

Minister Urges Divided UK MPs to Find Brexit Consensus



LONDON - A senior government minister called Saturday for divided MPs to "forge a consensus" on Brexit to avoid a potentially damaging "no deal" withdrawal from the EU in March. Work and pensions minister Amber Rudd said Brexit could succeed "if politicians are willing to try a different way and only if a coalition of those who want what's best for this country argue a little less and compromise a little more".

Her comments, in an article in the Daily Mail newspaper, come after Prime Minister Theresa May returned from an EU summit without the reassurances she said she needed to get her Brexit deal through the House of Commons.

Few people now believe the agreement, forged over 17 months of tough negotiations with Brussels, will pass in a vote of MPs planned for January.

That raises the prospect that Britain could leave the European Union with no arrangements at all on March 29.

Rudd opposed Brexit in the 2016 referendum, and was reported by The Times newspaper to be among five cabinet ministers discussing whether another referendum is necessary if May's deal fails. (AFP)

Israel Destroys House of Palestinian Charged with Killing Soldier

EL AMARI REFUGEE CAMP - Israeli forces on Saturday demolished the family home of a Palestinian charged with killing an Israeli soldier in the occupied West Bank, the military and witnesses said.

Israel says Islam Abu Humaid, 32, threw a 40 pound (18 kg) marble plate from a rooftop, killing an Israeli special forces sergeant, Ronen Lubarsky, 20, during a May arrest raid in El Amari refugee camp in the Palestinian city of Ramallah. Israeli forces arrived at the El Amari camp before dawn on Saturday, sealed off the four-storey Abu Humaid house and destroyed it, the military said in a statement. The Abu Humaid family home has been destroyed before and rebuilt. Two other Abu Humaid sons are



in Israeli custody, charged with the killings of five Israelis, and another two face lengthy incarceration for serious security offences. A sixth Abu Humaid son was killed by Israeli forces in 1994 after himself being involved in a deadly ambush

against an Israeli intelligence officer in the West Bank. According to the indictment against him, Islam Abu Humaid told interrogators that he wanted to avenge the injury of one of his brothers in a previous Israeli army raid. (Reuters)

Pentagon Fails to React to Russia's Proposal to Discuss INF Treaty: Russian Defense Ministry

MOSCOW - Moscow has not received any response from Washington to Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu's proposal to discuss disagreements concerning the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement on Saturday. The proposal was related to one of the two notes recently sent by Shoigu to U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis. The other note was about Syria, according to the ministry. "It has been emphasized that Russia is ready for an open and detailed dialogue with the Pentagon on all the pressing bilateral issues. However, three days after the notes were received, the Russian Defense Ministry has not received even a formal response to this proposal



from the U.S. military," the ministry said in the statement.

The lack of a U.S. response showed Washington's unwillingness to maintain a professional dialogue with Moscow on solving pressing regional and global security issues, the ministry

said. In early December, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that the United States would suspend its obligations under the INF Treaty in 60 days unless Russia returns to full compliance with the agreement. (Xinhua)

Europe Must Fight Illiberal Forces, Draghi Warns



PISA, Italy - The spread of illiberal ideology is threatening the euro but it is an illusion that leaving it would offer an easier path, European Central Bank President Mario Draghi said on Saturday.

Warning that a half-finished monetary union could be at risk in the next crisis, Draghi made the case for sweeping changes in how the currency bloc operates and spreads around financial risk.

"The fascination with illiberal prescriptions and regimes is spreading; we are seeing little steps back in history," Draghi said in Pisa, Italy.

"Only by continuing to make progress, freeing up individual energies but also fostering social equity, that we will save (the European Project) through our democracies, with a unity of purpose," he added.

Anti-establishment and often populist parties have made political headway across the globe in recent years, challenging the principles of open trade, multilateral cooperation and even democracy. (Reuters)

(1) China Pledges...

Economic Corridor (CPEC), a central part of its global Belt and Road initiative.

Direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban collapsed in 2015, and the Taliban, fighting to drive out international forces and re-establish their version of strict Islamic law, have repeatedly rejected the direct peace talks offered by the Western-backed Afghan government.

However, they have opened contacts with the United States to prepare for possible talks to end a war that has killed and maimed tens of thousands in the 17 years since a U.S.-backed campaign overthrew the Taliban in 2001.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani recently formed a 12-strong team to negotiate with the Taliban, but has said any deal could take at least five years to implement. "We support Afghanistan and Pakistan efforts for peace and we call on the Taliban to join the peace process," said Wang, adding that both countries have agreed to resolve disputes through "friendly consultations."

Political tensions, coupled with allegations that security agencies in both countries support militant groups that bring deadly attacks against one another continue to strain relations between Kabul and Islamabad.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said Islamabad was committed to stability and peace in Afghanistan.

"By blaming, no one moves ahead, we have to stop pointing fingers at each other that why I am here to build mutual political trusts and facilitate the peace process of Afghanistan," he said. Earlier this month U.S. President Donald Trump requested Pakistan's support for the U.S. effort to advance the Afghan peace process.

The officials also signed agree-

ments to enable the expansion of CPEC to Afghanistan through road and rail links. (Reuters)

(2) Aided by...

"When I used to say there is no solution to this problem other than negotiations, I was branded as Taliban Khan, but they now ask us to help them in initiating talks with the Taliban." (Pajhwok)

(3) Dostum...

India, have said they will run for president.

The Presidential Palace did not comment on the report. But a number of a possible candidate said they are ready to fill registration papers.

"In my talks and discussions with the people, I also talk about my team. I want to have people's opinions to see which kind of team they want," Abdali said.

The Independent Election Commission meanwhile said they have finalized the operational plan for the presidential elections and have the required preparations for the process.

"The preparations that were needed were operational plan and training of employees for registration. Fortunately, the operation plan has been approved by the commission," said Sayed Hafizullah Hashemi, spokesman of the election commission.

Some electoral monitoring organizations said delay in activities relevant to parliamentary elections will have negative impacts on the presidential elections timeline.

"The election commission showed to the people of Afghanistan and the international community that the elections timeline is not important," said Yusuf Rasheed, CEO of Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan.

The election commission admitted the shortcomings in parliamentary elections activities.

"There were lots of shortcomings and weaknesses in our op-

erational affairs and we are late from the timeline," said Hashemi.

The commission has so far announced preliminary results of parliamentary elections for 23 provinces. The parliamentary elections were held on October 20.

According to IEC, the presidential elections will be held on April 20. The registration of candidates for presidential elections will be held from December 22 to 2nd of January 2019. (Tolo news)

(4) Taliban Formulates...

after the end of Khalilzad's third round of trips to the region.

However, the Taliban Spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid in a phone call with Ariana News rejected the issue as "baseless".

This comes as some Afghan people and politicians have concerns that the past 16 years' achievements in Afghanistan might get compromised in the negotiation process with the Taliban.

But President Ashraf Ghani on Thursday in a meeting in Herat province assured that the government would not conclude any peace deal behind closed doors. He insisted that every decision regarding peace will take place based on people's will and the approval of the parliament. (ATN)

(5) CEO Urges Soon...

ministries have not still fulfilled their own responsibilities in this respect, and the related institutions should do the commitments as soon as possible," said the statement.

He instructed that the ministries' required posts should be prioritized in coordination with the Independent Administrative Reform and civil services commission in order to apply the country's commitments to the World Trade Organization, the statement added.

The CE also instructed the (IARC-SE) to employ professional staffs needed by the ministries within

the next two or three months.

Dr. Abdullah also instructed the ministries of economy and trade to soon provide reports about the developments of work, programs and challenges ahead of the implementation of Afghanistan commitments to the World Trade Organization and share with the next meeting of the Council of Ministers (CMs) in order to seek solution and to approve the final draft by the cabinet. (BNA)

(6) BiH Sends...

be asked from them.

"They will work on the control at the airport in Afghanistan. This way, our members are protected from external attacks and have a fairly good status in the segment of protection and the ability to perform their tasks in the best way," Chief of Joint Staff of BiHAF Senad Masovic stated during the ceremony.

Masovic added that members of BiHAF will continue participating in peace missions in the United Nations, NATO and the European Union, with the tendency to increase the contribution in 2019.

Brigadier General Kenan Dautovic said that this is an extremely important mission for BiH soldiers, adding that BiHAF Operational Command prepares members to respond to all the challenges in any of the missions to which they are sent. BiH Armed Forces have been present in Afghanistan since 2009, with more than 1,300 members involved in the peace mission so far. (Xinhua)

(7) Guards...

"You see this video clip. How cruelly they are beating my brother. He has went unconscious three times," said Jihad Gul Mangalzoi, brother of Zazai.

Zazai's family members said their lands have been grabbed a lawmaker and that they referred to many government department over the issue, but no one secured justice for them.

"We asked Zazai to pass on our message to the President, but now

he has been jailed," said Lal Band, Zazai's mother.

Head of Afghanistan Human Rights Organization, Lal Gul Lal, said they denounce this act by Ghani's guards and that mistreatment against a civilian is in contravention of all human rights laws.

"This act is obviously against all human rights laws. We ask the President to stay patient against people's critics and understand them so that people can tell him their complaints," Lal said.

The Presidential Palace has not commented on the incident, but Ghani's deputy spokesman Shahussain Murtazawi has said in a social media post that Ghani heard the man's complaints.

Murtazawi writes that after hearing Zazai's complaints, the President said that the man has been subjected to injustice and that now he wants justice. (Tolo news)

(8) Afghan Muay...

According to the National Muay Thai Federation, the national team members were selected at a national competition in July. (Tolo news)

(9) 4 Gunmen...

remaining suspects were rounded during the special operations of the police forces.

Kabul Police Commandment also added in its statement that one of the residents of the city had earlier filed a complaint against one of the suspects regarding the kidnapping of his daughter. (KP)

(10) Uprising Group...

in the battle, but there are no exact figures of them available, he said.

Meanwhile, Zabiullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesman claimed nine Afghan soldiers including an uprising group commander were killed in the attack. He said Taliban also captured a number of security personnel and seized some weapons and ammunition. Mujahid said that no Taliban fighter suffered casualties in last night's fight. (Pajhwok)