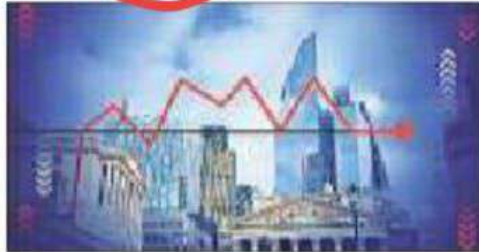


British economy flatlines in 3rd quarter in another blow to new Labour Government



LONDON, Dec 23 (AP)

THE British economy flatlined in the third quarter of the year, according to downwardly revised official figures on Monday, in another blow to the new Labour Government that has made growth its number one mission.

In its latest revision of the July to September period, the Office for National Statistics said the British economy showed no growth against the previous estimate of 0.1%.

The agency partly blamed the reduction on fresh survey data showing weaker trading across bars and restaurants.

The reduction has prompted critics to say that Labour talked down the economy on taking power on July 5 for the first time in 14 years when it described its economic inheritance from the previous Conservative administration as being the worst in generations.

Treasury chief Rachel Reeves promised to turbocharge economic growth after Labour won the July election but has now seen the economy stall over the three months to September, while official figures earlier this month also pointed towards a 0.1% decline in October.

EXTRADITE HASINA: B'desh requests India

DHAKA/NEW DELHI, Dec 23 (PTI)

BANGLADESH'S Interim Government on Monday said, it has sent a diplomatic note to New Delhi seeking the extradition of deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from India, a move that may further strain the ties between the two countries.

India confirmed receiving the 'note verbale' or diplomatic communication from the Bangladesh

High Commission in New Delhi but refrained from making any comment on it.

Bangladesh's de facto Foreign Minister Touhid Hossain said, Dhaka wants Hasina back to face the judicial process.

"We have sent a note verbale to the Indian Government saying that Bangladesh wants her back here for the judicial process," Hossain told reporters in Dhaka.

New Delhi confirms communication

In New Delhi, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said: "We confirm that we have received a Note Verbale from the Bangladesh High Commission today in connection with an extradition request."

"At this time, we have no comment to offer on this matter," he said in response to a question.

Hasina, 77, has been living in India since August 5 when she fled the country following a massive student-led protest that toppled her 16-year regime.

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Philippines plan to deploy midrange missiles would be 'extremely irresponsible': China

BEIJING, Dec 23 (AP)

CHINA said a plan by the Philippines to deploy midrange missiles would be a provocative move that stokes regional tensions. The Philippines top army official told reporters in Manila earlier on Monday that the military plans to acquire a midrange system to defend the country's territory amid tensions with China in the South China Sea. "Yes, there are plans, there are negotiations, because we see its feasibility and adaptability," Lt. General Roy Galido said.

The US deployed its Typhon midrange missile system in the

northern Philippines in April and troops from both countries have been training jointly for the potential use of the heavy weaponry. They have agreed to keep the system in the Philippines indefinitely to boost deterrence. China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said that deployment of a midrange missile by the Philippines would intensify geopolitical confrontation and an arms race. "It is an extremely irresponsible choice for the history and people of itself and the whole of Southeast Asia, as well as for the security of the region," she told a daily briefing.

L&T bags MoD's K9 Vajra-T artillery platforms order

NEW DELHI, Dec 23 (PTI)

INFRASTRUCTURE Major Larsen & Toubro (L&T) on Monday said it has bagged a major order from the Defence Ministry for the supply of K9 Vajra-T Artillery Platforms to the Indian Army.

According to the company's project classification, the 'major' order values between Rs 5,000 crore-10,000 crore.

The K9 Vajra-T is a 155 mm, 52-caliber tracked self-propelled artillery platform, adapted from the world's leading South Korean self-propelled howitzer K9 Thunder. Co-developed by L&T and Hanwha Aerospace, it has been customised to suit the requirements of the Indian Army for operations in varied terrains.

EAM Jaishankar to visit US from Dec 24-29

NEW DELHI, Dec 23 (PTI)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will pay a six-day visit to the US beginning Tuesday.

It will be the first high-level visit from India to the US after Donald Trump won the presidential election.

“External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will visit the United States of America from December 24-29,” the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

“He will be meeting counterparts to discuss key bilateral, regional and global issues,” it said in a brief statement.

The MEA said Jaishankar will also chair a conference of the Consul Generals of India in the US visit.