

# Outcome of French First Round Election Sends High Stocks in France, Europe

PARIS - Stocks in France and exchanges in European markets opened with rosy note on Monday after pro-market and Europe stance Emmanuel Macron's win in France' first round offered a relief to investors who had feared radical candidates could win power. In Paris, the benchmark index CAC 40 rose sharply by 4.53 percent in early trading to stand at 5,228 points, the index best performance since 2007. Heavyweight banking sector jumped by 6.15 percent with France's leading banks BNP Paribas, Cedit Agricole and Societe Generale surged by 8.6 percent, 8.89 percent and 9.58 percent respectively.



Euphoria triggered by a victory of an advocate of strong eurozone, sent stocks of London's FTSE up by 1.86 percent while Frankfurt transactions were also lifted by optimistic French election outcome. They were high by 2.88 percent. The European index, the EuroStoxx 50 was rose by 2.03 percent. "Investors are reassured by the very likely prospect of seeing Mr. Macron at the Elysee. It lifts the risk of having an extremist party hostile to the European construction and which would have had very negative consequences on the future of the euro area," Jean-Marie Mercadal, chief operating officer at OFI AM wrote in a note. (Xinhua)

## EU Commission Throws Weight behind Macron in French Election

BRUSSELS - The European Union's head office has thrown its weight behind Emmanuel Macron in the French presidential runoff against Marine Le Pen, arguing it is a choice between the defense of the EU or those seeking its destruction. And even beyond the exceptional show of voting advice when it usually is scrupulously neutral, the European Commission also said it would vet campaign arguments and counter them if they told lies about the EU. "We have tools in Brus-

sels and also in Paris that allow us to clarify things and dispel untruths and Euro-myths if necessary," said Margaritis Schinas, the spokesman for EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. The EU has had a team for years to dispel lies and untruths about the EU in the British popular press. He insisted the Commission would not take part in the campaign itself. Schinas said circumstances forced Juncker's hand in going public ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

## Xi, Trump Discuss Ties, Korean Peninsula Situation over Phone

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping and his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump on Monday discussed bilateral ties and the situation on the Korean Peninsula on phone, pledging close contact by various means to promptly exchange views on major issues of common concern. China strongly opposes any act that violates resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, Xi said, and hopes that the parties concerned will exercise restraint and refrain from taking any action that will

aggravate tensions on the Peninsula. Xi noted that only when the parties concerned shoulder their due responsibilities and meet each other halfway, can they solve the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and denuclearize the Korean Peninsula as soon as possible. He said China is willing to work and make every effort with all parties concerned including the United States to realize peace on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia and the world at large.



The Chinese president recalled that he reached very good communication recently, which has won positive evaluation by the Chinese and American peoples and the rest of the international community. (Xinhua)

## U.S. Carrier Group Heads for Korean Waters, China Calls for Restraint

BEIJING/SEOUL - Chinese President Xi Jinping called for all sides to exercise restraint on Monday in a telephone call about North Korea with U.S. President Donald Trump, as Japan conducted exercises with a U.S. aircraft carrier strike group headed for Korean waters. Trump sent the carrier group for exercises in waters off the Korean peninsula as a warning, amid growing fears North Korea could conduct another nuclear test in defiance of United Nations sanctions. Angered by the approach of the USS Carl Vinson car-

rier group, a defiant North Korea said on Monday the deployment was "an extremely dangerous act by those who plan a nuclear war to invade". "The United States should not run amok and should consider carefully any catastrophic consequence from its foolish military provocative act," Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of the North's ruling Workers' Party, said in a commentary on Monday. "What's only laid for aggressors is dead bodies," the newspaper said. Two Japanese destroyers have joined the carrier



group for exercises in the western Pacific, and South Korea said on Monday it was also in talks about holding joint naval exercises. Worry that North Korea could be preparing to con-

duct another nuclear test or launch more ballistic missiles has increased as it prepares to celebrate the 85th anniversary of the foundation of its Korean People's Army on Tuesday. (Reuters)

## Russia Boosts Military Spending despite Sanctions

MOSCOW - Russia became the world's third largest military spender in 2016 despite low oil prices and economic sanctions, as the global expenditure rose for a second consecutive year, a study said on Monday. Russia's military spending was \$69.2 billion in 2016, a 5.9 per cent rise over 2015, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said in a report, adding this was the highest proportion of its GDP since it became an independent state.

"This increased spending and heavy burden on the economy comes at a time when the Russian economy is in serious trouble due to low oil and gas prices and the economic sanctions imposed since 2014," (by the West over the Ukraine conflict), SIPRI said. Saudi Arabia was the third largest spender in 2015 but dropped to fourth place in 2016 as its expenditure fell by 30pc to \$63.7bn, "despite its continued involvement in regional wars", it added. (AFP)

## National Parliaments of EU to Combat Terrorism Together: Tajani

BRATISLAVA - EU national parliaments will fight terrorism together, European Parliament President Antonio Tajani said at a conference of EU parliamentary chiefs here on Monday to set up the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group (JPSG) for Europol, the EU's law enforcement agency. Tajani urged the secret services from individual members to cooperate more closely, "because terrorism doesn't know any borders." European citizens tend to believe that the EU isn't able to react



flexibly enough to their concerns, he said. "This pours oil on the flames of populism," said Tajani, adding that populists were attempting to create the appearance of a discrepancy between the

European project and national interests. "The EU has done a lot for its people, but these results from the past aren't enough for securing a future for the European project as well," ...*(More on P4)...(19)*

## Australia-Based Company Sells Drone Jammer to G7 Militaries

SYDNEY - Australia-based technology company DroneShield announced Monday that it has sold a hand-held rifle-style drone jammer to the military of the Group of Seven (G7) nations. Although the sale was not significant in terms of revenue, the deal was very important as it was the first of such transactions with the G7 countries, the company said. DroneShield believes the G7 nations, namely, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Britain, and the United States will test the weapon in the Middle East. "The sale comes as IS (Islamic State) and other non-state actors rapidly increase their use of consumer or commercial drones for terrorism," the company said in a statement. The device works by jamming communications between a drone ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

## Al-Qaida Leader Tells Fighters to Prepare for Long Syria War

BEIRUT - The leader of al-Qaida urged his followers and other militants in Syria to unite ranks and prepare for protracted jihad, or holy war, in a recording released Sunday night. Ayman al-Zawahiri told the jihadis, who control Syria's northwestern Idlib province and other territory, to remain steadfast and change tactics in order to wage guerrilla war. Al-Qaida began fighting alongside Syria's rebels early in the civil war and won allies among the opposition because of its military prowess. Al-Qaida's official branch, the Nusra Front, changed its name to the Fatah al-Sham Front and formally cut ties with al-Qaida last year, but is still widely seen as being linked to the global terror network. In Sunday's message, released through al-Qaida's As-Sahab media arm, al-Zawahiri cast the Syrian conflict as part of a wider struggle aimed at imposing Islamic rule on the region and beyond. The local leaders of the Fatah al-Sham Front have tended to portray its struggle as being confined to Syria. Al-Zawahiri said an "international satanic alliance" would never accept Islamic rule in Syria, apparently referring to the Syrian government, its ally Russia, and the United States, all of which are actively targeting the group. The Fatah al-Sham Front is perhaps the most powerful rebel-aligned faction, but dozens of other factions - both hard-line Islamists and more mainstream groups - are also battling Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces. (AP)

## Abe, Trump Exchange Views on Korean Peninsula Situation over Phone

TOKYO - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and U.S. President Donald Trump held a telephone conversation Monday morning, exchanging views about heightened tension on the Korean Peninsula, Kyodo News reported. Abe told a press briefing after speaking with Trump that they "had completely agreed to strongly seek self-restraint" from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), which is "continuing its dangerously provocative acts." Speculations are high on whether Pyongyang could conduct another nuclear or missile test around April 25. Tensions are running high ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

## Merkel Ally Seehofer Staying on for 'Difficult' German Election

MUNICH - Bavarian state premier Horst Seehofer said on Monday he would stay on as leader of the Christian Social Union (CSU) to fight what he expects to be a "very difficult" national election in September and a state poll next year. As chairman of the CSU, the Bavarian sister party to Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU), Seehofer is nominally the chancellor's ally, but he has been a thorn in her side for much of the last two years, criticizing her open-door refugee policy. The 67-year-old had indicated in recent years that he would not lead the conservative CSU into a state election in Bavaria in autumn 2018, but senior CSU

officials recently urged him to stay on in his twin roles as party leader and state premier. "The passion has not deserted me. On the contrary, it is still there in full," he told reporters in Munich, announcing he would lead the CSU into the 2018 state vote after all. Seehofer said he believed the conservatives had a great chance in this year's federal election, when Merkel is seeking a fourth term in office, but added: "We are all aware that this will be a very, very difficult path." Merkel has refused demands by Seehofer for a cap on migrants but the conservative allies have drawn ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

## Nieghbor News

### China, Iran Agree to Promote Belt and Road Cooperation

ATHENS - China and Iran on Sunday agreed to carry out more co-operation under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative as two countries met here. The consensus came as Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif ahead of the Ancient Civilization Forum which is to open Monday. The forum, a Greek initiative with China as co-organizer, is attended by both China and Iran as well as other countries representing major ancient civilizations throughout the world. The other participants include Bolivia, Egypt, India, Iraq, Italy, Mexi-

co and Peru. Wang said that the Sino-Iranian comprehensive strategic partnership has been developing in a steady fashion as the bilateral cooperation in areas including economic and trade, investment and people-to-people exchange is deepening. He said China stands ready to expand cooperation with Iran under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative. Zarif, on his part, said that Iran welcomes and supports the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by the Chinese side and is willing to promote its development through the Ancient Civilization Forum so as to achieve common development. (Xinhua)

### Iran's Rouhani Urges Pakistan to Complete Long-Delayed Gas Pipeline



TEHRAN - Tehran is ready to meet Pakistan's needs in the energy sector, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani told the visiting Pakistani National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, SHANA news agency reported Monday. The Peace Pipeline has been stretched to the border with Pakistan and Iran is hopeful that Pakistan carries out necessary measures "with stronger will" to complete the project, Rouhani noted. Iran may cancel the gas pipeline deal with Pakistan due to long-delayed construction works, the head of National Gas

Company, Hamid Reza Araqi, said Jan. 27. Iran signed a deal with Pakistan during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency to export 22 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d) of gas. Tehran even offered a \$500 million loan (a third of the pipeline's cost) to Islamabad to start pipeline construction in Pakistan's territory, but then withdrew citing financial problems under sanctions. Pakistan should have started Iranian gas imports in early 2015, but it has not started construction of its part of the pipeline. (Trend)

### President of Uzbekistan to Visit China in May

TASHKENT - Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev plans to make a state visit to China in the middle of May, local media report with reference to First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Javlon Vahabov. The current state of bilateral relations in trade, investment and security spheres will be the main

issues of the agenda, he said. The two sides plan to sign a package of documents, including agreements between agricultural agencies of the two countries. Mirziyoyev will participate in the high-level forum "One Belt, One Road", which will be hosted by China for the first time. (AKI)

### UN Elects Turkmenistan to Women's Rights Commission, UNICEF for 2018-2022

ASHGABAT - At the meeting on April 21 that Turkmenistan's election "is an evidence of the international community's high appreciation of the multilateral activities carried out by the country." To date, Turkmenistan is a member of eight commissions, committees and councils of the United Nations, the country was elected five times as vice-chairman of the UN General Assembly. (AKI)