - Prime Minister Imran Khan, along with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa, visited the Line of Control (LoC) on Friday. According to a statement by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the premier was also accompanied by Defence Minister Pervez Khattak, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Chairman of Special Committee on Kashmir Syed Fakhar Imam. During their visit, the prime minister and army chief interacted with troops and met the families of martyrs. The country observed Defence and Martyrs Day on Friday. This year, Defence and Mar-

tyrs Day is also being observed as Kashmir Solidarity Day. Tensions between Pakistan and India are high since last month, when ISPR said that Indian forces had used cluster munitions to target the civilian population in Azad Jammu and Kashmir from across the LoC; in violation of the Geneva Convention and international law. Relations worsened when New Delhi repealed Article 370 of the Indian constitution, stripping occupied Kashmir of its special status. Instances of ceasefire violations by Indian forces from across the LoC have also increased and have resulted in casualties of both, civilians and soldiers. (Agencies)

Turkmenistan Attends UN Conference on Legal Identity

ASHGABAT - The Turkmen delegation took part in the regional conference on legal identity and prevention of statelessness in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, Trend reports referring to the Turkmen Foreign Ministry. The representatives of five Central Asian countries attended the event. The event was organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Turkmen delegation consisted of the management of the State Migration Service and representatives of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Foreign Ministry, Interior Ministry and the State

Statistics Committee. The Turkmen side made presentations on the review of the national civil registration system and preparation for the upcoming census. UNHCR approved a global plan of action in November 2014 to eradicate statelessness in 2014-2024, which was enshrined in a resolution of the UN General Assembly. Some 735 people, permanently residing in the territory of the country, without citizenship and who are the representatives of different nationalities, became Turkmen citizens in 2018. Some 8,145 people became Turkmen citizens in 2011-2017. (Trend)

Pakistan Denies Indian President Permission to Enter Airspace

ISLAMABAD - Islamabad has refused to give the president of India permission to enter its airspace for his flight to Iceland, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said on Saturday. Prime Minister Imran Khan approved the move in light of India's treatment of people in occupied Kashmir, Qureshi told Pakistani media, adding that the state's concerns about Kashmir would be raised with the UN's Human Rights Council. India's President Ram Nath Kovind is due to travel to Iceland, Swit-

zerland and Slovenia next week as part of a business delegation to promote economic ties between the nations and India. The refusal is the latest escalation in increased tensions between the neighboring states after India's government unexpectedly revoked Kashmir's special status last month. New Delhi insists that stripping the disputed region of self-governing status is necessary to curb terrorism. However, Pakistan has condemned the curfew-like sanctions imposed on Kashmir. (RT)