



PARIS (France 24) - A British submarine accused of sinking a French fishing trawler in 2004 had "nothing to do with" the incident, the UK vessel's former captain said Tuesday, adding that the submarine was docked on the day of the tragedy. Relatives believe the trawler sank after a submarine caught its nets and dragged it down.

The families of the five crew members who died on the Bugged Breizh on January 15, 2004 are hoping an inquest at the High Court in London will confirm their view that the boat was pulled down by the British submarine HMS Turbulent.

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MANILA (CNN) - Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte suggested that people reluctant to receive a COVID-19 shot should be inoculated while asleep. "I know many people are still hesitant. That's the problem, those people who do not want to get vaccinated ... Let's enter their houses and vaccinate them while asleep. End of story," Duterte said, as quoted by the newspaper the Inquirer. The president also urged the population to comply with restrictions, including social distancing and a requirement to wear masks. To date, the country has logged nearly 2.7 million cumulative COVID-19 cases and 39,660 deaths. Nearly 27 million people in the Philippines have received at least the first shot, and more than 23.3 million are fully vaccinated.

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PRISTINA (Reuters) - Ten Serbs and 10 police officers were injured on Wednesday when police fired tear gas to disperse a crowd that became hostile after raids on suspected smugglers in a volatile area of Kosovo populated by the Serb minority. Kosovo police said officers met resistance with firearms and grenades in Mitrovica as they carried out an operation to seize smuggled goods in several towns on Wednesday. Police chief Samedin Mehmeti said 10 officers were injured in the clashes. Interior Minister Xhelal Svecla said the police operation was "not directed against any nationality".

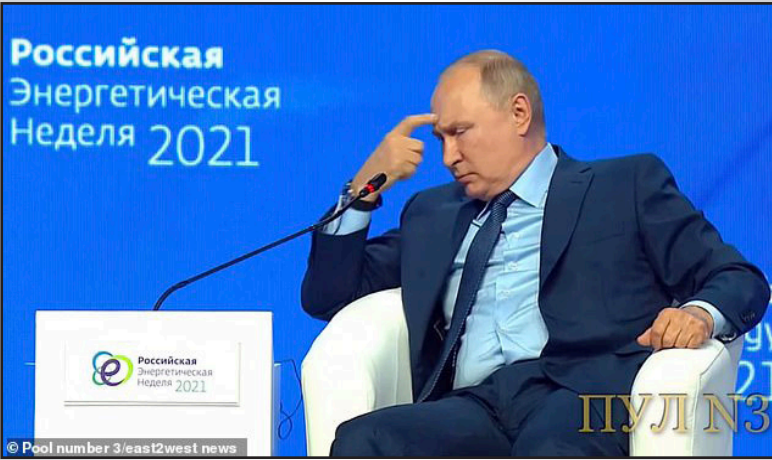
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BEIJING (CGTN) - Beijing announced on Wednesday that it firmly opposes Indian vice president's visit to a disputed area on the China-India border, urging New Delhi to refrain from moves that complicate boundary issues and bring China-India relations back on the right track and steady development. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian made the remarks when asked about Indian Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu's visit to the so-called "Arunachal Pradesh", CGTN reported. China has never recognized the so-called "Arunachal Pradesh", the spokesperson stressed. Zhao also called on the Indian side to truly respect China's major concerns and take concrete actions to maintain peace and stability in the China-India border region.

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PARIS (AFP) - A French soldier has died during a maintenance operation in northern Mali, Defence Minister Florence Parly said on Wednesday, bringing France's death toll since the start of anti-jihadist operations in the region to 53. The soldier, identified as non-commissioned officer Adrien Quélin, "died [on Tuesday] following an accident that occurred during a maintenance operation in Timbuktu", Parly wrote on Twitter. The government spokesperson, Gabriel Attal, told French TV an investigation was under way.

## Putin: Europe's Gas Price Crunch Caused by Systemic Flaws



President Vladimir Putin has said Russia is fulfilling all of its obligations to Europe in gas deliveries

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday said that systemic flaws in Europe's energy sector are responsible for the current supply crisis, and Russia's partners would be advised against trying to blame Moscow for gas shortages.

"The spike in gas prices in Europe was the result of a deficit of electricity, and not the other way around. And it's not worth trying to lay one's own fault at someone else's door, as we say, and as some of our partners are attempting to do," Putin said, speaking at the plenary session of the Russian Energy Week forum in Moscow.

"Stability and predictability are important for any market. Russia fully fulfills its contractual obligations to our partners, including those in Europe, and ensures the guaranteed, uninterrupted supply of gas to this region. All the preconditions exist to ensure that Russia hits a record in the delivery of gas to the global market by the end of this year," Putin said.

Russian officials have repeatedly said over recent weeks that suppliers are fulfilling obligations under contracts with European buyers.

Moscow is not upping supplies available on the short-term spot markets, which the EU prefers, arguing it is more competitive.

Russia's energy minister said earlier Wednesday that new contracts would be needed for increased deliveries to Europe.

"If there are requests, that will only be

via the establishment of new contractual obligations," Nikolai Shulginov said, describing Russia as a "reliable supplier".

Putin said that Russia was "ready" to increase gas exports, claiming supplies were being increased by "as much as our partners are asking us".

Russia, which supplies more than a third of European gas, has said a speedy launch of its Nord Stream 2 pipeline would help combat the surge in prices.

The Baltic Sea pipeline is set to double natural gas supplies from Russia to Germany.

But critics charge that the recently constructed pipeline would deprive Ukraine -- a key EU ally -- of transit fees.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky this week called on Europe to develop a "common long-term vision of Europe's energy security".

Moscow has also not booked additional gas transit capacity via Ukraine to Europe for October, raising concerns.

Russia denies it is pressuring customers, saying it needs to fill its own reserves for the winter before sending supplies on to Europe.

But European and UK gas prices surged last week to record peaks, energised by fears of runaway demand in the upcoming northern hemisphere winter.

The crisis has also been exacerbated by a lack of wind at turbine sites, coupled with ongoing nuclear outages -- and the winding down of coal power by climate-conscious governments.

## Britain Looking to Ink More AUKUS-Style Pacts



BEIJING (China Daily) - The United Kingdom will start an international charm offensive with the aim of resetting foreign and trade policies and forging more security and technology pacts.

It said Foreign Secretary Liz Truss wants to strike deals that are similar to the three-way AUKUS pact that London inked recently with Australia and the United States.

The Financial Times said Truss plans to start by visiting capital cities in European Union nations, with the goal of improving diplomatic ties.

The Financial Times said Foreign and Commonwealth Office insiders with knowledge of her plans said she will focus her attention on countries in regions that have the biggest impact on the UK's security and commercial interests.

The Daily Express newspaper said Truss, who was made foreign secretary in a Cabinet reshuffle on Sept 15, is particularly interested in building stronger relations with smaller states.

The paper quoted an unnamed official from Truss's department as saying: "Liz believes the way to challenge

our adversaries and boost Britain's global influence is to build deeper economic ties with other countries ... She's focused on deepening trade links, forging new tech partnerships, and working with allies to increase infrastructure into developing countries."

The official said Truss is interested in improving ties with not only Europe but also the "Indo-Pacific region", and is eyeing more cooperation with Australia, India, Indonesia and Japan.

Critics have said she might be better served, for now, to focus on deteriorating ties close to home, after disputes flared recently with the EU over the Northern Ireland Protocol.

The Republic of Ireland's foreign minister, Simon Coveney, told RTE's Morning Ireland program on Monday that the UK's insistence on trying to remove European Court of Justice oversight of the protocol amounts to a new red line.

"Each time the EU comes forward with new ideas, new proposals to try to solve problems, they are dismissed before they are released and that is happening again this week," he said.

## China: Drills Near Taiwan a 'Just' Move to Protect Peace



Chinese military exercises near Taiwan are targeted at forces promoting the island's formal independence and are a "just" move to protect peace and stability.

BEIJING (Dispatches) - China says recent military drills near Chinese Taipei were a "just" move aimed at protecting the country's sovereignty and integrity against Taipei's "collusion" with foreign forces.

China carried out beach landing and assault drills in the province directly across the sea from Chinese Taipei on Monday, one week after former Australian Prime Minister

Tony Abbott paid a visit to Taipei.

Beijing considers Chinese Taipei a breakaway province that should be reunited with the mainland. It also opposes other countries pursuing ties with the self-ruled island and has consistently warned against engagement with Taipei.

Spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, Ma Xiaoguang, said the cause of the current tensions was Taipei's ruling Democratic Progress-

sive Party (DPP)'s "collusion" with foreign forces and "provocations."

"They are absolutely just actions," Ma said, referring to the drills, adding that Taipei's "hyping of the so-called 'military threat' of the mainland is to completely invert right and wrong, and a bogus accusation."

Ma warned that Taipei's defiant authorities were pushing the island "into a more dangerous situation" as they "obstinately persist in going about things the wrong way."

Over the weekend, president of Chinese Taipei Tsai Ing-wen vowed to bolster the island's military capabilities in the face of what she called China's attempt to "compromise its sovereignty." She said Taipei would not let down its guard against Beijing.

Her remarks came a day after Chinese President Xi Jinping warned against Taipei's "independence separatism."

The U.S., too, recognizes Chinese sovereignty over Taipei but has long courted the island in an apparent attempt to unnerve Beijing.

## Americans to Face Higher Prices, Empty Shelves at Christmas



Empty supermarket shelves in Texas last year

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - White House officials, scrambling to relieve global supply bottlenecks choking U.S. ports, highways and railways, warn that Americans may face higher prices and some empty shelves this Christmas season.

The supply crisis, driven in part by the global COVID-19 pandemic, not only threatens to dampen U.S. spending at a critical time, it also poses a political risk for President Joe Biden.

The latest Reuters/Ipsos poll shows the economy continues to be the most important issue for Democrats and Republicans alike.

The White House has been trying to tackle inflation-inducing supply bottlenecks of everything from meat to semiconductors, and formed a task force in June that meets weekly and named a "bottleneck" czar to push private-sector companies to ease snarls.

Biden himself plans to meet

with top executives from retail giants Wal-Mart Inc (WMT.N) and Home Depot Inc (HD.N) and with unions and other stakeholders on Wednesday to discuss efforts to relieve transportation bottlenecks before delivering a speech on the topic.

Supply chain woes are weighing on retail and transportation companies, which recently issued a series of downgrade earnings outlooks. Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve last month predicted a 2021 inflation rate of 4.2%, well above its 2% target.

American consumers, unused to empty store shelves, may need to be flexible and patient, White House officials said.

"There will be things that people can't get," a senior White House official told Reuters, when asked about holiday shopping.

"At the same time, a lot of these goods are hopefully substitutable

by other things. ... I don't think there's any real reason to be panicked, but we all feel the frustration and there's a certain need for patience to help get through a relatively short period of time," the official added.

Inflation is eating into wages. Labor Department data shows that Americans made 0.9% less per hour on average in August than they did one year prior.

The White House argues inflation is a sign that their decision to provide historic support to small businesses and households, through \$1.9 trillion in COVID-19 relief funding, worked.

U.S. consumer demand stayed strong, outpacing global rivals, and the Biden administration expects the overall economy to grow at 7.1%, as inflation reaches its highest levels since the 1980s.

"We recognize that it has pinched families who are trying to get back to some semblance of normalcy as we move into the later stages of the pandemic," said a second senior White House official.

In August, the White House tapped John Porcari, a veteran transportation official who served in the Barack Obama administration as a new "envoy" to the nation's ports, but he's known as the bottleneck czar.

Porcari told Reuters the administration has worked to make sure various parts of the supply chain, such as ports and intermodal facilities, where freight is transferred from one form of transport to another, are in steady communication.

## ICJ Rejects Kenya's Claim in Border Dispute With Somalia

NAIROBI (Reuters) - The International Court of Justice rejected Kenya's territorial claims in a maritime border dispute with Somalia, in a ruling that may inflame tensions between the nations eyeing the area's oil and gas reserves.

The ruling read by Judge Joan Donoghue on Tuesday was largely in favor of Somalia, with the Hague-based court saying that there isn't a boundary agreement between the nations as earlier claimed by Kenya.

Kenya rejected the judgment, President Uhuru Kenyatta said in a statement following the ruling. The nation's foreign ministry had on Oct 8 signaled it wouldn't accept a ruling by the court because it had withdrawn its recognition of the institution's compulsory jurisdiction. It warned that whatever the

outcome, the ruling will have "profound" security and economic ramifications in the region.

"The decision embodies a perpetuation of the ICJ's jurisdictional overreach," according to the statement. Kenyatta said the ruling will strain relations between the countries and urged the international community to pursue a negotiated settlement.

The controversial case opened in 2014 when Somalia challenged a 2009 accord that set its Indian Ocean maritime border along latitudinal lines, with Kenya claiming ownership of a 150,000 square-kilometer zone potentially rich in hydrocarbons and fish. International energy companies including Anadarko Petroleum Corp, TotalEnergies SE and Eni SpA have shown interest in exploring in the area.