

G7 Financial Leaders Reiterate FX Pledges, Vow more Cyber Cooperation

BARI, Italy - Financial leaders of seven leading world economies pledged stronger cooperation against cyber crime on Saturday and not to use foreign exchange to gain competitive advantage, but stuck to their cautious wording on trade, their final communique showed.

Finance ministers and central bank governors from the United States, Canada, Japan, France, Germany, Italy and Britain met in the Italian city of Bari to discuss the world economy, combating terrorist funding, cyber security and taxes.

The final communique of the meeting said the seven countries would use all policy tools - fiscal, structural and



monetary - to boost economic growth.

It also said the G7 financial leaders would strengthen cooperation to counter cyber threats such as a global online attack which infected tens of thousands of computers on Friday. The statement said fiscal policy should be used to help job creation while keeping public debt on a sustainable path and monetary policy should help economic activity without fuelling strong inflation. "We reaffirm our existing G7 exchange rate commitments to market-determined exchange rates and to consult closely in regard to actions in foreign exchange markets," it said. *... (More on P4)... (18)*

Brexit Represents Far-Reaching Challenge for Ireland: IMF

DUBLIN - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Friday warned Brexit represents the most pressing and far-reaching challenge for Ireland.

"While the impact to date has been modest, the overall effects over the medium term are expected to be negative and significant," the IMF said in its latest country report on Ireland. "Risks are most acute for traditional sectors that depend on trade with the UK, with potentially sizable consequences for activity and employment outside of the main urban centers," it said.

In the country report, the IMF mentioned the ongoing changes in corporate taxation at the interna-

tional level and discussion of further reforms in the United States and the European Union, saying that these contribute to uncertainty in Ireland given the sizable role of multinationals in the Irish economy and their substantial contribution to the tax base. Britain announced reductions to its corporation tax rate, while U.S. President Donald Trump has signalled his desire to more than halve the U.S. rate from 35 percent to 15 percent. Ireland's 12.5 percent corporation tax rate is very low and is often cited as an example of tax competition, because it is used as an incentive for foreign companies to invest in the *... (More on P4)... (19)*

Putin, Moon Stress Political, Diplomatic Solution to Tensions on Korean Peninsula

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin and new South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Friday emphasized a political and diplomatic solution to the tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

"In exchanging views on the Korean Peninsula situation, the importance of finding ways to resolve the crisis politically and diplomatically was underlined,"

said the Kremlin in a statement. During a phone conversation, Putin congratulated Moon on his election as president, and the two leaders discussed bilateral relations and global issues. The two presidents agreed on further contacts. Moon won a landslide victory in the presidential election on Tuesday and was sworn in on Wednesday. (Xinhua)

AIIB Committed to Providing Strong Support to ASEAN

PHNOM PENH - Jin Liqun, president of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), said here Friday that the multilateral development bank is committed to lending strong support to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for infrastructure development.

"We're in the AIIB very much supportive of the economic and social progress in ASEAN countries," Jin said during the closing plenary of the World Economic Forum on ASEAN in Phnom Penh, capital of Cambodia. "We are committed to providing strong support, financially or technically, to the infrastructure development in your region, and we are very much committed to working not only



with the governments, but also with the private sectors," he said. He said that ASEAN was the first group of countries that participated in the establishment of *... (More on P4)... (21)*

Poll Gives UK Conservatives Big Lead Ahead of June Election

LONDON - British Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party maintained a strong lead over the main opposition Labour Party, ahead of a June 8 national election, according to an ORB opinion poll for The Telegraph. The Conservatives were at 46 percent, unchanged from ORB's previous poll, against Labour's 32 percent, up 1 percent. The poll put the centrist Liberal Democrats on 8 percent and the anti-European Union UK Independence Party at 7 percent, both down 1 percent. ORB surveyed 1,508 voters. Its interviews were carried out before the leak of the Labour manifesto on Wednesday. (Reuters)

UN Eyes Positive Role of Syrian Gov't in Upcoming Geneva Talks

DAMASCUS - UN Deputy Special Envoy to Syria Ramzy Ezzeldin Ramzy said here on Saturday that the United Nations expects a positive role from the Syrian government in the upcoming intra-Syrian talks in Geneva.

In a press briefing in Damascus following his meeting with foreign ministry officials, Ramzy said he heard that the Syrian stance will be constructive during the fresh round of talks that will be held in Geneva on May 16.

"We are looking forward to a positive contribution from the Syrian government to make the Geneva conference a success and what I heard today from the Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad gave me hope that the Syrian stance will be constructive during the next meeting," he told reporters. On the relation between the Geneva talks and the Syrian talks in Astana, Ramzy said the relation is reciprocal, noting that the Astana talks cannot be a



standalone without the political talks in Geneva, as the Astana talks are merely talks between the rebel factions and the government representative, while the

Geneva talks have a wider representation of the political opposition groups. "There is a reciprocal relationship between Astana *... (More on P4)... (20)*

Sino-U.S. Relationship "Paying Dividends": White House

WASHINGTON - White House spokesman Sean Spicer said that the trade consensus reached by China and the United States on Thursday showed that the bilateral relationship is already "paying dividends." "As the president has shown, in terms of the relationship that he's built with (Chinese) President Xi (Jinping) and the rest of the team built with their delegation, those relationships are clearly paying dividends," Spicer told a daily press briefing on Friday. Chinese Vice Finance Minister Zhu Guangyao Friday confirmed the ini-

tial results of a 100-day action plan for China-U.S. comprehensive economic dialogue, covering agriculture, financial services, investment and energy. Some highlights of the outcome are that China will allow imports of U.S. beef; the United States is to import poultry from China. The United States expects China and other partners to import liquefied natural gas and China will allow wholly foreign-funded financial



services to provide credit ratings in China. Most of the agreements are expected to be implemented by July 16, Zhu said. Spicer

also suggested that the U.S. government is eyeing further cooperation with China under the Belt and Road Initiative. (Xinhua)

UK Labour Deputy Leader Warns of 'Thatcher Style' Landslide

LONDON - Britain's Conservative party will win a "Margaret Thatcher style" landslide in next month's national election unless the Labour party improves its poll ratings, according to Tom Watson, Labour's deputy leader.

In an interview with The Guardian newspaper published on Saturday, Watson said Labour had "a mountain to climb" before election day. "If we get to June 8 and (Conservative leader Theresa May) still commands the lead in the polls she had at the start of the election, she will command a Margaret Thatcher style majority," said Watson, referring to the 140- and 100-seat landslides the Conservatives won in 1983 and 1987. "A Conservative government with a 100 majority is what it is. It will be very hard for them to be held to account in the House of *... (More on P4)... (22)*

Macron Fully Supports Paris Bid in Talk with Bach

PARIS - French president-elect Emmanuel Macron showed his absolute support for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Bid in a talk with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach, Paris bid said in a communique on Friday.

In a phone talk with Bach on Thursday, Macron, who was elected as French president on May 7, expressed his full support to the French capital's bid. He also shared with Bach his attachment to the bid work, and stressed France's long-term commitment to the Olympic Movement.

"Emmanuel Macron has been a supporter of the Paris 2024 bid since the very beginning," said Tony Estanguet, Paris bid co-chairman and three-time Olympic champion, adding that the bid was delighted to see that Macron has already found time to speak to the IOC president to reaffirm his full support for Paris 2024 before his inauguration as new president of France.

Paris and Los Angeles of the United States are two remaining candidate cities for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. IOC members will vote for the host city at the General Assembly in Lima, Peru on Sept. 13.

The IOC Evaluation Commission delegation will arrive in Paris for the inspection on the bid work this weekend after spending three days in Los Angeles. According to Estanguet, Macron has confirmed a meeting with the IOC Evaluation Commission while they are in Paris. (Xinhua)

UN Chief Says China Strong Pillar of Open, Multilateral World

BEIJING - China has shown it is a strong pillar of an open world and multilateralism by hosting the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Saturday. Meeting Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the eve of the forum in Beijing, Guterres said the forum embodies China's uniquely far-sighted, strategic vision. He said the Belt and Road Initiative will steer economic globalization toward more balanced, inclusive and harmonious development. The initiative is a key contribution to addressing global problems through international cooperation. Guterres said the UN will work closely with China to help devel-

oping countries achieve faster growth and meet the UN's 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Wang said the Belt and Road Initiative is an important public good China gives to the world. Participating countries can use it to realize common development and shared prosperity. Wang also met with Peter Thomson, president of the UN General Assembly, and Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, high representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations. Thomson said the Belt and Road Initiative demonstrates China's determination and capability to push forward mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation. The initiative is welcomed by countries around the world. (Xinhua)

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Xi Expects more Belt and Road Cooperation with Spain

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping said Saturday that China and Spain should carry out practical cooperation in various fields to produce win-win outcomes and mutual benefits under the Belt and Road Initiative. With its special geographic advantage, Spain can play an important role in Belt and Road construction, Xi said when meeting with Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, who is in Beijing to attend the two-day Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation which opens Sunday.

The China-Europe freight train from Yiwu City in east China's Zhejiang Province to Madrid is an important bridge of Eurasian connectivity and one of the first outcomes of the Belt and Road, said Xi. In recent years, bilateral practical cooperation has deepened and expanded and faces broad prospects, he said.

Both sides should dovetail their development strategies and explore the

potential for cooperation in fields such as agriculture, bio-medicine, aviation and aerospace, said Xi. "China firmly supports the integration of Europe and hopes Spain will play an active role in the European Union and make a contribution to the long-term, sound and stable development of China-Europe ties," said Xi. Rajoy said Spain-China relations maintain good momentum with close high-level exchanges and fruitful economic and trade cooperation. Spain highly appreciates the Belt and Road Initiative, said Rajoy. The initiative will have an important impact on the regional economy and cultural exchange along the routes and provide more room for bilateral cooperation, he said. Spain is willing to strengthen cooperation in trade, investment and infrastructure and people-to-people exchange with China, and push for deeper Europe-China relations, Rajoy added. (Xinhua)

Xi Calls for Boosting China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Construction

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping on Saturday called for the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to be pushed forward.

Xi made the remarks when meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who is in Beijing to attend the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation scheduled for May 14 and 15.

The supplementary projects in and around Pakistan's Gwadar Port should be steadily advanced and the study on the construction of industrial parks along the corridor facilitated, Xi said.

Xi stressed that the long-term planning of the corridor should be completed as soon as possible and cooperation programs covering energy, transportation infrastructure and people's livelihoods should be promoted and carried out. China-Pakistan relations remain a priority for China and it is willing to enrich the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership with Pakistan, the president said. The two sides should not only continue high-level exchanges, but increase interactions between governments, legislative bodies and political parties, Xi said. (Xinhua)

Pakistan, Iran Officials Agree on Anti-Terror Cooperation

KARACHI - Pakistani and Iranian officials met in the border town of Taftan on Friday morning to step up cooperation between the two countries against the threat of terrorist attacks and ensure legal movement of people along their shared 900km-long border, Dawn.com reported.

The officials resolved to carry out an inspection of the site where an attack by militants on April 26 had left 10 Iranian soldiers dead, a security official told DawnNews on condition of anonymity. Chaghi Deputy Commis-

sioner Shahak Baloch led the Pakistani delegation, while the Iranian side was led by Colonel Najaf Safri.

The meeting which continued for almost six hours resulted in an agreement, according to which the two sides would remain in contact and ensure better coordination to avert any untoward incident in future.

The meeting took place under strict security. In addition to Levies forces, Frontier Corps personnel were deployed in the area for the meeting between the two delegations. (Agencies)

U.S. Embassy Donates \$6 Million to Tajikistan's Border Guards

DUSHANBEH - United States Ambassador to Tajikistan Elisabeth Millard, Chairman of the State Committee for National Security (SCNS) General-Lieutenant Saymumin Yatimov, and 1st Deputy SCNS Chairman and Commander of the Border Force of Tajikistan General-Lieutenant Rajabali Rahmonali attended the handover ceremony of \$6 million in vehicles, communications equipment, and thermal cameras to the Main Border Guard Department under the State Committee on National Security of the Republic

of Tajikistan on May 11. This assistance will be used to increase the ability of Tajikistan's Border Guards to identify and interdict narcotics crossing along Tajikistan's borders, the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe said. Ambassador Millard remarked during the handover ceremony that the partnership between the United States and the Republic of Tajikistan is promoting a mutual interest of securing Tajikistan's borders against transnational threats that can affect stability and security in Central Asia. (AKI)