

Trump Pushes Economic Hope, Immigrant Fear in Election Final Run

INDIANAPOLIS - With four days to save the Republican Party's grip on Congress -- and his own dominance of US politics -- Donald Trump unleashed his two main weapons Friday: boasts about the economy and fear-mongering over immigration.

Trump flew to West Virginia and Indiana for campaign rallies, with more planned on the weekend and Monday. Less than 24 hours earlier, he was in Missouri.

"It will be a very exciting five days," Trump said at the White House before departing on the Marine One helicopter. Trump said his Republicans are in a good position ahead of Tuesday's midterm congressional elections, particularly with new employment



figures out showing the economy booming. But polls point to the Democrats capturing at least the House of Representatives, threatening Trump with the specter of an

opposition finally able to block policies and dig into his highly opaque personal finances.

The campaign trail Friday also saw arguably the one Democrat able to match Trump's sheer media star power -- his predecessor in the White House Barack Obama.

Obama, employing his trademark oratorical flourishes, spoke in Florida, where Democrats and Republicans are locked in a series of tight races, telling supporters to "cut through the lies, block out the noise." "Out of this political darkness, I see a great awakening of citizenship all across the country," Obama said. (AFP)

Neighbor News

Iran Inaugurates Production Line of Indigenous Fighter Jet

TEHRAN, Iran -- State TV says Iran has inaugurated the production line of its domestically produced fighter jet a day after the Trump administration announced the reimposition of remaining U.S. sanctions on Tehran to ramp up economic pressure on the Islamic Republic.

On Friday, the U.S. announced the re-imposition of all sanctions on Iran starting Monday, covering Iran's shipping, financial and energy sectors. This is the second batch of sanctions the U.S. has applied against Iran since the U.S. withdrew from a landmark nuclear accord in May. Iran unveiled its Kowsar aircraft in August. Iran already has both U.S.-made jet fighters and Russian-made Sukhoi aircraft in service. (AP)

Biles Sets Record by Picking Up 13th World Championship Gold

DOHA, Qatar -- Simone Biles made history by picking up her record 13th career gold medal at the world gymnastics championships when she cruised to victory in the vault final on Friday. Yet it's the silver she captured on uneven bars that the Olympic and world champion may cherish more. For years Biles viewed bars with a mixture of skepticism and scorn. There was a point in time she admits she would have been OK with taking a "chainsaw" to every bars

set in the country. Those days are over. Helped in part by the influence of new head coach Laurent Landi, Biles now considers the event a challenge more than a chore. Maybe that's why the smile on the podium during the medal ceremony after she came in second to Belgium's Nina Derwael was so wide. "I've come a long way," Biles said. It certainly showed. Biles put together a score of 14.7 to edge Germany's Elisabeth Seitz for silver. (AP)

China Says Willing to Help Pakistan over Fiscal Crisis

BEIJING -- Close ally China said Saturday it was willing to offer assistance to Pakistan to help it weather its current fiscal woes but that terms of such aid are still being discussed. That followed a meeting in Beijing between Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and Pakistan's newly elected Prime Minister Imran Khan, who met the previous day with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Pakistan's growing fiscal crisis has raised questions about its ability to repay Chinese loans granted as

part of Beijing's "Belt and Road" infrastructure initiative. Pakistan has taken out billions of dollars in loans from China in recent years, the terms of which remain largely undisclosed. China has pledged a total of more than \$60 billion to Pakistan in the form of loans and investments for roads, ports, power plants and industrial parks to build what is termed the "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor." Following Li's meeting with Khan, Vice Foreign



Minister Kong Xuanyou said the sides had "made it clear in principle that the Chinese government will provide necessary support and assistance to Pakistan in tiding over the current economic difficulties." "As for the specific measures to be taken, the competent authorities of the two sides will have detailed discussions," Kong told reporters. (AP)

Irish PM Says Brexit Has Undermined Good Friday Agreement



DUBLIN - Brexit has undermined the Good Friday Agreement which ended thirty years of

violence in Northern Ireland, Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said on Saturday.

"Brexit has undermined the Good Friday Agreement and is fraying the relationship between

Britain and Ireland," he told Irish state broadcaster RTE. The border between Ireland and Northern Ireland after Brexit has been one of the major sticking points in Britain's negotiations to leave the European Union in March next year. "Anything that pulls the communities apart in Northern Ireland undermines the Good Friday Agreement, and anything that pulls Britain and Ireland apart undermines that relationship," Varadkar added. (Reuters)

Angry Copts Mourn Egypt Bus Attack Victims

MINYA (Egypt) - Angry Coptic Christians on Saturday buried relatives shot dead on a bus carrying pilgrims south of the Egyptian capital, the second such jihadist attack on the country's main religious minority in as many years. The Islamic State (IS) group said it was behind Friday's attack which killed seven Christians returning from a visit to the desert cemetery of Saint Samuel that was also targeted in 2017. A security source said another seven people were wounded in the

Uzbekistan Eyes to Increase Trade Turnover with Iran over Twofold

TASHKENT - Increasing trade with Iran to \$1 billion is one of the top priorities of the government of Uzbekistan, Mehr News reported citing Bahodir Abdullayev, the Uzbek ambassador to Iran, as saying at a meeting with representatives of Iranian private companies in Arak, in the Markazi province.

Astana, the ambassador stressed that achieving this goal is one of the priorities of Uzbekistan. The ambassador noted that there are good opportunities in the Markazi province in the sphere of building materials, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, oil and gas, and added that Uzbekistan is ready to cooperate and increase trade with this province. During his two-day visit to the Markazi province, Abdullayev met with officials and visited various companies. (Trend)

China International Import Expo Creates Cooperation Opportunities for Whole World

JERUSALEM - The upcoming China International Import Expo (CIIE) will create "good opportunity" for the whole world to cooperate with each other, said Israeli Scientific Minister Ofir Akunis.

"We are in global markets, we are all together and we want to cooperate," said Akunis in an interview with Xinhua.

This is a "very good idea" and the "right way" that China hosts the CIIE where people from all over the world will meet there and cooperate in the future, noted the minister. Over 3,000 companies from 130 countries and regions, including Israel, have confirmed to participate in the event. (Xinhua)

Cuba Rejects Expansion of U.S. Economic Sanctions

HAVANA - Cuba on Friday rejected new U.S. economic sanctions against the island's military and intelligence services announced by U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton, saying the move has an "electoral interest." On Thursday, Bolton said in Miami that the U.S. State Department will expand the list of Cuban entities or companies associated with the military or intelligence sector with which U.S. individuals and companies are banned from doing business.

Carlos Fernandez de Cossio, director of U.S. affairs at Cuba's foreign ministry, told a press conference that the expanded sanctions will have a negative impact on the Cuban economy, which has been long undermined by the nearly 60-year-old financial blockade imposed unilaterally by Washington. (Xinhua)

US Restores Iran Sanctions Lifted Under Obama Nuclear Deal

WASHINGTON -- The Trump administration on Friday restored U.S. sanctions on Iran that had been lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal, but carved out exemptions for eight countries that can still import oil from the Islamic Republic without penalty. The sanctions take effect Monday and cover Iran's shipping, financial and energy sectors. They are the second batch the administration has re-imposed since Trump withdrew from the landmark Obama's biggest diplomatic achievements, gave Iran billions of dollars in sanctions relief in



exchange for curbs on its nuclear program, which many believed it was using to develop atomic weapons. Trump repeatedly denounced the agreement as the "worst ever" negotiated by the United States and said it gave Iran too much in return for too little. But proponents as well as the other parties to

the deal -- Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the European Union -- have vehemently defended it. The Europeans have mounted a drive to save the agreement without the U.S., fearing that the new sanctions will drive Iran to pull out and resume all of its nuclear work. (AP)

Divers See Lion Air Jet Fuselage, New 'Ping' Heard

JAKARTA, Indonesia -- Divers reported seeing the fuselage and engines of the crashed Lion Air jet on the sea floor and a ping locator has detected a signal that may be from the cockpit voice recorder, Indonesia's search and rescue chief said Saturday. Speaking on the sixth day of the search, Muhammad Syaugi said that two engines and more landing gear

had been found. The plane crashed in waters 30 meters (98 feet) deep but strong currents have hampered the search.

"I haven't seen it myself but I got information from some divers that they have seen the fuselage," he said at a news conference at a Jakarta port where body bags, debris and passenger belongings are first taken. (AP)

Euro Area Banks More Resilient to Financial Shocks: Stress Test

FRANKFURT - The 33 largest banks directly supervised by the European Central Bank (ECB) have become more resilient to financial shocks over the past two years, according to the results of the EU-wide stress test released on Friday.

The stress test, which was initiated and coordinated by the European Banking Authority (EBA) and undertaken in cooperation with the Competent Authorities, the ECB and the European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB), showed that the average Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) capital ratio, a key measure of a bank's financial soundness, of all 33 banks after a three-year stress period was 9.9 percent, up from 8.8 percent two years ago.

"Thanks also to our supervision, banks have built up considerably more capital, while also reducing non-performing loans, and among other things, improving their internal controls and risk governance," said Daniele Nouy, Chair of the ECB's Supervisory Board. "Looking ahead, the test helps us see where individual banks are most vulnerable and where clusters of banks are most sensitive to certain risks," she added.

In total, the 2018 EU-wide stress test covered 48 banks, representing 70 percent of banking assets in the European Union (EU), while the test did not contain a defined pass or fail threshold. (Xinhua)

Zhirinovskiy: Russian Language Important for Uzbekistan's Development

TASHKENT - The delegation of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), headed by Chairman Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, visited Bukhara (Uzbekistan), where the chairman and members of the party met with representatives of the Uzbek parliament, local residents, and visited the historical sights of the ancient city, Uzbek media reported.

"We are pleased that the head of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, is such an energetic and competent leader. His work on this high position deserves respect," Zhirinovskiy said. He noted that in order to improve the well-being of the citizens of Uzbekistan, it is necessary to develop the private sector and cre-

ate conditions for people to choose a trade they love. According to him, it is also necessary to restore the state industry, to re-launch the stopped plants. The Russian politician assigns the key role to the Russian language for all of the aforementioned. "We all grew up in this common culture, we remember the films that were shot at the Tashkent film studio, we were happy to watch them in Russia. You need to keep your historical names. Why take the western word 'governor', if you can say 'amir', for example. The streets in the cities of Uzbekistan should be called by the names of the people who lived here and glorified the country. (Trend)