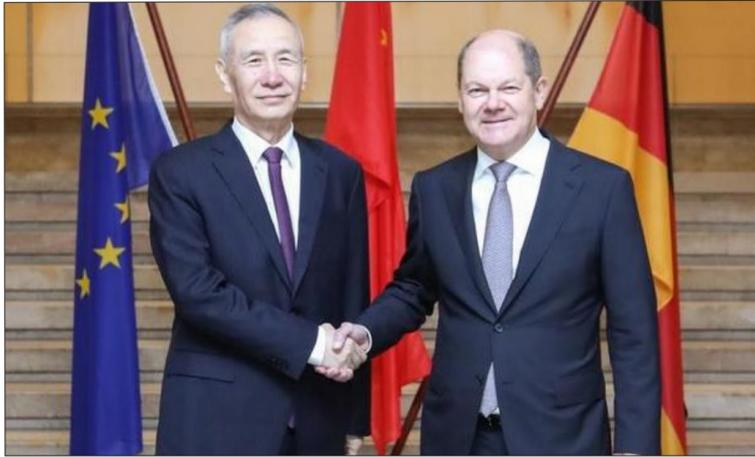


China, Germany Commit to Financial Cooperation, Rules-Based Multilateral Trade System

BERLIN - China and Germany are committed to more financial cooperation and rules-based multilateral trade system, senior officials from the two countries said here Monday.

The remarks were made during a meeting between visiting Chinese Vice Premier Liu He and German Vice Chancellor and Finance Minister Olaf Scholz.

Noting that bilateral ties have maintained good momentum in recent years, Liu said that China and Germany can leverage their complementary advantages, make good use of existing dialogue mechanisms, identify the meeting point of interests, and make steady headway in pragmatic



cooperation, so as to benefit the two countries and their peoples.

Briefing the German side on China's new

measures to expand market access for foreign companies in banking, insurance and securities sectors, Liu said China wel-

comes more German financial institutions to invest and do business in China and called on the German side to take care of those Chinese banks that operate in Germany.

It is in the interests of both China and Germany, Liu said, adding that China expects to learn the successful practices from Germany in areas such as innovation of small and medium-sized enterprises and vocational education.

China and Germany, both as the world's major economies and responsible major countries, should jointly safeguard the rules of free trade and the multilateral system, he said. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

Japan to Seek Extension of US Waivers for Iran Oil Imports

TEHRAN - Japanese buyers will seek an extension of the waiver from US sanctions on Iranian oil imports after the initial 180-day exemption is over, the Petroleum Association of Japan (PAJ) said on Tuesday.

The United States granted exemptions to Japan and seven other countries on Nov. 5, allowing them to continue buying Iranian oil.

As Japan sees Iran as an important crude supplier, local refiners plan to request the government to secure extension at the earliest, president of Petroleum Association of Japan (PAJ) Takashi Tsukioka told reporters in Tokyo.

Refiners in Japan and South Korea are reportedly looking to resume

Iranian oil imports. Tsukioka said first Japan's shipments are about to take place around end-December. Oil loadings in January-March are likely to be heavy, he added.

Among the importers of Iranian crude is Japan's second-biggest refiner Idemitsu Kosan which hopes to buy the remainder of its contractual volumes of Iranian oil during the exemption period, said Tsukioka which also serves as the company's chairman. Iran's biggest oil client is China which is also the world's largest energy consumer. Chinese refiners imported 247,160 barrels per day (bpd) of Iranian oil in October, data cited by Reuters showed. (Press TV)

Days of Tajikistan's Culture Held in Qatar

QATAR - Days of Tajikistan's Culture have taken place in the Qatari capital of Doha, news.tj reports. Hosted by the Ministry of Culture of Tajikistan and the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Qatar, the event reportedly began on November 24 and continued till November 26.

Tajik delegation was led by Minister of Culture Shamsiddin Orumbekov and Tajik known singers Dalvaltmand Kholov, Khujastai Mirzovali, Fotima Mashrabova, Sitora Karomatullo, Amirjon Rouziyev, Damirbek Olimov and the dance ensemble "Parastou"

represented Tajikistan's culture in Doha. Besides, an exhibition of works by known Tajik painters, photographers and craftspeople was organized in Doha.

According to Qatar Tribune, the activities that were held in Katar and Qatar Mall are part of the joint cultural cooperation between Qatar and Tajikistan in various artistic and cultural fields, contributing to facilitating the joint cultural cooperation between the two countries, through organizing cultural days, fine arts exhibitions and exchange of visits of artistic, musical and theatrical teams. (Trend)

Turkmenistan Offers to Hold Int'l Forum on Security in Central Asia

ASHGABAT - The Turkmen delegation, headed by Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov, offered to host a forum on security and cooperation in Central Asia during the recent EU-Central Asia meeting in Brussels, Al-tyn Asyr local TV channel reported.

Turkmen and EU representatives discussed the cooperation issues in key areas. Among them are preparation of an updated EU strategy for Central Asia; regional cooperation; integration, investment and economic partnership; cooperation in sustainable development and climate

change, environmental protection, water issues; security. Special attention in Brussels was paid to such vectors as energy, industry, agriculture, transport and trade. When discussing the issues of climate change, environmental protection and water issues, the Turkmen delegation updated about the preparation of the special UN program for the Aral Sea basin.

Earlier, Ashgabat voiced the initiative for holding a forum on cooperation and security in Central Asia during one of the sessions of the UN General Assembly. (Trend)

Uzbek Region Reveals Results of State Property E-Trades

TASHKENT - Six state properties in the Samarkand region of Uzbekistan were sold over the past month for 473 million soums through the auction trades at the E-IJRO AUKSION electronic trading platform.

On Oct. 11, Shavkat Mirziyoyev allowed selling empty state-owned properties without estimating their value by putting them up for auction on the E-IJRO AUKSION electronic trading platform at a starting price equal to 1 soum. The only condition for the buyer is taking certain investment and social obligations.

At the same time, a number of state-owned properties can be transferred to entrepreneurs only on the terms of a public-private partnership, in which the relevant ministry or agency acts as a state partner. (Trend)

Italian Government Indicates Willingness to Amend Budget

MILAN - Investors are welcoming with relief the Italian government's indication that it is open to changing the draft budget that has led to a high-stakes standoff with the European Union.

Bond yields dropped significantly Tuesday, a sign of greater investor confidence, after Italy's populist leaders said their focus in the budget is "on relaunching growth and development" and that they were not bothered by "a question of decimals" in the level of the defi-

cit. Their comment late Monday showed a willingness to respond to the EU executive Commission's concerns about a spending plan that would increase Italy's debt to 2.4 percent of GDP, three times the level agreed by the previous government. The Commission has said the budget is in severe violation of rules underpinning the common euro currency and has recommended legal action against Italy that could result in a fine. (AP)

PM Modi to be Invited for SAARC Summit, Says Pakistan Foreign Office

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI - Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be invited to Pakistan for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit, Foreign Office Spokesman Mohammad Faisal said on Tuesday.

The 2016 SAARC Summit was to be held in Islamabad. But after a deadly terrorist attack on an Indian Army camp in Uri in Jammu and Kashmir in September that year, India expressed its in-

ability to participate in the summit due to "prevailing circumstances".

The summit was called off after Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan also declined to participate in the Islamabad meet.

Maldives and Sri Lanka are the seventh and eighth members of the initiative. Addressing a conference in Islamabad on Tuesday, Faisal recalled that Prime Minister Imran Khan in his victory speech had said that if India



took one step forward, Pakistan would take two.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be invit-

ed to Pakistan for the SAARC summit, Faisal was quoted as saying by Dawn newspaper. (Agencise)

Hundreds Protest in Tunisia against Saudi Crown Prince's Visit



TUNIS - Hundreds of Tunisians protested on Tuesday against a visit by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, denouncing the top Saudi royal as a murderer in the

second straight day of demonstrations condemning the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, heir

to the throne of the world's top oil exporter, departed from Cairo on Tuesday and was expected in Tunis in the late afternoon on a tour of Arab states that has also taken him to Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

The killing of Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist and critic of the crown prince, at Riyadh's consulate in Istanbul six weeks ago has strained Saudi Arabia's ties with the West and battered Prince Mohammed's image abroad.

Saudi Arabia has said the prince had no prior knowledge of the murder. After offering numerous contradictory explanations, Riyadh said last month that Khashoggi had been killed and his body dismembered when negotiations to persuade him to return to Saudi Arabia failed.

Hundreds of protesters marched through the central Habib Bourguiba avenue in Tunis, scene of the mass protests that toppled Ben Ali in 2011. (Reuters)

Macron Acknowledges Protests, But Won't 'Change Course'

PARIS - French President Emmanuel Macron sought to take the heat out of mass anti-government protests over taxes on Tuesday, saying he had heard the anger but would not change course. The 40-year-old centrist acknowledged that many struggling households felt penalised by an increase in fuel taxes this year, the spark for road blockades and demonstrations over the past 10 days.

He offered minor concessions, saying he would propose a mechanism to adjust tax hikes when

they occurred at the same time as an increase in oil prices internationally -- as they have this year. And he called for a three-month national consultation to draw up a roadmap for accelerating the country's transition away from fossil fuels -- which he insisted remained his overall objective.

"What I've taken from these last few days is that we shouldn't change course because it is the right one and necessary," he told lawmakers at the Elysee palace in Paris. (AFP)

Erdogan Open to Meeting with Saudi Crown Prince, Turkish FM Says

ISTANBUL - Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said he is willing to meet Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, nearly two months after a Saudi writer was slain in a Turkish consulate and sparking an international outcry, Reuters reported.

Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu confirmed to a German newspaper that the two leaders have spoken recently. The interview was published Tuesday.

"Yes, (Prince Mohammed) has asked Erdogan on the phone, whether they could meet in Buenos Aires," Cavusoglu told the paper. (Fox News)

Israel Says Will Renew Ties with Chad after Presidential Visit

JERUSALEM - Israel said on Tuesday that it and Chad would resume relations, severed in 1972, after the central African country's President Idriss Deby made a surprise visit to Jerusalem this week. After Deby wound up his two-day visit, Israel said in a statement that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would "visit Chad soon and announce, with the Chadian president, the renewal of ties". No date was given.

Chad is a Muslim-majority country, and most Muslim or Arab countries do not have formal ties with Israel.

Some African countries have kept their distance from Israel since its occupation of the Palestinian territories in the 1967 Middle East war, but the Netanyahu government has been keen to improve relations with the continent. (Reuters)

Asian Shares Rise despite Trump's Latest Talk on Tariffs

SINGAPORE - Asian markets were mostly higher on Tuesday ahead of a meeting between the U.S. and China at the Group of 20 summit this week, despite President Donald Trump's comments that it's "highly unlikely" he'll hold off on raising tariffs as Beijing requested.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 added 0.6 percent to 21,952.40 and South Korea's Kospi rose 0.8 percent to 2,099.02. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 rallied 1 percent to 5,728.30, while the Shanghai Composite



dropped 0.2 percent to 2,570.49. Hong Kong's Hang Seng gave up 0.3 percent to 26,296.26. Shares rose in Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore but fell in the Philippines.

WALL STREET: Technology and retail com-

panies led a recovery of U.S. stocks, which suffered big losses last week. Monday marked the first full trading day of the holiday shopping season. Amazon surged 5 percent and Nike gained 1.7 percent. (AP)

Mars Touchdown: NASA Spacecraft Survives Supersonic Plunge

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. - Minutes after touching down on Mars, NASA's InSight spacecraft sent back a "nice and dirty" snapshot of its new digs. Yet the dust-speckled image looked like a work of art to scientists.

The photo revealed a mostly smooth and sandy terrain around the spacecraft with only one sizable rock visible.

"I'm very, very happy that it looks like we have an incredibly safe and boring landing location," project manager Tom Hoffman said after Monday's touchdown. "That's exactly what we were going for."

A better image came hours later and more are expected in the days ahead, after the dust covers come off the lander's cameras. The spacecraft arrived at Mars after a perilous, supersonic plunge through its red skies that took just six minutes.

"Touchdown confirmed!" a flight controller called out just before 3 p.m. EST, setting off jubilation among scientists at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, who had waited in white-knuckle suspense for word to reach across 100 million miles (160 million kilometers) of space. (AP)