

# May Says June Election Result 'Not Certain' Despite Big Lead in Polls

MAIDENHEAD, England - British Prime Minister Theresa May said on Friday that she was not taking anything for granted as she gears up for a snap election in June in which polls suggest her Conservative party is heading for a landslide victory.

May called the national election in a surprise move on Tuesday, saying it was necessary to boost her majority and provide stability as Britain gears up for two years of negotiations with the European Union about its departure from the bloc.

Polls give May's governing Conservative party a lead of around 20 percentage points, enough to command a ma-



majority that could be over 100 seats, but May said she was not complacent.

"The election campaign has only just begun. I'm not taking anything for granted. The result is not certain," she said in a speech at a GlaxoSmith-Kline factory in her constituency of Maidenhead.

The Labour party has been driven by divisions over its leader Jeremy Corbyn and Brexit, while May's commitment to a clean break with the EU has undermined support for the eurosceptic UK Independence Party.

While many specific policy positions have yet to be finalised, May did reaffirm a ... (More on P4)...(19)

## EU's Chief Brexit Negotiator Visits Warsaw

WARSAW - EU's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier, met with Polish deputy foreign minister Konrad Szymanski on Thursday in Warsaw, in preparation for a negotiation mandate from the Polish government for Brexit talks. Barnier told reporters that securing the rights of EU citizens would be the EU's top priority in negotiations with Britain and he wanted to succeed in Brexit negotiations for the common good. Furthermore, he enumerated three conditions of such a success - preserving the EU

unity, eliminating zones of uncertainty and putting Brexit procedures and stages in chronological order. Barnier also warned against the lack of agreement and stressed that a "hard Brexit" would have negative consequences for all 27 EU countries as well as Britain. Szymanski said that the principle of reciprocity alone was not enough to secure the rights of EU citizens in Britain. He added that it was necessary to define the scope of these rights in EU laws, which ... (More on P4)...(20)

## Syria Dispersed Warplanes, Retains Chemical Weapons: Mattis

TEL AVIV - U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said on Friday that Syria had dispersed its warplanes in recent days and that it retained chemical weapons, an issue he said would have to be taken up diplomatically. The United States launched dozens of missiles earlier this month against a Syrian air base in response to a chemical attack that killed 90 people, including 30 children. It says the Syrian government launched the attack from the Shayrat air base. The Pentagon has said that the strike had damaged or

destroyed about 20 percent of the Syrian military's operational aircraft. During a press conference alongside his Israeli counterpart, Mattis was asked whether the Syrian military had moved warplanes to a Russian base in Latakia. "They have dispersed their aircraft, no doubt. They have dispersed their aircraft in recent days," Mattis said. Mattis also reiterated that the United States believed Syria had retained some chemical weapons. "The bottom line is, I ... (More on P4)...(22)

## DPRK Delegation Visits Arab Countries Amid Sanctions

PYONGYANG - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Friday sent a delegation of diplomats to visit some Arab countries amid mounting international sanctions clamped on it due to its missile and nuclear tests. The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Sin Hong Chol and his delegation left here to visit some Arab countries, without specifying the countries. Earlier, Kim Jong Un, the supreme DPRK leader, exchanged messages with



Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on the anniversaries of each others' important national events, said KCNA. In a message sent on April 18, Assad thanked Kim for having supported Syria

## Algeria, US Ratify Counter-Terrorism Legal Treaty

ALGIERS - Algeria and the United States on Thursday have ratified a treaty on mutual legal assistance in criminal and counter-terrorism matters.

The treaty's documents were ratified by Secretary General at the Algerian Foreign Ministry, Hassane Rabehi, and U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, Joan Polaschik. The treaty was signed in April 2015.

"The Treaty between Algerian and the U.S. on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, sealed on 7 April 2015, has just come into force," Rabehi told reporters, adding that "Algeria welcomes this major asset that strengthens ... (More on P4)...(24)

## China, Russia Pledge Close Coordination in Political Settlement for Int'l Hot Issues

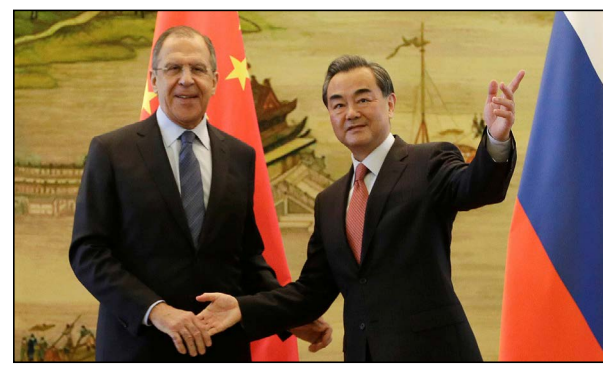
ASTANA - China and Russia should further strengthen strategic cooperation and play a constructive role in maintaining world peace and stability as well as in seeking political settlement for international hot issues, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said here Friday.

Hailing the close coordination and cooperation between Beijing and Moscow on international and regional issues, Wang, in a meeting with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, also noted that China,

at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council meeting on Thursday, supported Russia's proposal to investigate the chemical weapons attack in Idlib, Syria, earlier this month.

In addition, China and Russia both insisted on resolving the nuclear issue in the Korean Peninsula through dialogue, Wang said.

The major task for the two countries at the moment, Wang said, is to prepare for Russian President



Vladimir Putin's upcoming visit to China, during which he will attend the two-day Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation slated for mid-May. Lavrov said that

Russia and China bear special responsibility in maintaining international peace and stability, and that they cannot let hegemony and unilateralism dominate the ... (More on P4)...(21)

## French President Calls Defense Meeting after Paris Shooting

PARIS - French President Francois Hollande announced that a defense meeting will be held at 8 a.m. local time on Friday, following a shooting in central Paris on Thursday evening, which killed one police officer and injured two others.

The President made a statement in front of the Elysee Palace after a meeting with Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve and Interior Minister Matthias Fekl.

He said he's convinced that the attack is "terrorist-related", and pledged "absolutely vigilant" se-

curity measures for the upcoming presidential election, which will start on Sunday.

"Everyone will understand that my thoughts go to the family of the policeman who was killed, and to the wounded policemen," Hollande said.

"We must realize that our police force is exposed, and I repeat all the commitments I have made. Every effort must be made to ensure that these policemen and gendarmes are able to carry out their mission,"



he added. The extremist group Islamic States (IS) had claimed responsibility for the shooting. The shooting occurred at

around 8 p.m. local time Thursday on the Champs Elysees shopping street in central Paris. The assailant was shot dead. (Xinhua)

## US Congressional Leader Ryan Heads to Poland for Talks

WARSAW, Poland - U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan is leading a bipartisan congressional delegation to Warsaw to meet with Poland's president and prime minister following the recent deployment of thousands of U.S. troops to the NATO member state. Both Ryan's office and Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydlo said Friday's talks would focus on economic and security issues. Szydlo said: "We want our relations with the U.S. to be as close, as intensive, as possible." The United States deployed a brigade of 3,500 troops to Poland in January and in recent weeks sent hundreds more troops as part of a multinational U.S.-led NATO battalion. The purpose of the deployments is to reassure a region nervous about Russia. The congressional delegation's trip to Europe also is scheduled to include stops in Britain, Norway and Estonia. (AP)

## Paris Attack will Influence France's Election: Trump

WASHINGTON - President Donald Trump is taking the unusual step of weighing in publicly ahead of a foreign presidential election, predicting that the latest attack in Paris will have a "big effect" on voters there.

His tweet Friday comes as he tries to bolster U.S. support for hard-line proposals on immigration and foreign policy. Trump's administration is demanding that Congress fund a bigger U.S. border wall with Mexico and is suggesting that his administration could scrap the U.S. nuclear deal with Iran.

"Another terrorist attack in Paris. The people of France will not take much more of this. Will have a big effect on presidential election!" he tweeted. On Thursday, an attacker in Paris used an automatic weapon to shoot officers in the center of the Champs-Elysees. One officer was killed as was the gunman. The Islamic State claimed responsibility.

The outcome of France's presidential election is being closely watched for signs that Europe is moving toward nationalist candidates who advocate the European Union's dissolution. The top two candidates from Sunday's vote in Paris will progress to a winner-takes-all May 7 runoff.

Trump was a supporter of the British decision to exit the European Union and has stated his preference for one-on-one trade and defense agreements with U.S. allies. His tweet Friday came as he tried to bolster U.S. support for hard-line proposals on immigration and foreign policy. (AP)

## Nieghbor News

### China Sets Example for Open Trade: WB President

WASHINGTON - China is still embracing open trade, as the country has lifted millions of people out of poverty through engaging more and more in trade, said World Bank (WB) President Jim Yong Kim on Thursday.

"China is a good example (for embracing open trade)," said Kim at the opening press conference of the 2017 World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Spring Meetings.

Despite the rising protectionism sentiment, China continues to trade with all of its trading partners and work with Latin America, said Kim. He expected China's trade with these countries to go up further in the future. He considered China's Belt and Road initiative as "unprecedented". "China has been stepping up and illustrating that it's concerned about de-

velopment, not just in the neighboring countries or even along the Old Silk Road, but globally," he added. According to Kim, the World Bank is cooperating well with Chinese government and China-initiated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) on development. "The One Belt One Road project is an extremely important one for the Chinese government and also for us," said Kim.

Asked about the U.S. administration's skepticism about climate change, Kim said the World Bank will continue to work with governments and private sectors in the world to boost financing for climate change, especially in China, India and Philippines. At the same press conference, IMF managing director Christine Lagarde also called for multilateral support for open and fair trade. (Xinhua)

### Pakistan Supports all Regional, Int'l Efforts Against Terrorism: Mamnoon

ISLAMABAD - President Mamnoon Hussain Friday said Pakistan supported all regional and international efforts to combat the scourge of terrorism and the country had close cooperation with Saudi Arabia in this regard.

Talking to Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Saudi Arabia Vice Admiral @ Khan Hasham Bin Saddique who called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the president congratulated the designated envoy on his new responsibility. He hoped that he would work for further deepening and expanding already close bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries by utilizing his capabilities.

The president said both countries had convergence of views on all regional and international

issues and support each other on international fora which reflected close and friendly relations between the two countries. He directed the ambassador-designate to urge the Saudi entrepreneurs to invest in different projects in Pakistan and work for further enhancing bilateral trade. He said priority should be given to the welfare of Pakistani diaspora in Saudi Arabia and resolve their issues.

President Mamnoon urged the envoy-designate to take special interest in the education of children living in Madina.

Ambassador-designate Vice Admiral @ Khan Hasham Bin Saddique said he would try to come up to the expectations of the government of Pakistan to the best of his abilities. (APP)

### Iran Approves Qualification of 6 Candidates for Presidential Race

TEHRAN - Iran's high legislative body, namely Guardian Council of Constitution, on Thursday released the names of six candidates for the upcoming presidential election and disqualified the former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The approved candidates include the incumbent president Hassan Rouhani, Tehran Mayor Mohammed Baqer Qalibaf, Ebrahim Raisi, the custodian and chairman

of the Shrine of Shiite Imam Reza, the first Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri, Mostafa Mirsalim, former adviser to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as president, and former vice president Mostafa Hashemitaba.

The qualified candidates can now start their election campaigns until 8 a.m. May 18, the Interior Ministry said in a statement, according to the Press TV. Iran's presidential election is slated for May 19. (Xinhua)

### OSCE Events in Turkmenistan Address Energy Issues

ASHGABAT - An OSCE-organized three-day course on best practices in developing a national strategy for solar energy concluded today at the Turkmen State Energy Institute in the city of Mary, Turkmenistan.

The OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, in co-operation with the Turkmen State Energy Institute, organized the course to strengthen the scientific and research capacity of the national stakeholders in the area of solar energy production.

The seminar brought together officials from the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Economy and Development, the Institute of Solar Energy of the

Academy of Science of Turkmenistan, students and professors from the Turkmen State Energy Institute and representatives of other relevant institutions. "The OSCE Ministerial Council, back in 2006, determined to support the further development and use of new and renewable sources of energy," said Ambassador Natalya Drozd, Head of the OSCE Center in Ashgabat. "This event highlighted the importance of using solar energy for a greener future and the OSCE Center in Ashgabat is committed to providing support to the efforts of Turkmenistan's government in the area of renewable energy." (AKI)

## Pence on Way to Australia for First Official Visit

CANBERRA - U.S. Vice President Mike Pence is en route to Australia for the first official visit of a representative of President Donald Trump's administration. He is expected to arrive in Sydney on Friday evening.

Pence's visit comes at the end of an extensive tour of Asia where regional security concerns and trade have been top of the agenda. James Carouso, the acting U.S. ambassador to Australia, said the visit underlined the importance of the Australian-U.S. alliance.

"His purpose is basically to meet with our allies and close partners in the region as part of the new administration

reaching out and getting the benefit of the views and insight of our partners about the region," Carouso told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on Friday. He said that discussions on trade barriers between Australia and the United States would be an important aspect of the visit.

"They are pretty few and specific. Australia has certain restrictions on things like pork, the U.S. has other restrictions on certain agricultural imports from Australia," Carouso said. "I think the 'big thing' is if we could talk about taxes, and how we each tax each other's companies that might be useful." (Xinhua)