

N.Korea Warns of Nuclear War; Trump Says U.S. is 'Locked and Loaded'

BEDMINSTER, N.J./BEIJING - U.S. President Donald Trump issued a new threat to North Korea on Friday, saying the U.S. military was "locked and loaded" as Pyongyang accused him of driving the Korean Peninsula to the brink of nuclear war. Trump kept up the war of words on Twitter shortly after the North Korean state news agency, KCNA, put out a statement blaming him for the escalated tensions. "Trump is driving the situation on the Korean peninsula to the brink of a nuclear war, making such outcries as 'the U.S. will not rule out a war against the DPRK,'" KCNA said. The U.S. president, who is vacationing at his Bedminster, New



Jersey, golf resort, described American military readiness in stark terms. "Military solutions are now fully in place, locked and loaded, should North Korea act unwisely," he wrote on Twitter. "Hopefully Kim Jong Un will find another path!" Trump maintained pressure on the North after a week of incendiary rhetoric including his warning on Tuesday that the United States would unleash "fire and fury" on Pyongyang if it threatened the United States. U.S. allies in the region reacted with alarm to the unusual response from Washington and senior U.S. officials scrambled to play down his comments. (Reuters)

Ties between Russia, Turkey "Promising," Says new Russian Envoy

ANKARA - New Russian Ambassador to Turkey Alexei Yerkhov has said that the relations between Russia and Turkey are "promising," the Anadolu Agency reported Thursday. Yerkhov told Turkish media representatives earlier the week that it requires a serious effort to bring the relations to "a higher level." Yerkhov said that the political dialogue between Russia and Turkey was growing, citing that phone discussions between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan have "gained significant momentum recently." The Astana Process, chaired by Russia, Iran and Turkey in parallel to UN-backed talks on Syria in Geneva, aims to find a political solution to the six-year Syria's civil war. On the economic ties between Russia and Turkey, Yerkhov said "there is still substantial potential in trade between the two countries which has not been discovered." (Xinhua)

Russian FM Warns of Risk of Military Confrontation between DPRK, U.S.

MOSCOW - The risk of a military conflict between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is very high, but Russia hopes common sense will prevail, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Friday. "The risks are very high, especially given the rhetoric. There are direct threats to use force," Lavrov said, speaking at a youth forum in the Vladimir region, Central Russia. He referred to the recent exchange of threats between Washington and Pyongyang. According to a report by the Korean Central News Agency on Thursday, the DPRK said it would prepare a plan by mid-August to strike the U.S. territory of Guam with intermediate missiles. On Tuesday, Trump issued a controversial warning to the DPRK, saying that threats from the country would be met with "fire and fury like the world has never seen." Russia was worried about these develop-



ments, Lavrov said. "Unfortunately, rhetoric in Washington and in Pyongyang begins to go off scale. We still expect common sense to prevail," he said. Lavrov recalled that Russia and China had made a number of proposals aimed at preventing a deep-seated conflict. (Xinhua)

Merkel: More Needed to Address Migration Causes



BERLIN - The Latest on Europe's response to the large number of refugees and migrants trying to reach the continent (all times local): German Chancellor Angela Merkel says that while a lot has been done to address the causes of mass migration and to slow the flow of refugees to Europe,

there is still a lot more to do. Merkel famously opened Germany's doors to asylum-seekers in 2015. Some 890,000 migrants entered the country that year, many fleeing civil war in Syria. The numbers have dropped significantly since then, in a large part due to a deal the European Union struck with Turkey to keep migrants there. Speaking Friday with the heads of the United Nations' refugee agency and the International Organization for Migration, Merkel said

she hoped a similar arrangement could be worked out with Libya, another key launching point for Europe-bound migrants. She says Germany is willing to increase aid for migrant facilities in Libya and promoting the north African nation's stability, but acknowledges "there's a lot that lies ahead for us." A court in southern Germany has convicted three Syrian men over the drowning deaths of 13 migrants off the coast of Greece in September 2015. (AP)

U.S.-Led Coalition Targets IS Financial Centers

WASHINGTON - The U.S.-led coalition forces have been targeting IS financial centers and banks in Iraq and Syria in an effort to cut off cash flow of the extremist militant group, said the U.S. Defense Department on Thursday. The coalition has conducted precision airstrikes on five IS financial centers over the past two weeks, including three in Abu Kamal and Deir Ez-Zor of Syria and two in Hawija and Al-Mukana of Iraq, said the Pentagon in a press briefing. The attacks sought to prevent the terrorist organization from using the resources to pay for fighters and fund terrorism worldwide, said Colonel Dillon, the spokesperson for Combined Joint Task Force at the briefing. So far the Iraqi government has cut off more than 90 bank branches inside IS territory from global financial systems. The U.S.-led coalition has intensified airstrikes recently when targeting the positions of the IS group in its main stronghold in Raqqa in Syria, resulting in the killing of tens of civilians this week. (Xinhua)

Qatar Crisis is Caused by Gov't, not People: UAE Official

DUBAI - The United Arab Emirates' Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Anwar Gargash, said on Friday that Qatar crisis is not caused by "its people," but it's "the product of Qatari government towards its neighbors." Gargash said on Twitter that the diplomatic rift with Qatar is "regrettable, but predictable," adding that the "political crisis shall be resolved by politicians." The diplomatic rift erupted on June 5 when the three Arab Gulf states UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, along with Egypt severed diplomatic ties with Qatar and implemented a transport boycott on the gas-rich Gulf country. They accused Qatar of supporting "terrorism." Qatar denies the charges. Mediation efforts by Kuwait, the United States and Germany have not been successful as yet. (Xinhua)

Russia Says 'A Pity' U.S. Casts Doubt on Iran Nuclear Deal

MOSCOW - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday it is a pity that the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump was casting doubt on the 2015 deal to curtail Iran's nuclear weapons program. "Unfortunately now our American partners call this... (treaty) into question," Lavrov told a meeting with students broadcast live by state television. "In the Trump administration they continue calling these agreements wrong and erroneous, and it's a pity that such a successful treaty is now somewhat being cast into doubt." Trump said on Thursday said he did not believe that Iran was living up to the spirit of the deal. (Reuters)

Brexit Opponent Says two Senior UK Ministers Sympathetic to his Plans

LONDON - An influential former British government adviser who has called for a new political movement to block Brexit said on Friday that two senior members of Prime Minister Theresa May's government were sympathetic to his plans. James Chapman, who formerly worked as chief of staff to Brexit minister David Davis, and before that as an aide to then-finance minister George Osborne, said May's Brexit plans would sink the British economy. After calling for a new political movement to keep Britain in the Eu-



ropean Union, Chapman said senior politicians have also been in touch," he told BBC radio. "They are not saying they are going to quit their parties, but they are saying they understand that there is an enormous gap in the center now of British politics. (Reuters)

India's Military Steps up Operational Readiness on China Border

NEW DELHI - India's military has increased operational readiness along the eastern Indian border with China, sources said, as neither side shows any sign of backing off from a face-off in a remote Himalayan region near their disputed frontier. Indian and Chinese troops have been embroiled in the seven-week confrontation on the Doklam plateau, claimed by both China and India's tiny ally, Bhutan. The sources, who were briefed on the deployment, said they did not expect the tensions, involving about 300 soldiers on each side standing a few hundred

feet apart, to escalate into a conflict between the nuclear-armed neighbors, who fought a brief but bloody border war in 1962. But the military alert level had been raised as a matter of caution, two sources in New Delhi and in the eastern state of Sikkim told Reuters on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter. The crisis began in June when a Chinese construction crew was found to be trying to extend a road in the Doklam region that both China and the mountainous nation of Bhutan claim as theirs. (Reuters)

Trump Moves to Declare Opioid Crisis National Emergency

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday said his administration is drafting up paperwork to officially declare the opioid crisis a national emergency. "The opioid crisis is an emergency and I'm saying officially right now it is an emergency," Trump told reporters outside his private golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, where he has been on a 17-day working vacation since Friday. "We're going to draw it up and we're going to make it a national emergency... We're going to spend a lot of time, a lot of effort and a lot of money on the opioid crisis," he said. "It is a serious problem the likes of which we have never had... You know when I was growing up they had the LSD and they had certain generations of drugs. There's never been anything like what's happened to this country over the last four or five years," the president said. Two days earlier, Trump vowed an intense effort on opioids after receiving a private briefing on the crisis. At the time, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price said the Trump administration could deploy the necessary resources and attention without declaring a national emergency, while noting that "all things" were "on the table for the president." A formal declaration of a public health emergency, or a presidential emergency declaration, would give the administration additional powers to waive health regulations, pay for treatment programs, and make overdose-reversing drugs more widely available, local analysts say. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

China Urges EU not to Abuse Trade Remedy Measures in Tire Probe

BEIJING - China is concerned about the European Union's anti-dumping probe against Chinese tire products and urges the EU to use trade remedy measures discreetly, an official with the commerce ministry said Friday. The European Commission, or the EU's executive arm, announced on Friday that it would launch an anti-dumping investigation into truck and bus tires imported from China. There is no sufficient evidence that Chinese exporters are dumping truck and bus tires onto the EU market and hurting EU industries, said Wang Hejun, head of the Ministry of Commerce trade remedy and investigation bureau. The amount of Chinese tire exports to EU coun-

tries has remained stable in the past two years, said Wang, who attributed lower product prices to a decline in global commodity prices. In February this year, the United States terminated its anti-dumping investigation against bus and truck tires from China as no damage to U.S. industry was found. Chinese and European tire firms have enjoyed close cooperation, and the EU-initiated probe will not only undermine the interests of Chinese enterprises, but also affect the development of the EU tire industry and the benefits of its own consumers, Wang said. The Chinese government is highly concerned with the EU investigation and will protect the justified rights of Chinese companies, he said. (Xinhua)

Nobody can Deprive Masses from Right to Rule: Nawaz

ISLAMABAD - Former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Friday said right to rule rests with the masses and everybody should respect sanctity of vote. "Mockery of sanctity of vote should come to an end now. It is the will of the people that should prevail to elect their representatives and give them chance to serve them," he said addressing a mammoth rally. Thousands of supporters and party workers thronged to roads to listen to their leader in scorching heat as their enthusiasm was worth seeing who were carrying banners, placard and posters, bearing slogans and picture of their leaders. They have been waiting for hours in humid

weather, their leader who after deposition for the third time had decided to go to his voters and take them into confidence on events that led to his disqualification. "It is unfortunate that for the last 70 years the mandate of masses had been mocked and no Prime Minister in the country could complete tenure in the government," he said. Nawaz Sharif said after coming to power fulfillment of promises was his prime priority but he was not allowed to fulfill this agenda. "I promised you to end loadshedding, create jobs, revive economy and carry forward development. But, once again I had been dethroned and was not given time to serve you." (APP)

Iran Stands with Pakistan in Fighting Terror: Larijani

TEHRAN - Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani has highlighted the threat posed by terrorist outfits to the regional and global stability, urging joint cooperation to combat the scourge. In separate messages sent to the heads of the Pakistani houses of parliament on Thursday, Larijani condemned recent terrorist attacks in the city of Lahore, the capital of the Punjab province. "The occurrence of terrorist attacks once again reminds all of the serious threat posed by terrorist groups to security and stability of the region and the world and proves the need for cooperation among all countries for an all-out fight against the scourge," he said. The top Iranian parliamentarian further stressed that the Islamic

Republic, itself a victim of terror, stands by Pakistan to battle terrorism as a common threat. On Monday, at least 34 people were injured when a powerful truck-bomb explosion hit Lahore's Bund Road area. It came two weeks after at least 26 people, including nine policemen, were killed and 58 others wounded in another bombing in the Pakistani city's Kot Lakhpat neighborhood. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militant group, also known as the Pakistani Taliban, claimed responsibility for the incident. Bomb blasts by militants are common in Pakistan, especially in tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. However, attacks in Lahore have become less frequent recently. (Presstv)

Uzbekistan to Host UN Conference on Co-Op in Central Asia

TASHKENT - The International Conference on Security and Sustainable Development in Central Asia under the aegis of UN will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, in November 2017, said Petko Draganov, head of UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), Aug. 11. Draganov has arrived in Tashkent to participate

in the conference, titled "Central Asia - the main priority of the foreign policy of Uzbekistan". UNRCCA is determined to continue cooperation with the government of Uzbekistan in this area, noted Draganov. "It is important to remember that Central Asia is not only a geographical and geopolitical, but also a single cultural and civilized space. (Trend)