

Taking on Critics, Britain's May Vows to Deliver Policies and Brexit

MANCHESTER, England - Apologizing for losing her Conservative Party's majority at a June election, Prime Minister Theresa May responded to her critics on Sunday by saying she had the right strategy to lead Britain and win a Brexit deal. May, who has faced calls from within her party to step down, wants to use the Conservatives' annual conference in the northern English city of Manchester this week to try to reset her agenda, offering money to students and those people she once described as "just about managing" in Britain. In an interview with BBC television, she played down



the rifts among top ministers, saying they were united on their program and more importantly Brexit. That came a day after foreign minister Boris Johnson, perhaps May's biggest rival, set out four personal red lines in the complex talks with the EU. "We've listened to the message that came from that election. But I've been very clear, I called the election, I led the campaign, I take my responsibility and I'm sorry that some very good members of parliament lost their seats," May said in an appeal to those party members still angry over the vote. (Reuters)

3,000 Killed in Syria in Deadliest Month of 2017: Monitor

BEIRUT - Syria's war killed at least 3,000 people including 955 civilians in September, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor said Sunday, in the deadliest month of the conflict this year. "More than 70 percent of the civilians were killed in regime and Russian air strikes, or in air raids of the international coalition" fighting the Islamic State group, the Britain-based monitor's head Rami Abdel Rahman said. Backed by Russian air strikes, the forces of Syria's President Bashar al-Assad are pressing a battle to retake IS-controlled areas in the

eastern province of Deir Ezzor. A US-led international coalition has been providing air support to a Kurdish-Arab alliance, the Syrian Democratic Forces, also fighting the jihadists in its former northern bastion of Raqa city and Deir Ezzor. The number of people killed in September was higher due to increased fighting and "intensified air raids of the international coalition and Russia against jihadist bastions in the north and east of Syria, but also due to increased Russian and regime strikes on rebel-held areas," Abdel Rahman said. (AFP)

U.S. Sees No Indication of Denuclearization Talks with DPRK

WASHINGTON - After months of sanctions and threats, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has shown no interest in talks on giving up its nuclear weapons, the U.S. State Department said Saturday. "North Korean (DPRK) officials have shown no indication that they are interested in or are ready for talks regarding denuclearization," U.S. State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert said in a statement. Nauert reiterated that the

United States is not interested in "promoting the collapse of the current regime, pursuing regime change, accelerating reunification of the peninsula or mobilizing forces north of the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone)." The statement came after U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson revealed during a visit to China that the United States has direct channels of communication with the DPRK. "We have lines of com-



munications to Pyongyang. We're not in a dark situation or a blackout. We have a couple of direct channels to Pyongyang. We can talk to them ... We've made it clear that we hope to resolve this through talks," Tillerson said. At a congressional hearing on Thursday, U.S. Acting

Neighbor News

President Xi Meets U.S. Secretary of State

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping met with visiting U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson Saturday, discussing Trump's state visit to China later this year. "Currently the most important event in our bilateral relations is President Trump's China visit in November," Xi said. "His visit will be a major opportunity for the development of China-U.S. relations." Xi said China-U.S. ties have been generally stable, and that he has maintained sound communication with President Trump. Chinese and U.S. teams should implement consensus reached by the two heads of state, grasp the direction of bilateral relationship, respect each other, and focus on cooperation while dealing with differences properly, Xi said. "China attaches great

importance to President Trump's visit, and I look forward to working with him to outline and advance our bilateral relations in the years to come," Xi said. He said the teams on both sides should work closely to make the visit "successful and special." China and the U.S. are respectively the largest developing country and the largest developed one as well as two leading economies of the world, Xi said, stressing both sides need to and can cooperate on the bilateral, regional and global levels. "The common interests of our two countries far exceed our differences, and cooperation is the only correct choice," Xi said. The two sides should expand mutually beneficial cooperation and strengthen communication and coordination on major international and regional issues, he said. (Xinhua)

Iran Urges Europe to Defy Trump on Imposing New Sanctions

TEHRAN - Iran has warned that the only way to stop its nuclear deal from collapsing is for Europe to defy any U.S. reimposition of sanctions, Tasnim news agency reported Saturday. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Iran would develop much more advanced nuclear technology - though not for weapons purposes - if Europe followed the United States in returning to a sanctions regime. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is responsible for verifying

that Iran meets the terms of the agreement. The U.S. President Donald Trump has attacked the deal on numerous occasions, vowing to tear it up. On October 15, Trump is due to testify to Congress whether Tehran is complying with the deal and whether it remains in the United States' interests to stick by it. If he decides it is not, it could open the way for the U.S. lawmakers to reimpose sanctions, leading to the potential collapse of the agreement. (Xinhua)

Turkey No Longer Needs EU Membership but Won't Quit Talks: Erdogan



ANKARA - Turkey no longer needs to join the European Union but will not unilaterally abandon the stalled EU accession talks, President Tayyip

Erdogan told parliament on Sunday. "We will not be the side which gives up. To tell the truth, we don't need EU membership any

more," Erdogan said. Turkey's 12-year-long accession talks have ground to a halt, with the EU especially critical of Ankara's crackdown following a failed coup last year. Tens of thousands of people including teachers and journalists have been detained. Erdogan's government says EU states failed to appreciate the gravity of the threat which Turkey faced, and did not respond to requests to extradite coup suspects. "The EU failed us in a fight against terrorism,"

Erdogan said on Sunday, though he also suggested the bloc still needed Turkey. "If the EU is going to leap forward, there is only one way to do so. And it is to grant Turkey membership and start an action of cultural and economic growth," Erdogan said. German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in an election debate last month it was clear Turkey should not join the EU and entry talks should end, despite it being a crucial NATO ally. (Reuters)

Head of UN Food Agency Says World Must Step up Rohingya Aid

COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh - The head of the United Nations' food-assistance agency on Sunday urged the international community to step up its support for the relief operation for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh or risk "a massive catastrophic disaster." More than half a million Rohingya Muslims have fled into Bangladesh in little more than a month to escape a Myanmar military operation that has been condemned as ethnic cleansing. The crackdown was in response to a

series of deadly attacks on security posts by Muslim insurgents. Authorities have housed the refugees in a number of existing camps near the border, but the huge numbers and the sheer speed of the exodus have created acute needs, including food. "Bangladesh alone can't handle this. The international community must rally," David Beasley, head of the U.N.'s World Food Programme, said after observing a handout of food to refugees at Kutupalong camp, near Cox's Bazar. (AP)

World-First "Thunderstorm Asthma" Warning System Launched in Australia

CANBERRA - A year after a freak "thunderstorm asthma" event killed nine and hospitalized thousands in the southern Australian city of Melbourne, the Victorian state government on Sunday launched a world-first alert system to prevent a similar disaster from happening in the future. On Nov. 21 last year, a freak event occurred where heavy rain affected pollens in the air, killing nine asthmatics and affecting thousands more, forcing the government to spend more than 15 million Australian dollars (12 million U.S. dollars) in developing a warning system. On Sunday, Victorian Health Minister Jill Hennessy said the new system would keep authorities ahead of the threat. "The great challenge with thunderstorm asthma and epidemic thunderstorm asthma was its scale, its severity, and the fact that we did not have a prediction system in place which would enable us to understand what was coming," she said on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Paul Holman, spokesperson for Ambulance Victoria, said that last year caught both asthma sufferers and authorities off-guard, and the new warning system - which takes data from five new pollen monitoring locations - takes into account pollen levels across the city and weather conditions. "We never envisaged being overwhelmed (last year), we never envisaged not having ambulances to send to emergencies, we never envisaged not being able to answer (emergency) calls," Holman told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on Sunday. (Xinhua)

US Aircraft Carrier to Conduct Missile-Interception Exercise in S. Korean Waters

SEOUL - A U.S. aircraft carrier and its accompanying battleships would conduct a missile-interception exercise with South Korean forces in mid-October off the east coast of South Korea, Yonhap news agency reported Sunday, citing the South Korean military. An unnamed military official was quoted as saying that the South Korean military was consulting with the U.S. side on schedules for the dispatch of the U.S. aircraft carrier strike group,



led by a nuclear-powered USS Ronald Reagan, to the waters off South Korea's east coast around Oct. 15. Yonhap said the U.S. aircraft carrier strike group would carry out

a joint exercise with the South Korean navy to detect, track and intercept ballistic missiles fired by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). (Xinhua)

S. Korea Says in Close Cooperation with U.S. on DPRK Communication Channels

SEOUL - South Korea's presidential Blue House said on Sunday that it was closely cooperating with the United States to keep communication channels with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Presidential spokesman Park Soo-hyun told reporters via a text message that the government emphasized the peaceful resolution through dialogue of the DPRK issues whenever opportunities were given, according to local media reports. He said the government also expressed its position that dialogue could be of various types, including bilateral and multilateral ones. Park said the governments of South

Korea and the United States were closely cooperating in efforts to maintain a contact channel with the DPRK while sticking to a principle that maximum pressure and sanctions would be needed to encourage Pyongyang to return to a dialogue table. The comment came after U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the U.S. government was in direct communication with the DPRK and had two to three channels open to Pyongyang. Park said the U.S. government had a position that it needs a quiet contact with the DPRK to resolve humanitarian issues such as the release of U.S. citizens detained in the DPRK. (Xinhua)

Match North Korea Overture with Iran Offer, Germany 'Tells U.S.'

BERLIN - Germany welcomed U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's announcement that he was "probing" opportunities for dialogue with North Korea about its nuclear weapons program and called for Washington to take a similar step with Iran. German foreign minister Sigmar Gabriel also warned in a statement that going back on a nuclear deal with Iran signed by former U.S. President Barack Obama would risk undermining Washington's credibility in negotiating with North Korea.

In 2015, Tehran agreed to restrict its nuclear program in return for the loosening of economic sanctions that had crippled its economy. But U.S. President Donald Trump has called the deal "an embarrassment" and Washington said last month it was weighing whether to pull out of it. Germany, one of the few Western countries with a permanent embassy in Pyongyang, has advocated peaceful approaches to de-escalating tensions on the Korean peninsula and criticized some of Trump's more bellicose rhetoric regarding the potential nuclear flashpoint. "This is exactly the right direction. North Korea would be well advised to take this offer of talks seriously," Gabriel said on Sunday of Tillerson's announcement. He added: "I would like to see a similar offer for Iran. If the U.S. canceled its nuclear deal with Iran, that would undermine the credibility of its offer to North Korea." (Reuters)

Uzbekistan to Hosts Conference on Security and Sustainable Development in Central Asia

TASHKENT - An international conference on security and sustainable development in Central Asia under the auspices of the United Nations will be held in Samarkand in November 2017. The conference "Central Asia: One Past and a Common Future, Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Mutual Prosperity" will be held on 10-11 November 2017, UzDaily reported. President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed an order "On preparation and holding of the International Conference on Security and Sustainable Development in Central Asia under the auspices of the

United Nations "Central Asia: One Past and a Common Future, Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Mutual Prosperity". The document said that about 150 foreign guests, including the heads of international organizations, the leadership of the UN and the EU, foreign ministers of foreign countries, representatives of the expert community, as well as foreign news agencies and media are expected to attend the international conference. The head of Uzbekistan approved measures to prepare and hold the conference at a high level. (Trend)