

# China rebukes Australia for 'Cold War mentality' after Belt and Road accords cancelled

REUTERS, Sydney

Australia said on Thursday that it cancelled two accords between Victoria state and China on the Belt and Road Initiative because they were out of line with the federal government's foreign policy, which sees a "free and open Indo Pacific" as a key goal.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman responded by urging Australia to abandon its "Cold War mentality and ideological bias" and "immediately correct its mistakes and change course".

The Chinese embassy earlier criticised the move by Foreign Minister Marise Payne to veto two agreements signed by Victoria state as "provocative" and said it would further damage ties.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison told reporters on Thursday the accords were cancelled because his federal government didn't want other levels of government to enter into agreements that conflict with Australia's foreign policy.

"We will always act in Australia's national interest to protect Australia, but to also ensure we can advance our national interest in a free and open Indo Pacific and a world that seeks a balance in favour of freedom," he said.

Under a new process, states must consult with the foreign minister before signing agreements with other nations.

Payne earlier told local radio the policy was "not aimed at any one country". Wang Wenbin, a spokesman at the Chinese foreign ministry, expressed doubt over that claim during a regular news conference in Beijing. "The Australian side reviewed more than 1,000 deals and only decided to cancel four, and two of them were agreements with China, so Australia's claim that the decision doesn't target any particular country



Chinese President Xi Jinping attends a summit at the Belt and Road Forum on May 15, 2017 in Beijing.

does not hold water," Wang said.

The spokesman warned Australia against travelling "further down the wrong path to avoid making the already strained China-Australia relations worse." Speaking to reporters in New Zealand after meeting with her counterpart Nanaia Mahuta, Payne said Australia sought a clear-eyed and practical engagement with China, particularly as the world emerged from Covid-19.

"We also have to acknowledge that China's outlook, the nature of China's external engagement, both in our region and globally, has changed in recent years, and an enduring partnership requires us to adapt to those new realities," she said.

China is the largest trading partner of New

Zealand and Australia.

Mahuta on Thursday repeated comments that New Zealand valued the Five Eyes security alliance - which also includes Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States - but questioned whether it was the right platform for New Zealand to speak out on human rights issues.

The comment, first made on Monday, has been widely interpreted as referring to recent Five Eyes joint statements criticising China.

In a joint written statement that did not mention China, Payne and Mahuta said they had "reaffirmed their intent to work together to preserve the liberal international order that has underpinned stability and prosperity in the region, and to foster a sustainable regional balance where all countries - large and small can freely pursue their legitimate interests".

Australia's conservative coalition government had declined to agree to a country-level MOU with China on the Belt and Road Initiative. But Victoria Labor Premier Dan Andrews signed an MOU to promote the infrastructure development initiative in 2018 and a framework agreement in 2019 saying it would bring Chinese investment to his state.

Hans Hendrichske from the University of Sydney Business School said the cancellation of the agreements would have minimal commercial impact because no projects had begun.

"It had no legal force and there were no specific deals," he told Reuters.

Diplomatic relations between Australia and China have worsened since Canberra called for an international inquiry into the origins of the coronavirus, prompting trade reprisals from Beijing.

Fitch Ratings said economic co-dependencies between Australia and China will restrain Beijing from targeting major exports such as iron ore.

# Samsung leader Jay Y Lee attends trial amid calls for pardon

REUTERS, Seoul

Samsung Electronics Co Ltd Vice Chairman Jay Y. Lee on Thursday made his first public appearance since being jailed in January, as he attended court to face charges of fraud and stock manipulation amid calls for his release.

The 52-year-old head of the world's biggest memory chip maker wore a dark suit and white shirt as he entered the courtroom for the hearing, media reported. The heir to one of South Korea's most powerful family-run business empires is accused of fraud and stock manipulation and could face a fresh jail term if convicted.

Pressure is mounting on the government to pardon Lee for a previous conviction of bribery and other offenses, for which he has served half of a 30-month sentence.

Business lobby groups and some lawmakers say he should be freed to help South Korea secure supplies of coronavirus vaccines.

"Utilizing Vice Chairman Lee's global network will help in securing the Covid-19 vaccine," Kwon Tae-shin, vice chairman of the Federation of Korean Industries, told Reuters. A conservative opposition member of parliament, Park Jin, told Reuters South Korean investment in semiconductor



Samsung Group heir Jay Y. Lee arrives at a court in Seoul, South Korea.

production in the United States also could be leveraged to secure US vaccines.

Samsung is considering building a \$17b chip factory in the United States, while Seoul has noted its potential role in helping US President Joe Biden preserve the global chip supply chain.

The United States has said its first priority is vaccinating Americans, although it has promised to look into options to help other countries bolster their supplies.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in is due to visit Washington for a summit with Biden next month.

South Korea has reported 116,661 coronavirus cases and 1,808 deaths from Covid-19, but just 3 per cent of the population has been vaccinated due to problems with vaccine supplies.

# Facebook begins testing ads in Instagram Reels

REUTERS

Facebook Inc on Thursday said it will begin testing ads on its TikTok clone Instagram Reels in India, Brazil, Germany and Australia, as the social media giant aims to make money from its short-form video feature.

The company is seeking to capitalize on its popularity in India, a fast-growing social media market, while rival TikTok has been banned from the country since last year. Facebook has said it plans to test other features in India, such as letting content creators share Reels videos on their Facebook accounts.

The introduction of ads is an "indication of how strong the momentum is for Reels," said Carolyn Everson, vice president of global business group at Facebook, in an interview. Everson declined to share usage metrics for Reels.

Facebook also announced Thursday it will let advertisers select categories of video content they want to place ads on, such as videos about children and parenting, animals and pets or fitness and workouts.

The effort is Facebook's biggest move yet to let brands advertise alongside content subjects. Advertisers typically use Facebook to target certain users by their interests.



The Facebook logo is displayed on a mobile phone in this picture illustration taken on December 2, 2019.

# US weekly jobless claims decline further

REUTERS

Fewer Americans filed new claims for unemployment benefits last week, suggesting layoffs were subsiding and strengthening expectations for another month of blockbuster job growth in April as a re-opening economy unleashes pent-up demand.

Initial claims for state unemployment benefits totaled a seasonally adjusted 547,000 for the week ended April 17 compared to 586,000 in the prior week. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast 617,000 applications in the latest week.

It was the second straight week that claims were below the 700,000 level since March 2020 when mandatory shutdowns of nonessential businesses like restaurants and bars were enforced to slow the first wave of Covid-19 infections.

Claims have remained high because of fraud, especially in California and Ohio. The enhancement of the unemployment benefits programs, including a weekly \$300 subsidy, could also be encouraging some people to attempt to file a claim for assistance, though not every application is approved.

Latest Labor Department data on first payments show only a fraction of claims were successful over the past months.



People line up outside a newly reopened career center for in-person appointments in Louisville, Kentucky, US on April 15.

The unprecedented surge in claims early in the pandemic could also be messing with the model that the government uses to strip seasonal fluctuations from the data. Claims jumped to a record 6.149m in early April 2020. In a healthy labor market,

claims are normally in a 200,000 to 250,000 range.

The United States has expanded vaccination eligibility to most American adults, and more than half that population has had at least one vaccine dose, according to the US Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention. A third of US adults are fully vaccinated, as well as 26 per cent of the population overall, it said.

That, together with the White House's \$1.9t pandemic rescue package, has allowed for broader economic re-engagement. The

resulting surge in demand has left businesses scrambling for workers. Retail sales raced to a record high in March and factories are humming.

Last week's claims data covered the period during which the government surveyed business establishments for the nonfarm payrolls component of April's employment report. First-time filings have dropped from 765,000 in mid-March.

Claims are generally considered a leading labor market indicator, but have lagged employment during the pandemic.

While the recent downward trend supports expectations for robust job gains in April, economists are keeping an eye on the number of people receiving benefits under both the regular state unemployment insurance and government-funded programs to get a better read of the labor market's health.

"The total number of individuals receiving benefits on all programs also seems to be trending lower as hiring has picked up, although this number could also fall as more individuals reach the end of their allotted period of benefits," said Andrew Hollenhorst, an economist at Citigroup in New York.

"Still, we expect more strong monthly employment reports over the coming months."

# J L Rover output at two UK plants hit by chips shortage

REUTERS

Output at two of Jaguar Land Rover's (JLR) British car factories will be temporarily halted from Monday, due to Covid-19 supply chain disruption, including a lack of semi-conductors, the firm said on Thursday.

"We have adjusted production schedules for certain vehicles which means that our Castle Bromwich and Halewood manufacturing plants will be operating a limited period of non-production from Monday 26th April," the Tata Motors-owned company said.

The Covid-19 pandemic has driven up demand for semiconductor chips for use in electronics like computers, as people worked from home, and suppliers are struggling to adjust, hitting output at many automakers. Trade flows have also been affected.

On Wednesday, carmaker Stellantis said it would replace digital speedometers with more old-fashioned analogue ones in one of its Peugeot models, as the fallout continues.

Renault's finance chief said on Thursday that car production fell by tens of thousands of vehicles in the first quarter as a result of the shortage.



A car hangs on the wall of Jaguar's Castle Bromwich manufacturing facility in Birmingham.

**Padma Oil Company Limited**  
(A Subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)  
Strand Road, Sadarghat, Chattogram-4000

**2nd Corrigendum Notice**

**Project Name:** Construction of 12 (G+11) Storied Modern Residential cum Commercial Office Building with 02 (two) Basements of Padma Oil Company Limited at 6, Paribag, Dhaka-1000.  
Invitation Ref. No. 28.22.2675.854.17.001.21, date: 24/02/2021.

This is for inform of all concerned that the above tender has been published on the Daily Samakal, The Daily Observer on 24/02/2021 & the Daily Kalerkantho, the Daily Jugantor, The Daily Star on 25/02/2021 and the websites of POCL, CPTU, BPC from 24/02/2021 and 1st Corrigendum Notice has been published on the Daily Kalerkantho, the Daily Samakal, The Daily Observer, The Daily Star on 05/04/2021 & the Daily Jugantor on 06/04/2021 and the websites of POCL, CPTU, BPC from 05/04/2021. Now due to unavoidable circumstances the following amendments have been carried out:

Clause No., Page No.	Description in original documents	Description as per 1st Corrigendum Notice	To be read (Corrected as)
In Tender Notice SI No. 15	Tender last selling date: 11/04/2021.	Tender last selling date: 25/04/2021	Tender last selling date: 04/05/2021
In Tender Notice SI No. 16 and in Technical offer ITT 42.1, ITT 42.3, ITT 42.4 Page No. 38	Tender submission date & time: 12/04/2021 up to 1400 hrs.	Tender submission date & time: 26/04/2021 up to 1300 hrs.	Tender submission date & time: 05/05/2021 up to 1300 hrs.
In Tender Notice SI No. 17 and in Technical offer ITT 48.1, Page No. 38	Tender opening date & time: 12/04/2021 at 1500 hrs.	Tender opening date & time: 26/04/2021 at 1400 hrs.	Tender opening date & time: 05/05/2021 at 1400 hrs.

All other terms and conditions of the tender schedule shall remain unchanged.

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GD-806

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জিডি-৮০৫      পরিচালক (প্রশাসন ও অর্থ)