

## Latin America in Flux as G20 Leaders Descend on the Region

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina – Argentina had hoped to show off its newly market-friendly economy to the world when the G-20 group of the world's top economies begins its first South American summit this week. Instead it's looking for help to avoid an all-out crisis. The two-day meeting that starts Friday is meant to focus on development, infrastructure and food security, but most of the talk on the sidelines is expected to center on trade disputes between the U.S. and China and the signing of the new North American free trade deal.

Argentina, a darling of Wall Street just a year ago, finds itself hosting the summit while scrambling for international



aid to fend off a collapse.

"The original vision for Argentina was to use the G-20 to showcase that it had transformed

the economy, and instead it welcomes world leaders to the economic wreckage. So, the timing is inconvenient, to say the least," said

Benjamin Gedan, an Argentina expert at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

"Instead of a showcase, the G-20 is an opportunity to plead for international support."

Argentina was forced to obtain a record \$56 billion credit line from the International Monetary Fund recently following a currency crisis and spiraling inflation. The peso has depreciated by more than half this year and consumer prices are estimated to have risen by about 45 percent. Growing frustration over massive layoffs and poverty has also stoked protests that are expected to re-ignite during the summit. (Fox News)

## Neighbor News

### Pakistani Equities Stay Bearish for the Third Straight Day

ISLAMABAD - The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) stayed bearish for the third straight day on Monday as investors remained on the selling counters after Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund failed to find common grounds on the possible bailout package. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's benchmark KSE 100-Index declined by 0.24 percent or 97.73 points to close at 40,771.55 points on Monday when compared with a closing of 40,869.28 points reported on Friday. During the last three trading sessions, the main index has trimmed down by 1.56 percent or 647.69 points from 41,419.24 points on Nov. 20, 2018,

to 40,771.55 points on Nov. 26, 2018. During Monday's trading session, the main index moved in a narrow range of 475.83 points as it touched an intraday high of 41,144.09 points as against an intraday low of 40,668.26 points. The KSE All-Share Index dipped by 0.22 percent or 63.65 points to close at 29,437.07 points, the KSE 30-Index dropped 0.17 percent or 33.27 points to end at 19,409.35 points, the KMI 30-Index fell by 0.45 percent or 314.40 points, whereas the Islamic All-Share Index shed 0.56 percent or 112.07 points to finish the trading session at 19,822.49 points. (Xinhua)

### Iran Says Ready to Export Fighter Jets, Training Aircraft

TEHRAN - Iran says it is ready to export domestically built fighter jets after showcasing them to potential buyers during an upcoming air show on Kish Island. Brigadier General Abdolkarim Banitarafi, head of Iran Aviation Industries Organization (IAIO), made the announcement on Monday, before the air show's opening ceremony.

"We have already taken the necessary steps to export products that we are authorized to sell," he told reporters, noting that Tehran will resume selling trainer jets as well.

Iran unveiled its first domestically designed and manufactured fighter jet named "Kowsar" during a defense show in Tehran in August.

The fourth-generation Iranian fighter jet is equipped with "advanced avionics and fire control systems" and can be used for short aerial support missions.

The plane can be manufactured in both single- and double-cockpit types, the latter of which can be used for advanced pilot training missions in addition to its combat capability, according to Fars news agency. (Press TV)

### Defense Minister Builds Health Center at His Own Expense

DUSHANBE - Defense Minister of Tajikistan, Colonel-General Sherai Mirzo, has built a health center in the village of Doshmandi in the Baljuvon district of the Khatlon province for his money, news.tj reports.

The center, which consists of six departments (admission department, diagnostic room, medical treatment room, maternity ward, circumcision room), is reportedly provided with all necessary medical equipment.

The health center has been built in the native village of Sherai Mirzo upon the agreement with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. Besides, Sherai Mirzo has donated an ambulance to the health center in the village of Doshmandi. Sherai Mirzo was born on May 24, 1967 in the

Moskovskiy district (present day Hamadoni) in the Khatlon province. He graduated from the Perm High Military School, Russia 1994. In 2002-2004, he studied at the M.V. Frunze Military Academy of the Armed Forces of Russia in Moscow. In 2005-2006, Sherai Mirzo served as Tajikistan's deputy minister of defense before being moving to the State Committee for National Security (SCNS), which succeeded the KGB of the Tajik SSR. On December 5, 2006 he was appointed Commander of the Border Troops of Tajikistan also first deputy chief of the SCNS. On October 3, 2013 by president's decree he was appointed Minister of Defense, replacing Sherai Khayrulloev who resigned as Minister of Defense due to "health reasons." (Trend)

### Japanese Company to Build Gas Turbine Power Plant in Turkmenistan

ASHGABAT - Japan's Sumitomo Corporation and Turkey's Ronsons have started the construction of a 432 megawatt gas turbine power plant in Charjew District of Turkmenistan's Lebap Province, the "Neutral Turkmenistan" newspaper reported. The project is being implemented under a contract with the Turkmenenergo State Corporation. The project is financed

by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), which has entered into a loan agreement with the State Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs of Turkmenistan. "In the main building of the power plant, it is planned to mount three gas turbines with a capacity of 144 megawatts each, which will be supplied by Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems," the report said. (Trend)

### UAE Pardons Briton Sentenced to Life for Spying

ABU DHABI - The United Arab Emirates on Monday pardoned a British researcher who was sentenced last week to life in prison for spying in a case that shocked Britain. Matthew Hedges was among more than 700 prisoners pardoned by UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan on the occasion of National Day. "Mr. Hedges will be permitted to leave the UAE once formalities are completed," an official statement said. The UAE showed footage

at a news conference in which Hedges purportedly confessed to being an MI6 foreign intelligence agent. A UAE official said that the presidential pardon came in response to a letter by Hedges's family delivered by a British official. Hedges was sentenced to life in jail by a court in Abu Dhabi last week after he was convicted of spying for a foreign country. The UAE official said that Hedges was "a 100-percent secret service agent and was convicted of espionage." (AFP)

### Chinese Premier Congratulates Fijian PM on Winning Second Term

BEIJING - Chinese Premier Li Keqiang sent a message to Fiji's Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama to congratulate him on winning a second term as the head of government last Thursday. In the congratulatory message, Li said that bilateral relations between China and Fiji have seen significant progress since the two countries established diplomatic ties 43 years ago. Li said that China regards the Pacific island country of Fiji as a sincere



friend and cooperation partner. China appreciates the firm adherence of the prime minister and Fiji government to the one-China policy.

### UN Envoy Expected in Riyadh as Calm Returns to Yemen's Hodeida



ADEN - The United Nations' Yemen envoy is expected in Riyadh on Monday as part of efforts to convene December peace talks between Huthi rebels and the

Saudi-backed government. Martin Griffiths' visit comes as fighting eased around the rebel-held port city of Hodeida, a vital lifeline for imports and aid which

has been the target of a fierce Saudi-backed government offensive. Under heavy international pressure, the Yemeni government and a Saudi-led military coalition have largely suspended a five-month offensive against the Red Sea city. Fighting had intensified in early November as coalition-backed loyalist forces attempted to enter Hodeida, but calm returned after Griffiths arrived in Yemen on Wednesday. The UN said the envoy, who also visited Hodeida

last week to assess the humanitarian situation, is due to hold talks with Yemen's internationally recognized government in Riyadh on Monday. While the loyalist advance on Hodeida has largely stalled, minor clashes have continued. Military officials quoted by the state-run Saba news agency on Sunday evening said the loyalists foiled a Huthi "infiltration attempt" into a camp in Hays province, about 100 kilometres (60 miles) south of Hodeida. (AFP)

### Anxiety Abounds at NASA as Mars Landing Day Arrives

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. – A NASA spacecraft's six-month journey to Mars neared its dramatic grand finale Monday in what scientists and engineers hoped would be a soft precision landing on flat red plains. The InSight lander aimed for an afternoon touchdown, as anxiety built among those involved in the \$1 billion international effort. InSight's perilous descent through the Martian atmosphere, after a trip of 300 million miles (482 million kilometers), had stomachs churning and nerves stretched to the

max. Although an old pro at this, NASA last attempted a landing at Mars six years ago. The robotic geologist – designed to explore Mars' mysterious insides – must go from 12,300 mph (19,800 kph) to zero in six minutes flat as it pierces the Martian atmosphere, pops out a parachute, fires its descent engines and, hopefully, lands on three legs. "Landing on Mars is one of the hardest single jobs that people have to do in planetary exploration," noted InSight's lead scientist, Bruce Banerdt. (AP)

### Russia Says It Has No Missiles Violating Nuclear Arms Pact with U.S.

MOSCOW - Russia's foreign ministry on Monday denied having any missiles that violate the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces arms control treaty that the United States has said it plans to quit because of violations by Moscow.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told reporters that the missile that Washington has said is flouting the accord has not been tested at a range banned by the treaty. He said the U.S. decided Russia was guilty before receiving evidence to the contrary. (Reuters)

### Bahrain 'Rejects' Attacks Targeting Saudi's Reputation

DUBAI - Bahrain has said it "completely rejects" attempts to tarnish the reputation of neighbouring Saudi Arabia, whose powerful crown prince has been under intense scrutiny since the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was in Manama Sunday night for talks with Bahrain's King Hamad as part of a regional tour, the state-run Bahrain News Agency (BNA) reported. "The king reiterated Bahrain's complete rejection of attempts targeting Saudi Arabia," said a statement carried by BNA on Monday. "Saudi Arabia is a nation of security, safety, justice and rights." Prince Mohammed visited Abu Dhabi Thursday as he began his first tour abroad since the murder of the Saudi journalist in October. (AFP)

### India Marks 10 Years Since Mumbai Attacks; US Offers Reward

MUMBAI, India - As Mumbai marked the 10th anniversary of attacks that killed 166 in India's financial capital on Monday, the United States made a new reward offer for information on the 2008 siege. The Pakistani gunmen who waged the attack were killed or captured. But U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Monday that those who planned the attack had not been convicted. He called on Pakistan to implement sanctions against those responsible and said the U.S. was offering a new \$5 million reward and was



committed to seeing those responsible face justice. On Nov. 26, 2008, gunmen staged coordinated attacks in the heart of Mumbai. They targeted two luxury hotels, a Jewish center, a tourist restaurant and a crowd-

ed train station in three days of carnage. India blamed the attack on the Pakistani militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba, throwing relations between the nuclear-armed neighbors into a tailspin. (Fox News)

### Ukraine Demands Action after Russia Seizes Ships

KIEV - Ukraine demanded the release of its sailors and more sanctions against Moscow on Monday after the Russian navy fired on and seized three Ukrainian ships off the coast of Crimea. In a sharp escalation of tensions between the ex-Soviet neighbors, Russia boarded and seized the three ships on Sunday, accusing them of illegally entering Russian waters in the Sea of Azov. The confrontation at sea has raised fears of a wider military escalation and

the UN Security Council was to hold an emergency session later Monday to consider a response. NATO also called an emergency meeting on the incident. Ukraine's military was on high alert and parliament was to vote Monday on a request from President Petro Poroshenko to impose martial law for 60 days. In a statement early Monday, Ukraine's foreign ministry denounced "another act of armed aggression" by Russia. (AFP)

### UK's May Fights to Sell Brexit Deal to A Skeptical Country

LONDON – U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May was starting a frantic two-week race Monday to convince the British public, and a skeptical Parliament, to back the Brexit deal she has struck with the European Union. May was gathering her Cabinet for a meeting hours after returning from Brussels with the divorce agreement approved by the 27 other EU leaders. She plans to address lawmakers in the House of Commons later in the day. The deal needs to be approved by Parliament, but scores of legislators – from both the opposition and May's governing Conservative Party – say they will oppose it.

May aims to convince them that the deal "honors the referendum" in 2016 that saw Britain vote to leave the EU. She argues that the British people are sick of endless debates about Brexit, and backing the deal will allow "us to come together again as a country whichever way we voted." Parliament's vote is due before Christmas, likely the week of Dec. 10. Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay conceded that "it's going to be a challenging vote." But he said Britain would be in "choppy waters" if the deal was rejected.

Rejection by Parliament would plunge Britain into a political crisis just weeks before it is due to leave the EU on March 29. Both Britain and the EU are adamant that the U.K. can't renegotiate the deal, struck after 18 months of tense negotiations. (AP)