

Syria, North Korea to Have Their Say at UN Gathering

UNITED NATIONS — Two of the planet's most troubled hot spots are sending envoys to have their say before the world on Saturday.

North Korea and Syria, places of international concern that spill trouble beyond national borders, are to appear before the U.N. General Assembly at a time when both countries could be on the cusp of significant developments.

Trump and his secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, are trying to regain momentum more than three months after the Singapore summit with North Korea's Kim Jong Un, and are pushing for a second meeting in their quest to get Pyongyang to renounce its nuclear ambitions. Syria could be on the verge of emerging from



seven years of bloody conflict that included the use of chemical weapons. Pompeo is planning to visit Pyongyang next month to prepare for a second Kim-Trump

summit. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has also said this week that he wants to meet with Kim. Still, there is widespread skepticism that Kim will actually relinquish

an arsenal that Pyongyang likely sees as the only way to guarantee the Kim dynasty's continued authoritarian rule. In a wide-ranging news conference at the U.N. on Wednesday, Trump said he was optimistic Kim wants to get a deal done because of their close ties.

"We have a very good relationship. He likes me, I like him, we get along," Trump said. "He wants to make a deal and I'd like to make a deal."

On Wednesday, Pompeo met with North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho on the sidelines of the General Assembly. Pompeo said on Twitter that his meeting with Ri was "very positive," but did not give any details. (AP)

Airline Now Says 1 Missing after Pacific Lagoon Plane Crash

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — The airline operating a flight that crashed into a Pacific lagoon on Friday in Micronesia now says one man is missing, after earlier saying all 47 passengers and crew had safely evacuated the sinking plane. Air Niugini said in a release that as of Saturday afternoon, it was unable to account for a male passenger. The airline said it was working with local authorities, hospitals and investigators to try to find the man.

The airline did not immediately respond to requests for more details about the passenger, such as his age or nationality. Local boats helped rescue the other passengers and crew after the plane hit the water while trying to land at the Chuuk Island airport. Officials said on Friday that seven people had been taken to a hospital. The airline said six passengers remained at the hospital Saturday, and all of them were in stable condition. (AP)

UNITED NATIONS — Russia's foreign minister trashed accusations of Russian meddling abroad as "baseless" and used the podium at the U.N.'s biggest event to tear into U.S. policies in Iran, Syria and Venezuela. He later declared that U.S.-Russian relations "are bad and probably at their all-time low."

In a rapid-fire, unforfeiting speech Friday, Sergey Lavrov pounded away at "self-serving" unilateral moves by U.S. President Donald Trump and assailed crippling Western sanctions against Russia as "political blackmail."



Lavrov deflected accusations of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, a nerve agent attack in Britain and other meddling abroad — despite mounting evidence of a broad, coordinated influence campaign. He criticized "baseless accusations of interference in the internal affairs of certain countries" and turned it around against the West, accusing unnamed forces of "overt endeavors to undermine democratically elected governments," in an apparent reference to U.S. and EU support for Russia's neighbors and the Syrian opposition. (AP)

At UN, Russia Says Meddling Claims Baseless, Slams the US

'Turbulence' in Ties Threatens U.S.-China Security Meeting



BEIJING - A key diplomatic and security meeting between China and the United States next month may not take place due to tensions in relations, sources

briefed on the matter said, potentially the latest casualty of worsening ties. Beijing and Washington are locked in a spiraling trade war that has seen them

level increasingly severe rounds of tariffs on each other's imports. Friction between the world's top two economies is now moving beyond trade, with U.S. President Donald Trump accusing Beijing this week of seeking to interfere in congressional elections, marking what U.S. officials told Reuters was a new phase in an escalating campaign by Washington to put pressure on China.

On the military front, China has been infuriated by the United States putting sanctions on the People's Liberation Army (PLA) for buying weapons from Russia, and by what Beijing sees as stepped up U.S. support for self-ruled Taiwan, claimed by China as its sacred territory. Two Beijing-based diplomatic sources familiar with the plans said U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis were both due in Beijing next month for the U.S.-China Diplomatic and Security Dialogue, which first took place last year in Washington, a reboot of earlier high-level talks under previous administrations. (Reuters)

At Conference, British PM May Faces Party Divided by Brexit

LONDON - British Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party began gathering for its annual conference on Saturday, bitterly divided over her plans to leave the European Union which threatens to derail any deal and put her own job in doubt. Just six months before Britain is due to leave the EU on March 29, 2019, May has said talks to clinch a divorce deal are at an impasse. She has said her "Chequers" proposals are the only viable option, but

EU leaders have said parts of them are unacceptable and many Conservative lawmakers have threatened to vote down a deal based on May's blueprint. The uncertainty has led to business concerns that there will be no deal, potentially leading to tariffs and border delays. Japanese carmaker Toyota on Saturday warned that leaving without an agreement would hit its production and jobs would ultimately be at risk. (Reuters)

At Least 384 Killed in Indonesian Quake, Tsunami

PALU, Indonesia - At least 384 people were killed, many swept away as giant waves crashed onto beaches, when a major earthquake and tsunami hit the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, authorities said on Saturday.

Hundreds had gathered for a festival on the beach in the city of Palu on Friday when waves as high as six meters (18 feet) smashed onshore at dusk, sweeping many to their death and destroying anything in their path, following a 7.5 magnitude earthquake. (Reuters)

World Court: Palestine Files Complaint over U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem

AMSTERDAM - The International Court of Justice on Friday said it has received a complaint from the "State of Palestine" against the United States, arguing that the U.S. government's placement of its Israeli embassy in Jerusalem violates an international treaty and it should be removed. The ICJ, known as the World Court, said in a statement Palestine argues the 1961 Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations requires a country to locate its embassy on the territory of a host state. While Israel controls Jerusalem militarily, its ownership is disputed.

In December, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the American embassy in Israel relocated from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and the new embassy opened in May. The Palestinian suit requests the court "to order the United States of America to withdraw (its) diplomatic mission from the Holy City of Jerusalem." (Reuters)

Meeting of U.S and Central American Officials Reset for October

MEXICO CITY - Mexico said on Friday that it will participate in a U.S.-hosted meeting with Central American countries on Oct. 11 and 12 in Washington, after a prior postponement put in question whether the event would actually take place. The Alliance for Prosperity, a U.S.-led economic and security group, was launched in 2014 in an effort to curb migration from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras by boosting economic growth and funding security programs. There was disagreement



as to why the initial conference scheduled for the week of Sept. 9 was called off. At the time, the United States said it was postponed because of "scheduling conflicts"

and with agreement by the participating countries, but El Salvador said it was Washington's decision to suspend the meeting and that it did not know the reason. (Reuters)

Hundreds Protest in German City against Erdogan's Visit

COLOGNE, Germany — Hundreds of people have gathered in the German city of Cologne to protest against a visit by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Erdogan is due to open a mosque which was built by a group with ties to Turkey in the city on Saturday. Several thousand people also demonstrated against Erdogan in Berlin on Friday night. Erdogan is in Germany for a visit aimed at reducing tensions between

the two NATO allies. He had breakfast with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin on Saturday. Germany and Turkey have clashed over numerous issues in recent years, including Turkey's jailing of German journalists. The rhetoric escalated to the point where Erdogan called Germany's mainstream parties "enemies of Turkey" and accused German officials of acting like Nazis, prompting Merkel to condemn his comments. (AP)

Four Ministers from Thailand's Military Government Launch New Party ahead of Polls

BANGKOK - Four ministers from Thailand's military government launched a new political party on Saturday, amid speculation they will back Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha to remain in power beyond a general election promised by May. May next year is the most recent deadline Prayuth's junta has set for a vote its critics hope will return Thailand to civilian rule after more than four years of military government, although it has repeatedly extended the timeline.

The Palang Pracharat party, whose name is an echo of the military government's economic and social development policy, will be led by Industry Minister Uttama Savanayana, who vowed to help Thailand overcome its political divide.

"We have wasted enough time and opportunity to develop our country," Uttama told reporters and party members at the launch, referring to decade-long political conflicts between supporters of ousted premiers Thaksin and Yingluck Shinawatra and the pro-military royalist establishment.

The announcement came days after Prayuth said he was "interested in politics." The four ministers are the first of Prayuth's cabinet members to form a political party, possibly to support his role in the next election. Like Prayuth, the ministers said they would not resign from their current posts. (Reuters)

Neighbor News

Uzbekistan's President to Pay Visit to India

NEW DELHI - Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev will pay a two-day state visit to India from Sept. 30, said official sources in external affairs ministry. He will be accompanied by a high-level delegation. This will be his first visit to India.

The visit will provide an opportunity to discuss bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest and reinforce the strategic partnership which exists between the two countries, said the official sources. (Xinhua)

Iran Unveils Indigenous Airborne Firefighting System

TEHRAN - Iran unveiled on Saturday a high pressure fire suppression system which can be mounted on various aircraft, state TV reported. The technology enables release of as much as 18 tonnes of water every five seconds from the aircraft to allow proportionate response to large-scale blazes.

The aerial firefighting technology is solely possessed by Iran, Defense Minister Amir Hatami said on the sidelines of the unveiling ceremony in Iran's central province of Isfahan.

The high pressure used for water release with the operation of the firefighting aircraft, Hatami added.

"Well-equipped aircraft at our disposal enables us to preserve the country's entire geographical and environmental expanse through deployment in crisis-hit areas," he noted.

According to Press TV, Iran's northern jungles are prone to fire given their popularity among tourists. Around 150 hectares of northern jungle areas are burned in a springtime fire this year, which was described as unprecedented in the past decade.

The western areas in Iran are also susceptible to blazes, though to a lesser extent. The jungles in Zagros Mountains suffered heavily during sweeping fires last year. (Xinhua)

Pakistan-Qatar; Movements to Enhance Bilateral Ties

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and Qatar have been enjoying close ties and the Foreign Ministers of the two countries during a meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session have vowed to strengthen the ties by forging partnerships and enhancing economic and trade relations.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi and his Qatari counterpart Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani also welcomed increase in the bilateral trade by 53%.

Pakistani foreign minister stressed unleashing the great economic potential between the two countries by increasing the exports of food items, construction material, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, sports goods and fabrics.

The Foreign Minister of Qatar also emphasized the need to activate all the existing institutional mechanisms between the two countries, to take bilateral relations to the next level.

Meanwhile President and Chief Executive Officer of Qatar Petroleum, Sherida Al-Kaabi met with Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad and briefed him on the Qatar Petroleum's global

portfolio and activities. The president and chief executive of Qatar Petroleum also showed keen desire to enhance the company's investment in Pakistan.

Prime Minister Imran Khan welcomed investment by Qatar Petroleum in Pakistan's energy and petroleum sectors and assured the CEO of the government's full support and cooperation in that regard.

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani had also invited Prime Minister Imran Khan for an official visit to the Kingdom. Al-Thani expressed his desire to expand ties with the incoming government in Pakistan.

There is a large Pakistani community in Qatar which numbers over 50,000. They work in diverse fields and send remittances each year.

The bilateral trade volume between Qatar and Pakistan witnessed a remarkable triple-digit growth last year compared to previous year.

The bilateral trade volume is set to witness further jump in the coming years as both the countries are working in close cooperation to further strengthen and deep economic cooperation in several promising areas. (Monitoring Desk)

Turkmen President Arrives in New York to Attend UNGA 73

ASHGABAT - A Turkmen government delegation headed by President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov started a working visit to New York, the Turkmen Foreign Ministry said in a message.

The delegation arrived in the US to participate in the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly. During the visit, the Turkmen president is expected to address the meeting of the UN

General Assembly, and the Turkmen-US business forum will be held. It was earlier reported that top level meetings are also planned.

In accordance with the priority positions of Turkmenistan, at the UN General Assembly's session, Turkmenistan will propose to declare 2019 the Year of Peace and Confidence, and hold a conference on disarmament in Ashgabat. (Trend)