

Merkel's Party CDU Remains Largest in German State Election: Exit Polls

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel's party CDU was ahead with a clear lead over rival SPD in the Saarland state elections, exit polls showed on Sunday.

The vote was the first in a series leading up to German federal elections in September.

Some 800,000 eligible voters cast their ballots. Exit polls showed that CDU was ahead with 41 percent with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) trailing behind on 29.5 percent.

The Left party (Linke) was reported to have won 13 percent of the votes, Alternative for Germany (AfD) 6 percent and the Greens 4.5 percent.

The outcome of the vote in



U.S., Britain, France, others Skip Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty Talks

UNITED NATIONS - The United States and almost 40 other countries, including Britain and France, will not join negotiations that started at the United Nations on Monday aimed at agreeing on a nuclear weapons ban treaty, U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley said.

The Trump adminis-

tration is reviewing whether it will reaffirm the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, a White House aide said last week, referring to an aim embraced by previous Republican and Democratic presidents and required by a key arms control treaty. (Reuters)

Refugee Situation in East Africa Alarming: UNHCR

DAR ES SALAAM - The United Nations said on Sunday the refugee situation in East Africa and the Horn of Africa was alarming.

"This pathetic situation of refugees in the region is caused by grave food shortage and armed conflicts," said Victoria Ak-yeampong, the Head of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for East, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region.

She said the situation was equally worrying in the Great Lakes region, another flash point of political violence in the continent pitting militia groups and the government forces.

"The situation is too alarming. We have to develop a

mechanism on how to address the crisis," said Ak-yeampong on a visit to the East African Community (EAC) headquarters in Tanzania's northern tourist town of Arusha.

The UNHCR regional boss and the EAC Secretary General Liberat Mfumukeko agreed to form a task force to develop and implement the regional mechanism on management of refugees.

"I am happy today that we have agreed to work together. Our region has for a long time suffered a lot in the context of refugees and that explains why we in the EAC look at the refugee issue as one of the critical areas of regional integration," said Mfumukeko. (Xinhua)

UN Invigorates Political Momentum Against Climate Change

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations dimmed the lights at its headquarters in New York and other facilities around the world to mark the 10th annual "Earth Hour," a global event to spotlight issues facing the planet and to inspire people to live a more sustainable life.

In a video message, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said: "Climate change continues to imperil lives and livelihoods around the world...The landmark Paris Agreement gives us an unprecedented opportunity to

limit global temperature rise, promote clean energy for all and create a sustainable future."

Guterres and his team members has put the Paris deal, a legacy from his predecessor Ban Ki-moon, high on agenda.

In his remarks at the High-Level Meeting on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Agenda on March 23, the UN chief said, "climate change is an unprecedented and growing threat to peace and prosperity and the same in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals."



"Addressing climate change is a massive opportunity that we cannot afford to miss," Guterres added. He called for efforts to be made to invigorate political momentum and highlight its deep links with the 2030 Goals of the United Nations. STUNNING CLIMATE SITUATION Global temperatures set ... (More on P4)... (16)

G7 Host Italy Wants U.S. to do More to Foster Stability in Libya

ROME - Italy will push for greater U.S. involvement in fostering stability in Libya when President Donald Trump and other world leaders meet in May, Italy's deputy foreign minister said on Monday.

Italy hosts the annual meeting of seven of the world's biggest industrialized economies (G7) in the town of Taormina in Sicily on May 26-27. It will be Trump's first scheduled trip to Europe.

Speaking in his office, Deputy Foreign Minister Mario Giro told Reuters

one of Italy's foreign policy priorities was to build international support to unify Libya.

People-smugglers based in the strife-torn country, where two rival governments compete with armed militias for power, have sent hundreds of thousands of migrants on boats toward Italy since 2013. Arrivals have surged more than 50 percent this year.

"In recent years, Libya has always been a priority of ours," Giro said. "We hope - and at the G7 we will say



it - that this issue interests also the U.S." As well as Italy and the United States, the G7 comprises Britain, France, Canada, Japan and Germany. Libya split into a patchwork of rival fiefdoms after a NATO-backed uprising led to the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. (Reuters)

Turks in Germany Start Voting in Referendum on Boosting Erdogan's Powers

BERLIN - Turks living in Germany began casting their ballots on Monday in a referendum which proposes changing Turkey's constitution to increase President Tayyip Erdogan's powers.

The controversial vote is taking place amid increasingly strained ties between Turkey and Europe, home to an estimated 2.5 million Turkish citizens eligible to vote.

Bans on some campaign rallies by Turkish officials in Germany and the Neth-



erlands have prompted Erdogan to accuse European leaders of "Nazi methods". German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaueble

said on Sunday Erdogan's rhetoric was setting back integration in Germany by years and it would take ... (More on P4)... (17)

Britain's May to Press for Strong Union on Scotland Visit

EAST KILBRIDE, Scotland - Prime Minister Theresa May told Scotland on Monday unity was crucial to Britain winning a good divorce deal from the European Union, in a new attempt to persuade the Scottish government to step back from independence demands.

Before meeting Scotland's first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, who has accused May of intransigence over her Brexit talks, the British leader told staff working on international aid that together, the United Kingdom was "an unstoppable force". May is battling to keep the United Kingdom together after Britain's vote to leave the European Union revealed deep divisions, with England and Wales voting for Brexit, while Scotland and Northern Ireland supported ... (More on P4)... (18)

Sweden, Slovenia Urge for Unity in EU after Brexit

LJUBLJANA - Visiting Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lovfen and his host Slovenian counterpart Miro Cerar called on Monday for unity of the EU following Brexit and the need to continue fostering common values and build a Europe of the future. The two prime ministers said at a press conference after their meeting in Ljubljana that trade could be strengthened further, according to the Slovenian Press Agency (STA). Sweden is Slovenia's most important trading partner among Nordic countries, but 22nd among all countries Slovenia trades with, the STA report said, adding that trade ... (More on P4)... (19)

EU Could be Gone by 2040: Pro-Brexit Party Leader

LONDON - The leader of Britain's eurosceptic and right-wing party, the UK Independence Party (UKIP), has given out new strong eurosceptic words in an exclusive interview with Xinhua.

"I can see the EU disappearing by 2040, and by 2030 it will certainly look very different. It is no good blaming the British either because all that is happening is their fault," said Paul Nuttall, who leads the UKIP, a party was set up with the specific aim of campaigning for Brexit.

The party's leader Nuttall spoke with Xinhua from his home in Liverpool as the EU celebrated in Italian capital of Rome the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome,

which was signed in 1957 and created the European Economic Community, a predecessor to the modern EU.

"They are celebrating, but what they should really be doing is asking themselves why things for the EU have gone awry since the signing of the Treaty of Rome," said Nuttall, who believes in any event the EU will look very different by 2030 to the one being celebrated.

"Brussels has become more and more remote from the people as it strives to gain more power for itself," said the British politician, who believes EU leaders, many of them unelected, were guiding the bloc towards a United States of Europe. (Xinhua)

Nieghbor News

Pakistan is Gateway for World to Access Region: NSA

ISLAMABAD -Terming Pakistan as land of opportunities and a gateway of the world to regional countries, Pakistan's National Security Adviser (NSA) Nasser Khan Janjua on Monday said Pakistan is a country of prosperous future.

The resilient nation and people of Pakistan are on the rise despite three wars with India and perpetual war in Afghanistan since last four decades, he said while addressing a seminar on Maritime Security in India Ocean.

He said Pakistan is on its way to become a "Massive Trade Corridor" for the world. By becoming a Trade Corridor, Pakistan will become a Trade Hub, Economic Hub and finally Industrial Hub. By providing the strategic connectivity, Pakistan will be able to play a better role to serve the peace and economic growth of the world. Pakistan believes in "Cooperation instead of Competition" which will serve all the countries of a region with equal opportunities, the NSA said. "We need to improve ties at western front," he said

while talking to media persons after addressing the seminar. He said that achievement of lasting peace in Afghanistan will pave way to gain benefits from the China Pakistan Economic Corridor project by Central Asian Republics as well as other states in the region. Answering a question, he said that Indo-Afghan nexus is creating a two front situation for Pakistan. "We, however, believe that Afghanistan and Pakistan hold a future which is common and cannot be separated. Pakistan sees a great future along with Afghanistan which will come around with reconciliation, peace and stability in Afghanistan." He said that he is not sure about General @ Raheel Sharif taking over the command of Saudi led coalition defence force but if it happens, it will be beneficial for the entire Muslim Ummah. He said that with his acumen and experiences, Gen. Raheel will bring balance besides playing a pivotal role in overcoming the existing misunderstandings among the Muslim world. (APP)

Iran Urges Political Solution to Yemen Conflicts

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Ministry called for an immediate halt to bloodshed in Yemen and urged efforts to start a political process for formation of a national unity government in the Arab country, Tasnim news agency reported on Monday.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry condemned what it called the "blatant aggression" on Yemen that has brought about deaths, famine and starvation on the Yemeni people.

Over the past two years, thousands of women and children have been killed in clashes, millions of Yemenis have become dependent on humanitarian aid, as most of them are suffering from malnutrition and hunger, it said in a statement. Destruction of this im-

poverished country's infrastructure and the constant bombing of hospitals and education centers are among other outcomes of this unjust war, the statement added.

Also, the war has prepared the ground for the growth of terrorist groups' activities in different parts of Yemen, a fact that threatens international peace, stability and security, the statement added.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry urged the international community to step up efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people of Yemen, especially women and children.

The situation in Yemen deteriorated economically and politically as of March 2015, when a war broke out between the (Xinhua)

Russia, Tajikistan Hold Joint Anti-Terror Drill

MOSCOW - Russian and Tajik forces troops started on Monday a four-day counter-terrorist exercise in the southern part of Tajikistan, the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement.

"The servicemen will improve cooperation between the force groupings while countering conditional illegal armed formations," said the statement, adding that both ground troops and air forces will be mobilized in the exercise.

As a traditional partner to Russia, Tajikistan is a

member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a Russia-led military alliance established in 1992.

Russia stations its 201st military base in Tajikistan, which now houses the largest ground troops of the Russian Armed Forces outside its territory.

Tajikistan shares a 1,300-km border with Afghanistan. Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Tajikistan last month, agreeing to beef up efforts to protect the Tajik-Afghan border. (Xinhua)

Turkmenistan Preparing for Parliamentary Election

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan has scheduled a parliamentary election for May 21, the country's Central Election Commission said Mar. 27.

New MPs will be elected to replace the ones who discontinued their office terms early, according to the Turkmen CEC.

Turkmenistan will also elect members of local governing bodies on the same day due to changes in administrative and territorial structures of the

country's regions. Ensuring transparency and wide choice at the election were set as priorities in a meeting of the Turkmen Central Election Commission Mar. 27.

Representatives of the Democratic Party, the Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, the Agrarian Party, as well as public organizations and associations of Turkmenistan took part in the meeting. (Trend)