

Brexit: Parliament Gets to Decide Between No Deal and Delay

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May bowed to intense political pressure Tuesday and handed control of Brexit to Parliament, telling lawmakers they will get to choose between leaving the European Union on schedule — with or without a divorce deal — or asking the EU to postpone.

May said that if Parliament rejects her deal with the EU next month, lawmakers will vote the next day on whether to leave the bloc without an agreement. If that is defeated, as seems likely, they will vote on whether to ask the EU to delay Brexit by up to three months.

May said the promises were “commitments I am making as prime minister and I will stick by them.”

Britain is due to leave the EU on March 29, but so far the govern-



ment has not been able to win Parliament's backing for its divorce deal with the bloc. That leaves the U.K. facing a chaotic “no-deal” Brexit that

could cause disruption for businesses and people in both Britain and the EU. May shifted position after members of her own

government joined calls for her to rule out a “no-deal” Brexit.

Three junior government ministers wrote in the Daily Mail that they would vote with opposition lawmakers to stop a no-deal departure unless May agreed to delay Brexit and guarantee “we are not swept over the precipice on March 29.” May said her goal remains to lead Britain out of the EU on schedule and with a deal, even though she still hasn't managed to win Parliament's approval for her agreement with the bloc. Her concession to Parliament on Tuesday comes ahead of a series of votes Wednesday in which pro-EU lawmakers will try to force the government to rule out the “no-deal” Brexit and to seek an extension to the Brexit date if Parliament fails to back her deal. ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

Neighbor News

Iranians Have Grown Stronger Than 40 Years Ago despite All Enemy Plots: Leader

TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the Iranian nation has only grown stronger despite all the hostile plots against the country over the four decades since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

He made the remarks in a meeting with religious eulogists in Tehran on Tuesday on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad's daughter Hazrat Fatemeh Zahra (PBUH), which Iranians celebrate as national Women's Day and Mother's Day.

“Over the past forty

years, the enemies have been using all in their power to stand against the Islamic Republic — and have dealt some blows — but the Iranian nation managed to handle these schemes by relying on God and honoring its duties,” Ayatollah Khamenei said.

Now, the Iranian nation “is stronger than ever before, whereas the enemy front is weaker than in the past,” he added.

The Leader also underlined the need for building strong family foundations and maintaining family values. (Press TV)

Uzbekistan Expects 474-Ton Increase in Gold Reserves in 5 Years

TASHKENT — Uzbekistan's gold reserves are expected to increase by 474 tons worth 18.75 billion U.S. dollars during 2020-2024, said a draft document published Tuesday by the country's state committee for geology.

According to the committee, Uzbekistan's gold reserves reached 5,990 tons as of Jan. 1, 2018.

In 2017, the country produced 89.9 tons of gold. The Central Asian nation plans to invest around 230 million dollars in searching, evaluating and exploring its gold reserves, which is 45 percent of the total allotment of geological

survey of the sector, said the document.

The main part of the geological works will be carried out in the Central Kyzylkum desert in Navoi region, as well as in Samarkand and Tashkent regions.

Uzbekistan has been carrying out reforms to develop its mining sector, which include lifting bans on private gold mining. Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has been opening up the country's economy for foreign investors since he came to power in 2016. He ordered in February more transparent policies for the country's gold reserves and production. (Xinhua)

Turkmenistan Introducing Digital System on Goods Turnover

ASHGABAT — The work is underway in Turkmenistan to introduce a digital system on goods turnover in the ministry of trade and foreign economic relations of the country, Trend reports with reference to the Watan newspaper.

The ministry manages 184 enterprises, and each has sales outlets that will be combined with a digital system that allows online tracking of goods, their delivery to warehouses, stores, sales volumes, etc.

With the help of this centralized system, specialists will be able to obtain information about the provision of all objects of the trade network with goods, monitor their movement, timely replenish stocks in stores and establish uninterrupted supply of goods.

The introduction of this technology will allow conducting online reporting on sales and settlements with suppliers, as well as more effectively monitor and manage the market. Along with this, for the convenience of customers, a special website will be created with information about each store - its address, contact details, range of products, including quality indicators, date and place of production, packaging, shelf life.

It will be possible to order goods with their delivery, obtain additional information on the website. This system will provide an opportunity to study the demand in the domestic market, to analyze its trends. The introduction of the new system is scheduled to begin in Ashgabat and further expand in the regions. (Trend)

China Tells India and Pakistan to Exercise Restraint

ISLAMABAD — China, which has good diplomatic ties with Islamabad, on Tuesday urged India and Pakistan to “exercise restraint” and asked New Delhi to carry out its fight against terrorism through international co-operation, hours after the Balakot airstrike claim by India. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang told the media in Beijing that “we have taken note of the relevant reports. I want to say that India and Pakistan are both important countries in South Asia. A sound relationship and co-operation between the two serves the interests of both the countries and peace and stability in South Asia.”

About India's assertion that the operation was a “non-military preemptive strike” directed against training camps of the terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lu said: “As for India's claim on taking action against terrorism, well fighting terrorism is a global practice. It needs necessary international cooperation. India needs to create favourable conditions internationally for the same,” he said. Lu's comments came ahead of the Russia, India and China (RIC) foreign ministers' meeting in the Chinese city of Wuzhen on Wednesday where Sushma Swaraj is expected to take part. (Agencies)

Huawei Exec Pokes Fun at US Spying, Snowden at Tech Show

BARCELONA, Spain — A top executive at Chinese tech supplier Huawei poked fun at U.S. intelligence on Tuesday as he sought to reassure people attending the world's biggest mobile industry fair that the company's technology is secure.

Guo Ping, Huawei's rotating chairman, used his keynote speech at MWC Barcelona to fight back against U.S. allegations that the company's technology poses a national security risk to next-generation mobile networks.

“PRISM, PRISM, on the wall, who is the most trustworthy of them all?” Guo said, in a reference to a U.S. data gathering program.

“If you don't understand that, you can go ask Edward Snowden,” he said, referring to the former National Security Agency contractor who exposed the program in 2013. Under the PRISM program, the NSA, pursuant to secret court orders, collects intelligence about foreign threats through U.S. Internet companies. (AP)

Iran's Foreign Minister Resigns as His Nuclear Deal Teeters

TEHRAN, Iran — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif resigned without warning late Monday, offering an “apology” to the nation as the nuclear deal he negotiated with world powers is on the verge of collapse after the U.S. withdrawal from the accord. Zarif's resignation, if accepted by Iran's relatively moderate President Hassan Rouhani, would leave the cleric without one of his main allies in pushing the Islamic Republic toward further negotiations with the West.

It remains unclear why Zarif chose to leave his post now and what effect it will have on the atomic accord, which Iran has been complying with. He likely briefed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei before offering his resignation. Khamenei, who has final say on all state matters, previously backed the American-educated envoy through the nuclear negotiations.

“We'll see if it sticks,” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tweeted about Zarif's resignation. “Our policy is unchanged — the



regime must behave like a normal country and respect its people.” The veteran diplomat first hinted at his resignation with a vague Instagram post in which he offered an “apology” for his “inability to continue to his service.” ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

Pence in Colombia Announces New Sanctions on Maduro



BOGOTA, Colombia — The Trump administration announced new sanctions Monday on allies of Venezuela's Nicolas Ma-

duro as it struggles to find new ways to boost his opponent after an effort to deliver humanitarian aid to the economically

devastated nation faltered amid strong resistance from security forces loyal to the socialist leader.

Vice President Mike Pence arrived in the Colombian capital for an emergency summit of regional leaders to discuss the deepening crisis and immediately met with Juan Guaido, the opposition leader the U.S. and 50 other nations recognize as Venezuela's rightful president.

In a speech, Pence urged regional partners to freeze oil assets controlled by Maduro, transfer the proceeds to Guaido and re-

strict visas for Maduro's inner circle. He said the U.S. was imposing more sanctions on four pro-government governors, including a close Maduro ally who negotiated the release of an American jailed for more than two years.

“It's time to do more,” Pence said. “The day is coming soon when Venezuela's long nightmare will end, when Venezuela will once more be free, when her people will see a new birth of freedom, in a nation reborn to libertad.” ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

France Criticized for Its Handling of Yellow Vest Crisis

PARIS — A top European official is criticizing French authorities for their handling of the anti-government protests that have rocked the country in recent months, urging them to “show more respect for human rights.”

Following a visit to Paris last month, Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Dunja Mijatovic wrote a memorandum released Tuesday in which she also asked the French government to “refrain from

introducing excessive restrictions to freedom of peaceful assembly” via a bill currently under debate in the French parliament. The controversial bill aims at cracking down on troublemakers who use protests to attack police. According to the French Interior ministry, more than 3,000 people, including protesters and police, have been injured since the yellow vest demonstrations started in November. (Fox News)

Australian Cardinal Pell Convicted of Molesting 2 Choirboys

MELBOURNE, Australia — The most senior Catholic cleric ever charged with child sex abuse has been convicted of molesting two choirboys moments after celebrating Mass, dealing a new blow to the Catholic hierarchy's credibility after a year of global revelations of abuse and cover-up.

Cardinal George Pell, Pope Francis' top financial adviser and the Vatican's economy minister, bowed his head but then regained his composure as the 12-member jury delivered unanimous verdicts in the Victoria state County Court on Dec. 11 after more than two days of deliberation. The court had until Tuesday forbidden publication of any details about the trial. (AP)

Dispute over Chagos Islands Is a Bilateral Matter: UK Junior Foreign Minister

LONDON — Britain will consider the view of the World Court on control of the Chagos Islands but the dispute is with Mauritius and should be resolved bilaterally, British foreign office minister Alan Duncan said on Tuesday.

On Monday the International Court of Justice (ICJ) told Britain to give up control over the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean, and said it had wrongfully forced the population to leave in the 1970s to make way for a U.S. air base.

The U.N. General Assembly asked the court to advise on whether the process of decolonization had been concluded lawfully. (Reuters)

Turkey Says EU Hypocritical for Attending Egypt Summit after Executions

ISTANBUL — Turkey criticized European Union leaders on Tuesday for attending a summit hosted by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi days after nine men were executed for killing Egypt's chief prosecutor.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said it was hypocritical for EU leaders, who have told Ankara that reinstating the death penalty in Turkey would finally crush its hopes of joining their bloc, to attend the meeting in Egypt.

“The whole EU leadership supporting Sisi and being in the same place as him on the days after these young saplings were martyred, executed is a photograph



of exactly what we are saying,” he said. “This is a double standard, it is hypocrisy.”

Sisi defended the death penalty on Monday at the summit in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh between Arab and EU states, saying the two regions had “two different cultures”. Relations between Ankara and Cairo have been strained

since the Egyptian army ousted President Mohamed Mursi, of the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, following mass protests against his rule in 2013. The Muslim Brotherhood has close ties with Turkey's ruling AK Party and many of its members have fled to Turkey since the group's activities were banned in Egypt. ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

North Korea's Kim Awaits Trump in Vietnam for Second Summit

HANOI/ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un arrived in Vietnam on Tuesday for a summit with U.S. President Donald Trump where they will try to reach agreement on how to implement a North Korean pledge to give up its nuclear weapons. Trump is due in the Vietnamese

capital, Hanoi, at about 9 p.m. (1400 GMT).

They will meet for a brief one-on-one conversation on Wednesday evening, followed by a dinner, at which they will each be accompanied by two guests and interpreters, White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders told reporters on Air Force One. (Reuters)