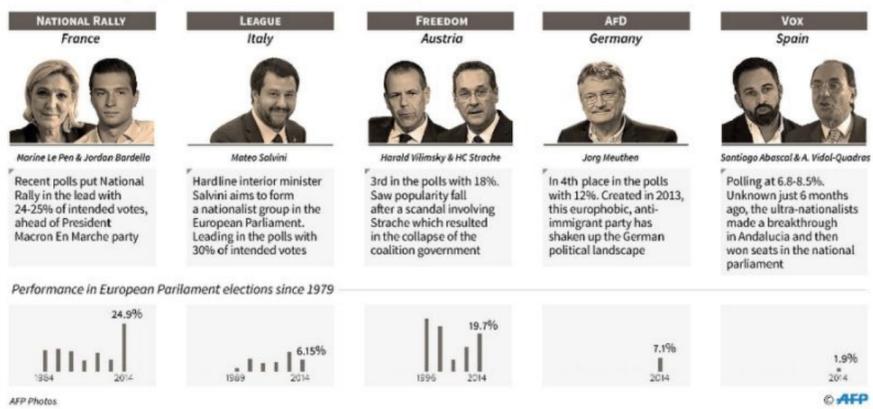


## Battered EU Centre Holds Off Populist Surge in Vote

BRUSSELS - Europe's mainstream political parties took a hit in elections on Sunday but held off a strong surge by the populist right of Marine Le Pen, Matteo Salvini and Nigel Farage. In one of the world's biggest democratic votes, the main centre-right and centre-left groups lost their combined majority in the European Parliament in the face of a challenge by eurosceptic and nationalist forces. The symbolic clash of the campaign saw French far-right leader Le Pen's National Rally on course to come in just ahead of President Emmanuel Macron's centrist movement, damaging

### Main far-right parties in Western Europe



his drive for deeper European integration. In Britain, Farage's one-issue Brexit Party appeared to have trounced the main parties and

he will send a large contingent of British eurosceptics to a parliament they want to leave in a few months. And in Italy, Salvini's far-right

League achieved a similar result, strengthening its role at the core of a vocal populist faction in the EU's legislature. The advance of the right was less pronounced in Germany - where a strong showing by the Greens was reflected in a "green wave" in many countries - but the anti-immigrant AfD broke the 10-percent barrier. "We are facing a shrinking centre," said German conservative Manfred Weber, lead candidate for the centre-right European People's Party (EPP) to replace Jean-Claude Juncker as European Commission chief. (AFP)

## Neighbor News

### 'Negotiating with Devil' Bears No Fruit - Iran's Revolutionary Guards on Talks with US

TEHRAN - Talking with Washington is akin to talking with the devil, a senior official with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said, downplaying the US military presence in the region as the "weakest in history." "Negotiating with the devil, the Quran says, bears no fruit," the deputy commander of the IRGC, Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi, said, as cited by Fars News Agency. Fadavi made his remarks while talking about the longtime lack of effective negotiations between Tehran and Washington. He also did not mince his words on the state of the US military presence in the region, labeling it the "weakest in [its] history." The influence of Saudi Ara-

bia, a US major ally and arms-buyer, in the Middle East has also been diminished over the years, the official added. The Pentagon deployed the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group near the Persian Gulf in early May and sent three guided-missile destroyers to join it earlier this week. Tehran had been downplaying the buildup of US forces near its waters but said that its Navy is prepared to target the American ships should a conflict break out. Iran partially suspended its commitments under the 2015 deal on its nuclear program, known as the JCPOA, after several rounds of sanctions from Washington which unilaterally ... (More on P4)...(14)

### Pakistan's PM Vows to Work Together with India's Modi, after States Nearly Went to War in February

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan's PM Imran Khan told Indian counterpart Narendra Modi in a phone call that both states should work together for "betterment" of their people. It comes after a crisis in February almost saw the nuclear powers go to war. During his talk with Modi, Khan wished for India and Pakistan to strive for "peace, progress and prosperity" in the region, Pakistan's foreign ministry spokesperson, Mohammad Faisal said. Faisal added that Khan "expressed desire for both countries to work together for betterment of their peoples." The leaders spoke several days after Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won the general election, retaining a strong majority in the parliament's

lower house. The neighbors came dangerously close to a full-fledged war in February. India sent jets into Pakistani territory to bomb what it said were camps of the militant group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) which had earlier killed 40 policemen in a terrorist attack in the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir. A week later, the hostilities escalated into an open aerial combat, coupled with cross-border shelling. An Indian pilot was shot down over Pakistan, but later handed over by Islamabad to India. Indian officials accuse Pakistan of harboring and aiding JeM and other militant groups that carry out attacks on Indian soil. Islamabad strongly denies this. (RT)

### Russian PM Medvedev to Visit Uzbekistan on May 29-30

TASHKENT - Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev will take part in the first meeting of the Joint Commission at the level of the heads of the governments of Russia and Uzbekistan on May 30 in Tashkent, Trend reports with reference to press service of the Russian government. "Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Abdulla Aripov will hold the first meeting of the Joint Commission at the level of the heads of the governments of Russia and Uzbekistan. A meeting of the head of the Russian government with

President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev is also scheduled," reads the message. During the talks, it is planned to discuss a wide range of topical issues of bilateral cooperation in the trade, economic, investment, scientific, educational, cultural and humanitarian spheres. The sides will also discuss implementation of major joint projects in the energy, industry, transport, high technologies and agriculture sectors. During the visit, joint documents on cooperation in various fields are expected to be signed. (Trend)

### Agreements Between Pakistan, China Reflective of Growing Ties: Dr Firdous

ISLAMABAD - Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan Monday said signing of agreements between Pakistan and China during the visit of Chinese Vice President was proof of increasing economic cooperation between the two countries. In a tweet on social media platform twitter,

she said these agreements were reflective of China's strategic interest in progress and prosperity of people of Pakistan. She said under the leadership of Imran Khan, national interest and public welfare were given priority while in the past, personal interest and business were given preference by others. (Agencies)

### Thai Parties Meet to Discuss Deal to Keep Coup Leader as PM

BANGKOK - Two Thai political parties were meeting leaders of a pro-army party on Monday to discuss a possible deal to keep military junta chief General Prayuth Chan-ocha as prime minister more than two months after a disputed election. An agreement would likely sink the opposition Democratic Front coalition's bid to keep members of the junta from retaining dominance over the government five years after the army seized power in a

couple. The Democrat and Bhumjaithai parties would be given formal coalition invitations by Palang Pracharat, the pro-military party formed last year by members of the junta's Cabinet. The two parties' seats would give the pro-army coalition a slim majority in the House of Representatives. The Democrat Party, Thailand's oldest political party, was to meet Palang Pracharat leaders ... (More on P4)...(9)

### Dovish Trump Says Not Looking for Regime Change in Iran

TOKYO - The United States does not seek "regime change" in Iran despite mounting Middle East tensions, President Donald Trump said Monday, in dovish comments also praising North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un as a "very smart guy." Speaking after summit talks with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Trump seemed at pains to dial down tensions in the world's two most pressing flashpoints as the US faces increasingly

regimes in Tehran and Pyongyang. Iran "has a chance to be a great country, with the same leadership. We're not looking for regime change, I want to make that clear. We're looking for no nuclear weapons," said the president. "I really believe that Iran would like to make a deal. I think that's very smart of them and I think there's a possibility for that to happen also." He had earlier opened the door to negotiations with Tehran, saying: "if



they'd like to talk, we'd like to talk also." Washington has decided to deploy 1,500 additional troops to the Middle East amid grow-

ing friction with Iran after Trump pulled out of a landmark nuclear deal and later reinstated tough sanctions. ... (More on P4)...(7)

### Russia Says It Is Ready to Play Role in Venezuela Crisis Talks in Oslo



MOSCOW - Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Monday

that Moscow was ready to play a role in talks between the Venezuelan

government and opposition in Oslo if the participants felt it was useful.

Norway said on Saturday that representatives of Venezuela's government and opposition would return to Oslo following an initial round of preliminary talks about how to address the country's political crisis. The Russian foreign ministry said in a statement it welcomed the fact that the talks were continuing, but warned against any external powers trying to foist ultimatums on the Venezuelan leadership. (Reuters)

### Anthony Albanese Set to Become Australia's Opposition Leader

SYDNEY - Veteran Sydney lawmaker Anthony Albanese will become Australia's new opposition leader this week, after being made head of the Labor Party on Monday. Albanese took control of the country's main opposition party when he stood unopposed to replace Bill Shorten, who resigned as opposition leader after Labor's unexpected loss to Prime Minister Scott Morrison's conservative government in the May 18 general election.

A member of Parliament for 23 years, Albanese served as a Cabinet minister under Labor governments from 2007 to 2013, and was briefly deputy prime minister under Kevin Rudd in the last of those six years. Albanese, 56, told a news conference Monday that he would hold Prime Minister Morrison's newly reelected government to account, but would not be an opposition leader who routinely opposes all ... (More on P4)...(10)

### Greece: Stock Market Opens Up after PM Calls Early Election

ATHENS, Greece - Greece's stock market has opened up 5 percent, the morning after Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras called snap general elections following a resounding defeat of his left-wing Syriza party in European elections. Official results from 75% of the vote Monday showed the conservative New Democracy party more than 9.5 percentage points ahead of Syriza, with 33.26 percent, compared to the governing party's 23.75 percent. Tsipras said Sunday he would visit Greece's president to request the early dissolution of parliament after the second round of local elections on June 2. The likeliest dates for ... (More on P4)...(11)

### Fiat Chrysler Proposes Merger with French Carmaker Renault

PARIS - Fiat Chrysler on Monday proposed a merger with France's Renault, in a deal that would create the world's third-biggest automaker and save billions needed to invest in the race to make new electric and autonomous vehicles.

Shares of both companies jumped on reports of a merger. The joint company would be 50 percent owned by Fiat Chrysler shareholders and 50 percent by Renault shareholders, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles said in a statement. The proposal indicated that Renault's existing alliance with Japan's Nissan and Mitsubishi could continue and that the companies would benefit financially from the deal through extra savings. Renault's ... (More on P4)...(12)

### North Korea Dubs Bolton's Missile Comments 'More Than Ignorant': KCNA

SEOUL - U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton is "more than ignorant" to argue that North Korea's recent missile tests violated U.N. resolutions, the North's foreign ministry said in a statement on Monday. Giving up missile tests would mean giving up the right to self defense, a North Korean foreign ministry spokesman was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the state KCNA news agency. The unidentified spokesman singled out Bolton, who last week said the recent tests "no doubt" violated U.N. Security Council resolutions. "His claim is indeed much more than igno-



rant," the spokesman said. "Our military drill neither targeted anyone nor endangered the surrounding countries, but Bolton makes dogged claims that it constitutes a violation of the 'resolutions', impudently poking his nose into other's internal matters." Bolton, a regular target of North Korean criticism, is more of a "secu-

urity-destroying adviser" than a security adviser, the spokesman added. "It is not at all strange that perverse words always come out from the mouth of a structurally defective guy," the spokesman said. Earlier in May, North Korean military forces test fired several rockets and missiles, including several guided ... (More on P4)...(8)

### Britain's Corbyn Calls for General Election or Second Referendum

LONDON - Opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn said the British public should be asked again to give its verdict on Brexit, either through a general election or a second referendum. "With the Conservatives disintegrating and unable to govern, and parlia-

ment deadlocked, this issue will have to go back to the people, whether through a general election or a public vote," Corbyn said. "Over the coming days we will have conversations across our party and movement, and reflect on these results on both sides of the Brexit divide." (Reuters)

### Huawei Ban Could Deal Blow to U.S. Firms, Consumers: Expert

BUENOS AIRES - The U.S. government's ban on Huawei could end up hurting U.S. businesses and consumers badly, said an Argentine expert on international relations. Lucas Gualda, a member of the Argentine Council for International Relations, an academic institution, told Xinhua that the decision to limit U.S. companies from doing business with Huawei is not just "unfounded," but also likely to backfire, leading to unintended negative consequences. "This measure could cost it (the United States) dearly, because let's not forget that China is one of the most important markets for Android," the mobile operating system employed by Huawei and developed by U.S. tech giant Google, Gualda said. "In China, there are more than a billion mobile devices. It's truly a very important market," he stressed. The United States cited security concerns to justify the ban, but Gualda sees competition as the main worry keeping Washington up at night. "Huawei is a direct target of the United States because it really represents direct competition for any technology manufacturers in the world," he said. "While it appears to be a threat, it is really an opportunity for China to make a technological leap, (and) to develop its own operating system," said Gualda, who also teaches corporate social responsibility at ... (More on P4)...(13)