

U.S. Senators Urge India to Soften Data Localization Stance

NEW DELHI - Two U.S. senators have called on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to soften India's stance on data localization, warning that measures requiring it represent "key trade barriers" between the two nations.

In a letter to Modi dated Friday and seen by Reuters, U.S. Senators John Cornyn and Mark Warner - co-chairs of the Senate's India caucus that comprises over 30 senators - urged India to instead adopt a "light touch" regulatory framework that would allow data to flow freely across borders.

The letter comes as relations between Washington and New Delhi are strained over multiple issues, including an Indo-Russian defense contract, India's new tariffs on electronics and other items, and its moves to buy



oil from Iran despite upcoming U.S. sanctions. Global payments companies including Mastercard, Visa and American Express have

lobbying India's finance ministry and the Reserve Bank of India to relax proposed rules that require all payment data on domestic transac-

tions in India be stored inside the country by October 15.

The letter is most likely a last-ditch effort after the RBI told officials at top payment firms this week that the central bank would implement, in full, its data localization directive without extending the deadline, or allowing data to be stored both offshore as well as locally - a practice known as data mirroring.

"We see this (data localization) as a fundamental issue to the further development of digital trade and one that is crucial to our economic partnership," the U.S. senators said in the letter that has not been previously reported.

Modi's office did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment. (Reuters)

Neighbor News

China to Boost Ties with Tajikistan to New Levels: Premier Li

DUSHANBE - China and Tajikistan will support each other and seek common development to boost bilateral ties to new levels, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said. Li made the remarks when holding talks with Tajik Prime Minister Kokhir Rasulzoda in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, on Saturday. Li said Tajikistan is the first leg of his Eurasian trip, which demonstrates the importance China attaches to the comprehensive strategic partnership with Tajikistan.

Noting the rapid and healthy growth of bilateral ties and cooperation in all areas at the moment, Li said China stands ready to

strengthen the synergy of the Belt and Road Initiative with Tajikistan's development strategy to advance good-neighborliness and practical cooperation across the matrix.

Speaking in details, Li said cooperation in economy and trade and investment must be expanded. Leading and trustworthy Chinese companies are encouraged to invest in Tajikistan in the fields of energy, power, mineral exploitation, industrial capacity and processing. He said connectivity should be strengthened, with more to be done in transportation, energy, and border infrastructure development. (Xinhua)

DUP Leader Prefers No Brexit Deal to EU 'Annexation' of Northern Ireland

BELFAST - The head of the Northern Irish party that props up British Prime Minister Theresa May's government said on Saturday she would prefer no Brexit deal to a bad deal, describing current plans as amounting to "the annexation of Northern Ireland" by the EU.

British and European Union negotiators this month have accelerated the push for a Brexit deal but talks remain snagged on the issue of the border between Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK, and the Irish Republic, an EU

member state.

In the absence of a comprehensive EU-UK trade partnership after Brexit, the EU is seeking a "backstop" arrangement whereby Northern Ireland would effectively remain subject to the bloc's regulations to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland.

But the DUP, whose support May needs to pass legislation in the British parliament, vehemently opposes any proposals under which the province would be treated differently to the rest of the UK. (Reuters)

Saudi Rejects 'Baseless' Murder Claims over Missing Journalist

DUBAI - Saudi Arabia dismissed on Saturday accusations that Jamal Khashoggi was ordered murdered by a hit squad inside its Istanbul consulate as "lies and baseless allegations", as Riyadh and Ankara spar over the missing journalist's fate. A Saudi delegation was in Turkey for talks on the case, which threatens not only to harm fragile relations between the two countries but also to do serious damage to the reformist credentials of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the

kingdom's ties to the West.

As the controversy intensified, the Washington Post reported Turkish officials had recordings made from inside the building that allegedly proved their claims Khashoggi was tortured and killed at the consulate. Big names from media and business have already cancelled appearances at a major conference in Riyadh this month and both the IMF chief and the US treasury secretary made their attendance conditional on the findings in the case. In the first Saudi minist-



rial reaction to Turkish accusations that Khashoggi was killed, Interior Minister Prince Abdel Aziz bin Saud bin Nayef condemned "what has been reported in certain media concerning false accusations against Saudi Arabia... in the case of the disappearance of citizen Khashoggi". (AFP)

Chinese Action Debut and South Korean Family Drama Win at Busan



BUSAN (South Korea) - A thrill-a-minute actioner from China and a moving South Korean drama about a unique family reunion have taken the top prize at Asia's largest

film festival, with judges lauding both for their "original" takes. "Savage", from first-time Chinese director Cui Siwei, pits a forest ranger against gold thieves in a

snowy mountain range and won praise from the New Currents award jury at the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) for being "strikingly accomplished and riveting".

South Korean production "Clean up", from debut feature director Kwon Man-ki, charts the tale of a struggling woman who is offered a salvation of sorts when she meets someone from her past. It is a film with "perfect control and masterful psychological development," the jury statement read.

BIFF's New Currents award comes with prizes of \$30,000 for the two most impressive efforts from first- or second-time Asian filmmakers and there had been a buzz around town after screenings of "Savage" in particular. The film now looks certain for wide commercial release in China and beyond.

Veteran South Korean director Kim Hong-joon, who led the New Currents jury, said the judges were unanimous in their decision to award "Savage" its prize. (AFP)

12 Feared Dead in India Cyclone Shelter Swamped by Landslide

NEW DELHI - Twelve people were feared dead in a cyclone shelter swamped by a landslide caused by heavy rains in eastern India, officials said Saturday. Krishan Kumar, a spokesman for the National Disaster Response Force, said relief officials rushed to the remote area in Gajapati district in Orissa state. The landslide hit on Friday, a day after a severe cyclone that caused heavy rains in parts of eastern India. Villagers had moved

to the shelter to escape the fury of Cyclone Titli, which whipped up wind speeds of up to 150 kilometers (95 miles) per hour.

State Relief Commissioner B.P. Sethi said there were reports that 12 people at the shelter were killed and another four trapped in the debris, the Press Trust of India news agency said.

Sethi said rescue workers were clearing roads blocked by uprooted trees to reach the remote site. (AP)

Hundreds Taken by IS From Displacement Camp in East Syria

BEIRUT - Hundreds of people were taken by Islamic State group fighters from a displacement camp in east Syria during a jihadist counter-attack against advancing US-backed forces, a monitor said Saturday. The jihadists raided the camp on Friday, taking "more than 100 families" including relatives of IS defectors and of ji-



hadists killed in fighting, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. A number of fighters of the Kurdish-led Syrian

Democratic Forces (SDF) died trying to defend the camp in a battle that lasted several hours, the Britain-based monitoring group said. (AFP)

Merkel's Alliance Faces Severe Test in Upcoming State Elections

MUNICH - Germany's economic strong heartland of Bavaria is set to elect its local parliament on Sunday. The southern state's long-governing Christian Social Union (CSU), sister party of Chancellor Angela Merkel's party, could see a historic setback which will in turn weaken her.

The political conservative CSU, operates only in Bavaria, and has governed most of the post-war period with absolute majority, having contributed 11 of the 12 minister-president of Bavaria. Ordinarily, the Bavarian election would lack attracting headlines as most media would, at this time of the year,

round up the beer festival Oktoberfest.

However, local politics seems to be on focus this year as polls showed CSU might lose its control of the state parliament Landtag, with only a historically low support rate of 34 percent, down from 47.7 percent in 2013, according to the latest poll. (Xinhua)

Interests of Uzbek People Top Priority for Agriculture Sector: Mirziyoyev

TASHKENT - Interests of the Uzbek people are the top priority in agriculture, just as in other sectors, and it is necessary to cultivate crops that generate more income, press service of the President of Uzbekistan quoted Shavkat Mirziyoyev as saying during a visit to the Buka district in the Tashkent region.

In the Tashkent region, Mirziyoyev was at the cotton field of the Valikhon Ota farm and got acquainted with the harvest process. The president held a conversation with the farmers of the region and the agriculture officials.

In 2018, the weather was unfavorable for cotton growing. There was a shortage of water, the number of pests increased. Cotton

growing lagged behind in development.

"It is necessary to not only cover costs, but also make a profit. To make tomorrow better than today, everyone must rely on their own strength. Today, the winner is the one who seeks and works," said Mirziyoyev.

The president noted that it was time for farmers to see the fruits of their labor, and it is necessary to organize the harvest before the onset of inclement weather.

In July 2018, the head of the republic identified urgent tasks for revitalization of cotton cultivation and crop harvest. In accordance with them, the necessary agro-technical measures were carried out in the Tashkent region. (Trend)

(1) Kabul, Ashgabat...

development.

Afghan, Turkmen, Pakistani and Indian leaders attended the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the energy scheme in February. The agreement outlines the level of energy to be supplied to Afghanistan through the power line -- 300 megawatts each to Herat and Kandahar. It will rise to 1000 megawatt in future. The Afghan delegation commended President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov's support and the pro-peace policy Turkmenistan was pursuing. (Pajhwok)

(2) 50,000 Afghan...

would keep security for one polling station until people cast their votes. The upcoming Wolesi Jirga elec-

tions will be the first in the country being controlled by Afghan forces, Danish said.

He did not share further details but said currently 19 districts were under security threats but security forces were trying to facilitate elections in the districts. (Pajhwok)

(3) Will not Allow...

and Shorabak districts, he alleged.

The police chief said the Taliban wanted to keep the Afghan border forces engaged and let the Pakistani forces safely install the fence.

"If the Taliban really defend their territory, then they should not disturb Afghan forces and not attack their posts before possible clashes with Pakistani forces", Raziq added. He said they would

never allow the Durand Line to be fenced.

A year back, Afghan and Pakistani forces engaged in heavy clashes over fence installation in Luqman and Jahangir areas of Spin Boldak district and both sides suffered casualties.

Luqman and Jahangir areas are located in the zero point area of the border and they belong to Spin Boldak district.

Pakistan forces last year conducted a population registration process in the two areas and claimed the areas belonged to Pakistan, but Afghan forces prevented them.

The Afghan forces' interference last year led to a fierce clash that continued for several hours, with both sides sustaining heavy casualties.

After the clash, Afghanistan port with Pakistan was closed for 23 days that caused millions of Afghanis losses to traders. (Pajhwok)

(4) 73 Militants...

But Zabihullah Mujahid, Taliban's spokesman, claimed Khoshamand district was under insurgent control.

A resident of the area, wishing anonymity, confirmed the fire-fight. However, he was unaware of casualties. (Pajhwok)

(5) Nimroz Media...

said currently three television channels, three radio stations and one newspaper were operational in Nimroz, but they could also face closure if the government did not assist them in the next three months.

He said Nimroz was important for Pakistan and Iran for its location and both the countries wanted to use Nimroz media in their interest. Local media has been unable to meet or interview Nimroz governor during the past three months, he added. Government officials are responsible to provide information to journalists as per the law and president's order, he said.

"Most of the reports published in Nimroz lack balance because of no access to information," Khelwatgar said. He asked the government to force Nimroz local administration into providing information to the media and working for resolving economic problems of media there. Besides Nimroz, many media outlets have shut down their offices in other parts of the country as well due to economic problems. (Pajhwok)