



# Li trip to strengthen cooperation

Premier's tour to Tajikistan, the Netherlands and Belgium to deepen trade, connectivity and people-to-people ties

By XINHUA and CHINA DAILY

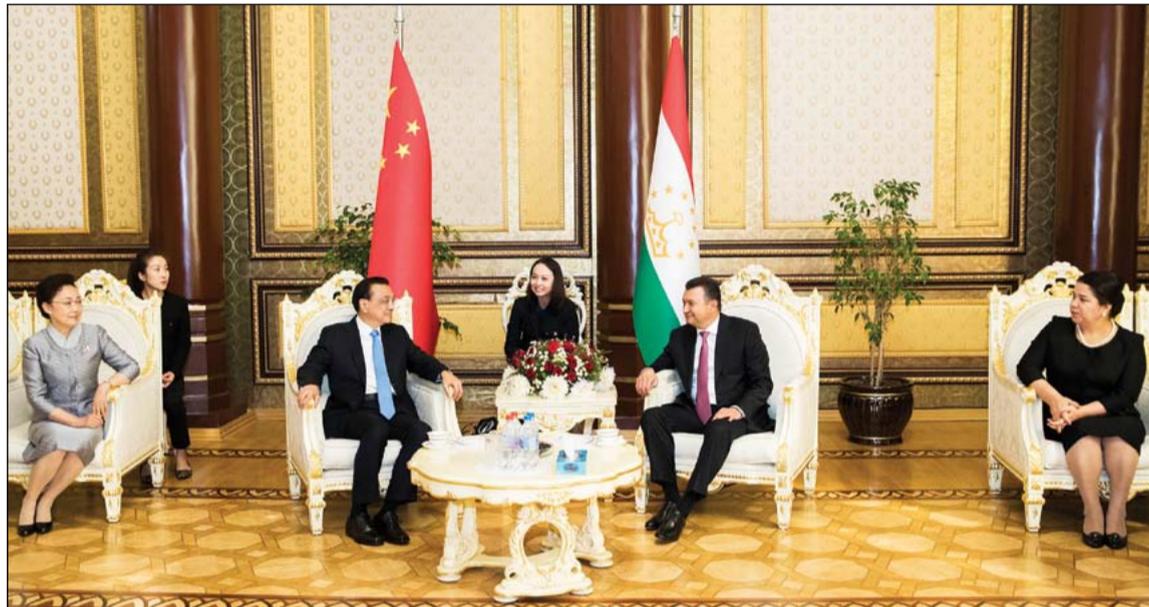
At the eastern end of the Eurasian continent that enjoys the widest longitudinal span, China has been dedicated to its connectivity, urging Asian and European countries to work in unison for a more open global economy.

With such an aim, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang started a nine-day trip to Tajikistan, the Netherlands and Belgium on Oct 11. While China is taking a more active and responsible role in the global arena, Li's westward journey shows that China holds Eurasia in high regard, where the Chinese premier pays visits almost every year.

At the 17th meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Heads of Government Council, Li planned to discuss issues such as deepening joint efforts on the Belt and Road Initiative and strengthening cooperation in fields including trade, connectivity and people-to-people exchanges to advance SCO ties.

On Oct 11 when meeting with Kazakh Prime Minister Bakytzhan Sagintayev, Li called on China and Kazakhstan to further dovetail development strategies and give full play to industry capacity cooperation advantages, thereby steadily promoting existing joint projects and exploring new areas of cooperation.

Noting the two countries are friendly neighbors of sincerity and mutual trust as well as comprehensive strategic partners of mutual ben-



Premier Li Keqiang and wife, Cheng Hong, meet Tajik Prime Minister Kokhir Rasulzoda on Oct 11 in Dushanbe for an official visit to Tajikistan. Li will also attend the 17th meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Heads of Government Council. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY ASIA WEEKLY

efit and win-win cooperation, Li said both China and Kazakhstan regard each other's stability, development and revitalization as a good opportunity for their own development.

Sagintayev said Kazakhstan stands ready to further promote the synergy of development strategies with China, facilitate port upgrading, increase cargo transit volume in Kazakhstan, and expand exports of agricultural products to achieve mutual benefit and win-win results.

Eurasian cooperation has huge potential considering its combined

landmass, population and economic scale. From the first stop of Li's trip in Tajikistan to the last leg Belgium, Eurasian countries are a treasure of multiethnic civilizations at different development stages that share the common aim of development.

Despite development gaps, Eurasia enjoys a huge, competitive market with a wide range of possibilities for economic growth and all-round cooperation.

As a developed Europe is undergoing economic recovery and seeking an external means of growth, the less

developed economies of Asia represent a strong source of demand, abundant resources and opportunities.

Opening-up, a commitment China has and will continue to follow, will generate new opportunities for the common prosperity of the country and the world, Li said on Oct 10 while meeting with Harald Kruger, chairman of the BMW Group, in Beijing.

The premier said China will promote a higher level of opening-up and will continue to be an ideal place for foreign investment.

"We welcome enterprises from different countries, including German enterprises, to seize the opportunity and expand investment in China and better achieve common development and win-win results," Li said.

By further lowering import tariffs and hosting the China International Import Expo, China aims to buy more products from its trade partners, which are expected to top \$8 trillion over the next five years.

Apart from liberalizing the market and increasing the international presence in China, the country further opens up by encouraging its firms to go global, which creates local jobs and boosts local economies.

The German carmaker is increasing its stake in a China-based joint venture BBA from 50 percent to 75 percent, the first such move by a global carmaker after China announced plans to ease ownership rules for automobile joint ventures in the world's largest car market.

Both Li and German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Oct 11 sent congratulatory letters on breaking ground for a new BMW Brilliance plant in Northeast China's Liaoning Province. The groundbreaking ceremony for the new BMW Brilliance plant was held in the Tiexi district in Shenyang, the provincial capital.

Germany welcomes China's deepening of its reform and opening-up and the relaxation of market access, and hopes the bilateral cooperation can produce new achievements, Merkel said.

## US urged to manage differences, cooperate

Beijing open to resuming negotiations with Washington on bilateral investment and initiating FTA talks

By JING SHUIYU

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China hopes the United States will join efforts to explore appropriate ways to resolve differences and promote cooperation between the world's two largest economies, the Ministry of Commerce said on Oct 11.

Analysts said that to resolve the current trade disputes, the two countries should shift focus to making the economic pie bigger in order to benefit both, as the two economies are complementary.

Gao Feng, a ministry spokesman,

said at a news conference that the country is open to resuming negotiations with the US on bilateral investment and initiating talks on a free-trade agreement at a proper time. "But regrettably, the US has failed to demonstrate its sincerity."

China and the US initiated talks in 2008 on a bilateral investment treaty, the signing of which will ease two-way investment procedures. The ongoing trade tensions have brought more uncertainty to its possibility of success.

He reiterated that China has not, and will not, engage in "economic aggression". On the contrary, China

hopes to share opportunities with all its economic and trade partners and grow together with them to boost world economic growth.

Gao was responding to US Vice-President Mike Pence's recent accusations toward China. In a speech, Pence said the administration would levy even more tariffs, with the possibility of more than doubling the current level, unless a "fair and reciprocal" deal is made.

In response to Pence's claim that much of China's success was driven by US investment and trade imbalances, Gao said the country does not deny the contribution US investment

has made to its economic growth, although it accounts for a small proportion of total foreign investment in China.

Since 1987, China has seen \$2 trillion in foreign investment, of which the US accounted for \$81.4 billion, or 4.1 percent, according to the ministry.

Wang Huiyao, president of the Center for China and Globalization, said Chinese and US policymakers should "make the economic pie bigger", build on the agreements already reached through bilateral negotiations and work to increase Sino-US bilateral trade and opportunities

in services trade, Wang said. They should also seek further tariff reductions through bilateral negotiations and re-engage in the Bilateral Investment Treaty talks.

Long Guoqiang, vice-president of the Development Research Center of the State Council, said the trade tensions will not change the two nations' overall economic complementarity, as they are complementary in terms of industrial structures, technologies and resources.

"Their economic and trade relations will rise to a higher level in both scale and substance in the coming 10 years," Long said.