

Global Economy on Precipice of Challenging Times

TOKYO - Concerns are rife about a global economic slowdown as evidenced by an overnight equities rout on major U.S. and European bourses, sending the U.S. dollar tumbling versus other currencies, including the Japanese yen.

Tokyo-based analysts indicating there will likely be more headwinds ahead.

Market here closed sharply lower Tuesday as a swathe of issues were dumped in the face of a rising yen against the greenback, with the Nikkei Stock Average plunging 5.40 percent to a three-week closing low, as market players offloaded riskier assets like stocks in favor of safe havens like the yen. Analysts said that market consternation was growing based on a raft of economic data suggest-



ing that global economic growth is slowing. Despite what traders have described as a temporary uptick in crude oil prices owing to the U.S. dollar's slump proportional to the affordability of oil, the glut will likely continue as surplus continues to outstrip demand and prices drop again when the dollar recovers. "What we've seen in the last 24 hours or so is a global market react to concerns that, while a slowdown in emerging economies has been widely factored in, recent macroeconomic data from the U. S. has, collectively, contributed to an overall 'sour indicator' that the world's largest economy may be heading toward a recession," Hisao Katayama, a senior equity analyst at Nomura Securities Co., told Xinhua.(Xinhua)

Greece Open to NATO's Involvement in Monitoring of Refugees Flows

ATHENS - Greece is open to discuss a possible involvement of NATO in the monitoring of refugees flows from Turkey to Greece under certain conditions, Greek government spokeswoman Olga Gero-vassilis said on Tuesday. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras had a telephone conversation with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Tuesday to be briefed on the results of her visit to Turkey on Monday, Gero-vassilis said during a press briefing in Athens. The Greek leader stressed

that any potential involvement of NATO should strictly concern the Turkish territorial waters and by no means affect Greece's sovereign rights, she underlined. The idea of joint NATO patrols in the Aegean Sea was unveiled during joint statements made on Monday by Turkish Premier Ahmed Davutoglu and Merkel. The proposal comes as Greece and Turkey are under increasing pressure from European countries to boost efforts to curb the flow of migrants into Europe and



provide more assistance to refugees. Ahead of a new EU summit on the issue next week Greece has received clear warnings by its European partners

lately that it could be temporarily expelled from the Schengen passport free travel zone unless it fulfills all its obligations on time. ...*(More on P4)...(25)*

EU Introduces New Safety Features to Protect Citizens from Falsified Medicines

BRUSSELS - Medicines could be safer with the introduction of new obligatory features like a unique identifier and an anti-tampering device, the European Commission announced in a press release on Tuesday. Such safety features would protect European citizens against the health threat of falsified medicines, which may contain the wrong dosage of ingredients or low quality active ingredients, said the press release. The safety features would guar-

antee the medicine's authenticity for the benefit of patients and businesses, and would strengthen the security of the medicine supply chain, from manufacturers to distributors to pharmacies and hospitals, added the press release. The act in question, published in the EU's Official Journal, supplemented the EU's falsified medicines directive, which aims to prevent falsified medicines from reaching patients, to allow EU citizens to ...*(More on P4)...(26)*

German Industrial, Foreign Trade Sectors end 2015 with Weak Performance

BERLIN - Both German industrial output and exports declined in December 2015, official data showed on Tuesday, indicating a shaky growth of Europe's biggest economy. Adjusted for seasonal swings and inflation effects, production in German industrial sector fell by 1.2 percent from the previous month in December 2015, said German federal statistics office Destatis. It followed a monthly decrease of 0.1 percent in November. In the final quarter of last year, the factory output dropped by 0.8 percent.

"The industrial production went through a dry spell at the end of 2015," said German Economy Ministry in a statement. Another release from the statistics office also showed that both German exports and imports declined by 1.6 percent in December, narrowing adjusted-net exports to 19.4 billion euros (about 21.8 billion U.S. dollars). Foreign trade was Germany's traditional driving engine, but remained subdued in recent years due to weak global growth. (Xinhua)

Abe, Obama Agree to Adopt UN Resolution on DPRK's Rocket Launch, Nuke Test

TOKYO - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and U.S. President Barack Obama on Tuesday agreed to adopt a strong UN Security Council resolution against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) recent rocket launch and nuclear test. Abe in his telephone talks with Obama said DPRK's rocket launch on Sunday poses a "direct and serious threat" to Tokyo and Washington, and the two leaders agreed to coordinate with South Korea over the issue, according to Japanese Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary

Hiroshige Seko. For his part, Obama said the United States remains committed to the defense of its allies, local media quoted the senior Japanese official as saying. The DPRK on Sunday launched a long-range rocket, saying it carried an earth observation satellite, but Japan and the U.S., among other nations, believe the launch was a test of a long-range ballistic missile. It is the first time since December 2012 that the DPRK has conducted such a test. The DPRK is banned from testing any rockets based on a ballistic missile tech-



nology under UN Security Council resolutions. The DPRK also tested its first hydrogen nuclear bomb last month which was also a violation against related UN resolution and was criticized by the international community. (Xinhua)

France's National Assembly Approves State of Emergency Bill

PARIS - France's National Assembly, the lower house of the country's parliament, approved late Monday the government's constitutional reform aimed at giving a greenlight to state of emergency amid growing concerns that it will weaken citizens' rights and freedom. With the absence of three quarters of lawmakers, 103 of them approved the constitutional amendment that includes procedures to empower the police to handle terrorist threats. A total of 26 voted against the bill, while seven abstained. Under the proposed amendment, the parliament will have to endorse any state of emergency that can last a



maximum of four months before requiring another approval. The state of emergency allows police to conduct searches without judicial warrants, ban public gatherings, put people under house arrest and close the country's borders. French President Francois Hollande declared a state of emergency a day after the Paris terror attacks

on Nov. 13 that killed 130 people, the first of its kind since the Algerian War of Independence from 1954 to 1962. Since November, the granted state of emergency has helped to foil 11 terrorist assaults with 3,289 raids launched. The French police seized 560 arms and detained 341 people, according to official figures. (Xinhua)

Pro-Gov't Forces, Qaida Suspects Clash in Yemen's Aden

ADEN - Heavy fighting broke out between pro-government forces and suspected al-Qaida gunmen in Yemen's southern port city of Aden early on Tuesday, a military official told Xinhua. "The heavy fighting occurred after security units backed armored vehicles attempted to enter Aden's neighborhood of Mansourah, where scores of al-Qaida members have large presence and influence," the local military official said on condition of anonymity. "The Yemeni security forces backed by troops of the Saudi-led Arab coalition faced strong resistance from suspected al-Qaida gunmen positioned in Mansourah, sparking fierce clashes in the area," the military source said. Local residents told Xinhua that "large explosions were heard in Mansourah and scores of unknown masked gunmen deployed on the streets and seized several homes." Warplanes of ...*(More on P4)...(27)*

UN Fears for Hundreds of Thousands if Syria Troops Encircle Aleppo

GENEVA/AMMAN - Hundreds of thousands of civilians could be cut off from food if Syrian government forces encircle rebel-held parts of Aleppo, the United Nations said on Tuesday, warning of a massive new flight of refugees from a Russian-backed assault. Syrian government forces, backed by Russian air strikes and Iranian and Lebanese Hezbollah fighters, have launched a major offensive in the countryside around Aleppo, which has been divided between government and rebel control for years. The assault to surround Aleppo, once Syria's biggest city with 2 million people, amounts to one of the most important shifts of momentum in the five year civil war that has killed 250,000 people and already driven 11 million from their homes. Since last week, fighting has already wrecked the first attempt at peace talks for two years and led rebel fighters to speak about losing their northern power base altogether. (Reuters)

Hollande Set for Reshuffle Ahead of 2017 French Re-Election Bid

PARIS - French President Francois Hollande is expected to set in motion Wednesday a government reshuffle aimed at boosting his appeal to voters ahead of a bid for a second term in 2017. Veteran foreign minister and former premier Laurent Fabius is likely to step aside as Hollande seeks fresh political momentum with just 15 months left in office. Hollande's popularity rose after he took a tough approach on security following the November ...*(More on P4)...(30)*

Kremlin Rebukes Merkel over Syria Criticism

MOSCOW - The Kremlin on Tuesday issued a rare rebuke to German Chancellor Angela Merkel a day after she criticised Russian air strikes in Syria. In Ankara on Monday, Merkel - referring to air strikes including those carried out by Russia - said "we are horrified in the face of this human suffering." Her comments repre-

sented some of the sharpest criticism yet of Russia's aerial campaign by Merkel. Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman said Merkel should carefully watch what she said on the Syrian crisis. "We once again call on everyone to be very careful and responsible in their choice of words, given the ...*(More on P4)...(28)*

Israeli, Palestinian Officials to Hold Security Meeting in Jerusalem this Week: Official

RAMALLAH - A senior Palestinian official said on Tuesday that Israeli and Palestinian officials will hold a security meeting in Jerusalem this week to discuss the security situation in the West Bank. Saeb Erekat, secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), who was speaking to Voice of Palestine Radio, did not give further de-

tails about the meeting. However, a senior Palestinian official told Xinhua on condition of anonymity that the Palestinian delegation will convey a clear message to the Israeli side on the Palestinian commitment to agreements and treaties signed in the past between the two sides. But, "if Israel kept storming ...*(More on P4)...(29)*

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Iran's Reformist Ex-President Calls on Supporters

TEHRAN - Iran's reformist ex-president has called on Iranians to cast their vote in the crucial upcoming election despite a ban preventing many reformist candidates from running. In a statement issued late Monday, Mohammad Khatami called on his supporters to vote in the Feb. 26 parliamentary elections to serve "national interests." Khatami said although it is disappointing that "capable" and "deserving figures" have been disqualified, people should vote because "massive participation"

and "heated elections" are in their interests. The reformist ex-president remains popular among young people and women but is deeply disliked by hard-liners and the state media has banned the broadcasting of his picture. After weeks of intensive political lobbying by President Hassan Rouhani, the Guardian Council, Iran's hard-line constitutional watchdog, reversed a ban on 1,500 parliamentary candidates Saturday. It is unclear how many of those approved are reformists.(AP)

Entering the Most Difficult Phase of Operation: Gen Raheel



PESHAWAR - Pakistani Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif said Tuesday that the state is entering the most difficult phase of the military operation, while speaking at a special provincial Apex committee meeting held in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The meeting laid special focus on the return of Temporary Displaced Persons (TDPs), with

further discussion on the current progress of ongoing military operations and intelligence-based operations (IBO) being conducted across the urban centers of the country. "We are in the most difficult phase of the operation after successfully evicting terrorists from their sanctuaries and restoring the writ of the state," said the army chief.(Agencies)

Islamic Renaissance Party Members go on Trial in Tajikistan

DUSHANBE - The Tajik Supreme Court has started hearings in the trial of 13 leading members of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) accused of attempting to overthrow the government. Hearings took place on Tuesday behind closed doors. The accused included one woman, Zараfo Rahmoni, who worked as a legal adviser to the party's leadership. The group stands accused of conspiring with former Defense Minister Abduhalim Nazarzoda in a sup-

posed armed bid to seize power in early September. The authorities say Nazarzoda led attacks on a police station and an arsenal that killed at least 26 people. Nazarzoda was reportedly killed in an operation by government forces. Authorities blamed the IRPT for organizing the mutiny, while the Supreme Court banned the party, designating it an "extremist and terrorist organization." Party leader Muhiddin Kabiri, who now lives in exile, has rejected the accusations.(Agencies)

China to Further cut Government Funds for Public Financial Relief

BEIJING - China will further cut government funds to reduce financial burden on the public, according to the Ministry of Finance (MOF). The government cut, streamlined and optimized a total of 13 government funds in early February. Moves of such kind will reduce financial burdens worth 26 billion yuan (3.96 billion U.S.dollars) for enterprises and individuals this year. Government funding is

set up to support public infrastructure development and public services by charging enterprises and individuals. The government has been cutting unnecessary government funds in recent years, whose number fell from 327 items in 2000 to 28 items now. China will also cut illegal funds set up by local governments this year, according to Shi Yaobin, deputy head of MOF. (Xinhua)