

In search of trade deals

In a dramatic coup de theatre the EU decided to announce a possible trade deal with Japan. They did so with the sound of clicking cameras at the Hamburg G20 summit in prospect. They did so to embarrass Mr Trump, who has turned his back on the elaborate and contentious multi country Trans Pacific Trade Partnership. They did so to tell the UK that after years of no progress the EU with its Canada deal and it is possible Japan deal is at last willing to pursue more free trade worldwide.

I would be delighted if the EU did do a proper trade deal with Japan. When we leave the EU both we and EU have to confirm that each of the EU trade deals will still apply to the two splitting parts. There is every likelihood that they will. Only the third country as the co signatory could prevent each trade deal novating, passing, to both the rest of the EU and the UK naturally. Why would they wish to reverse something that is in their interest and which they willingly signed. So if before we leave the EU already has a Japanese deal, all well and good.

If you read some of the smaller print about the Agreement, you see that so far it is fairly narrow, with plenty of remaining issues to sort out. It does not unfortunately look likely that there will be an EU/Japan deal signed and operating by March 2019. They have not, for example worked out how any disputes will be resolved. Japan favours existing arbitration. The EU ants the ECJ involved. Sound familiar? The EU has sort of promised to remove the 10% tariffs on Japanese cars into the EU market, but it wants to spread the reduction over a number of years and reserves the right to go slow or cancel if too many Japanese cars turn up. Japan for her part has promised some opening of her food market for some EU dairy products.

Any progress is welcome, and should be welcome to the UK leaving the EU. The lack of agreement over important issues, and the narrowness of the positives imply this was an announcement put out for dramatic diplomatic effect at this summit.

Meanwhile Mr Trump could not have been clearer. He wants a good trade agreement between the US and UK as soon as possible. That's left the gloomsters who reject the democratic choice of the UK saying that we can do nothing to advance this before we have left! Why not? The only thing we cant do is to sign the Agreement we are working on. When will they start working on our side for a change?

Overseas fugitive caught after 17

[years at large](#)

Liu Mengping has been arrested in late June for taking bribes, 17 years after first being listed as wanted, Beijing police confirmed Saturday.

Liu, a former accountant with a subsidiary of the China International Water and Electric Corporation, was put under investigation on June 2, 2000 for allegedly taking bribes. She had fled to Southeast Asia via Hong Kong.

Following unswerving search and investigation, and on learning of her recent whereabouts, police arrested her on June 29.

Police give no further details.

The anti-graft authority in Beijing said that Liu's arrest proved again that overseas was no paradise for fugitives and giving themselves up was the only way to go.

[Inner Mongolian forest fire spreads to 1,500 hectares](#)

A lightning-induced fire in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in north China has engulfed 1,500 hectares of forest as of Saturday, but authorities believe the fire is still controllable.

About 3,000 firefighters from Inner Mongolia and neighboring Heilongjiang Province, together with 14 helicopters, are trying to extinguish the blaze. Another 1,000 firefighters are rushing to the scene to help.

The forest is part of the Greater Hinggan Mountains in north and northeast China.

According to firefighters, this year the Greater Hinggan Mountains have seen a longer period with high temperatures and severe drought, which has made it difficult to put out the fire.

[Gulangyu island enters world heritage](#)

list



Photo taken on July 8, 2017 shows the session of the World Heritage Committee in Krakow, Poland. The 41st session of the World Heritage Committee on Saturday decided to put China's Gulangyu historic international settlement on the prestigious World Heritage List as a cultural site. So far, China has 52 sites inscribed to the List. (Xinhua/Chen Xu)

Gulangyu island in east China's Fujian Province, famous for its varied architecture and multicultural history, was included on the UNESCO World Heritage list Saturday.

The 41st session of the World Heritage Committee on Saturday decided to put China's Gulangyu historic international settlement on the prestigious World Heritage List as a cultural site. So far, China has 52 sites inscribed to the List.

Only a six-minute ferry ride from Xiamen, Fujian's dynamic economic and culture hub, Gulangyu has an area of about two square kilometers and is home to 20,000 residents.

A former international settlement, the island features 13 consulates, churches, hospitals, schools, and police stations, built by foreign communities from the middle to late 19th century.

In the early 20th century, the island attracted overseas Chinese elites, who returned and built private residences on the island, often with a mixture of eastern and western architectural styles.

Gulangyu has more than 2,000 intact historical buildings, making it one of the best-preserved international settlements in China.

Wu Yongqi, a historian on Gulangyu, said the styles developed here affected the architecture in southern Fujian and were brought to east and southeast Asia by Chinese immigrants.

"The island was home to an international community made up of local people, overseas Chinese and foreigners," Wu said. "It was a distinct combination and the integration of their cultures made the island unique."

A popular tourist destination, the island receives more than 10 million visitors per year.

"People often come to the island for its beautiful gardens, winding alleyways, pristine beaches and quiet lifestyle," Wu said. "However, the island's status as a world cultural heritage tells another story."

In its bid, Gulangyu listed 53 groups of representative historical buildings, four historical roads and seven representative natural landscapes.

"Better protection is what we want to achieve through the world heritage inscription," said Zheng Yilin, director of Gulangyu island management committee.

According to UNESCO, the inscription serves as a "magnet for international cooperation" and financial assistance for heritage conservation projects.

In preparation for the bid, Xiamen municipal government rolled out protection laws and regulations for Gulangyu, repaired damaged historic buildings, opened more cultural museums, and limited tourist numbers to the island.

"With the successful inscription, we are going to keep up with these efforts," Zheng said.

Island of music

Gulangyu has one of the highest pianos ownership ratios in China, with nearly 600 pianos on an island that is less than two square kilometers.

Many of China's most celebrated musicians have come from Gulangyu, and the island is nicknamed "piano island."

"When I was a child, the sound of piano could be heard everywhere on the island," said Fang Site, a 34-year-old local pianist. Her family was among the overseas Chinese who moved to the island in the early 1900s.

Fang said she grew up in a place with strong music traditions. At about six years old, she and many of her peers were sent to music schools on the island.

Her family, like many others on Gulangyu, gather weekly to hold a family concert, a tradition that persists to this day.

“The concert is a part of our lives, through which we connect with our families and express our love for music and life,” Fang said.

Gulangyu has the first piano museum and only organ museum in China, both established by Hu Youyi, an Australian Chinese pianist and collector. The museums host important music festivals and contests regularly.

Fang is the curator of the organ museum and has received UNESCO inspectors to the museum, a landmark on Gulangyu and one of the 53 historical buildings.

“Music is an important part of Gulangyu’s culture and my life. With the inscription, our music has a wider audience,” she said. “Gulangyu’s inscription provides a great opportunity for the preservation and promotion of music culture,” Fang said.

[Suspect identified as policeman in east China hit-and-run](#)

The suspect behind a string of hit-and-runs in east China has been identified as a local policeman, authorities said Saturday.

Four people were killed while nine others were injured by a car in Jiangsu Province, local police said.

Police received a report about a car ploughing into several pedestrians in a neighborhood in Jingjiang City at 8:27 p.m. Friday. The victims were rushed to hospital where four died despite medical treatment, while the nine injured are believed to be in stable condition.

The suspect, 57, was caught in nearby Taixing City, where he serves in a local police bureau. Police found that he had taken poison in an attempt to commit suicide. He is still in a coma and is receiving emergency treatment.

Further investigation is under way.