

'Don't Walk into Trump's & His Poodle Johnson's Trap': German Govt Split Over Sending Navy to Gulf

BERLIN - A prospect of German warships being sent to patrol the troubled waters of the Strait of Hormuz has ignited a debate in Berlin. Critics are warning against joining a potential US- and UK-led mission. Proponents of the London-proposed mission say Germany should take part just because it is an inherent part of global trade. "Hardly any other country is as dependent on the freedom of international shipping as export champion Germany," former envoy to the US Wolfgang Ischinger told Die Welt. That said, Germans should not just "watch from the sidelines," he argued. His words were echoed by the influential Association



of German Industries, whose president told the paper that such a mission would be "a question of solidarity among us Europeans." The opposition slammed the proposal, warning

that events could ultimately spin out of control. Germany "should not walk into the trap of [US President Donald] Trump and his poodle [UK Prime Minister Boris] Johnson and let itself be led

into a conflict or the preparation for a war against Iran," Sevim Dagdelen, a Left Party MP, was quoted by Deutsche Welle as warning. The Social Democrats (SPD), the junior coalition partners in Chancellor Angela Merkel's center-right coalition government, were equally unappreciative of the idea. Karl-Heinz Brunner, an SPD member of the parliamentary defense committee, said that while maritime shipping is important, securing it could be done through diplomacy. "In the current situation, military options could contribute to further destabilization," he cautioned. **... (More on P4)... (10)**

Kim Dotcom Advises Followers to Pull a Soros and Short the British Pound before No-Deal Brexit

BERLIN - Internet entrepreneur Kim Dotcom has suggested his followers short the British pound sterling, to make some "easy money" in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Dotcom tweeted his hot tip on Tuesday, adding that a no-deal Brexit "will drive [the pound sterling] down hard." The Megaupload founder's advice was compared to 'doing a Soros,' as many of his followers drew similarities with George Soros' famous shorting of the pound in

1992, which netted him a billion dollars. On September 16, 1992, which came to be known as Black Wednesday, Soros bet a large sum of money against the overvalued sterling. Shorting allows an investor to profit from the price of a commodity going down. Other hedge funds heard about it and followed suit. When the London markets opened, billions of pounds had been sold; the Bank of England tried to buy up the pound to prop up the price but its value remained low. (RT)

'Whoever's on Israel's Side, We're Against': Erdogan Slams Netanyahu & US Over Palestinian Killings

ISTANBUL - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has condemned Israel and its enabling allies over "state terror... in Palestine," declaring, "Whoever is on Israel's side, let everyone know that we are against them." "We do not approve of silence on the state terror that Israel blatantly carries out in Palestine," Erdogan said on Sunday, addressing senior provincial officials of his Justice and Development Party in Ankara, according to Iranian



PressTV. Erdogan has been a fierce critic of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his

government, denouncing the PM currently mired in multiple corruption and bribery probes as "the thief who heads Israel" and a "tyrant who slaughters 7-year-old Palestinian kids" earlier this year. **... (More on P4)... (11)**

Neighbor News

Women Taking Photos of Themselves Without Headscarves Face 10-Year Prison Sentence in Iran

TEHRAN - Iranian women who post photos of themselves online without their headscarves on could face up to 10 years in prison. They face the punishment for posting images or video online, and for sending them to Masih Alinejad, a US-based activist who founded the "White Wednesdays" campaign in Iran to oppose the compulsory hijab. The campaign encourages women to post photos of themselves without headscarves. The semi-official Fars news agency quoted the head of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, Mousa Ghazanfarabadi, saying "those who film themselves or others while removing the hijab and send photos to this wom-

an ... will be sentenced to between one and 10 years in prison." Wearing the Islamic headscarf is mandatory in public for all women in Iran. Those who violate the rule face up to two months in prison and a fine of £20. Scores of women in Iran have been arrested for removing their headscarves as part of the "White Wednesdays" campaign. Last year, an Iranian woman was sentenced to two years in prison and 18 years probation for removing her headscarf in a protest. Shaparak Shajarzadeh said she had been sentenced for "opposing the compulsory hijab" and "waving a white flag of peace in the street". (The Independent)

President of Uzbekistan to Visit Belarus to Develop Scientific, Technical Cooperation

TASHKENT - President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev will be visiting Belarus from July 31 to August 1 at the invitation of President Alexander Lukashenko, Trend reports citing Uzbek media. In Belarusian capital of Minsk, presidents plan to discuss cooperation in the political, trade, economic, investment, cultural, humanitarian and other fields, as well as topical issues of the regional and international agenda. The leaders of the two countries will visit the National Industrial Exhibition of Uzbekistan

in the Belarusian capital and the High Technologies Park of Belarus. As expected, following the talks, the heads of state will sign a joint statement and approve a package of documents in the field of investment, industrial and scientific and technical cooperation. In a year and a half, mutual trade turnover between Uzbekistan and Belarus significantly increased: by 23 percent in 2018 compared to 2017 totaling to \$169 million, and by 14.6 percent in 1H2019 amounting to \$89 million. (Trend)

Turkmenistan, UAE Stress Importance of High-Level Negotiations

ASHGABAT - A new round of political consultations between the foreign ministries of Turkmenistan and the UAE took place in Abu Dhabi, Trend reports referring to the Turkmen Foreign Ministry. The talks were held by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Berdiniyaz Matiev and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the UAE Khalifa Shaheen Al Marar. "It was noted that the organization of high-level visits is an effective mechanism in the development of bilateral relations," the source said. The parties discussed

topical issues of political, diplomatic, trade and economic cooperation, noting that there are favorable opportunities for the expansion of partnership in energy, industry, high technology and agriculture. The parties also expressed confidence that the regularly held meetings will contribute to the further development of mutually beneficial cooperation in all areas between Turkmenistan and the UAE. Diplomats stressed the positive cooperation of countries within international organizations, particularly the UN. (Trend)

China, Pakistan to Enhance CPEC Cooperation

ISLAMABAD - China and Pakistan should implement consensus reached by leaders of the two countries and enhance strategic communication and coordination, Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan said on Tuesday. The two sides should make solid progress on the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and deepen cooperation in various areas including anti-terrorism and security to achieve more development in bilateral relations, Wang said while meeting with Zubair Mahmood Hayat, Pakistan's chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. Noting that Pakistan

is the only all-weather strategic cooperative partner of China, Wang said both countries have always trusted and supported each other regardless of the changes of international and regional situations. He commended the vigorous momentum of the development of bilateral relations and underscored the achievements of the CPEC, adding that the CPEC cooperation is heading toward a new stage featuring enrichment, expansion and high-quality development. Zubair spoke highly of Pakistan-China relations and expressed Pakistan's admiration of China's development. (Agencies)

Russian Court Rejects Kremlin Critic Navalny's Early Release Appeal



MOSCOW - A court in Moscow rejected jailed opposition leader Alexei

Navalny's appeal for early release on health grounds on Tuesday,

after he was suddenly taken ill in custody at the weekend and rushed to

hospital to be treated. Navalny was jailed for 30 days last week for urging people to take part in an unauthorized opposition protest. He was hospitalized on Sunday and discharged on Monday. He has said he may have been poisoned, a suspicion shared by his lawyer and personal doctor. Navalny's lawyer had asked the court to free him early on health grounds, saying the cell where he is being kept looked like it had been the source of his mysterious illness. (Reuters)

U.S. Firms See Little Clarity on Huawei as U.S.-China Talks Resume

WASHINGTON - A month after President Donald Trump said he would allow U.S. companies to resume selling to blacklisted Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei, his administration has done little to clarify what sales will be permitted. The lack of clarity on what U.S. firms can supply to the world's top producer of telecommunications equipment as long as it's on a so-called "entity list" is likely to cast a shadow over this week's U.S.-

China trade negotiations in Shanghai. Trump had pledged to allow the sales as a goodwill gesture to President Xi Jinping when the two met last month and agreed to restart talks to try to resolve their year-long trade war. China, for its part, agreed to restart large-scale agricultural purchases. U.S. chipmakers cheered Trump's announcement, which administration officials clarified afterwards **... (More on P4)... (13)**

Iraq Displays Stolen Artifacts Recovered from UK, Sweden

BAGHDAD - Iraqi officials are displaying stolen artifacts from the country's rich cultural heritage that were recently recovered from Britain and Sweden. Many archaeological treasures from Iraq, home of the ancient "fertile crescent" considered the cradle of civilization, were looted during the chaos that followed the 2003 U.S. invasion and whisked out of the country. Now Iraq is making a massive effort to bring these pieces home, working closely with the U.N. cultural organization. The artifacts on display Monday at the foreign ministry in Baghdad include archaeological and historical items, such as pottery fragments and shards with writing dating back at least 4,000 years to the ancient Sumerian civilization. (AP)

TSA: Man Checked Missile Launcher in Luggage at BWI

BALTIMORE - Federal officials say they've found a missile launcher in a man's luggage at the airport in Baltimore. The Transportation Security Administration said in a statement that the military grade weapon was located in the man's checked luggage at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport. TSA officers called airport police who found the man and detained him for questioning. The unidentified traveler said he was in the military and coming home from Kuwait. He said he wanted to keep the weapon as a souvenir. The TSA said the missile launcher was "not a live device." But it was handed over to the state fire marshal for disposal. (AP)

Rivals Iran and UAE to Hold Maritime Security Talks

DUBAI - Iran was to receive maritime security talks on Tuesday with officials from traditional foe the United Arab Emirates (UAE) amid worsening frictions between the Islamic Republic and the West in the Gulf region, Iranian media reported. The talks had been off since 2013, but the UAE wants to help calm the crisis and guard its reputation as a safe business hub. "The 6th joint meeting will be held on Tuesday between a visiting seven-member delegation from the United Arab Emirates' coast guard and Iranian officials in Tehran," Iran's semi-official Students News Agency (ISNA) reported.



Without giving a source, ISNA said issues from shared borders, visits by citizens of each nation, illegal entries, and maritime connections would be discussed. Officials in the UAE did not immediately respond to emailed requests by Reuters for comment. Attacks on Saudi tankers and other vessels off the UAE coast in

May increased tensions between the United States, Iran and Gulf Arab states. Washington and its Sunni Arab allies blamed Iran for the attacks, but Tehran denied that. The UAE tempered its reaction to the attacks, and has also scaled back its military presence in Yemen, where Saudi Arabia is involved in a **... (More on P4)... (12)**

Biden Will be Main Target of Democratic Rivals in Second Debate

CALIFORNIA - This time, Joe Biden knows his Democratic rivals are coming for him. The lineup of the second debate of Democratic candidates on Tuesday and Wednesday is almost exactly the same as for the first. But the stakes on Tuesday and Wednesday are higher as the contenders try to ensure they will survive an inevitable winnowing of the crowded field. Biden will be the main target of rivals such as Senators Cory Booker and Kamala Harris, who are likely to once again confront him issues from criminal justice to health care. "I'm not going to be as polite this time," Biden said Thursday at a fundraiser in Detroit. Biden has retreated to huddle with advisers for five days of debate preparation behind closed doors, even as other candidates maintained busy public schedules through the weekend and Monday. "Joe Biden probably goes into this debate right now with the largest expectations in terms of what he must do," said Mitchell McKinney, a professor at the University of Missouri who studies presidential debates. With attacks likely to come from many directions, Biden can no longer afford to position himself above the primary fray and focus his campaign on running against Donald Trump in November, he said. Booker has been increasingly critical in recent weeks, calling Biden "the architect of mass incarceration" for his 1994 **... (More on P4)... (14)**

Russia Says U.S. May be Aiming to Quit Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

GENEVA - The United States may be planning to blame Russian non-compliance as a pretext to pull out of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), a Russian diplomat told the Conference on Disarmament, the world's main arms talks forum, on Tuesday. "It would appear that through

propaganda around false claims about Russia's compliance there are attempts to prepare international opinion for a U.S. exit from the CTBT and then to blame Russia again for everything," the Russian diplomat said. The United States has signed but not ratified the CTBT. (Reuters)