

As Anti-G20 Protests Begin, Merkel Says Growth must be Inclusive

BERLIN - With an eye on anti-globalization protests brewing in Hamburg before this week's G20 summit, Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Sunday leaders will have to focus on sustainable and inclusive economic growth rather than their own prosperity. In her weekly podcast, the German chancellor said this year's G20 summit will delve into issues championed by protesters such as distribution of wealth and consumption of resources - alongside related issues like climate change, free markets, consumer protection and upholding social standards. Tens of thousands of demonstrators marched against the meeting in the rain in Hamburg on Sunday in a



prelude to the July 7-8 gathering, where 21,000 police from across Germany will protect the meetings of the world's 20 largest economies. "It's not only going to be about (economic) growth but rather sustainable growth," Merkel said. "We've got to have a 'win-win' situation for everyone. The issues obviously revolve around: how do we achieve inclusive or sustainable growth?" Merkel, seeking a fourth term in a Sept. 24 election, outlined the issues as: "What are we doing with our resources? What are the rules of distribution of wealth? How many people are taking part? And how many countries are able to profit from that?" (Reuters)

Trump to Speak with Xi, Abe as North Korea, Steel Issues Loom

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump will speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Sunday, calls that come as frustration builds in the White House over North Korea's nuclear program and overcapacity in the steel market. The talks come ahead of meetings he will hold with both leaders on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany, on July 7-8 where trade practices

are expected to be high on the agenda. Trump, who pledged a hard line on trade during his campaign for office, has been weighing new quotas or tariffs on steel imports for national security reasons and plans to discuss his concerns at the G20. The White House said the phone calls were scheduled starting at 8 p.m. EDT (0000 GMT Monday). Trump, who met with Xi in April in Florida, had said he was willing to work with China on trade issues but wanted to see Beijing use its economic leverage



to force North Korea to scale back its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, which are a threat to the United States and allies South Korea and Japan.

But Trump has become frustrated that China has not done more to pressure Pyongyang, and has been considering moving ahead on trade actions. (Reuters)

Erdogan Hosts Russia Defence Chief Amid Syria Border Tensions

ISTANBUL - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Sunday held talks with Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu in Istanbul as tension soared on the Syrian border between Turkish troops and a Kurdish militia. Turkey and Russia were long at loggerheads over the Syrian conflict, with Ankara seeking the ouster of President Bashar al-Assad and Moscow remaining his chief international ally. But cooperation had tightened markedly since last year, with

the two countries jointly sponsoring peace talks in the Kazakh capital Astana. Sunday's meeting took place at Istanbul's Tarabya Palace by the Bosphorus, the presidency said, with images showing Turkey's top general Hulusi Akar and spy chief Hakan Fidan were also in attendance. Last August, Turkey launched its Euphrates Shield cross-border operation aimed at clearing the border zone in northern Syria of both Kurdish militia fighters and jihadists. (AFP)

Italy Urges other EU Ports to Welcome Migrants

ROME - Italy's interior minister called Sunday on other European countries to open their ports to rescue ships ahead of talks with France and Germany on tackling the migrant emergency. Marco Minniti, who meets his counterparts in Paris later Sunday to prepare for EU talks in Tallinn this week, said in an interview with Il Messaggero daily that "we are under enormous pressure". With arrivals in Italy up nearly 19 percent compared to the same period last year, Rome has threatened to close its ports

to privately-funded aid boats or insist funding is cut off to EU countries which fail to help with the crisis. "There are NGO ships, Sophia and Frontex boats, Italian coast guard vessels" saving migrants in the Mediterranean, he said in a reference to the aid boats as well as the vessels deployed under EU border security and anti-trafficker missions. "They are sailing under the flags of various European countries. If the only ports refugees are taken to are Italian, something is not working. (AFP)

Political, Diplomatic Efforts Needed to Settle Crisis with Qatar: Putin

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday called upon Qatar and its neighboring countries to solve the current crisis by making political and diplomatic efforts, as he held a telephone conversation with Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. "The two leaders discussed the crisis in relations between Qatar and a number of other states. Vladimir Putin stressed the importance of political and diplomatic efforts aimed at overcoming the

disagreements and normalizing the current complicated situation," the Kremlin said in a statement. According to the statement, the heads of state also shared opinions on relevant issues of Russian-Qatari cooperation with an emphasis on the implementation of a number of promising projects including investment and energy, as well as agreed on contacts at different levels. Earlier on Saturday, Putin had a telephone conversation with King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al



Reuters File Photo

Khalifa, during which the two leaders also touched upon the Qatar issue, noting that it brought negative effect on the already complicated situation in the Middle East. "They

(The leaders) stressed that it is vitally important to launch a direct dialogue based on mutual respect between all states involved in the conflict," the Kremlin said. (Xinhua)

Putin Talks to Qatar, Bahrain Leaders on Gulf Row

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin had telephone discussions with the leaders of Qatar and Bahrain, stressing the need for diplomacy to end the dispute between Qatar and several other Arab states, the Kremlin said on Saturday. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain severed ties with Qatar last month, accusing it of supporting terrorism and opening up the worst rift in years among some of the most powerful states in the Arab world. Moscow is trying to tread cautiously in the dispute, since it wants good relations with both Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Russia backs President Bashar al-Assad in the six-year-long Syria conflict and is close to Iran, which has fraught ties with the Saudis. (Reuters)

First Asian Festival Held in Bulgaria

SOFIA - The first Asian festival was held in one of the biggest parks here on Sunday with the aim of showing culture and history unknown to many Bulgarian citizens. The festival was organized by the joint efforts of the embassies of China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan, Palestine, Syria, Thailand, the Philippines, South Korea, Vietnam, and Japan, with the support of Bulgarian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Tourism and Sofia Municipality. During the 10-hour event, held under the slogan "Asia Close-up," the audience enjoyed culinary, as well as musical and dance performances. Meanwhile, the host embassies provided calligraphy and arts workshops as well as children's games. Bulgaria's Vice President Iliyana Yotova opened the event, calling it a great feast that shows the magic of Asia. (Xinhua)

China's Contribution to Peacekeeping "Extremely Important," Says UN Peacekeeping Chief

UNITED NATIONS - The top UN peacekeeping official has said that China's contribution to peacekeeping is "extremely important," while highly commending the quality of its contingent and equipment. "As the second largest financial contributor, China's contribution to peacekeeping is extremely important," Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the UN Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Peacekeeping Operations, told Xinhua in a recent exclusive interview. Lacroix, who took over



from the former Under-Secretary-General Herve Ladsous on April 1 and is in charge of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, said that "China is a very important

troop contributor as well with about 2,500 peacekeepers deployed in a number of countries as in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Mali." (Xinhua)

Xi Talks Tough on Hong Kong as Protesters Call for Democracy

HONG KONG - Chinese President Xi Jinping swore in Hong Kong's new leader on Saturday with a stark warning that Beijing won't tolerate any challenge to its authority in the divided city as it marked the 20th anniversary of its return from Britain to China. Police blocked roads, preventing pro-democracy protesters from getting to the harbour-front venue close to where the last colonial governor, Chris Patten, tearfully handed back Hong Kong to China in the pouring rain in 1997. Xi said Hong Kong should crack down on moves towards "Hong Kong independence". "Any attempt to endanger China's sovereignty and security, challenge the power of the central government ... or use Hong Kong to carry out infiltration and sabotage activities against the mainland is an act that crosses the red line and is absolutely impermissible," Xi said. He also referred to the "humiliation and sorrow" China suffered during the first Opium War in the early 1840s that led to ceding Hong Kong to the British. Hong Kong has been racked by demands for full democracy and, more recently, by calls by some pockets of protesters for independence, a subject that is anathema to Beijing. Xi's speech was his strongest yet to the city amid concerns over what some perceive as increased meddling by Beijing, illustrated in recent years by the abduction by mainland agents of some Hong Kong booksellers and Beijing's efforts in disqualifying two pro-independence lawmakers elected to the city legislature. (Agencies)

Qatar Defiant as Deadline Nears to Resolve Gulf Rift

DOHA - A deadline was approaching Sunday for Qatar to accept a series of demands made by several Arab states to lift a de facto blockade, with no indications Doha was ready to comply. Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said Saturday that the 13 demands from Saudi Arabia and several of its allies were designed to be spurned. "The list of demands is made to be rejected," Sheikh Mohammed said. "Everyone is aware that these demands are meant to infringe the sovereignty of the state of Qatar," he said at a news

conference in Rome after meeting his Italian counterpart. "The state of Qatar... is rejecting it as a principle," he said, adding: "We are willing to engage in providing the proper conditions for further dialogue." Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt announced on June 5 they were severing ties with their Gulf neighbour, sparking the worst diplomatic crisis to hit the region in decades. They accused Doha of supporting extremism and of being too close to regional arch-rival Iran, which Qatar has strongly denied. (AFP)

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China-Russia Ties Enter New Phase

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping is paying a state visit from Monday to Tuesday at the invitation of his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, the third meeting between the two leaders since the beginning of this year. Deemed as "event of the year" for the two countries, Xi's upcoming tour and his meeting with Putin will be dedicated to a wide range of issues concerning the relationship as well as current international and regional problems. Given their aligned economic goals and unprecedentedly high mutual trust, the two neighboring countries are expected to come up with ways to further promote bilateral ties as well as contribute to global prosperity and stability. BILATERAL TRADE PICKS UP AMID IMPROVING ECONOMIES This year marks the 16th anniversary of the signing of the China-Russia

Treaty on Good-Neighborhood, Friendship and Cooperation. The past decade has seen the enhancement of bilateral relations, especially the strategic partnership that has been running at high levels since Xi took office four years ago. "Along with increasingly frequent high-level exchanges, pragmatic cooperation between the two countries is progressing steadily, while their people-to-people exchanges as well as inter-governmental and non-governmental exchanges in various fields are also flourishing," Chinese Ambassador to Russia Li Hui said. Economic and trade cooperation is an important manifestation of the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination. With highly complementary economies that are both taking a turn for the better, the two countries enjoy great potential for cooperation. (Xinhua)

CPEC Great Opportunity for Progress in Region: Sartaj Aziz

LAHORE - Advisor to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz said on Saturday the future of One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative was very bright as it offered great opportunities. Talking to media, he said in globalization, trade was only for rich people but now the trend was declining and development was increasing. He said China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project was not against anyone, adding it was a great opportunity for economic progress and development in the region. "We want good relations with all countries, adding that country's interests will always be kept on priority," he added. Sartaj Aziz said Kashmir

issue was being highlighted on all forums in a best way, adding people in India were also raising voice against the atrocities on innocent Kashmiris. Earlier, he attended the 125th Founder's Day ceremony of Govt Islamia College, Lahore and speaking on the occasion he shared his memories as a student in the college. He informed the participants of the ceremony about his interaction with Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and about teachers who always motivated students to achieve big goals. Govt Islamia College, Lahore Principal Prof Tahir Javed and others also spoke on the occasion. (APP)

Iran Should Act so as to Isolate US: Rouhani

TERHAN - President Hassan Rouhani says Iran should exercise such foreign policy, which would rally the world behind it rather than behind the United States. "We should not allow the US hand to expand and become powerful," he said on Sunday at a meeting convened by Iran's Judiciary. "Our foreign policy should be of such effect that would make powers condemn the US and reproach it should it choose to stand against us," he added. Rouhani said, "Being revolutionary means isolating the United States, and speaking to the world in such a language that it would comprehend and accept our discourse." The president said the

US has become isolated in the international community because of its insistence to impose new sanctions against the Islamic Republic in breach of a nuclear accord. He proceeded to cite examples of Washington's isolation on the world stage in its opposition against Iran. Rouhani recalled a Thursday plenary meeting of the United Nations Security Council held to address the implementation of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers. The event saw the UN, the European Union, and many major world countries all speaking appreciatively of Iran's commitment to the nuclear deal, while the United States alone cried foul. (Presstv)

Uzbekistan, Turkey Sign Trade Agreements Worth \$2 Billion

TASHKENT - documents signed by Uzbekistan and Turkey during the session, Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Rustam Azimov noted that the documents proposes implementation of about 30 projects in textile, electrotechnical and construction sectors. The Turkish side underlined that the agreements will allow to increase the mutual trade turnover up to \$1.4 billion in 2017 against \$1.2 billion in 2016. (AKI)