

World Economy is Picking up Speed: IMF

WASHINGTON — The world economy is picking up momentum. The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday raised its forecast for global growth to 3.6 percent this year and 3.7 percent in 2018. For both years, the outlook is up 0.1 percentage points from the IMF's previous forecast in July and would mark the fastest growth since 2011. The world economy grew 3.2 percent in 2016. The United States, the 19-country eurozone, Japan and China are all forecast to grow faster this year. World trade is expected to grow 4.2 percent this year, the most in six years.



IMF chief economist Maurice Obstfeld said the sunnier outlook for the United States — 2.2 growth this year versus 1.5 percent in 2016 — did not include any expectations that the U.S. Congress will pass big tax cuts and just reflected healthy U.S. growth in the first half of 2017. A pickup in investment, industrial production and consumer and business confidence also underpins the improved global outlook. But lackluster productivity growth and aging populations continue to drag on growth in the world's wealthiest countries. (AP)

ASEAN Ministers to Meet in Laos to Discuss Disaster Management

VIENTIANE — The fifth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management is scheduled to be held in northern Lao city of Luang Prabang with focus on the need to prepare resources in readiness for disasters so as to lessen their impacts. The meeting, slated for Oct. 17-19, will emphasize the importance of public awareness, community participation, promoting partnerships and collaboration, and mainstreaming disaster management in the development process,

Lao state-run media Vientiane Times reported on Tuesday. ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) ministers responsible for disaster management would review the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Center's services in Jakarta, Indonesia, to ensure it acted as the regional hub for disaster management, information and knowledge, Director General of the ministry's Social Welfare Department Prasong Vongkhamchanh was quoted as saying. (Xinhua)

BRUSSELS — EU negotiator Michel Barnier warned Tuesday that Brexit was "not a game" as he held new Brexit talks amid clashes between London and Brussels over who must make the next move. Barnier's comments came a day after British Prime Minister Theresa May told the European Union that the "ball is in their court" — only for the European Commission to send the ball back the other way. Speaking after lunch with his Brit-

'Brexit is Not a Game,' Says EU's Barnier

ish counterpart David Davis during the fifth round of Brexit talks in Brussels, Barnier told Britain's BBC and Sky News: "The lunch was good and we had constructive talks." Asked if the ball was now in the EU's court, the Frenchman replied: "Brexit is not a game. Don't forget." This round of divorce discussions is the last before European leaders meet at a summit on October 19 to decide whether there is "sufficient progress" to



move on to the trade talks that Britain desperately wants. But with the EU virtually ruling out making enough progress, this week's four-day talks have got off to a slow start, with Barnier and Davis meeting only on the second day of negotiations, where they would normally meet on the first. (AFP)

S.Korean President Calls for Bipartisan Efforts on Security Issues



SEOUL — South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Tuesday called for bipartisan efforts on security issues at a meeting with top five leaders in the administrative, judiciary and legislative

branches of the government. Moon said at the meeting that if a permanent consultation body is formed between ruling and opposition parties and the government to share

views on security and make bipartisan efforts, it would help unite people's minds. The president stressed the importance for the unified minds of people by sharing the government's security views with people, according to the presidential Blue House. Attending the meeting was Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon, National Assembly Speaker Chung Sye-kyun, the new chief of the Supreme Court Kim Meong-su, head of the National Election

Commission Kim Yong-deok and a justice and acting chief of the Constitutional Court Kim Yi-su. It was the second time since Moon's inauguration in May that the president met with the five highest-level leaders of the country. South Korea, Moon said, was not in a situation that the country can play a leading role in the current security crisis on the Korean Peninsula as the crisis was created by external factors. (Xinhua)

Syria Accuses Israel, U.S. of Supporting Terrorism

DAMASCUS — Syria on Monday accused Israel and the United States of supporting terrorist groups in Syria with arms and munitions, state news agency SANA reported. Syrian defense ministry said in a report that Syrian authorities had seized a large amount of Western-made arms and munitions in several areas. It added that U.S.-made weapons were found in hideouts of the Islamic State (IS) militants and other terrorist groups. IS and the al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front offered western countries with oil from the oil fields

in terrorist-controlled areas in Syria and Iraq, in exchange for rockets, rifles, machine-guns and anti-aircraft missiles, even tanks, the ministry said. The ministry said that the weapons reached Syria via various channels from companies in Eastern Europe with links to the U.S. military base of Ramstein in Germany. Other channels included the aid programs to support the so-called "moderate opposition group," the Free Syrian Army, since the administration of former U.S. President Barack Obama, according to the ministry. (Xinhua)

Spain, EU Warn Catalan Leader Ahead of Independence Showdown

BARCELONA — The Spanish government and the European Union warned Catalonia's separatist leader Tuesday against declaring independence, just hours before he announces a possible split from Spain under intense domestic and European scrutiny.

Whether or not Catalan president Carles Puigdemont will follow through on his threat to announce a full breakaway in defiance of the central government and Spanish courts is still unknown.

Police increased security around the regional parliament in Barcelona where Puigdemont is due to address Catalan lawmakers at 1600 GMT, blocking public access to a park that houses the building. In Madrid, the Spanish government issued a sharp warning to Puigdemont as it grapples with the nation's worst political crisis in a generation.

"We call on Puigdemont not to do anything irreversible, not to pursue a path of no return and not to make any unilateral independence declaration," government spokesman Inigo Mendez de Vigo told reporters.

EU President Donald Tusk also urged Puigdemont against making a decision that would make "dialogue impossible".

At stake is the future of a region of 7.5 million people deeply divided over independence, one of Spain's economic powerhouses whose drive to break away has raised concern for stability in the European Union.

Political leaders in Catalonia, Spain and Europe have come out against an independence declaration, concerned over the country's biggest upheaval since its transition to democracy in the 1970s. (AFP)

Turkey Won't Ask U.S. for Permission to Detain Suspects: PM

ANKARA — Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said on Tuesday that Turkey will not ask the U.S. for permission to detain or prosecute suspects.

"There is rule of law in Turkey and if someone from the U.S. diplomatic mission commits a crime, he/she will not have any privileges," Yildirim said at the ruling party's weekly parliamentary group meeting in Ankara. His remarks came two days after the U.S. suspended non-immigrant visa operations in Turkey. "The two countries should solve the visa is-



sue through talks as soon as possible," Yildirim noted. On Sunday, the U.S. Embassy in Ankara announced it had suspended non-immigrant visa services at all diplomatic facilities in Turkey. In response, Turkey's Washington Embassy also suspended non-im-

migrant visa services in the United States, citing security concerns. On Monday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan condemned the U.S. decision as "upsetting," saying Turkey's response is "based on the rules of reciprocity." (Xinhua)

Decreased U.S. Coalition Strikes in Iraq Bolsters IS in Syria: Russia

MOSCOW — The U.S.-led coalition has reduced airstrikes against Islamic State (IS) terrorist group in Iraq, allowing it to send reinforcements to Syria and complicate the advance of Syrian troops, the Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday. The international coalition has sharply cut the number of airstrikes against IS in Iraq since September to just several times a day, the ministry's spokesman Igor Konashenkov said in a statement. The decrease in intensity of strikes coincided "in a strange way" with the arrival of IS militants from Iraqi border areas

to the eastern bank of the Euphrates River, where Syrian government troops have significantly expanded the territory liberated from terrorists over the past week, he said. The continued fueling of terrorists from Iraq raised serious questions about the objectives of U.S.-led anti-terrorist operations in the region, he said. In a separate statement, Konashenkov said Russian warplanes delivered 182 strikes over the past 24 hours in the Syrian province of Deir al-Zour against IS militants coming from Iraq, killing dozens of them. (Xinhua)

Turkey's Erdogan Blames U.S. Envoy for Diplomatic Crisis

ANKARA — President Tayyip Erdogan blamed the U.S. ambassador to Turkey on Tuesday for a diplomatic crisis between the two countries and said Ankara no longer considered him Washington's envoy. In a blunt and personal attack on outgoing ambassador John Bass, Erdogan suggested Bass acted unilaterally in suspending visa services in Turkey after the arrest of a U.S. consulate worker, and said "agents" had infiltrated U.S. missions.

The dispute has plunged already fragile relations between the two NATO allies to a new low after months of tension linked to the conflict in Syria, last year's failed military coup in Turkey, and U.S. court cases against Turkish officials. The U.S. embassy said on Sunday night it was suspending visa services while it assessed Turkey's commitment to the safety of its missions and its staff, a message reiterated in a video released by Bass late on Monday.

"An ambassador in Ankara taking decisions and saying he is doing so in the name of his government is strange," Erdogan said. "If our ambassador did this, we wouldn't keep him there even a minute." The embassy said allegations that the arrested employee had links to Fethullah Gulen, a U.S.-based Muslim cleric blamed by Ankara for orchestrating the failed coup against Erdogan last year, were baseless. But Erdogan said the arrest, and a police request to question a second consulate employee, showed "there is something cooking in the U.S. consulate in Istanbul... How did these agents infiltrate the U.S. consulate?" (Reuters)

Neighbor News

UN Vows Objectivity in Assessing Iran's Nuclear Program

TEHRAN — The UN nuclear watchdog has pledged to remain "impartial" in its reports about Iran's nuclear program subject to the 2015 nuclear deal between the Islamic republic and the world powers, Press TV reported Tuesday. Amano reassured Iran that political developments, particularly in the United States, will not influence the organization's reporting on the Islamic republic and his agency's reports would be based on the objective assessments. The announcement came during the Monday meeting between Yukiya Amano, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and Ali Akbar Salehi, head of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, at the Ira-

nian Embassy in Rome. During the meeting, they exchanged views on the latest political developments related to the nuclear agreement between Iran and six world powers sealed in July 2015 and implemented in December 2016. They also discussed the recent U.S. stances against the deal, as U.S. President Donald Trump has said the deal, which was signed during former U.S. President Barack Obama, is "the worst deal ever" and an "embarrassment" to his country. Trump also claimed that Iran is not committed to the spirit of the deal, while Iran has dismissed the charges and repeatedly stressed its adherence to all obligations. (Xinhua)

Abbasi for Enhanced Govt-to-Govt, People-to-People Pak-BD Interaction

ISLAMABAD — Pakistani Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi Tuesday emphasized on the enhanced government-to-government and people-to-people interaction between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Talking to High Commissioner of Bangladesh Tarik Ahsan, who paid a courtesy call on him here, the Prime Minister underlined the importance of bilateral relations with Bangladesh and highlighted the need for overcoming the current challenges. He expressed satisfaction over the increased trade and urged further economic cooperation

between the two countries. Noting the importance of regular interaction, the Prime Minister hoped that the sixth round of Foreign Secretary level bilateral political consultations would take place soon. The Prime Minister assured the High Commissioner of full cooperation for his efforts to improve the bilateral relations. The High Commissioner underscored the importance that Bangladesh attached to its relations with Pakistan and stated that he would endeavour to further strengthen the bilateral ties. (Monitoring Desk)

President of Uzbekistan Departed for Sochi

TASHKENT — President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev departed for the city of Sochi of the Russian Federation for taking part in the regular meeting of the Council of the Heads of States of the Commonwealth of Independent States. As previously reported, at the meeting, the heads of the CIS member states are expected to discuss the current state and prospects of further development of multilateral cooperation, exchange views on regional and international issues, con-

sider the issue of the presiding state in the Commonwealth in 2018. Following the results of the summit, it is planned to adopt the Statement of the Heads of States of the CIS on supporting family institutions and traditional family values, the decision on declaring 2019 as the Year of Book, 2020 — the Year of the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, and other documents aimed at strengthening interaction between the member states of the Commonwealth. (Agneices)

Turkmenistan Adopts Law on Free Economic Zones

ASHGABAT — Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov signed the country's Law "On Free Economic Zones" on Tuesday, a source in the Turkmen government said. The country is implementing program measures to modernize, diversify and strengthen the export potential of the national economy. Big investments are allocated for the development of oil and gas sector, agro-industrial complex, high-tech industries that produce competitive goods for world markets, and the formation of developed transport, information and communications infrastructure. The Turkmen state supports the development of small and medium businesses. Important aspects

of the state economic policy are international cooperation, large-scale financing of the most important national and international projects by domestic resources, as well as attraction of foreign investments to the country, establishment of long-term mutually beneficial relations with business circles of the world, including the introduction of innovative resource-saving technologies, advanced achievements of management and marketing. "The new law will give a new momentum to the development of national economy, help to increase the investment attractiveness of Turkmenistan," reported the Turkmen Dovlet Habarlary state news agency. (Trend)