

## China Warns State-Run Companies to Refrain from Travel to US, Its Allies amid Arrest of Huawei Top Exec in Canada

BEIJING - China has advised officials from state-run enterprises to refrain from traveling to the U.S. and its allies following the arrest of Huawei top executive in Canada on behalf of the American government, deepening the rift between the two countries.

The State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission, a government group that oversees state-owned companies - told some use a secure company-issued laptop when traveling abroad or avoid business trips to Western countries altogether, Bloomberg reported, citing people familiar with the request.

In addition to the U.S., the warning covered four other countries: the United King-



dom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The request also instructed employees to

allow the companies to validate which records they should carry during the trip and

store them on a secure USB flash drive, according to the outlet.

The travel rules come amid the arrest of Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of Huawei and the daughter of founder Ren Zhengfei, who was detained by Canadian authorities last month at the request of the U.S. government. She was granted bail but remains in Vancouver under 24-hour surveillance. The U.S. must submit an extradition hearing by the end of January.

The U.S. has accused the Chinese tech giant of using a Hong Kong shell company to sell equipment in Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions. Meng and Huawei denied the accusations. (Fox News)

## Neighbor News

### Iran Satellite Launch, Which U.S. Warned against, Fails

GENEVA - Iran's bid to put a satellite into orbit, in defiance of U.S. warnings, failed on Tuesday after the rocket carrying it did not reach escape velocity, as the country's telecoms minister said a second launch would go ahead. Authorities in Washington this month warned Tehran against undertaking three planned launches that they said would, by using long-range ballistic missile technology, violate the U.N. Security Council resolution that enshrined Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

The United States is concerned that that technology can also be used to launch warheads.

Iran, which considers its space program

a matter of national pride, has said its space vehicle launches and missile tests are not violations and will continue. Telecoms Minister Mohammad Javad Azari-Jahromi said Tuesday's satellite, named Payam, was mounted with four cameras. It was intended to be used for imaging and communications purposes and orbit at an altitude of 500 km (310 miles), according to a report on the ministry's website. He said the satellite failed at the third stage because the rocket "did not reach adequate speed".

"I would have liked to make everybody happy with good news but sometimes life doesn't go forward the way we anticipate," he said on Twitter. (Reuters)

### Pakistan, China Agree to Make 2019 a Year of Economic Cooperation Under CPEC

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and China agreed on Tuesday expediting work by promoting joint ventures and export led growth under China Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC) by declaring 2019 as "year of industrial, socioeconomic and agriculture cooperation". (Monitoring Desk)

### Agreements Exceeding \$4B Signed at Uzbek-German Business Forum

TASHKENT - The Uzbek-German Business Forum, organized by the State Investment Committee of Uzbekistan, has wrapped up in Berlin, Trend reports referring to the Uzbek media.

The event was attended by Eckhard Franz, the Director-General for External Economic Policy at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Jurgen Rigterink, the First Vice-President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Karsten Fuelster, the Country Manager at the International Finance Corporation, Klaus Mangold, the Member of the Presidium of the Eastern Committee of the German Economy, and Volker Treier, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer at the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce.

The Uzbek delegation was headed by Sukhrob Kholmuradov, the Deputy Prime Minister, Chairman of the State Investment Committee. The forum was attended by more than 300 representatives from 234 German companies and banks.

As a result of the business forum, agreements on implementation of projects, totaling more than \$4 billion, were signed. The projects cover the oil and gas sector, petrochemistry, energy, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, food industry, building materials production, and hotel construction.

Agreements were also reached with Deutsche Bank, Commerzbank, Landesbank, KfW, and Aka Bank on loan allocation to commercial banks of Uzbekistan to finance projects in the country. (Trend)

### Tajikistan Produces over 1.2 Million Tons of Grain

DUSHANBE - Tajikistan reduced the volume of flour imports, while the volume of wheat imports, on the contrary, increased in 2018, Tajik media reports.

According to the ministry of the country's economic bloc, in 2018, imports of flour decreased by 7,400 tons compared to 2017, while the import of wheat increased by about 4,400 tons.

Tajikistan received 47,000 tons of flour worth \$ 10.3 million in 2018, which is 7,400 tons less than in 2017.

During this period, there was an increase in the volume of wheat imports compared with the figures for 2017 - by 4,400 tons. As many as 1,02 million tons of wheat worth \$ 272.6 million were imported to the republic in January-December 2018. Kazakhstan remains the main supplier of flour and wheat to the Tajik market.

According to the source, to date, more than 90 percent of Tajikistan's domestic flour needs are met from domestic production. The country has significantly increased the volume of processing of grain, especially wheat, which led to a decrease in the import of flour.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture of Tajikistan, over 1.2 million tons of cereals, including over 765,200 tons of wheat, were produced in Tajikistan by the beginning of December 2018. Wheat is Tajikistan's main cereal food crop. In the framework of the project of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the Tajik Ministry of Agriculture, the main goals of the project are sustainable food security and nutrition; natural resource management and climate resilience; agricultural productivity and competitiveness. (Agencies)

### U.N. Delivers Food for 9.5 Million in Yemen Last Month, Shy of Target

GENEVA - The U.N. food agency delivered emergency food and vouchers for over 9.5 million people in Yemen in December, just shy of its 10 million monthly target in the famine-threatened country, a spokesman said on Tuesday. Yemen's nearly four-year war and economic collapse have left 15.9 million people, 53 percent of the population, facing "severe acute food insecurity", and famine looms if immediate action is not

taken, a survey said last month. "We were at a bit less than 10 million because the actual situation slowed down a bit the distribution in some areas. The security is not as good as expected in some areas," World Food Programme spokesman Herve Verhoosel told a Geneva news briefing. "Some of our trucks were also stopped for longer than usual in some security checkpoints." (Reuters)

STRASBOURG - The European Union could hold new talks with Britain if parliament in London rejects the Brexit agreement on Tuesday, Germany's foreign minister said, but he ruled out significant changes to the treaty.

Speaking to reporters at the European Parliament, Heiko Maas said: "The agreement stands, as it is. I doubt very much that the agreement can be fundamentally reopened. If there were a better

### Germany Says EU Ready to Talk If UK Rejects Brexit Deal

solution, it would already have been put forward."

He said he had not given up hope that Prime Minister Theresa May might win parliamentary backing for her withdrawal agreement with the EU, saying that would be a good way to avoid a disorderly departure. But he added: "If it goes wrong tonight, there could be further talks."

EU leaders have previously ruled out significant changes to



the withdrawal agreement. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman denied a report on Tuesday in Britain's Sun newspa-

per that she had given May assurances that the EU could amend the deal if the British parliament rejected it. (Reuters)

### Saudi Minister 'Very Optimistic' about Oil Market



ABU DHABI - Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih said on Tuesday he was "very optimistic" about the outlook for the

oil market after producers cut output to support flagging prices. Members of the OPEC cartel and allies includ-

ing Russia decided last month to reduce output by 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) after prices fell by more than 40 percent in just a few weeks in late 2018.

The price of benchmark Brent crude, which briefly dipped below \$50 a barrel in December, rebounded partially to above \$60 a barrel following the production cuts which took effect on January 1.

The market has remained volatile with prices fluctuating sharply even after OPEC kingpin Saudi

Arabia announced last week it will gradually cut output by 800,000 bpd in January and a further 100,000 bpd next month.

"I am confident that the impact of the decision we took to cut output by 1.2 million bpd... will be very strong," Falih told reporters on the sidelines of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week conference. "But there is always a lagtime between the (decision to) cut production and the impact reaching the market," he said. (AFP)

### Singapore Says It Won't Name Hackers Who Targeted PM

SINGAPORE - Singapore officials said Tuesday that it isn't in the country's interest to nab - or even name - the perpetrator of a cyberattack that breached 1.5 million health records, including those of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

An inquiry into the July 4 breach, believed to be the largest in Singapore's history, concluded that it was likely state-linked. The inquiry called for hearings and considered factors like the attacker's persistence, resources and advanced tactics.

In a public report released last week, it said "the attacker had a clear goal in mind, namely the personal and outpatient medication data of the Prime Minister in the main." Lee is a two-time cancer survivor. Minister of Communication and Information S. Iswaran, who is also in charge of cybersecurity, told Parliament on Tuesday that the attacker could not be named for "national security reasons" and the copied personal data has not "emerged in any form" on the dark web. (AP)

### ICC Judges Acquit Former Ivory Coast President Gbagbo

THE HAGUE, Netherlands - Delivering a stinging defeat to prosecutors at the International Criminal Court, judges on Tuesday acquitted former Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo and former youth minister Charles Ble Goude of crimes committed following disputed elections in 2010, saying the prosecution failed to prove their case.

Presiding Judge Cuno Tarfusser ordered the immediate release of the 73-year-old Gbagbo and 47-year-old Ble Goude following the judgment that came before their lawyers even had to present a case. Tarfusser later suspended that order ahead of a follow-up hearing on Wednesday, when prosecutors are expected to announce whether they will appeal. (AP)

### UK Lawmakers Prepare to Deliver Verdict on EU Divorce Deal

LONDON - British lawmakers were preparing to deliver their verdict on Prime Minister Theresa May's divorce deal with the European Union on Tuesday after more than two years of political upheaval. All signs point to it receiving a resounding thumbs-down from Parliament, a development that would throw British politics further into turmoil, just 10 weeks before Britain is due to leave the EU on March 29. Despite a last-ditch plea from May for legislators to give the deal "a second look," it faces deep opposition from both sides of Britain's divide over Europe. Pro-Brexit lawmakers say the deal will leave Britain bound indefinitely to EU rules, while pro-EU politicians favor an even closer economic relationship with the bloc. (AP)

### Merkel's 'Crown Princess' Seeks to Chart Own Path

BERLIN - Dismissed by some as a mini-Angela Merkel, the new leader of Germany's centre-right CDU party and likely next chancellor has marked the turn of the year by underlining a change in tone from her mentor.

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, known in Germany as AKK after her initials, raised eyebrows Tuesday when she said her party will hold a critical session on February 11 on Germany's immigration policies.

"By reviewing the policies with regards to refugees since 2015, the new boss of the CDU shows that she's not a younger version of Angela Mer-



kel," the Sueddeutsche Zeitung newspaper said. "She is positioning herself clearly against Merkel", whose decision in 2015 to keep Germany's borders open to refugees has deeply divided the country.

AKK's planned debate on the decision to let in more than a million asylum seekers was a way to

openly contradict Merkel, who has always said debate about the past would amount to "frittering away" time.

"A month after her closely-run election, Kramp-Karrenbauer has started to orientate the CDU her way, setting its work programme," wrote the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. (AFP)

### India Finance Minister Goes for 'Medical Check-Up' in U.S.

NEW DELHI - Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has left for the United States for a "regular medical check-up", following a kidney transplant last year, two people with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters on Tuesday.

The minister, 66, is expected to present this government's last budget on Feb. 1 before Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks a second term in a general election due by May. A person familiar with Jaitley's medical

condition said the minister had "recovered well" from the transplant in New Delhi eight months ago.

A Finance Ministry spokesman declined to comment. Jaitley is the publicity head of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's election team and often acts as the chief spokesman for the government.

He continued to push what he sees as India's success story under Modi on Tuesday. (Reuters)