

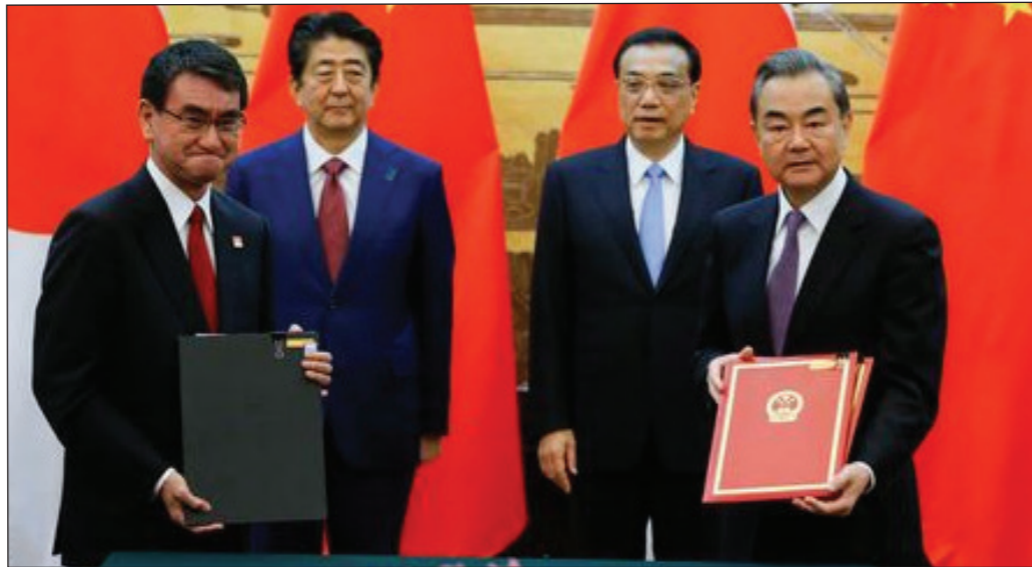
## China, Japan to Forge Closer Ties at 'Historic Turning Point'

BEIJING - China and Japan on Friday pledged to forge closer ties as both countries stood together at an "historic turning point", signing a broad range of agreements including a \$30 billion currency swap pact, amid rising trade tensions with Washington.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang also agreed the two countries would work together to achieve denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula.

The pacts were reached on Abe's three-day visit to Beijing as the two neighbors looked to carve out new areas of cooperation and seek ways to promote trust, which has been fragile at times since diplomatic relations resumed in 1972.

Deals worth a total of \$18 billion



were signed between Chinese and Japanese companies during Abe's visit. That reflects the "bright prospects" for cooperation between the two countries, said Chinese Premier Li Keqiang. "From competition to co-existence, Japan and

China bilateral relations have entered a new phase. Hand in hand with Premier Li, I would like to advance our ties forward," Abe told reporters after the pair met on Friday morning. Both countries are neighbors and partners, and

will not become a threat to each other, Abe said after meeting with President Xi Jinping on Friday in the first full-scale Sino-Japanese summit since 2011. "With President Xi Jinping, I would like to carve out a new era for China and Japan," Abe said.

Xi said bilateral ties had returned to the right track and China would ensure the positive momentum continues, according to state media.

"That is worth cherishing by both sides," Xi said.

Both sides should undertake more in-depth strategic dialogue, Xi said, adding that exchanges between ordinary Japanese and Chinese people should also be stepped up to foster deeper mutual understanding. (Reuters)

### Ex-French Diplomat Unlikely Favourite for Georgian President

TBILISI - When Salome Zurbishvili arrived in Georgia in 2004 as French ambassador, few could have predicted that 15 years later she would be favourite to be elected president of the ex-Soviet country. The Caucasus nation votes Sunday in a hotly contested race that has pitted Zurbishvili, supported by the ruling Georgian Dream party, against opposition-backed Grigol Vashadze. The position of president will be largely ceremonial following a change to the constitution but the polls are seen as a

test for the increasingly unpopular Georgian Dream. Zurbishvili's unorthodox path to the candidacy has also generated interest. "I always thought that one day I will help - in some function, in some capacity - this country to move to democracy," Zurbishvili told AFP in an interview conducted in English. But "decades ago, as a young French diplomat, I couldn't have imagined I will be running for the presidency of my ancestral homeland, which back then was firmly in the Soviet empire's claws." (AFP)

### Oman Says Time to Accept Israel in Region, Offers Help for Peace

MANAMA - Oman described Israel as an accepted Middle East state on Saturday, a day after hosting a surprise visit by its prime minister that Washington said could help regional peace efforts. Oman is offering ideas to help Israel and the Palestinians to come together but is not acting as mediator, Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, the sultanate's minister responsible for foreign affairs, told a security summit in Bahrain. "Israel is a state present in the region, and we all understand this," bin Alawi

said. "The world is also aware of this fact. Maybe it is time for Israel to be treated the same [as others states] and also bear the same obligations." His comments followed a rare visit to Oman by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu which came days after Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas paid a three-day visit to the Gulf country. Both leaders met with Oman's Sultan Qaboos. "We are not saying that the road is now easy and paved with flowers, but



our priority is to put an end to the conflict and move to a new world," bin Alawi told the summit. Oman is relying on the

United States and efforts by President Donald Trump in working toward the "deal of the century" (Middle East peace), he added. (Reuters)

### US Treasury Sanctions 2 Singapore Firms for Nkorea Dealings



SINGAPORE - An executive of one of two Singapore companies accused by the U.S. Treasury Department of violating U.N. sanctions against North Korea said Friday

that he was unaware of any such dealings. The Treasury Department said in a statement Thursday that the companies, commodities trading house Wee Tiong

(S) Pte. Ltd. and ship management services company WT Marine Pte. Ltd., engaged in laundering money for North Korea. The Singapore Police Force said in a statement Friday that the country takes its obligations under the U.N. sanctions seriously and "will take appropriate action based on the outcome of our investigations." It said it could not comment further until the investigations are complete. The sanctions and charges filed by the Justice

Department follow earlier allegations against other Singapore-based companies and highlight concerns over the role the trading hub may play in helping bypass sanctions against North Korea for its nuclear program. "Singapore has historically been a weak link in the enforcement of U.N. sanctions against North Korea and a key node in North Korea's smuggling and money laundering operations," said lawyer Joshua Stanton, who helped to draft the North Korea sanctions law. (AP)

### Italy PM Welcomes S&P Move to Maintain Rating, Lower Outlook

MILAN - Italy's premier has welcomed Standard & Poor's decision to maintain Italy's rating while still lowering the financial outlook for the country to "negative" from "stable." Premier Giuseppe Conte said Saturday the decision by the ratings agency was "correct in light of the economic solidity of the country," citing the competitiveness of Italian businesses and the high level of Italian private savings. Italy escaped another downgrade in the Stand-

ard & Poor's decision, but the rating's agency noted that the populist government's policies are "weighing on the country's economic growth prospects, a critical driver of government debt-to-GDP trajectory." The European Commission has rejected Italy's draft budget, which raises Italy's deficit to 2.4 percent of GDP, three times the previously agreed-upon level. Italy has three weeks to respond, but policy makers haven't indicated significant changes. (AP)

### Romans Protest at Eternal Decline of Italian Capital

ROME - Several thousand people protested in front of Rome City Hall on Saturday to denounce the ragged state of the Italian capital, where roads are potholed, rubbish often goes uncollected and wild boar roam the streets.

Critics say the city has been in decline for years and accuse Mayor Virginia Raggi, who took office in 2016, of failing to fulfill campaign promises to clean up the mess. "We're here because Rome deserves better, because Rome is in a state of neglect the like of which has never been seen before," said Marita Monaco, 57, who took part in the protest in a Renaissance square designed by Michelangelo. (Reuters)

### More Violence Feared as Brazil Braces for Far-Right Presidency

SAO PAULO - After a presidential campaign that has seen political violence overshadow policy debate, many Brazilians fear attacks will continue after the likely election on Sunday of tough-talking far-right candidate Jair Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro's supporters in recent weeks have threatened to harm Supreme Court justices and physically attacked journalists and opposition voters.

There has also been violence attributed to backers of Bolsonaro's opponent, Fernando Haddad of the Workers Party (PT), but to a far lesser extent. Brazil's tense political climate has been compared by some to divisions in the United States, where several high-profile opponents of President Donald Trump received pipe bombs in the mail this week. (Reuters)

### China to Expel Disgraced Former Interpol Chief from Advisory Body

BEIJING - China will expel former Interpol chief Meng Hongwei from a high profile though largely ceremonial advisory body to parliament, state media reported, after the Chinese government put him under investigation for bribery and other violations. Under President Xi Jinping, China has been engaged in a sweeping crackdown on official corruption.

Earlier this month, Interpol, the France-based global police coordination body, said that Meng had resigned as its president, after French authorities said the Chinese official had been



reported missing by his wife after traveling to his home country. It is unclear where Meng is being held and it has not been possible to reach him for comment. It is also unclear if he has been allowed to retain legal representation. In the latest move by the

Chinese government against Meng, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which advises parliament though has no legislative powers, has decided to dismiss him from the body, state media said late on Friday. (Reuters)

### Mexico President-Elect Defends Airport Vote against Fraud Charges

MEXICO CITY - Mexico's President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador on Friday defended a public consultation about whether to continue the construction of a new Mexico City airport, rejecting criticism the vote was rigged. The poll, which runs from Oct. 25 to Oct. 28, will show if voters think Lopez Obrador's administration should finish the ambitious but costly new hub, or scrap it and upgrade a military air base to com-

plement the current airport. Since polling began, many observers have criticized the vote for being organized by supporters of Lopez Obrador's own party rather than the country's electoral institute, saying there were few guarantees for fair polling. Several local media outlets reported cases of people who were able to vote more than once, and highlighted failures in software used to register voter identification cards. (Reuters)

### China Produces Largest Number of New Billionaires Last Year

GENEVA - China produced the most billionaires last year (55) and along with India it had three-quarters of the world's newly minted dollar billionaires, a report released Friday by Switzerland's UBS bank and international services network PwC showed.

The United States, which followed China, produced 53 billionaires in 2017, said the report.

Globally there are 2,158 billionaires worth a combined 8.9 trillion U.S. dollars. "In a landmark year, the number of Asian billionaires on our database exceeded U.S. billionaires for the first time," the report said. "Powered by the rise of China's entrepreneurs in an exceptional year, the number of Asian billionaires rose by almost a quarter to 637," it said.

By comparison, the United States is home to 563 billionaires and Europe to 342. The United States, however, retains the greatest amount of billionaire wealth as the wealthiest individuals live there.

The report noted that great wealth in Asia remains relatively volatile in a climate of rapid economic development and erratic stock markets that forge fortunes fast, but that can equally undo them. "Some 45 people (34 of them from China) dropped below the billionaire wealth band," said the report.

Many of Asia's young fortunes are just above the billion-dollar mark, making them vulnerable to reversals of fortune, whether in the form of falling stock prices, political changes or personal difficulty, the report noted. (Xinhua)

## Neighbor News

### Hemmati: Details of Payment Channel to be Released in Near Future

TEHRAN - Iran and European signatories of the Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), will establish a special payment channel in the near future, Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnaser Hemmati said.

Hemmati said the channel will serve as a monetary agreement between Iran and Europe and added the two sides discussed the details of the channel in a meeting held last week in Brussels. "The channel is to be established based on a common understanding that the Iranian and European businesses are eager to maintain their ties despite the US sanc-

tions," he noted. Iran and Europe, Hemmati added, decided to establish a special payment channel to facilitate the transactions between their businesses. "Through the channel, the two sides' exporters can obtain their foreign exchange income," he said.

The governor said Iran and Europe want to make operational the channel as soon as possible, adding, the details of the financial mechanism will be released in the near future.

The channel was first presented in a ministerial meeting between Iran and European signatories of the JCPOA held in New York in September. (Press TV)

### CAA Rejects Reports of Israeli Jet Landing in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD - The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on Saturday "categorically" rejected the reports of an Israeli jet landing in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan (GOP) on its official handle, tweeted the press release of CAA and wrote: "Civil Aviation Authority has categorically rejected any news regarding landing of Israeli Plane in Pakistan."

CAA in its press release stated that there is no truth in reports of Israeli jet landing in Pakistan because no such aircraft landed at any airport of the country.

Meanwhile, editor of the Israel-based newspaper, Haaretz, Avi Scharf again tweeted on the issue on Saturday and said: I don't have 100% confirm landed Islamabad."

In series of tweets, Scharf shared what he knows about the flight and what he does not. "As my previous post caused an uproar in Pakistan, here are all the details I have and have Not. Please follow: Bizjet M-ULTI tracked dep TLV (23Oct, 2000 UTC), hopped Amman, got new sqwk 0757, then over Saudi Arabia, and lost track Gulf of Oman (23:00) Sqwk 0757 type: Glex XRS."

In the second tweet, he wrote: "Re-appeared (24Oct, 00:40 UTC) descending into Islamabad, still sqwk 0757 and type. Descended to 20K feet, and then lost track again After 10 hours (11:20 UTC), re-appeared heading SW from Islamabad, continued same track back to Amman, then TLV." (Agencies)

### Turkmen Delegation at CIS Summit to be Led by Deputy PM

ASHGABAT - A delegation of Turkmenistan, led by Deputy Prime Minister Gochmyrat Myradov, will take part in a meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the CIS, be held in Astana on Nov. 2, the state news agency Turkmen Dowlat Khabarlary reported.

A wide range of cooperation issues, in particular in the economic and social spheres, energy sector will be discussed at the event, the message says. This topic was touched upon during a government meeting in Ashgabat. Cooperation within the CIS is one of the priorities of the foreign policy of neutral Turkmenistan, a message quoted President

Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov as saying. In 2019, Turkmenistan will take over the chairmanship of the CIS. In 2005, Ashgabat, referring to the status of permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan, recognized and supported by the UN, decided to participate in the CIS as an associate member. In 1999, Turkmenistan withdrew from the agreement on visa-free regime with the CIS countries.

In 2012, Turkmenistan even chaired the CIS and held about 30 events in this regard. Turkmenistan ranks second in the CIS in terms of natural gas reserves after Russia. Gas is exported to China and Iran. (Trend)

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### First Uzbek-Chinese Innovation Center to Appear in Uzbekistan

TASHKENT - The first Uzbek-Chinese innovation center will be established in Uzbekistan in the near future, Podrobno.uz reported.

The agreements on its establishment were concluded by the Development Strategy Center and the Shanghai Science and Technology Exchange Center (SSTEC) at the Technological Innovation Alliance Summit held in the People's Republic of China. In addition, the parties agreed on conducting consultations, organiz-

ing the training and education of Uzbek specialists at leading research and innovation centers in Shanghai in order to facilitate the exchange of talented young people in science and technology industry.

Following the summit, a joint statement was signed on the development of scientific and technological cooperation between research and analytical centers of China and the countries of Central Asia on innovations, science and technologies. (Trend)