

ECB holds steady as markets wait

Frankfurt

The European Central Bank held its key interest rates and a mass bond purchase programme unchanged, sending a message to financial markets looking for hints its easy money policy will soon end. Interest on the bank's main refinancing operations stood at 0.0 percent, on its marginal lending facility at 0.25pc and on deposits at -0.4pc, meaning banks pay to park money with the ECB.



UK to decide on Murdoch's Sky takeover

London

Britain will decide whether to formally investigate the proposed takeover of pan-European satellite TV Sky by Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox. Karen Bradley, the minister for culture, media and sport, said she was "still minded" to launch an in-depth investigation into the £11.4-billion bid for the 61-pc of Sky not yet owned by 21st Century Fox.



"We (European Central Bank) need to be persistent, and patient as really there isn't any convincing sign of pickup in inflation."

Mario Draghi

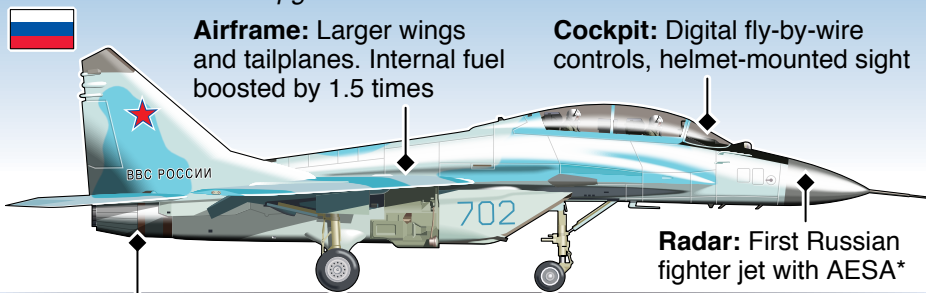
ECB chief



Russia readies new MiG-35 fighter jet

Russia's newest fighter jet, the MiG-35, which has been in development for over a decade, is expected to be showcased at the MAKS Air Show outside Moscow as engineers finalize testing on the aircraft

MIG-35 FULCRUM-F: Upgraded version of MiG-29. First deliveries due 2019



Airframe: Larger wings and tailplanes. Internal fuel boosted by 1.5 times

Cockpit: Digital fly-by-wire controls, helmet-mounted sight

Radar: First Russian fighter jet with AESA*

Engines: 2 x Klimov RD-33 turbofans – 12 percent more power than previous models. Optional thrust vectoring

Armament: 30mm cannon, 7,000kg payload. Optical / laser targeting pod for precision attack

Maximum takeoff weight	29,700kg	Speed	Mach 1.94 (2,400km/h)
Engine thrust	176kN	Range	2,000km

PERFORMANCE COMPARISON



Eurofighter Typhoon: Multi-role jet

Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II
U.S. stealth fighter

Maximum takeoff weight	23,500kg	Maximum takeoff weight	31,800kg
Engine thrust	180kN	Engine thrust	191kN
Speed	Mach 2.0 (2,500km/h)	Speed	Mach 1.6 (1,900km/h)
Range	1,390km	Range	2,220km
Armament	27mm cannon, 7,500kg payload	Armament	25mm cannon, 8,160kg payload

*Active electronically scanned array. Radar system produces signal emissions across wide range of frequencies, making detection and jamming more difficult

Sources: Airforce Technology, Aviation Week, U.S. Air Force

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US, European police say 'dark web' markets shut down

Washington

US and European police yesterday announced the shutdown of two huge "dark web" marketplaces that allowed the anonymous online trade of drugs, hacking software and guns.

US Attorney General Jeff Sessions said underground websites AlphaBay and Hansa had tens of thousands of sellers of deadly drugs like fentanyl and other illicit goods serving more than 200,000 customers worldwide.

"This case, pursued by dedicated agents and prosecutors, says you are not safe, you cannot hide. We will find you, dismantle your organization and network, and we will prosecute you," Sessions said in a warning to dark web entrepreneurs.



Representational image

The announcement came three weeks after AlphaBay stopped functioning with no explanation.

On July 5, the Canadian national who ran AlphaBay, Alexandre Cazes, was arrested in Thailand. Earlier this week, Cazes was found dead in his Thai police cell, with police saying he apparently hanged himself with a towel.

AlphaBay's shutdown

sent traffic flooding into the smaller Hansa marketplace.

But that new traffic, tens of thousands of users, was unaware that Dutch police had already secretly taken control of Hansa, giving them the ability to identify and track buyers and sellers of illicit goods.

The Hansa market has also now been shut down, said Europol executive director Rob Wainwright.

Audi pulls 'sexist' China ad after public outcry

Shanghai

German automaker Audi apologised yesterday over an advertisement it aired in China that was slammed as sexist for showing a bride-to-be being roughly examined like a piece of livestock.

The Chinese-language spot for Audi's used-car division, which appeared online and also reportedly in movie theatres, was criticised on social media for depicting an anxious mother-in-law crashing the wedding to pull and prod the bride, even prying her month open to check her teeth.



Representational image

Separate statements by Audi AG and the used-car division apologised and said the ad had been pulled.

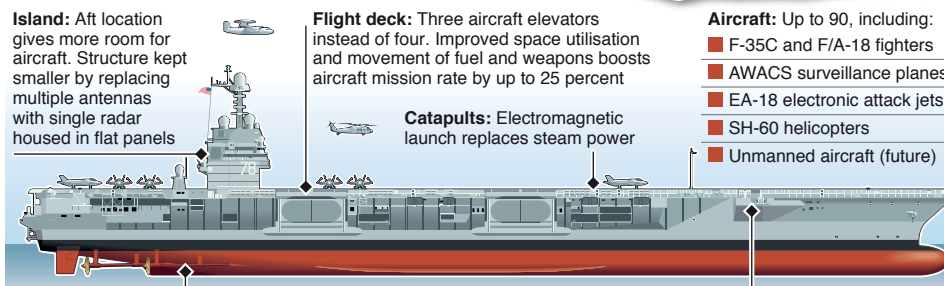
"The lack of consideration ... caused the public to view the advertisement as disrespectful to women. We hereby extend

our most sincere apology," the used-car unit said.

Audi AG's statement said it "deeply regrets" any offence caused by the ad, which it said "does not correspond to the values of our company in any way".

U.S. Navy to test next-generation supercarrier

President Donald Trump is scheduled to preside over the commissioning on July 22 of the Navy's newest aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R. Ford. The \$12.9 billion vessel is the first in a new generation of aircraft carriers, featuring a host of changes over the current Nimitz-class fleet



Island: Aft location gives more room for aircraft. Structure kept smaller by replacing multiple antennas with single radar housed in flat panels

Flight deck: Three aircraft elevators instead of four. Improved space utilisation and movement of fuel and weapons boosts aircraft mission rate by up to 25 percent

Catapults: Electromagnetic launch replaces steam power

Aircraft: Up to 90, including:

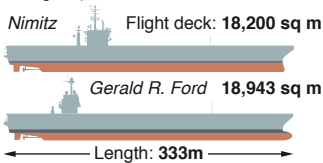
- F-35C and F/A-18 fighters
- AWACS surveillance planes
- EA-18 electronic attack jets
- SH-60 helicopters
- Unmanned aircraft (future)

Propulsion: Two nuclear reactors generate 600MW of electricity – triple that of Nimitz-class carrier

Technology: Greater automation enables less crew and lower costs. Maintenance reduced by 30 percent

Armament: Integrated system controls ship sensors, anti-air weapons (missiles and guns) and countermeasures

Specifications	Nimitz-class	USS Gerald R. Ford
Commissioning date	1975 (USS Nimitz)	2017 (planned)
Displacement (fully loaded)	88,000 tonnes	100,000 tonnes
Aircraft	60+	75+
Crew (including air wing)	5,200	4,539
Cost (2016)	\$8.9 billion*	\$12.9 billion



Sources: U.S. Navy, Navy League Hampton Roads, U.S. Government Accountability Office

*Inflation adjusted

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