

China's Premier Reassures Region on Growth, South China Sea

SINGAPORE — China's premier sought Tuesday to reassure its neighbors that Beijing will push ahead with reforms needed to support growth across the region and also keep the peace in contested waters in the South China Sea.

Premier Li Keqiang said his government will favor reforms in the world's No. 2 economy over temporary boosts from economic stimulus as China copes with a gradual slowing of growth and a trade war with the United States. China can energize its slowing economy by adjusting policies, such as streamlining procedures like business registrations, taxes and fees, Li said in a lecture on the sidelines of the annual summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations that brings together leaders from the U.S. and



across the region.

"Despite the downward pressure, we will not resort to massive stimulus. We will make adjustments as appropriate. We want to energize the

market, in particular, market entities, and we have the conditions to do that," Li said in the wide-ranging speech that touched on China's role in regional development.

Li said the government also will "crack down harshly" on businesses that infringe on patents and other intellectual property rights and engage in "other cheating activities."

"China will not stop in its opening up. The door will only open wider and China will continue to deepen reform. Reform and opening up have brought China to where it is today," Li added.

China and the U.S. are locked in a trade dispute over Washington's complaints that China uses predatory tactics to acquire technologies that could undermine U.S. industrial leadership. The two countries have raised import duties on billions of dollars of each other's goods, including soybeans, electric cars and whiskey. (AP)

Neighbor News

Iran to Host Major Int'l Islamic Conference in Nov

TEHRAN - Iran's capital Tehran will host a major Islamic conference attended by representatives from more than 80 countries later in November, Tasnim news agency reported Tuesday.

The 32nd International Islamic Unity Conference, organized by the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought (WFPIST), will be held on Nov. 24-26.

High-ranking political officials and religious figures, including 10 ministers and 40 Muf-

ti, most senior religious scholars, are expected to participate in the international event. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani would deliver speeches at the conference.

The Islamic Unity Conference is held annually on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad in an effort to promote stronger solidarity among Muslims and provide appropriate solutions for their problems. (Xinhua)

Turkmenistan Has All Conditions to Increase Number of Tourists: President

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan has all the conditions for increasing the number of tourists, President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov said, the "Neutral Turkmenistan" newspaper wrote Nov. 13.

The head of state drew attention to the need to fully use all the available conditions and opportunities for the development of the country's recreational potential, in particular, health and ecological tourism.

"New interesting offers and services should appear in the market of tourism services," the president said. The Berdimuhamedov demanded to organize

activities for attraction of travel enthusiasts to the country, active promotion of the cultural, historical and natural heritage of Turkmenistan abroad.

Tourism industry occupies a special place in the strategic plans of Turkmenistan. One example is the Avaza resort being built on the Caspian shores.

Turkmenistan has a rich folk culture, diverse natural landscapes, unique archaeological monuments, including the ancient Nisa, Merv and Kunya-Urgench, included in the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List, and the Gonurdepe archaeological park. (Trend)

SCNS Denies Information About Planning of Terrorist Act at the Russian Military Base in Dushanbe

DUSHANBE - The State Committee for National Security (SCNS) of Tajikistan has denied information about the arrest of a group of Islamists who allegedly planned to commit a terrorist act at the Russian military base in Dushanbe as absolutely baseless, news.tj reports.

Some Tajik and regional media outlets reported on November 12 that 12 supporters of the Islamic State (IS) terror group were arrested on November 4 for an attempt to blow up the commandant's office of the Russian military base in Dushanbe.

"We officially deny the information that a group of Islamists were detained for an attempt to commit a terrorist act at the Russian military base in Dushanbe. We did not arrest anybody and no terrorist act was being planned," Dilshod Abdulimov, a chief spokesman for the SCNS, told Asia-Plus by phone. A representative of the Russian military base also says that servicemen serve as usual and permit regime has not been tightened. "We did not hear about planning of any terrorist act at the base," he added. (Trend)

Rahmon Criticized the Country's Security Forces for Failure to Prevent Deadly Attack on Foreign Cyclists

DUSHANBE - Tajik President Emomali Rahmon has criticized the country's security forces for their "failure" to prevent the killing of four foreign cyclists in late July, news.tj reports.

The attack on a southern mountain road in late July had been prepared for "half a year" and the suspects had been on the police's list of potential terrorists, Rahmon said in Dushanbe on November 10.

Despite that, nothing was done to prevent the attack, the Tajik president said during an event devoted to the Day of Police.

"It was possible to prevent that horrific crime -- look how many gatherings they have held before the attack [and] how many illegal things they did be-

fore it -- but we have been negligent," Rahmon said. The four cyclists -- an American man and woman, a Dutchman, and a Swiss man -- were killed on July 29 when attackers plowed into their group on a road and then stabbed some of them.

Two other foreign cyclists survived the attack, which occurred about 150 kilometers south of Dushanbe. Days later, Tajik police arrested the alleged ringleader of the group, Hussein Abdusamadov.

The four other men suspected in the attack were killed during a police operation. Abdusamadov and 14 other Tajiks are currently on trial on suspicion of involvement in the attack. (Trend)

UK Far-Right Couple with Neo-Nazi Views Who Named Son after Hitler Convicted

LONDON - A British couple with neo-Nazi views who named their son after Adolf Hitler was convicted Monday of membership in an outlawed far-right group, according to multiple reports.

A jury at Birmingham Crown Court in central England found 22-year-old Adam Thomas and 38-year-old Claudia Patastas guilty of being members of National Action. During the trial, jurors were shown photos of Thomas holding his

baby son -- who was given the middle name Adolf -- while wearing the white robes of the Ku Klux Klan, as Sky News reported.

Sky News also reported that Thomas, a self-confessed Holocaust denier, moved to Israel when he was 18 to convert to Judaism so he could join the Israeli military.

He told the jury, according to Sky News, he lived in kibbutzes in Israel, and returned home in August 2016, after he "just lost interest." (Fox News)

In Iraq's Parliament, Shi'ite Militia Leaders Plan to Call the Shots

BAGHDAD - In May, Hassan Fada'am traded his military fatigues for a suit when he became one of 45 Shi'ite militiamen elected to Iraq's 329-seat parliament.

Fada'am trained as a soldier in Iran and fought against Islamic State in Iraq. Now he's a politician as paramilitary groups backed by Iran have doubled their number of seats in Iraq's parliament. The Fatih Alliance bloc that represents them has become the second largest political bloc. In interviews, eight mili-

tiamen who have translated their battlefield success into electoral victories set out how they plan to use this new platform. Six months after the vote, Iraq's new Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi has yet to win parliamentary approval for his government. Yet already one thing is evident, the militia are better placed than ever to influence policies, from domestic security to foreign policy.

Mahdi's predecessor as prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, has said he



fears the militiamen will undermine efforts to unify Iraq. Its young democracy is trying to balance the demands of its Sunnis, Kurds and Shi'ites after years of sectarian conflict, and the economy is only beginning to recover from the country's war with Islamic State. Abadi tried, unsuccessfully, to prevent militia leaders from standing in the 2018 election. (Reuters)

U.N. Will Not Help Myanmar with Long-Term Camps for Rohingya - Document



YANGON - The United Nations' refugee agency will not provide humanitarian assistance to Rohingya Muslims who return to Myanmar if they

are interned in camps, according to an internal position paper circulated days before the initial repatriation is due to start. The confidential briefing

paper, dated this month and reviewed by Reuters on Tuesday, outlines the position of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the repatriation process, and reflects a desire not to be drawn into supporting long-term camps for the Muslim minority.

A UNHCR spokeswoman said it did not comment on leaked documents.

Myanmar and Bangladesh agreed in late October to begin in mid-November the repatriation

of some of the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya who fled Myanmar last year to escape an army crackdown, despite warnings by the U.N. and aid agencies that conditions were not yet safe for their return.

Myanmar has been building transit centers for the refugees that it says will be temporary, but many Rohingya say they fear the sites could become permanent because of harsh restrictions on movement imposed on the largely stateless minority. (Reuters)

Mexico to Hold another Referendum, This Time on New Train

MEXICO CITY - Mexico's president-elect said Monday he will hold another public referendum later this month on his proposal for a railway to connect the main tourist attractions across the Yucatan peninsula.

Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said during a trip to the Yucatan state capital of Merida that the public can vote on the train and nine other proposed projects and programs Nov. 24 and 25. A referendum last month cancelled Mexico City's

new \$13 billion airport that was already one-third completed.

Lopez Obrador has said the train would run 932 miles (1,500 kilometers) across five states. He promotes it as a regional economic development project that would share the economic boom of Cancun's world class beach resorts with poorer, more remote parts of the south. Lopez Obrador said he would openly push for public support because they are campaign promises. (Fox News)

IDF Sends Tanks to Gaza Border, Bracing for Potential Full-Fledged Ground Offensive - Reports

GAZA - Tel Aviv has reportedly deployed additional ground forces, including tanks, to the Gaza Strip border after more than 300 rockets were fired at Israel, triggering airstrikes against some 70 targets across the Palestinian enclave. The Israeli military began reinforcing its positions along the Gaza border on Monday night after the army was reportedly given a green light to act against Hamas militants if the rocket fire against southern Israeli communities continues. Columns of trucks carrying armored vehicles were recorded heading to the border just as the IDF warned Hamas of an "iron fist" response to the most rigorous shelling of Israel since the 2014 Gaza war. (Russia Today)

'Separatists Are Not People': Ukrainian Kids Taught to Shoot & Kill at Far-Right 'Summer Camp'

KIEV - The Ukrainian far-right party 'Svoboda' is training children as young as eight to use firearms and shoot to kill, getting them ready to fight elusive "Russian aggression," and stand up to the "perversions" of the West.

The "Temper of will" summer camp -- which looks more like a full-fledged boot camp -- is located in a forest close to the Dniester river in the western Ukrainian region of Ternopol. The camp is run by the Sokil (Falcon) organization -- a militant youth offshoot of the "national-socialist" Ukrainian party Svoboda (Freedom). (Russia Today)

Pence, Abe Agree on Nkorea Sanction, Indo-Pacific Projects

TOKYO - U.S. Vice President Mike Pence and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Tuesday reaffirmed the need to keep sanctions on North Korea to achieve its denuclearization as they showcased their bilateral alliance, while Pence also urged Japan to do more to reduce U.S. trade deficit.

Pence and Abe also agreed to deepen cooperation in promoting energy, infrastructure and providing loans to nations in the region.

Pence said the U.S.-Japan alliance is a "cornerstone" of the region's peace and prosperity and said Japan is not only an ally but a friend, but that Japan needs to do more to



reduce the bilateral trade imbalance. "Japan is an indispensable trade partner for the United States," he said. "The United States has had a trade imbalance with Japan for too long." Abe and President Donald Trump agreed in September to start bilateral free trade talks, which are expected to begin early

next year. Pence also said he expected Japan's increased "investment" in stepping up the country's defense. Japan's Deputy Chief Secretary Yasutoshi Nishimura told reporters later that Japan limited defense purchases to necessities and no details were discussed Tuesday. (Fox News)

Italy Brings Together Libya Rivals on Conference Sidelines

PALERMO, Sicily - Italy's premier hosted a meeting Tuesday of Libya's rival leaders on the sidelines of a conference aiming to help its former colony crack down on Islamic militants and human trafficking. Photos of the encounter show Premier Giuseppe Conte presiding over a handshake between the Tripoli-based U.N.-backed prime minister, Fayez Serraj, and rival Gen. Khalifa Hifter, commander of the self-styled Libyan National Army that is based in Libya's east. Other leaders attending the Palermo conference, including French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, also participated. (Fox News)

33rd ASEAN Summit Opens with Call for Multilateralism, International Cooperation

SINGAPORE - The 33rd summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) opened here Tuesday with a call for upholding multilateralism and international cooperation.

The summit, gathering leaders of ASEAN's 10 member countries, will review ASEAN's achievements in the year 2018 in pushing forward community building and integration while mapping out a new course for the year ahead.

In a speech at the opening ceremony of the summit, Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong called on ASEAN members and partners to uphold multilateralism and international cooperation in future development and tackling common challenges including terrorism and climate change. "The international order is at a turning point. The existing free, open and rules-based multilateral system, which has underpinned ASEAN growth and stability, has come under stress," Lee said.

He called on ASEAN countries to stay united and find common ground as past experiences proved that "ASEAN is greater than the sum of its parts."

During Singapore's chairmanship in 2018, ASEAN member countries have redoubled integration efforts and come up with concrete measures that laid the groundwork for "united, effective, and relevant ASEAN," he said. (Xinhua)