

Chinese Accuse McDonald's of Supporting Taiwan Independence

BEIJING — Chinese nationalists are accusing a McDonald's advertisement in Taiwan of supporting independence for the self-ruled island.

The advertisement for a breakfast sandwich, broadcast only in Taiwan, shows a two-second glimpse of a woman's identity card that lists her nationality as "Taiwan."

Comments on internet bulletin boards on Monday accused McDonald's of violating Chinese law by supporting independence for Taiwan, which Beijing claims as part of its territory.

Some called for a boycott of the restaurant chain. Others said McDonald's, whose mainland franchises are owned by a group that includes the Chinese Cabinet's investment arm, should be expelled from China.



"McDonald's this is what you want to do? Help Taiwan independence?" said a posting

on the Sina.com portal signed "Good Knife Still." Phone calls to McDonald's China headquarters were not answered. (AP)

Reinvented Legacy: Nazi's Paintings Fund Foundation for Jews

BERLIN — When Hilde Schramm inherited several paintings collected by her father, Hitler's chief architect and Armaments Minister Albert Speer, she was only sure of one thing: she didn't want them.

Despite determining they probably hadn't been looted from Jews during World War II, she wanted their legacy to somehow benefit others. So she huddled with friends around a rickety green table at her home-office in Ber-

lin and came up with a plan to sell them and use the proceeds to support Jewish women's creative projects in Germany.

In 1994, that became the Zurueckgeben foundation, a project for which Schramm is receiving an Obermayer German Jewish History Award on Monday. The honor was established by an American Jewish philanthropist to recognize the efforts of non-Jewish Germans to keep alive their nation's Jewish cultural past. (AP)

FRANKFURT, Germany — Multiple threats stalking Europe's economy mean the European Central Bank could keep interest rates at rock-bottom levels longer than expected, extending skimpy returns for savers — but supporting indebted companies and governments with low borrowing costs.

Speculation about a possible longer path to the first rate increases in Europe since 2011 has grown ahead of the European Central Bank's meeting on Thursday.

Interest Rates Could Stay Lower for Longer in Europe

The renewed focus also comes after U.S. Federal Reserve chairman Jay Powell suggested the Fed might not hike its own rates as fast as expected either.

The reason for the doubts in Europe: the economic upswing has slowed and faces worrisome hurdles in the months ahead.

Those include a possible chaotic exit by Britain from the European Union without a trade deal, which could disrupt industrial supply chains and production. Another is the U.S.-Chi-



na trade dispute, which could sideswipe Europe because its companies trade with both. And there's the lingering threat of U.S. President Donald Trump imposing auto tariffs if U.S.-EU trade talks don't reach a deal. As a result, investors are not expecting a rate increase until mid- or late 2020, judging by money-market indicators. (AP)

After Violence, Greek Parliament Debates Deal with Macedonia



ATHENS, Greece — Greece's government has submitted a controversial agreement to parliament aimed at normalizing

relations with neighbor Macedonia, a day after violent demonstrations against the deal erupted in Athens.

The agreement, submitted Monday for ratification in Greece, would see Macedonia change its name to North Macedonia and

allow the country to join NATO later this year.

Left-wing Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras' government is struggling to secure the majority needed to back the deal and may need the support of as many as six opposition lawmakers.

On Sunday, tens of thousands of people gathered outside Parliament to protest the deal, and at least 25 police officers were injured during extensive clashes.

Lawmakers are expected to vote on the agreement Friday. (AP)

Kremlin Downbeat on Japan Peace Deal Chances before Abe Visit

MOSCOW — The Kremlin on Monday played down the notion that Russia and Japan would be able to swiftly clinch a World War Two peace deal or resolve a decades-old territorial dispute, a day before the two countries are due to hold talks on the issues.

Japan is seeking a peace deal with Russia it hopes will end a dispute over islands captured by Soviet troops in the last days of World War Two, a disagreement that has long soured bilateral relations.

The islands are known as the Southern Kuriles in Russia and the Northern Territories in Japan, and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has launched a diplomatic campaign to strike a deal with Moscow. Abe and President Vladimir Putin are due to hold talks in Moscow on Tuesday after Tokyo and Moscow agreed to intensify their search for a solution. (Reuters)

Neighbor News

Iran Denies Germany Summoned Envoy over Military Spy Case

TEHRAN — Iran has dismissed reports that Germany summoned its charge d'affaires over Berlin's arrest of a German-Afghan dual national accused of spying for Tehran.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi told reporters on Monday that while the acting Iranian envoy had visited the German foreign ministry, local media reports that the visit was in any way related to the espionage case were false.

"We are not surprised to hear such news amid fake security accusations by those who seek to harm ties between Iran and Europe at this critical stage," Qassemi

said. Last week, German media reported that a 50-year-old Afghan-German dual national who worked for the German military had been arrested on suspicion of transferring sensitive military data to Tehran.

Germany's federal prosecutor's office identified the man as Abdul Hamid S. and said he had been remanded in custody pending an investigation.

The German defense ministry did not confirm the reports but said it was aware of an ongoing espionage case involving a member of the military. (Press TV)

Pak Govt to Proceed with Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan has decided to proceed on the Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project and expedite the process, a media report said on Monday. A report published by 'propakistani' website said Pakistan seeks regional cooperation in the energy sector.

It said the government is afraid that even bigger gas outages are going to hit the country in the coming years. It anticipates a gap of 3,262 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) in 2022-23 even after the implementation of the new gas pipeline projects.

To overcome this gap, the policymakers have suggested numerous ideas. They think that the work on the IP gas

project, with a capacity of 750 mmcf, can be expedited within 24 months. It has the potential to reduce the gap up to 2,513 mmcf. Experts believe that the rising demand for transport fuel and the increasing crude oil prices in the global market can become a challenge to the present government.

The IP gas pipeline is considered to be the easiest and most feasible route for importing natural gas to Pakistan. The groundbreaking of the pipeline project was performed in March 2013. While Iran has since then laid its side of the pipeline, Pakistan is yet to begin work on its side. (IRNA)

Uzbekistan Creating Single Uranium Extraction Enterprise

TASHKENT — Uzbekistan will create a unified state enterprise for extraction and processing of uranium in the near future, Trend reports via Podrobno.uz. The state enterprise will be organized using the Navoi Mining and Metallurgical Combine's assets.

Nowadays, Navoi MMC ranks seventh in uranium mining and production of nitrous oxide in the world. It is the sole operator in Uzbekistan engaged in extraction of uranium and exporting finished

products. Uzbekistan supplies its uranium to Japan. It also signed a seven-year \$300 million contract for uranium supplies to the United States in 2017.

Indian UCIL signed a contract in August 2014 with Navoi MMC to purchase up to 500 tons of Uzbek uranium per year in a period from 2014 to 2018. A new long-term contract was signed for exporting Uzbek uranium during Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's visit to India. (Trend)

ADB to Finance Project on Modernizing Turkmenistan's Energy Network

ASHGABAT — The State Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs of Turkmenistan signed an agreement with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for a sum of \$500 million for financing the project of modernization of the energy network of Turkmenistan, Trend reports via Turkmen Döwlet Habarlary (TDH).

Actively connecting Turkmenistan to a single Central Asian energy system plays an important role in opening up additional possibilities for the increase of the scope of supply of Turkmen electricity within the framework of the international "Turkmenistan - Uzbekistan - Tajikistan - Afghanistan - Pakistan" (TUTAP) project, TDH said.

It was previously reported that a financing of the construction of

high-voltage power lines in the Akhal-Balkan and Balkan-Dashoguz areas was in the works. It was reported at the end of October that the ADB expressed readiness to invest funds in Turkmenistan's transport and communications, energy, oil and gas industries, along with the country's private sector. The working plan proposed by the bank, considered investments in the Turkmen economy for the period of 2019-2021, amounting to about \$1 billion. Turkmenistan has been cooperating with ADB since 2000.

The country exports electricity to Iran and Afghanistan. By 2020, the Caspian country plans to produce up to 27.4 billion kilowatts per hour of electricity, and to increase its volume by 2030 to 35.5 billion kilowatts per hour. (Trend)

S.Korean President Positively Expects 2nd DPRK-U.S. Summit

SEOUL — South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Monday positively expected the outcome of the second summit between top leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump.

Moon said during a regular meeting with his senior aides that he heard from the U.S. side of the positive assessment on the results of the talks between Kim Yong Chol, vice chairman of the DPRK's ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) Central Committee, and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo as well as the former's meeting with Trump. (Xinhua)

China Offers Key Strategy for Tackling Challenges in New Globalization Era, Says Expert

LONDON — China has offered key components of a global strategy for tackling global challenges as the world enters a new era of so called "globalization 4.0," said a leading British expert.

"The new stage is a transformation of the world. It is a clash between an older global age and a coming, already come, digital age," said Martin Albrow, a renowned sociologist and a pioneer of the theory of globalization.

"That's the real transformation which is going on at the moment, and which the world has not yet been able to manage because it can't see it clearly enough," Albrow told Xinhua ahead of an annual gathering of world leaders and business elites in the Swiss resort of Davos. (Xinhua)

Stocks Mixed as Chinese Economy Slows to Weakest Since '90

BANGKOK — World stocks were subdued Monday after China reported that its economy expanded by 6.6 percent in 2018, its slowest pace since the slump that followed the crackdown on protests centered on Tiananmen Square in 1989. KEEPING SCORE: Germany's DAX fell 0.5 percent to 11,155 while the CAC 40 in France slipped 0.2 percent to 4,866. Britain's FTSE 100 added 0.1 percent to 6,976. Wall Street was due to remain closed for Martin Luther King Jr Day.

THE DAY IN ASIA: The Shanghai Composite Index added 0.6 percent to 2,610.51 and Hong



Kong's Hang Seng index climbed 0.3 percent to 27,196.54. Japan's Nikkei 225 index rose 0.3 percent to 20,719.33, while South Korea's Kospi was flat at 2,124.61. The S&P ASX 200 in Australia added 0.2 percent to 5,890.40. India's Sensex surged 0.7 percent to 36,633.37. Shares rose in Southeast Asia and Taiwan.

CHINA'S ECONOMY: The 6.6 percent expansion of the world's second-largest economy was down from 2017's 6.9 percent. China's communist leaders are trying to steer the country to slower, more self-sustaining growth based on consumer spending instead of trade and investment. (AP)

Germany Bans Iranian Airline from Its Airspace after U.S. Pressure

BERLIN — Germany has revoked the license of an Iranian airline because it has been transporting military equipment and personnel to Syria and other Middle East war zones, the foreign ministry said on Monday, after heavy U.S. pressure on Berlin to act.

The United States imposed sanctions on Mahan Air in 2011, saying it provided financial and other support to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards,

and has been pressing its European allies to follow suit.

The German ban on the airline takes immediate effect, a foreign ministry spokesman said.

Contacted by Reuters, Mahan Air in Tehran said it could not comment immediately on the ban.

The measure does not signal plans for the reimposition of broader sanctions against Iran, a German government source told Reuters. (Reuters)