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Economic Watch: China seeks next leap in manufacturing



Inside C2

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# Trump says Christmas shopping was factor in tariff decision



MORRISTOWN, N.J. (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday his administration decided to delay tariffs on some Chinese imports until mid-December to avoid hurting U.S. shoppers heading into the Christmas holiday.

"We're doing this for the Christmas season" to avoid any adverse impact on U.S. shoppers, Trump told reporters as he prepared to leave New Jersey for an event in Pittsburgh.

## U.S. Steel delivers unwelcome Christmas surprise to Michigan town

CHICAGO (Reuters) - The mayor of a Michigan steel town was attending his grandchildren's Christmas play Thursday evening when he got an unwelcome voicemail from an official of the town's top employer: United States Steel Corp (X.N).

U.S. Steel was about to send out a press release announcing layoffs for 1,545 workers and the idling of a significant portion of operations at the Great Lakes Works facility, according to the voicemail received by Michael Bowdler, mayor of River Rouge, a city of 7,500 that sits on the Detroit River roughly 10 miles south of Detroit.

In the voicemail to Bowdler, heard by Reuters, the U.S. Steel official called the layoffs "terrible news" and attributed the decision to weak demand, lower steel prices and new corporate strategy.

Domestic steel prices, after rising in the immediate aftermath of tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump on steel imports, have fallen amid weakening demand from the auto and other manufacturing sectors.

In the 2016 presidential election, Trump won Michigan by less than 11,000 votes. But with its factories shedding thousands of jobs, the state is seen as up for grabs in the 2020 election.

Steel production at Great Lakes Works will stop around April 1 and the hot-strip mill rolling facility will cease operations before the end of next year, U.S. Steel said in its statement released on Thursday. Production will be shifted to Gary Works in Indiana, the statement added. The latest layoffs come months after U.S. Steel decided to temporarily lay off 48 employees at Great Lakes Works and warned of up to 200 more layoffs. The Great Lakes plant primarily serves the automotive industry. It is the lifeline of the cities of Ecorse and River Rouge, which house the plant.

Local officials had worked out a deal to give tax breaks to the company for a \$600 million investment to carry out upgrades at Great Lakes Works. They thought the investment was the company's commitment to stay invested in the towns.

In September, a U.S. Steel spokeswoman told Reuters that the incentives would help preserve jobs in the region. After Thursday's developments, Bowdler did not know whether the tax deal would be put before the city council for approval. U.S. Steel did not respond to requests for comment on Friday.

Bowdler said the company's move will result in a \$1 million hit on the city's finances and could also dampen the business of its retailers.

U.S. Steel's new strategy to ramp up investments at three mills in North America - Mon Valley plant in Pennsylvania, Gary Works in Indiana and Big River Steel in Arkansas, which the company expects to fully acquire within the next four years - had thrown into doubt the future of the Michigan plant. Martin Englert, a steel industry analyst for brokerage firm Jefferies LLC, called the idling of Great Lakes an "incremental positive" for the company.

U.S. Steel's stock closed down Friday about 11% at \$11.91 as the company announced a dividend cut and forecast a wider-than-expected loss in the fourth quarter. The company's shares have plunged 75% since March 1, 2018, when Trump announced his decision to crack down on foreign steel imports.

Prices of hot-rolled coil are down 41% from their 2018 peak, hurting the profits of American steel companies. U.S. Steel, which saw a record profit in 2018 on soaring steel prices, reported a loss in the latest quarter on slowing demand.

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# Economic Watch: China seeks next leap in manufacturing

BEIJING, Dec. 19 (Xinhua) -- Guangzhou, capital of south China's Guangdong Province and a manufacturing hub, has recently approved a three-year action plan to elevate its manufacturing industry to the next level.

With both its past and present dependent on labor-intensive industries such as apparel and toys, the city in recent years quickened its pace to move up the industrial chain and by 2021, it aims to increase the value added of high-end manufacturing to more than 300 billion yuan (about 42.9 billion U.S. dollars).

The plan also called for the creation of two world-class manufacturing clusters in autos and ultra-high definition videos, as well as four other national clusters in industries including new materials and high-end equipment.

The city's manufacturing shift is emblematic of the broader trend in China as the "world's workshop" built upon low labor and production costs is taking on new forms.

Apart from the traditional "Made in China" tags found on store shelves, high-speed trains and semi-conductors are becoming the new symbols of Chinese manufacturing.

Across the nation, provinces including Sichuan, Shandong, Zhejiang and Jiangsu have invested huge amounts to push high-quality development of the manufacturing industry.

Over the past year, as overall manufacturing investment was losing steam, investment in high-tech manufacturing showed resilience.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed investment in high-tech manufacturing surged 14.8

percent year on year in the first 11 months of the year, far outpacing the sector's average growth of 2.5 percent. At the Central Economic Work Conference earlier this month, top policymakers promised to step up the upgrading of equipment to optimize traditional manufacturing and increase long-term financing support for the sector. China will work to build a number of advanced manufacturing clusters with international competitiveness, said a statement released after the key eco-

nomie meeting, which charted the course for economic work in 2020. The meeting also called for promoting industrial and consumption upgrading, fully tapping into the advantages of China's considerable market, and giving play to the underpinning role of consumption and the pivotal role of investment. The emphasis on concerted monetary, fiscal and regional support for advanced manufacturing highlighted the industry's key role in

China's economic transformation, according to a research report by Shenwan Hongyuan Securities. Investment in high-tech manufacturing will not only help prop up investment demand in the short term, but also spur technological progress at the supply end in the long run, noted the report. Wang Yiming, deputy director of the Development Research Center of the State Council, said the meeting sends a signal that more investment will flow to areas such as high-end manufacturing that could stimulate upgrading at both the supply and demand ends to achieve a dynamic balance.



FILE PHOTO: The logo of Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) is pictured at the entrance to its branch in Beijing



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# Editor's Choice



The 53rd Annual CMA Awards - Arrivals - Nashville, Tennessee, U.S., November - Kacey Musgraves and Gigi Hadid. REUTERS/Charles Pulliam



Senator Warren criticizes South Bend Mayor Buttigieg during the sixth 2020 U.S. Democratic presidential candidates campaign debate at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California, U.S.



Democratic U.S. presidential candidates former Vice President Joe Biden gestures as he speaks in front of Senator Bernie Sanders at the 2020 campaign debate at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles



U.S. President Trump hosts mental health event at the White House in Washington



Democratic 2020 U.S. presidential candidate and U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) casts a shadow while speaking at a SEA/SEIU Local 1984 Member Town Hall in Concord, New Hampshire, U.S., November 13, 2019. REUTERS/Brian Snyder TPX IMAGES OF



A text exchange between ambassadors Taylor and Sondland shows on a screen as Taylor testifies before a House Intelligence Committee hearing as part of the Trump impeachment inquiry on Capitol Hill in Washington



U.S. President Donald Trump meets with Turkey's President Erdogan at the White House in Washington



A group of students from Tulane University's School of Medicine poses for a picture at a former slave plantation, at Whitney Plantation in Wallace, Louisiana, U.S., December 14, 2019, in this picture obtained from social media.

## It's Christmas Eve Around the World.....

Christmas Eve is the day before Christmas Day, an internationally celebrated holiday commemorating the Nativity of Jesus. It is a culturally significant celebration for most of the



Western world and is widely observed as a full or partial holiday in anticipation of Christmas all over the world. In Western culture, Christmas Eve is mostly celebrated on December 24th.

# Worldwide Christmas Celebrations



Christmas in Ottawa, Canada



Large Christmas tree in a Hong Kong Mall



Christmas lights in Tokyo, Japan



Christmas Services in Karachi, Pakistan



Christmas Services in Karachi, Pakistan and Czech Republic



Singapore Orchard Road Lights Up At Christmas time



Holiday Lion Dance in Hong Kong



Christmas toy, from Berlin, Germany



Colorful Parols in the Philippines



The Cheonggyecheon River Walk, Seoul, South Korea



Christmas Market at the Town Hall, Vienna, Austria



"Father Christmas" Walk in Russia



Children March in the Streets of Tbilisi, Georgia at Christmas



Christmas tree in Kiev, Ukraine



Christmas Eve Candles in Finland



Julbock, a Giant Christmas Goat in Gävle, Sweden Town Market



Christmas at Rockefeller Center in New York City, USA



ZUM Department Store in Bulgaria



Christmas Tree at Syntagma Square, Athens, Greece



Christmas Decorations in Milan, Italy



Christmas Decorations along the Champs-Élysées in Paris, France



Butchart Gardens, Vancouver, Canada at Christmas



Christmas Parade in Nigeria



Christmas Tree at Trafalgar Square



Christmas Lights on Regent Street



Giant Christmas Bulb Sculpture in Melbourne, Australia



Greek Orthodox Christmas Service



Traditional Christmas Pudding, New Zealand



Nativity Scene in Lima, Peru



A Giant Christmas Pinata Lights Up the Mexican Sky



From Staff of Southern Daily.



Christmas tree on the Taipei 101 Building in Taipei



Christmas tree in Downtown Beirut, Lebanon



Christmas decorations, Budapest, Hungary



Traditional Danish Christmas Dinner



Wheat Grass used for holding Christmas Candles in Croatia



Carrer Portal de l'Angel, at Christmastime, Barcelona, Spain

### UN Cultural Agency Removes Birthplace Of Jesus From Its List Of Heritage Sites In Danger



Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem.

**OVERVIEW**

The United Nations' cultural agency announced last summer that it was removing the place that is officially recognized as the Birthplace of Jesus, from its List of World Heritage in Danger – crediting extensive restorative work on Bethlehem's Nativity Church, in Palestine.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The gospels of the New Testament of the Bible state that Christ was born in a manger in Bethlehem, in the reign of King Herod, to Mary and Joseph. The nativity is the basis for the Christian festival of Christmas.

Meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan, the World Heritage Committee made its decision based on the high quality of work carried out on the church in recent years, including the restoration of its roof, exterior facades, mosaics and doors.

The Committee also welcomed the shelving of a project to dig a tunnel under Manger Square and the adoption of a management plan to conserve the site. Just last week reports revealed that archaeologists had discovered inside one baptismal font, or basin of holy water used for the baptism rite, a more ancient font that dates back to the sixth or seventh century.

Since the Second Century the church, situated 10 kilometers south of Jerusalem, has been identified by Christians as the birthplace of Christ.



Baku, Azerbaijan, meeting site where the World Heritage Committee made its decision removes birthplace of Jesus from its list of heritage sites in danger.

While the edifice of a church built there in 339 CE was replaced after a fire in the sixth century, the elaborate floor mosaics were retained from the original building. The official site also includes Latin, Greek Orthodox, Franciscan and Armenian convents and churches, as well as bell towers, terraced gardens and a pilgrimage route.

Inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2012, due to the poor state of the Nativ-

ity Church, it was simultaneously added to the List of World Heritage in Danger. Others on the list include Syria's ancient cities of Aleppo, Bosra and Damascus, all inscribed in 2013, and the "Maritime Mercantile City of Liverpool" in the United Kingdom – which consists of six locations in the city centre– inscribed in 2012.

The 54 properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger aim to alert the international community to threats to essential characteristics for which a property was initially inscribed on the World Heritage List. These can include armed conflicts, natural disasters, unplanned urbanization, poaching or pollution.

**Related**

**Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem**



The Church of the Nativity and nearby pilgrimage route in Bethlehem is a cultural UNESCO World Heritage Site in Palestine. It was inscribed by UNESCO in 2012 as a religious/Christian structure. However, it was also added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Danger that same year due to the damage incurred at the property due to water leaks. Formerly known as "The Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem," the nativity pilgrimage to Bethlehem, Jesus' birthplace is a sacred journey and lifelong dream for many. Traveling to Bethlehem from Jerusalem is not difficult if you're not Israeli, although there are some restrictions when going into the Palestinian Territories, and your van might get searched crossing the border, but dozens of buses and tour groups do this every

day and it's quite normal to make the pilgrimage to Bethlehem.



**Outside the Church of the Nativity, which was the birthplace of Jesus and is the final spot on Pilgrimage Route to Bethlehem from Jerusalem.**

Most groups visit the Church of the Nativity and leave, but there is more to see in the area, including the Milk Grotto and Star Street.

That said, the Church of the Nativity is the highlight of the visit. The current building was built in 565 by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. Over the centuries, there have been many restorations and repairs to the building, including a more recent restoration in 2017.

The birthplace of Jesus is in a very small alcove under the main altar area. Expect a long line to visit the spot, which is marked by a silver star and is show in the very first photo above.

The door into the Church of the Nativity is also ridiculously small, so you'll have to crouch to enter. This was created several hundred years ago to prevent horses from entering. The nativity pilgrimage is an important piece of cultural, religious, and world history, as is Bethlehem itself. This pilgrimage is often part of a visit to other important sites in the region, including the baptism site at Bethany Beyond the Jordan and the Biblical Tels of Megiddo, Hazor, Beer Sheba. (Courtesy the World Heritage inscription for The Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem)

**About The Birthplace Of Jesus: Church Of The Nativity And The Pilgrimage Route**



**The Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem** is a UNESCO site covering a total land area of fewer than three hectares and it has a buffer zone of 23 hectares. The inscribed property is located south of Jerusalem. It's a notable site for the Christian religion since it is not only believed to be the birthplace of Jesus, but it's located amongst the fertile limestone hill country, also known as the Holy Land.

The belief that this is the location of the birthplace of Jesus has been held since at least the second century AD. One particular cave on the site is believed to be the actual spot of Jesus Christ's birth. Since being declared so by St. Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, this place has been considered one of the holiest sites in Christendom—hence the historic pilgrimage route. (Courtesy <https://everything-everywhere.com/>)



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