

Britain Urges Flexibility from EU in New Brexit Talks

LONDON - Britain will push for a flexible approach in its third round of Brexit talks with the European Union (EU), the British government said on Sunday. "Both sides must be flexible and willing to compromise when it comes to solving areas where we disagree," said a press briefing from the Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU). "As the EU itself has said, the clock is ticking so neither side should drag its feet," it added. Brexit Secretary David Davis will meet the European Commission's chief negotiator Michel Barnier on Monday in Brussels, capital of Belgium, to formally open the four-day negotiations and discussions on the country's departure from



the 28-nation bloc.

Officials from the two sides will discuss the details behind their proposals, covering citizen rights, financial settlement, the border issue between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, as well as other separation issues. The talks are likely to be technical in nature, laying the groundwork for more substantive discussions in September, the Brexit department said. During the talks, Davis will build on work done over the last two weeks that outlined Britain's strategy by calling for "imagination" on both sides to drive talks forward, a spokeswoman for the DExEU said. (Xinhua)

Britain Should Remain in EU Customs Union and Single Market for up to 4 Years: Labour

LONDON - Britain's main opposition Labour Party opened up a clear divide with Theresa May's ruling Conservatives Sunday by announcing a dramatic shift in its Brexit policy. The party's Brexit shadow secretary Sir Keir Starmer said Labour would seek a transitional deal that maintains the same basic terms that Britain currently enjoy with the European Union. It means we would abide by the common rules of both," said Starmer in a keynote article published

in the Observer newspaper. Starmer said a transitional continuation of membership beyond the March 2019 departure date would be as short as possible but as long as necessary, but would also mean accepting the free movement of labour, possibly until around 2023. He said "The fanciful and unachievable proposals put forward in the government's recent customs paper show the colossal risks it is willing to take with British jobs and the economy." (Xinhua)

Indian FM Holds Wide-Range Talks with Qatari Counterpart in Delhi

NEW DELHI - Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on Saturday held wide-ranging talks with visiting Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani in the national capital. The two foreign ministers discussed bilateral issues of mutual interest, including the welfare of Indian workers in the Gulf nation, the Indian External Affairs Ministry said.

"EAM @SushmaSwaraj welcomes Mr Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdul-

rahman Al-Thani, Foreign Minister of Qatar on his visit to India. Bilateral issues, including welfare of Indian workers in Qatar were discussed," Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted. Over 600,000 Indians work in Qatar.

The Qatari foreign minister arrived in the Indian capital Friday at a time when Doha is locked in a diplomatic stand-off



with four Saudi Arabia-led Arab nations. India has close ties with both Qatar and Saudi Arabia. While the former

is India's largest gas supplier, Saudi Arabia is one of the biggest crude oil suppliers of this country. (Xinhua)

BRICS Youth Expect Summit to Enhance Cooperation in Finance, Trade, Education



XIAMEN, China - As the 2017 BRICS summit draws close, young people from Russia, Brazil, India and South Africa who study or work here are expecting the summit

to promote enhanced cooperation in finance, trade, education, and beyond between BRICS countries. The 9th annual summit of the bloc, scheduled for Sept. 3-5 in Xiamen City of

southeast China's Fujian Province, is expected to provide more opportunities for emerging economies and injecting impetus into economic globalization. Anait Agadzhanian from Russia, who majors in finance, will graduate from Xiamen University this year. She plans to find a job in China because she thinks she has more opportunities here. Agadzhanian said she believes the long-time good relationship between China and Russia will reach a new level within

the BRICS framework, in areas such as financial cooperation. The two countries have done some work on the integration of banks within the BRICS framework and help to raise funds for developing countries, she noted, adding that a lot more need to be done. "That will present lots of opportunities for me particularly," she said, noting that she hopes to facilitate cooperation between Chinese and Russian banks and governmental organizations with her bilingual skills. (Xinhua)

Anti-Terror, Anti-Fascism Demonstrators Have Verbal Clash in Helsinki

HELSINKI - A predominantly right wing demonstration "against terrorism" and a parallel counter event "against fascism and fundamentalism" went without major incidents in Helsinki on Saturday. The police detained two persons on account of opposing the police. From the start, the police separated the two sides wide apart that made only verbal exchanges possible. Following the speeches outside the Kamppi shopping mall in central Helsinki, the "anti-terrorism"

demonstrators walked in procession to the official residence of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä in Meilahti. They lit handles at the gates of the residence in memory of the victims of the stabbings in Turku a week ago. In social media and also in statements by political leaders, opinions in Finland have been split as to what measures should be taken. Plans to accelerate the legislation process for stricter security laws has yet received unanimous political support in the Nordic country. (Xinhua)

Merkel Backs Libyan Coastguard but Warns Against Abuses

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday said the Libyan coastguard should be supported in its efforts to stem the flow of migrants to Europe, but warned that rights abuses would not be tolerated.

A day before a Paris summit on the migrant crisis, Merkel said the Libyan coastguard had to become capable of patrolling its waters and should be given "the necessary equipment to do its job". "At the same time, of course we also consider it of the utmost importance that the Libyan coastguard adheres to international law, both in its dealings with refugees and migrants as well as non-governmental groups," she told the Welt am Sonntag newspaper.

"Should any doubts be raised about this, then we will investigate the allegations," she vowed.

The Libyan government sparked controversy this month when it barred foreign vessels from a stretch of water off its coast, claiming that charity boats active in the search and rescue zone were facilitating illegal migration.

The move was welcomed by Italy, the main port of arrival for migrants from north Africa, but several NGOs have since suspended their sea missions, accusing the Libyan coastguard of making threats and creating a hostile environment in the Mediterranean.

So far this year more than 100,000 people have made the perilous journey from Libya, according to the International Organization for Migration, and the European Union is eager for Libya to clamp down on the influx. Over 2,300 have died attempting the crossing. (AFP)

Merkel Rules out Cooperation with Far-Right AfD

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel has ruled out any forms of cooperation between her party and the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) as the latter is likely to enter the Bundestag in the upcoming federal elections.

"It is quite clear that the AfD cannot be a partner for us in any form of cooperation. We must try to win back every single person," Merkel told the Welt am Sonntag.

"This requires patience with people's concerns and the attempt to address them repeatedly



with concrete solutions to specific problems," said Merkel, who is also the candidate of the ruling Christian Democratic Union (CDU) for the next chancellor. As the German federal elections scheduled on Sept. 24 are

approaching, the AfD is likely to win over 5 percent of votes and thus reach the threshold for entering the Bundestag, or the Federal Parliament, for the first time after the WWII as a far-right party. (Xinhua)

Tillerson Keeps Distance from Trump's Race Row Stance

WASHINGTON - Secretary of State Rex Tillerson defended American values on Sunday after a UN panel criticized the official response to racist violence - but conspicuously declined to speak for President Donald Trump. Trump triggered outrage earlier this month when he suggested both sides were at fault after unrest in Charlottesville, Virginia, in which a woman was killed when a white supremacist drove his car into a group of counter-protestors.

The president went on to say there were "very fine people" on "both

sides" of the protest, which began when torch-bearing young men in neo-Nazi regalia gathered to protect a statue of a Confederate general.

Trump's response was celebrated in white nationalist circles, but drew criticism from across the mainstream political spectrum and - with the intervention of a UN anti-racism committee - from around the world.

Asked on Fox News Sunday whether Trump's stance had made it harder for Washington's top diplomat to promote US values around the world, Tillerson spoke for his State Department. (AFP)

Neighbor News

China, Russia Freight Train Delivers Success, 17,000 Tonnes of Cargo

GUANGZHOU - With a long whistle, a freight train coded X8426 and loaded with electronic products, garment and machinery left southern China's city of Guangzhou Saturday morning, heading for Vorsino, Kaluzhskaya Oblast in Russia.

The Guangzhou-Russia freight train was inaugurated a year ago. Over the past year, a total of 43 trains have run on the route, delivering more than 17,000 tonnes of products, worth 236 million U.S. dollars, from Guangzhou to Russia. It takes the train 15 to 18 days to reach Vorsino, about 10 days less than the sea-rail transport

service, and 25 days less than a ship. The costs are just one-third of air transportation.

"Our train runs once per week and were fully loaded from March this year, one of the highest loading rates among all China-Europe routes," said Huang Zhongxi, general manager of Guangzhou Dashunfa Logistics, the train operator.

Kong Zhi, from Guangzhou customs, said they had set up a window for China-Europe trains and had significantly raised the clearance efficiency. More than 20 Chinese cities now run trains to central Asia and Europe. (Xinhua)

Pakistani Army Chief in Tajikistan for Counter Terrorism Forum

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa arrived in Tajikistan on Saturday to participate in a four-nation counter terrorism forum, local media quoted the Pakistani army as reporting on Sunday.

The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of Pakistan army, said the army chief will participate in the forum comprising Pakistan, China, Tajikistan and Afghanistan in his three-day visit.

"Ministries of defense and military leadership of all the four countries have held several staff-level consultations over the last few months to formulate agenda points for conduct of this

event," said the ISPR in a statement.

According to the Pakistani army, the two-day forum will discuss regional security environment and way forward in relations to the situation in Afghanistan and counter terrorism efforts.

In an earlier statement, the Pakistan army said the group including armed forces of Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and Tajikistan, was established in order to coordinate and provide mutual support against terrorism.

The group will cooperate in countering terrorism, clue verification, intelligence sharing, capacity building and joint training exercises, the ISPR said. (Xinhua)

UN Special Envoy Due in Iran to Discuss Syria Crisis

TEHRAN - United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura is scheduled to pay a visit to Tehran to discuss the Syrian crisis with senior Iranian officials.

De Mistura plans to arrive in Tehran later on Sunday and hold talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Jaber Ansari on the latest developments in Syria and the settlement of the crisis through political negotiations.

The visit will come ahead of the next round of Syria peace talks in Kazakhstan's capital city of Astana, slated to be held in mid-September. The Kazakh Foreign Ministry said in a Tuesday Facebook post the timing of the talks would be set at a meeting in late August between experts

from Russia, Turkey and Iran and "provisionally, we could be talking about mid-September."

Astana has hosted five rounds of peace talks for Syria since January. Russia, Iran, and Turkey serve as guarantor states in the peace process. The negotiations are aimed at bringing an end to the foreign-backed militancy in Syria, which began in March 2011.

The Astana talks have so far resulted in an agreement on four de-escalation zones across Syria.

According to the Russian Foreign Ministry, three of the enclaves have been created to date, in the country's sprawling central province of Homs, in the Eastern Ghouta area of the southern Rif Dimashq Province, and a southwestern militant-controlled stretch along the border with Jordan. (Presstv)

Interior Ministry of Tajikistan Establishing Identities of Children Found in Orphanage of Iraq

DUSHANBE - The Russian authorities appealed to the Tajik side with the request to establish identities of three children, who were found in the orphanage in Bagdad, the Tajik service of the RFE/RL was told in the Interior Ministry of Tajikistan.

Some orphans were taken to the Iraqi capital after liberation of the city of Mosul from the militants of the Islamic State terrorist group. The report says that three of these children speak in Tajik language.

The search for the relatives of these orphans living in Iraq started after the Russia Today broadcast from the Bagdad orphanage. The editor in chief of Russia Today Margarita Simonyan called on the community to help in the search of relatives and friends of these children to return them home. According to the Iraqi authorities, there are more than 400 children from Russia and the CIS countries entering the country with their relatives joining the IS in Iraq today. (AKI)