

US-China Trade Truce Gives Global Stocks and Oil a Big Lift

LONDON — Shares around the world and oil prices surged Monday after the U.S. and China struck a 90-day truce in a trade dispute that has rattled investors for months.

KEEPING SCORE: In Europe, Germany's DAX climbed 2.4 percent to 11,511 and France's CAC 40 was up 1.1 percent at 5,057. Britain's FTSE 100 advanced 1.8 percent to 7,104. Wall Street was poised for a buoyant day too, with Dow futures and the broader S&P 500 futures up 1.5 percent.

G-20 SUMMIT: President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping dined together at the G-20 summit over the weekend and called a cease-fire, last-



ing for at least 90 days, to allow time to smooth out a dispute over Chinese technology policies that the U.S. and other trading

partners consider predatory. Trump will hold off on plans to raise tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese goods, which were sup-

posed to kick in on Jan. 1. In return, Xi agreed to buy a "very substantial amount" of agricultural, energy and industrial products from the U.S. to reduce its large trade deficit with China, the White House said. The truce could steady financial markets until the end of the year, analysts said, but any bumps in negotiations would bring on more volatility. **ANALYST TAKE:** "Three months is not a very long time to achieve this so there are naturally plenty of sceptics out there but this is a rare piece of good news in a conflict that has yet to produce any," said Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at OANDA. (AP)

NATO Chief Says Bosnia Set for New Move on Membership Path

BRUSSELS — NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg says Bosnia-Herzegovina is likely to get a green light this week to take a major step on the path toward future membership in the world's biggest military alliance. NATO foreign ministers are expected Wednesday to invite Bosnia to submit its first reform action plan, part of the alliance's Membership Action Plan, or MAP process, which helps

prepare countries for accession. But the Balkan country is unlikely to join soon. Stoltenberg said Monday that he expects the ministers to signal on Wednesday that "we are ready to receive the first annual national program." He added: "Then it's up to Bosnia-Herzegovina to decide whether they use this opportunity." NATO offered a MAP to Bosnia in 2010 but declined to "activate" it until all conditions had been met. (AP)

BEIRUT — The U.S.-led coalition has targeted a senior member of the Islamic State group involved in the 2014 killing of American aid worker Peter Kassig, a military spokesman said Monday. Col. Sean Ryan, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition fighting IS, told The Associated Press that coalition forces conducted precision strikes against Abu al-Umarayn and several other IS members. He said the strikes, which took place on Sunday, occurred in a desert area in southeastern Syria.

The area is close to where Syria's state news agency said the U.S.-led coalition fired several missiles at Syrian army positions in the country's east, causing material damage. The SANA report said positions targeted on Sunday night are in the Ghorab Mountains, south of the eastern town of Sukhna. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitoring group, said U.S. troops in the Tanf base near the Jordanian and Iraqi border fired 15 rockets at a Syrian military convoy that



lost its way in the area. It gave no further details. However, Mozaheem al-Salloum, from the activist-run Hammurabi Justice News network that tracks developments

in eastern Syria, denied reports that U.S. troops targeted Syrian army positions. The targets were only IS elements, al-Salloum added. (Fox News)

US Coalition Targets IS Figure Involved in Killing American

3 Astronauts Blast Off to International Space Station



BAIKONUR, Kazakhstan — Three astronauts successfully blasted off Monday to the International Space Station from

Jacques of the Canadian Space Agency and Oleg Kononenko of the Russian space agency Roscosmos lifted off as scheduled at 5:31 p.m. (11:31 GMT; 6:31 a.m. EST) Monday from the Russian-leased Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. Their Soyuz spacecraft entered a designated orbit just under nine minutes after the launch and is set to dock at the space outpost in about six hours after making four orbits of the Earth. NASA and Roscosmos said that all onboard sys-

tems were operating normally and the crew was feeling fine. McClain, Saint-Jacques and Kononenko will spend more than six months doing research and experiments in biology, Earth science, physical sciences and technology. On the space station, the crew of NASA's Serena Aunon-Chancellor, Russian Sergei Prokopyev and German Alexander Gerst were waiting for their arrival. They are scheduled to return to Earth on Dec. 20. (Fox News)

Australian Ruling Party Toughens Rules on Toppling Leader

MELBOURNE — Australia's Liberal party passed new rules late on Monday to make it harder to depose its leader, as the ruling coalition grapples with sinking opinion polls ahead of an election next year. The new rules require a two-thirds majority to change an elected leader, promising greater leadership stability after Australia's revolving door of five prime ministers in little more than five years. "It has been to the

great anguish of the Australian people, as they have seen this happen in the Labor and the Liberal party," Prime Minister Scott Morrison told the media in Canberra, the capital. "And they're sick of it...and it has to stop." The new rules will apply to leaders who successfully contest an election, Morrison added, thus opening the door to a challenge for the party's top job if the ruling Liberal-National coalition loses next year. (Reuters)

Britain's MI6 Spymaster Cautions Russia: Do Not Meddle in the West

ST ANDREWS, Scotland — The chief of Britain's foreign intelligence service warned the Kremlin on Monday not to underestimate the West after a brazen nerve agent attack on a retired double agent in England stoked fears about Russian covert activity abroad. In his second major speech since being named in 2014 to head the Secret Intelligence Service, or MI6, Alex Younger said Russia has a stance of "perpetual confrontation" with the West. After the attack on Sergei Skripal, a former Russian military intelligence officer who betrayed dozens of agents to MI6, Britain's allies in Europe and the United States took its side and ordered the biggest expulsion of Russian diplomats since the height of the Cold War. (Reuters)

Qatar Will Pull Out of OPEC Amid Tension with Saudi Arabia

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The tiny, energy-rich Arab nation of Qatar announced on Monday it will withdraw from OPEC in January, mixing its aspirations to increase production outside of the cartel's constraints with the politics of slighting the Saudi-dominated group amid the kingdom's boycott of Doha. The surprise announcement from Qatar's minister of state for energy affairs, Saad Sherida al-Kaabi, again throws into question the role of the cartel after needing non-members to push through a production cut in 2016 after prices crashed below \$30 a barrel. It also marks the first time a Mideast nation has left the cartel since its founding in 1960. (AP)

Who Are You? Merkel Uses Cheat Sheet to Read Up on New Australian PM before G20 Meeting

BERLIN — The internet has expressed solidarity with Angela Merkel after the German leader was seen reading up on Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison before their G20 meeting. The land down under has cycled through five PMs since 2013. Morrison, who became Australia's 30th prime minister in August, had his debut meeting with the German chancellor at the G20 summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina. But before the diplomatic pleasantries began, Merkel was spotted reviewing a briefing about Morrison — com-



plete with a photograph — as the Australian leader sat next to her. While some may view Merkel's last-minute cramming as unrefined, social media users have rushed to her defense. After all, Morrison is Australia's fifth prime minister since 2013. The turnover has been

so rapid that Morrison has become the third Australian prime minister to attend a G20 summit in just four years. "We'd all like to know who he is and why he's there. Perhaps she could pass the notes around?" one inquisitive Twitter user asked. (Russia Today)

Russia's Putin Escaped Critique for Ukraine Actions at G20-German Conservative

BERLIN — The G20 summit in Argentina failed to hold Russian President Vladimir Putin accountable for his actions with regard to Ukraine, despite significant efforts by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in bilateral meetings, a key Merkel ally said. "President Putin escaped nearly unscathed with his renewed aggression against Ukraine," Juergen

Hardt, foreign policy spokesman for Merkel's conservatives in parliament, said in a statement on Monday. He said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman missed an opportunity at the event both to provide details about the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi and to start to rebuild trust. (Reuters)

Saudi Friend of Khashoggi Sues Israeli Surveillance Company

JERUSALEM — A Saudi dissident has filed a lawsuit against an Israeli surveillance company, claiming its sophisticated spyware targeted him and helped lead to the killing of his friend, Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The suit, filed in a Tel Aviv court on Sunday, follows others previously filed against the company. But because of the dissident's ties to Khashoggi and his high-profile killing Oct. 2 at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul, it is likely to shine a greater spotlight on the Israeli company and the Israeli government, which licenses the export of the surveillance technology. According to the lawsuit, Omar Abdulaziz, a sharp critic on social media of the Saudi royals and a resident of Canada where he has received asylum, said he was friends with Khashoggi and worked with him on a project meant to rein in pro-monarchy Saudi trolls. The lawsuit says Abdulaziz received and clicked on a link sent to his phone in June 2018 that he argues exposed his mobile communications to Saudi authorities. It says Abdulaziz faced increased harassment by Saudi authorities after he clicked on the link, including the detention of family members in Saudi Arabia. The lawsuit says the plaintiff plans to argue that the cooperation between the two activists was "a crucial factor" in the decision to have Khashoggi killed and that there was a direct link between the surveillance carried out on Abdulaziz and the slaying of the U.S.-based columnist for The Washington Post. (AP)

Neighbor News

Pakistan, Leader of Islamic Radicals Accused of Terrorism

ISLAMABAD — Khadim Hussain Rizvi, Islamic radical and leader of the fundamentalist party Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (Tlp) is accused of terrorism and riot. This was announced by Fawad Chaudhry, Minister of Information in Pakistan, on December 1st. The Islamic religious, arrested by the Pakistani police last November 23, is blamed along with other members of his party of having fomented hatred throughout the country, following the acquittal of Asia Bibi, the Christian woman exonerated from the accusation of blasphemy. Minister Chaudhry explained that the arrest and

the indictment are due to the violent protests organized by the Tlp party. Following the reading of Asia's acquittal sentence, Rizvi and other Islamic radicals called for rebellion against the head of the army, to assassinate the judges of the Supreme Court and labeled Prime Minister Imran Khan as "son of the Jews". All these actions, the minister said, could lead to "a life sentence". For days the fundamentalists have blocked the main cities of Pakistan, created sit-ins and marches, prevented the circulation of cars and means of transport, burned tires and motorcycles. (Asia News)

Saudi Unwilling to Shed Old Delusions, Paying Price for Own Mistakes: Iran

TEHRAN — Iran says Saudi Arabia is not willing to change course even though it continues to pay the price for its own mistakes, leaving little to hope for in terms of improving ties. Speaking to reporters on Monday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said Tehran welcomes a more stable Middle East but there are no indications that the regime in Riyadh is ready to take on a more constructive role in the region. "Iran's policy in the region and towards its neighbors has always been clear and any country that is willing to improve ties will get a positive answer from Iran," he told reporters in Tehran. "Currently, we don't see a

similar vibe coming from the Saudi government," Qassemi said. "We think they continue to live with the same delusions from the past." Iran has time and again called on Riyadh to abandon its destabilizing policies and work towards resolving regional conflicts. Saudi Arabia stands accused of propping up terrorist groups wreaking havoc in Syria while also providing support to separatist groups that have carried out attacks against Iranian people. The Saudi regime is also facing growing international criticism over the actions of its de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. (Press TV)

UK Hedge Fund Gets Controlling Interest in Uzbek Leasing Company

TASHKENT — A controlling interest in the Uzbek leasing company Alliance Leasing has been acquired by the UK-based hedge fund Sturgeon Central Asia Balanced Fund Ltd., the press service of the Toshkent Republican Stock Exchange, where the deal took place, told Trend. It was earlier announced on the exchange's website that on Nov. 27 at 10:55, 26.67 million shares of Alliance Leasing worth 8 billion soums were sold. According to the press service, the transaction on the acquisition of 72.21 percent of the shares of the Uzbek company was concluded with Sturgeon Central Asia Balanced Fund Ltd. The press service of the

exchange reminded that Alliance Leasing's securities have been included in category "C" of Tashkent RSE's exchange quotation list from Nov. 13, 2018 by the decision of the exchange board in accordance with the regulations on the exchange quotation list, as well as on the basis of the Listing Commission's conclusion. Alliance Leasing was founded on Dec. 29, 2007. Sturgeon Central Asia Balanced Fund Ltd is a hedge fund launched by Compass Asset Management. The fund is managed by Sturgeon Capital LLP. It invests in public equity and hedging markets. It was formerly known as Kazakh Compass Fund, Ltd. (Trend)

12-Day Action to Celebrate 70th Anniversary of UDHR Launched in Tajikistan on December 3

DUSHANBE — A 12-day action to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was launched in Tajikistan on December 3, news.tj reports. The action includes a number of activities being carried out by the Civil Society Coalition against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan (Coalition). Beginning on December 3 during 12 days, the Coalition will cite one article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights a day and post two comments by a government official and a human rights activist.

The action is being held in three languages — Tajik, English and Russian. The action is organized under financial support of the Branch of the Open Society Institute/Assistance Foundation in Tajikistan (OSI/AF-Tajikistan), UNOCHA office in Tajikistan, UNDP Office in Tajikistan, the European Union Delegation to Tajikistan and Sigrud Rausing Trust. The Civil Society Coalition against Torture and Impunity in Tajikistan was established in September 2011 to consolidate the efforts of civil society to combat torture and impunity in Tajikistan. (Trend)