

US stocks close out worst week since winter

Beijing downplays link between release and Meng's return

Canadians in prisoner swap freed for health reasons: China

TAIPEI, Taiwan, Oct 2, (AP): China's Foreign Ministry said that two Canadians detained in late 2019 who were allowed to return to Canada in a prisoner swap were released on bail for health reasons.

A ministry spokesperson made the comment as Beijing sought to downplay the connection between their release and the return to China of a long-detained executive of Huawei Technologies.

Canadians Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig were detained in December 2019, days after Huawei's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, was arrested in Canada at the request of U.S. authorities.

Many countries labeled China's action "hostage politics," while China accused Canada of arbitrary detention. The two Canadians were jailed for more than 1,000 days.

Meng fought the U.S. demand for extradition from Canada. She landed in China on Saturday after reaching a deal with the U.S. Justice Department that led to a prisoner swap.

"The case of Meng Wanzhou is completely different from that of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor in nature," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said at a daily briefing on Monday.

The two men were suspected of endangering national security, Hua said.

Spavor, an entrepreneur, had been sentenced to 11 years in prison, accused of spying. Kovrig had not yet been sentenced but was facing similar charges.

China released the two Canadians on bail after a "diagnosis by professional medical institutions, and with the guarantee of the Canadian ambassador to Chi-

na," Hua said.

Hua did not answer questions from journalists about whether the prisoner releases were entirely unrelated and what the health reasons were.

Canada has maintained that Kovrig and Spavor were innocent of any charges.

"We continue to oppose the way these two citizens were treated," Canadian Foreign Minister Marc Garneau told the U.N. General Assembly meeting of world leaders Monday.

He said Spavor and Kovrig "paid a heavy price" because their country "observed the rule of law" in responding to the U.S. extradition request.

Representatives for the two countries traded retorts later Monday on the assembly floor, with China rejecting Canada's take on the affair. Canada continued to

insist Kovrig and Spavor were mistreated.

Meng reached an agreement with U.S. federal prosecutors that will drop fraud charges against her next year. In return, she is accepting responsibility for misrepresenting the company's business dealings in Iran.

U.S. White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters Monday that the decision to allow Meng to return to China was an independent law enforcement matter decided by the U.S. Justice Department. She added that President Joe Biden's administration has advocated for the release of the two Canadians but stressed that the White House was not involved.

She said Biden raised concerns about the Canadians' detention when he spoke with President Xi Jinping earlier this month.

Merck leads market

NEW YORK, Oct 02, (AP): Wall Street rebounded on Friday, led by companies that would benefit most from a healthier economy, but not by enough to keep the stock market from its worst week since the winter.

The S&P 500 rose 49.50, or 1.1%, to 4,357.04 following another choppy day of trading. It swung between a loss of 0.4% and a gain of 1.6% through the day.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 482.54 points, or 1.4%, to 34,326.46, and the Nasdaq composite gained 118.12, or 0.8%, to 14,566.70.

Merck helped pace the market and leaped 8.4% after it said its experimental pill to treat COVID-19 cut hospitalizations and deaths by half. Prospects for an additional tool to tame the pandemic helped lift shares of airlines, hotels and companies hurt by restrictions on travel and other activities.

United Airlines soared 7.9%, casino owner Caesars Entertainment swept 6.4% higher and Live Nation Entertainment jumped 8.3%. Energy producers, financial companies and other businesses whose profits are often closely tied to the economy's strength were also helping to lead the way.

The market's widespread gains weren't enough to make up for a dismal last few days. The S&P 500 still dropped to a weekly loss of 2.2%, its worst since February. A swift rise in interest rates earlier this week rattled the market and forced a reassessment of whether stocks had grown too expensive, particularly the most popular ones.

On Friday, the yield on the 10-year Treasury fell back to 1.46% from 1.52% late Thursday. That's still well above its perch of 1.32% from a week and a half ago.

September was also the worst month for the S&P 500 since March 2020, when markets plunged as COVID-19 shutdowns took hold. Among the worries that have weighed on the market: The Federal Reserve is close to letting off the accelerator on its support for markets, economic data has recently been mixed following an upturn in COVID-19 infections, corporate tax rates may be set to rise and political turmoil continues in Washington.

There's also high inflation still enveloping the world. Oil prices rose roughly 2% this week, approaching a seven-year high, while natural gas prices were up about 7%.

High

The Federal Reserve has said that it expects high inflation to be only transitory and that it's the result of an economy roaring back to life from its earlier shutdown. But if it's wrong, the Fed may have to raise interest rates earlier or more aggressively than it's telegraphed to markets.

Economic reports on Friday were mixed. The nation's manufacturing grew faster than expected last month, but an August reading for the Federal Reserve's preferred measure for inflation was a bit higher than forecast. They follow a disappointing report on Thursday showing more people filed for unemployment benefits than expected.

Such data means "you hear the word 'stagflation' come up once in a while, which would be the worst outcome" said Rich Weiss, chief investment officer of multi-asset strategies at American Century Investments.

Stagflation is when economic growth stagnates but inflation remains high. Weiss doesn't expect that to happen, so long as the pandemic doesn't cause more global shutdowns, but he also is not positioning his investments as if he's optimistic about big future gains for stocks.

"We're not swinging at the pitch right now," he said. "We are neutral." Weiss said the market would need to fall by about a third before he'd call stocks attractively valued based on where interest rates are now, all else equal.

Shares dropped in Paris, London, Frankfurt and Tokyo. Shanghai and Hong Kong were closed for a holiday.

The S&P 500 ended September down 4.8%, its first monthly drop since January and the biggest since March 2020. After climbing steadily for much of the year, markets have become unsettled with the spread of the more contagious delta variant of COVID-19, surging long-term bond yields and word that the Federal Reserve may start to unwind its support for the economy.

Rising inflation also has caused investors to reconsider recent high prices for shares, leading many to sell tech stocks that have soared during the pandemic.

Germany's DAX lost 0.8% to 15,134.21 and the CAC 40 in Paris slipped 0.8% to 6,465.81. London's FTSE 100 declined 1% to 7,013.74.

Decline

Japan lifted a pandemic state of emergency on Friday after seeing coronavirus caseloads decline as vaccinations picked up pace. A quarterly survey by the Bank of Japan found the mood among large Japanese manufacturers has risen to its highest level in nearly three years as companies look ahead to a recovery. The results of the "tankan" survey, released Friday, found sentiment among large manufacturers rose to 18 from 14. That's the highest level since late 2018. The reading for non-manufacturers edged up only slightly, to 2 from 1.

However, it and various other surveys have found manufacturers struggling with shortages of computer chips and other components, amid disruptions to supply chains and shipping that might crimp the rebound from the pandemic.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 lost 681.59 points to 28,771.07, while the S&P/ASX 200 declined 2% to 7,185.50. The Kospi in Seoul lost 1.6% to 3,019.18. Shares also fell in Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

The S&P 500 lost 1.2% on Thursday but is still up 14.7% for the year. The Dow Jones Industrial Average shed 1.6%, while the Nasdaq slid 0.4%. Small company stocks also lost ground. The Russell 2000 index declined 0.9%.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury note, a benchmark for many kinds of loans, fell to 1.49% early Friday from 1.50%. It was as low as 1.32% just over a week ago.

In recent weeks, economic data has revealed that the highly contagious delta variant has crimped consumer spending and the job market's recovery. The Labor Department reported that unemployment applications rose for the third straight week and were higher than economists anticipated. The Commerce Department upgraded its estimate of economic growth during the second quarter to 6.7%, which was slightly better than economists expected, but it expects growth to slow to 5.5% during the third quarter.

On Thursday, a bill to fund the US government through Dec. 3 and avoid a partial federal shutdown cleared Congress. But the dispute between Democrats and Republicans over extending the nation's debt limit remains unresolved.

In other trading Friday, US benchmark crude oil declined 74 cents to \$74.29 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It rose 18 cents to \$75.03 per barrel on Thursday.

Brent crude oil dropped 65 cents to \$77.66 per barrel. The dollar slipped to 111.14 Japanese yen from 111.28 yen. The euro was unchanged at \$1.1580.



A currency trader walks by the screen showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI) at a foreign exchange dealing room in Seoul, South Korea, Friday, Oct. 1, 2021. Asian markets tumbled Friday on the tail of Wall Street's worst monthly loss since the beginning of the pandemic. (AP)

KFH: Growth in Local and Foreign Trade Finance Transactions

Non-stop trade finance services during exceptional conditions

The Executive Manager – Trade Finance at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Rashed Almelhem said that the bank's efforts to continue providing Letter of Credit services and appropriate finance channels and its experience in acting as the mediator between the supplier and the buyer, have resulted into a remarkable growth in the values of the LC related to the internal and foreign trade in 2020 and the first half of the current year.

Almelhem stated, in a press release, that KFH, out of keenness to support commercial activities, companies, and SMEs, has not stopped providing its services and innovative solutions during the exceptional circumstances last year.

He reiterated KFH keenness to implement the latest IT applications at the trade finance department concerning the opening of LCs and LGs to facilitate procedures and enable customers to reach any place

worldwide by providing a vast correspondent banking network through highly sophisticated communication systems.

Almelhem mentioned that KFH has recently achieved remarkable success in launching the SWIFT Payment Controls service according to the highest security and quality standards. This service enables the bank to conduct a real time track the financial transfer stream directly with the advantage of notice and the ability to stop transferred payments and provide the user with daily reports on the transaction status.

Innovative Solutions

On the other hand, Almelhem emphasized that KFH has come a long track record in offering innovative solutions and alternatives to finance foreign trade through LCs and sharia compliant finance solutions, thus overcoming several challenges encountered by the trade exchange process.

He added that "To ensure



Rashed Al-Melhem

the achievement of an efficient performance, effective solutions, speed, and fulfillment of customer's trade requirements, safety of merchandise, speed of timely trade exchange, the trade finance department team at KFH comprises highly qualified and trained staff holding accredited certificates in all fields of trade finance operations".

KFH has continued to offer and develop finance channels to suite customers' requirements and provide parallel trade relations. Almelhem said that KFH has provided a variety of products to support the import/export activity including on sight LC which provides a security factor for the merchants

Highly qualified and trained talents with accredited certificates in trade finance

when importing their goods from abroad or when they get the supply inside Kuwait and the LC (on acceptance) which is a type of deferred payment credit. Payment to the foreign supplier is postponed after sending the merchandise or receipt of the cargo documents at certain agreed intervals. Also, it includes Murabaha refinanced credits according to which the merchandise is imported at the customer's account. When the merchandise arrives, the customer will be able to purchase it from KFH against certain profit and settle the value on flexible instalments according to the customer's cash inflows. Additionally, KFH provides the export credits product which contributes to the activation of the foreign export and supports local products. The export credit is

given or endorsed in favor of the exporter in Kuwait upon instructions from the importer outside Kuwait and receipt of the value upon completion of the specifications of the exported merchandise.

Regarding the letters of guarantee, the bank issues different types of guarantees to suite the nature of each project, initial guarantees or performance guarantees, maintenance contracts, down payment, L/Gs regarding financial guarantee of corporate labor as well as telephone installations or traveling abroad for individuals. The bank provides the LC service (on collection) and act as a mediator who delivers to the customer documents relating to individuals or local Kuwaiti establishments as per the instructions of foreign parties.

Technology applied in trade finance services

Most unique and innovative prepaid solutions for biggest family of subscribers

Zain launches 'eeZee Your Way' for prepaid customers

Exclusive options, free gifts, and selection of great digital entertainment services

Zain only operator that allows customers to carry over unused benefits upon renewal

Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the launch of 'eeZee Your Way', a new promotional campaign for prepaid customers that offers the most unique and innovative prepaid solutions to the biggest family of subscribers in Kuwait. The campaign aims at opening up entire new horizons towards Zain customers' usage needs in line with today's everchanging digital lifestyle, while offering them an added value and meeting their unique needs and aspirations.

By launching this new campaign, Zain gives eeZee customers the ease and flexibility of customizing their very own plan as per their unique needs via the Zain app or website. The campaign also gives customers the chance of getting up to triple benefits every month, carry over unused benefits to the next month, enjoy a wide range of digital entertainment services, and much more exclusive options.

Prepaid (eeZee) customers can now launch the Zain smartphone app or website and choose from a wide range of options to customize their very own plan from scratch that fits their priorities, needs, and budget. Customers can easily choose their preferred Internet caps, number of Zain-to-Zain minutes, number of local minutes, number of international minutes, as well as options for unlimited social media, WhatsApp, YouTube, and more.

Once a customer specifies the options that best suit their needs, the final plan price will be shown, where they may add or edit options as they see fit. Once a customer activates the plan they customized, it will be valid for 30 days starting from the activation date, and it will automatically renew when the period is over. The minimum amount for a plan is KD 5.



When a customer commits with autorenewal on-time (meaning enough balance is available to renew after the 30-day period), they will receive double the benefits they have selected (such as minutes, Internet caps, etc.) in the next month for the same original price. If a customer continues to commit with autorenewal on-time in the following months, they will continue to receive triple the benefits they have selected during the following months for the same original price. Any unused minutes or Internet caps will be transferred to the upcoming month and added over the doubled/tripled benefits at no extra charge.

Once a customer activates the plan they have customized, they have the ability to prepare a different plan with different benefits for the next month anytime during the current plan's period by simply tapping on "Set Next Plan". Zain offered this feature for customers

who may have changing usage habits that change from time to time, offering them the ease and comfort of not having to auto renew the same benefits they might not need in the future.

New customers who wish to join the eeZee family can order a new prepaid line with a new SIM card through the Zain Online Store (zos.kw.zain.com). The new card will be delivered to their doorstep, and they will enjoy 200 GBs of Internet, 60 local minutes, 60 International minutes, and unlimited calls within Zain's network (Zain to Zain calls) for KD 6 only. The same plan will auto renew every month at the same price.

Zain also offers existing eeZee customers the chance to enjoy many great free gifts when they download the Zain app for smartphones on iOS and Android. Gifts include free bonus

credit, free Internet, or other amazing gifts at no charge.

With the recent boom in digital entertainment services, Zain is keen on offering its customers a range of entertainment options in partnership with major content creators and service providers to give them the chance to enjoy their favorite programs wherever they are. eeZee customers can now subscribe to OSN for KD 3 monthly only to get 100 GBs of free Internet to stream OSN content. Customers can easily subscribe by activating the service via the Zain app or by sending OSN to 999 to receive their sign-in credentials and start enjoying their favorite movies and TV shows on the OSN app right away.

Zain prepaid customers can also enjoy Anghami by receiving a free subscription for two months, where they can enjoy one month themselves and gift the other month to a friend or family member. To enjoy the offer, customers can easily send "SUB ANG3" to 94010.

The unique campaign was specifically designed to complement the needs and aspirations of Zain's prepaid customers. By launching this new innovative feature, the company aims at creating a new concept for the services it offers, as well as offering convenience with flexible plans that meet the different personal and professional needs of its prepaid customers.

Zain is committed to offer the most flexible and innovative offerings in the market for both prepaid and postpaid customers, reinforcing its leadership position and its pledge in offering the best services and offers to the largest family of subscribers in Kuwait.