

US-China Trade Talks: What's Under Debate

BEIJING - US and Chinese officials wrapped up days of trade talks in Beijing on Friday with plans to resume negotiations in Washington this week as the world's top two economies try to smooth out their thorny trade dispute.

US President Donald Trump said the talks were going "extremely well", while his advisors deep in the details warned there was still "much work" to do.

Beijing and Washington have already imposed duties on more than \$360 billion in two-way trade, which are weighing on their manufacturing sectors and have shaken global financial markets.

Trump has said he may extend a March 1 deadline after which tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods are set to more



than double.

Here is a breakdown of the main sticking points:

- IP theft & tech transfer -

Washington contends Beijing has encouraged theft of American intellectual property

while forcing US companies to turn over trade secrets for market access. (AFP)

World Stocks Mostly Rise Ahead of More China-US Trade Talks

SINGAPORE — World stocks mostly rose on Monday ahead of more trade talks between Chinese and American officials in Washington this week.

After Asia closed higher, France's CAC 40 gained 0.1 percent to 5,157 while the DAX in Germany eased 0.2 percent to 11,272. Britain's FTSE 100 also shed 0.2 percent to 7,220.

Wall Street was due to remain closed for President's Day, and the future contracts for the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the S&P 500 were flat.

On Friday, China and the U.S. announced plans to resume trade negotiations in Washington, fueling hopes that both countries were edging toward a deal.

"We feel we have made headway on very, very important and difficult issues," U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said in a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Xi expressed hope for "a mutually beneficial and win-win agreement," according to the official Xinhua News Agency. (AP)

THE HAGUE, Netherlands - India is taking Pakistan to the United Nations' highest court in an attempt to spare an alleged spy from execution, in a case that has exacerbated tensions between the longtime rivals.

In a hearing Monday at the International Court of Justice, India is laying out its case that Pakistan breached the rights of Kulbhushan Jadhav following his arrest by not allowing him access to consular officials or the right to choose his own defense lawyer.

India Taking Pakistan to UN's Highest Court in Spying Case



Jadhav was arrested by Pakistan in March 2016 after he allegedly entered the country from Iran. Pakistani officials say he

has been linked to 1,345 deaths in acts of terrorism in Pakistan, making secret trips to the country from Iran.

He was convicted in Pakistan by a military tribunal and sentenced to death in April 2017. (Fox News)

Neighbor News

Saudi Crown Prince Starts Asia Trip Pledging \$20b for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD - Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have signed memorandums of understanding in the energy and agriculture sectors, including one for a \$10 billion (Dh36.73 billion) oil refinery in southwestern city of Gwadar, where China has helped build a deep water port. Saudi Arabia also signed a pact to provide Pakistan with crude oil and petroleum products on delayed payments to meet its energy needs. Saudi Arabia on Sunday said plans to invest \$20 billion in Pakistan as he began a swing through Asia at a time when Saudi Arabia's ties with the West have waned. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman

gave no time frame for the \$20 billion in projects, which would dwarf the roughly \$53 million Saudi Arabia has invested in Pakistan in the last three years. Investors appeared sceptical: The benchmark Karachi Stock Exchange 100 Index fell on Monday to the lowest in about three weeks. The Crown Prince's stop in Pakistan is the first leg of a broader Asia trip that will also take him to India, South Korea and China, where he's scheduled to meet with President Xi Jinping. He plans to head to India on Tuesday after postponing his trips to Indonesia and Malaysia. (Agencies)

Uzbekistan, UK Intend to Cooperate in Military Sphere

TASHKENT - Uzbek delegation, led by Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov, met with British Defense Minister Gavin Williamson at the Munich Security Conference, Trend reports with reference to press service of Uzbek Foreign Ministry.

"The sides discussed the state and prospects of expanding Uzbek-British relations, a number of international and regional problems, including issues of cooperation in the fight against modern challenges and threats to security," the press service of Uzbek Foreign Ministry said. Williamson expressed the interest of the British Defense Ministry to intensify cooperation in

military sphere by positively assessing the level of Uzbek-British cooperation in this area. The British side is ready to render all possible assistance to reform processes in Uzbek Ministry of Defense system, including the improvement of Armed Forces and the advanced training of military personnel. Special attention was paid to Afghan problem. The British minister stressed London's support for the outcome of Tashkent Conference on Afghanistan in March 2018, where consensus was reached in international community on the need to help launching the peaceful political process in that country. (Trend)

Turkmenistan Preparing for Additional Parliamentary Elections

ASHGABAT - Preparation for additional elections to the vacant parliament seats is underway in Turkmenistan, Trend reports referring to the Turkmen Central Election Commission (CEC) Feb. 18.

The elections are scheduled for March 31, 2019. "In accordance with the Constitution of Turkmenistan, the electoral legislation and the principles of the existing international standards in this field, a broad election campaign has been launched everywhere in Turkmenistan," the report said. The meetings are held to nominate representatives from the country's Democratic Party, the Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs and the Agrarian Party, as

well as groups of citizens. In line with the Constitution, the parliament adopts laws, makes changes and additions to the basic law, approves the state budget; resolves issues of holding national referendums; appoints elections of the president, members of the Parliament, members of representative bodies; considers issues of appointment and dismissal of the Chairman of the Supreme Court, the Prosecutor General, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Minister of Justice based on the proposal of the head of state; ratifies and denounces international treaties; and solves the issues of changing the state border and administrative-territorial division of the country. (Trend)

Self-Sufficient Iran Will Overcome US Sanctions: President Rouhani

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani says Iran has reached self-sufficiency in all areas, stressing that the nation will overcome the sanctions imposed by the United States. "The Iranian nation is on the path of self-sufficiency and nobody can stop this greatness by imposing certain conditions," he said in Bandar Abbas Monday at the opening of a refinery which will make the country self-sufficient in gasoline. "We face challenges at the time of an economic war and sanctions since the US and its mercenaries in the region are

attempting to increase daily pressure on the Iranian nation," he said. Rouhani further dismissed US claims that the sanctions do not target the Iranian nation, saying the measures are affecting people's lives. On Sunday Rouhani said, "If we want to stand against the superpowers and not to lose our independence, we must all remain united." "We must all stay together in order to preserve the freedom that has been achieved thanks to the blood of the Islamic Revolution's martyrs." (Press TV)

Germany Will Stop Extraditing Its Citizens to UK after Brexit - Report



BERLIN - Berlin reportedly told officials in Brussels that it will halt extradition of its citizens to Britain after Brexit. London has

little over a month left to strike an exit deal with the EU. Last week, Berlin formally notified the European

Commission that it will stop extraditing its citizens to Britain once London leaves the EU, the Financial Times reported on Sunday. The decision was "not a surprise" and is in line with the Brexit procedures, one EU official told the publication.

He also said that Germany halting extradition is a "sign of things to come" when the sides continue talks on securing cooperation in law enforcement, as the UK is formally set to exit the EU by the end of next month. Under current German

law, its citizens can be handed over either to fellow EU nations or to an international court.

The painstaking Brexit negotiations segued into another crisis last month when the UK Parliament firmly rejected Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit plan. The setback forced the authorities to frantically seek an additional bargain with the EU leadership.

The vote against the deal agreed upon by the EU prompted irritation from European politicians. (RT)

Saudi Official Fires Back after Iran Blames Attack on Riyadh

ISLAMABAD - A senior Saudi diplomat on Monday fired back after Iran initially blamed the kingdom for an attack last week that killed 27 members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard.

Adel al-Jubeir, the minister of state for foreign affairs, called Iran a "chief sponsor of terrorism," saying its allegations sought to divert the attention of the Iranian people from the country's own troubles.

"Saudi Arabia has been the victim of terrorism," he added, saying the kingdom would continue

to be "unmerciful" in going after terrorists and those who finance and condone them.

The comments came as Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was concluding a two-day visit to Pakistan. Al-Jubeir, the kingdom's former foreign minister, is part of the prince's entourage. Iranian officials had at first said that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were behind Wednesday's bombing near the Pakistani border, but later said the attack was planned from "inside Pakistan." (AP)

Indonesian Presidential Hopefuls Vow Energy Self-Sufficiency Via Palm

JAKARTA - Indonesia's two presidential candidates pledged to achieve energy self-sufficiency by boosting the use of bio-energy, particularly fueled by palm oil, to cut costly oil imports by Southeast Asia's biggest economy.

Indonesia, the world's biggest palm oil producer, has been pushing for all diesel fuel used in the country to contain bio-diesel to boost palm consumption, slash fuel imports, and narrow a yawning current account gap.

In a televised election debate, President Joko Widodo said if he won a second term the government planned to implement a B100 program, referring to fuel made entirely from palm oil, after last year making it mandatory to use biodiesel containing 20 percent bio-content (B20). (Reuters)

Germany in Talks for Joint Arms Exports Agreement with France

BERLIN - Berlin and Paris are in talks on common defense exports licensing procedures, a German government spokesman said on Monday.

German magazine Der Spiegel on Friday reported that Germany and France had signed a defense agreement in January which aims for regulation of arms exports to third countries. "It's true that Germany and France are in talks on the question of arms exports," government spokesman Steffen Seibert told journalists during a regular news conference. He said Berlin and Paris were in talks to reach a formal agreement on the issue. (Reuters)

To 'Save Face' Facebook Is Poised to 'Appease' Critics Like CNN over Russia Stories - Analyst to RT

MOSCOW - Facebook is under pressure by the US to hunt for supposed 'Russian influence' online, while the mainstream news outlets still continue to hype Moscow-related stories despite no evidence of collusion, an analyst has told RT. Succumbing to pressure from politicians and the media, Facebook tries to "save face" by wanting to "appease its loudest critics" like CNN, international law and human rights attorney Jennifer Breedon told RT. The social network has been getting a lot of flak for not doing enough to tackle the supposed 'Russian



meddling' in US politics. On Friday, without notice, Facebook took down several pages hosting video content. The action came right after CNN aired a report in which the pages were labelled "a growing brand of Russian-backed influence campaigns." The allegation

was brought up because they were partially owned by Ruptly video agency - a subsidiary of RT - which is funded by Russia. After taking down the pages, Facebook warned that they shouldn't be misleading about "who's behind them." (RT)

Ex-FBI Official: 'Crime May Have Been Committed' by Trump

WASHINGTON - Former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe said in an interview that aired Sunday that a "crime may have been committed" when President Donald Trump fired the head of the FBI and tried to publicly undermine an investigation into his campaign's ties to Russia. McCabe also said in the interview with "60 Minutes" that the FBI had good reason to open a counterintelligence investigation into whether Trump was in league with Russia, and therefore

a possible national security threat, following the May 2017 firing of then-FBI Director James Comey. "And the idea is, if the president committed obstruction of justice, fired the director of the of the FBI to negatively impact or to shut down our investigation of Russia's malign activity and possibly in support of his campaign, as a counterintelligence investigator you have to ask yourself, 'Why would a president of the United States do that?' McCabe said. (AP)

Silk Road City Xi'an Sees Soaring Foreign Trade

XI'AN - Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province, gained a 29.58 percent year-on-year increase in import and export volume in 2018, the city government announced in its work report.

Xi'an's total foreign trade valued at 330.4 billion yuan (about 48.8 billion U.S. dollars) in 2018, accounting for 94 percent of the volume of the whole province, the report said.

The city's foreign trade dependence degree, the ratio of foreign trade volume to the city's gross domestic output (GDP), rose for three consecutive years to 39.57 percent.

The foreign trade market has become more open and vibrant, said Lyu Hengjun, head of the city's bureau of commerce.

Trade between Xi'an and the United States grew by 17.5 percent and its trade with the Republic of Korea grew by 33.9 percent year on year. Trade with countries along the Belt and Road including Singapore, Malaysia, India, Vietnam and Russia also increased.

The city maintained an open economy with strong upward momentum, as the actual use of foreign direct investment rose by 19.7 percent to 6.35 billion U.S. dollars in 2018.

Xi'an, known in ancient times as Chang'an, is the starting point of the Silk Road and plays a key role in the Belt and Road Initiative.

According to local customs authorities, the city launched 1,235 China-Europe freight trains in 2018, 6.4 times the number in 2017, transporting a total of 1.2 million tonnes of goods with a value of 1.72 billion U.S. dollars. (Xinhua)