

Britain, EU within Touching Distance of a Deal on Citizen Rights: May

LONDON - Britain and the European Union are within touching distance of resolving the fate of millions of EU citizens living in Britain, Prime Minister Theresa May told the House of Commons Monday.

May was giving a report to members of parliament about the latest talks with leaders of the EU member states ahead of Britain's withdrawal in March, 2019.

Speaking about citizen's rights, May said: "Both sides share the same objective of safeguarding the rights of EU nationals living in the UK and UK nationals living in the EU. The negotiations are complicated and deeply technical, but in the end



they are about people, and I am determined that we will put people first."

"We are united on the key principles, and while there are a small number of issues that remain outstanding, we are in touching distance of a deal."

The issue is crucial for the estimated 3 million European nationals currently in Britain, as well as British people living in EU states in mainland Europe. May also insisted there will be no physical infrastructure at the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, adding that the Common Travel Area between Britain and Ireland will continue. (Xinhua)

EU's Tusk Says 'Up to London' How Brexit Ends

STRASBOURG, France - EU President Donald Tusk said on Tuesday that the outcome of fraught Brexit talks was "up to London" and that abandoning the EU divorce remained an option for the UK. Brussels has stressed that Britain needs to offer more detailed proposals, particularly on the thorny issue of its divorce bill, if it wants to move talks on to the next phase, on Britain's future relationship with the bloc.

Tusk told the European Parliament that the European Union must stay united in talks or face

"defeat", as British Prime Minister Theresa May struggles to contain divisions within her government and businesses grow increasingly worried about a so-called "hard Brexit" - in which the UK crashes out of the bloc in March 2019 with no trade deal in place. European leaders gave the embattled May a helping hand at a summit on Friday by agreeing to start preparations for the next round of talks while stressing that not enough progress had been made on three key initial areas to move on just yet. (AFP)

Tillerson Calls for Iraqi Unity, Urges Dialogue on Kurdish Issue

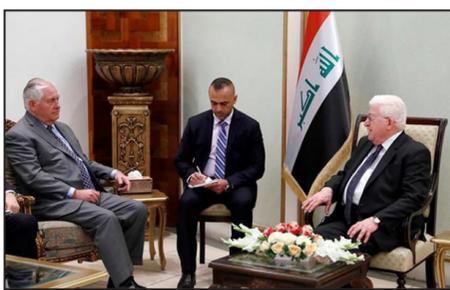
BAGHDAD - U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Monday that Washington was keen on dialogue between Iraqi government and the Iraqi Kurdish region to solve the Kurdish issue.

Tillerson made his remarks in his discussion with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi over the tension between Baghdad and the semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan.

In a statement by the prime minister's office, Tillerson said that the United States supported Iraq's unity and

called for the importance of adherence to the constitution.

For his part, Abadi said what Baghdad did in Kirkuk was redeployment and imposition of state power, which are legal and constitutional procedures. "We do not want to fight a battle with any (Iraqi) components, all of them are our sons, and when we entered Kirkuk we sent a clear message that the Kurdish citizens are Iraqis and we deal with them like other components," Abadi



said. The statement said that the two sides also discussed "enhancing bilateral cooperation in various fields and the war against terrorism." Abadi stressed that the fight against terrorism "is still a priority for us and we will continue to liberate the remaining areas of the country and secure the borders." (Xinhua)

Trump Says "Very, Very Close" to Fed Chair Decision



WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday that he is "very, very close" to making a decision on who is going to lead the Federal Reserve.

Trump made the remarks when asked about the timeline for Fed chair decision at the beginning of a meeting with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Oval

Office.

Trump's choice for the next Fed chair is narrowed down to a short list of three to five people, including current Fed chair Janet Yellen, whose term expires in February. In an interview with Fox Business, Trump responded to question on the next Fed chair choice and said that "most people are saying it's down to two: Mr. Taylor, Mr. Powell. I also met with Janet Yellen, who I like a lot. I really like her a lot. So, I have three people that I'm looking at, and

there are a couple of others."

Trump recently has had interviews with Yellen, current Fed governor Jerome Powell, Stanford University economist John Taylor, and former Fed governor Keven Warsh in discussion about the Fed chair job. White House's National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn is also under consideration for the job. Local media went that Powell and Taylor were the front-runners for the Fed chair job. (Xinhua)

ASEAN Defense Ministers Launch Hotline for Quick Response

CLARK, the Philippines - The defense ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) formally launched on Tuesday a hotline designed to provide quick response cooperation in emergencies, especially in maritime operations. Formerly known as the ASEAN Direct Communications Link (ADL), the ADL is designed to allow the defense ministers to communicate instantly through secure hotline. A statement issued by the ASEAN defense ministers said ADL "will further

foster cooperation and diffuse possible misunderstandings among ASEAN member states." "One of the main characteristics of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and the ADMM-Plus that we are proud of is that these meetings go beyond the ministerial platforms for dialogue, and actually serve as mechanisms for practical cooperation," said Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana. Lorenzana chaired the two-day ADMM and the ADMM-Plus that ended Tuesday. (Xinhua)

Snap Election Not Enough to Solve Crisis, Spain Tells Catalan Leader

MADRID - Catalonia's leader cannot solve its political crisis with Madrid just by calling regional elections, Spain's justice minister said on Tuesday, dampening hopes of a quick fix for a dispute that has rattled investors and fractured the country. The Spanish government says it will impose direct rule on Catalonia from Friday to counter an illegal independence push, invoking never-before-used powers to fire the government of the northeastern region that is critical to the country's economy. The Catalan parliament will meet on Thursday to agree on a response to Madrid, something many analysts said could pave the way for a formal declaration of independence.

Secessionists in Catalonia say that an independence referendum held on Oct. 1 - which drew only a 43 percent turnout and was mostly shunned by Catalans who wish to remain in Spain - has accorded them a mandate to claim statehood. Catalonia said on Monday it was confident all officials including police would defy attempts by Madrid to enforce direct rule, raising fears among Spain's European allies of separatist contagion affecting other parts of the continent. Spanish political and business leaders, along with most Catalan newspapers, have urged Catalan President Carles Puigdemont to call a regional election before he is stripped of his authority. They say direct rule from Madrid would be a humiliation for Catalonia and pose a serious risk of unrest. (Reuters)

Good U.S.-China Relations Benefit Region, World: Singapore PM

WASHINGTON - As "the most important bilateral relationship in the world," good U.S.-China ties will benefit the region and the world, said visiting Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on Monday.

Lee made the remarks in joint statements with U.S. President Donald Trump, who will kick off his first Asia trip next month since assuming the presidency. Sound relations between the two big countries will "enable countries in the Asia Pacific, including America and China themselves, to enjoy re-



gional stability, peace, and prosperity," Lee said. Lee said he also hoped that the United States will be able to "maintain a stable and constructive relationship with China, engaging each other at the highest levels, building trust, es-

tablishing institutional mechanisms." In the statements, Lee also noted the mounting tensions on the Korean Peninsula. "There is no quick and easy solution," he said, adding that "pressure is necessary but so is dialogue." (Xinhua)

S. Korea Holds Security Meeting to Discuss Korean Peninsula Issue

SEOUL - South Korea's presidential Blue House said Tuesday that a working-level national security meeting was held to discuss situations on the Korean Peninsula.

President spokesman Park Soo-hyun told reporters that the regular working-level meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) of the Blue House was chaired by Lee Sang-chul, the NSC's first vice chief who doubles as the NSC's secretary general. Attending the NSC meeting were vice-ministerial-level officials from the ministries of defense, unification

and foreign affairs as well as the spy agency. The officials discussed the recent situations on the peninsula as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) refrained from conducting another provocation following the test-launch of an intermediate-range ballistic missile on Sept. 15. In early September, DPRK carried out its sixth and most powerful nuclear test, detonating what it claimed was a hydrogen bomb that can be loaded onto an intercontinental-range ballistic missile. (Xinhua)

Less than 5 Percent of Syria Still under IS Control: Russia

BEIRUT - After losing major strongholds and key urban areas across Syria, including its self-proclaimed capital, the city of Raqqa, the Islamic State group now controls only 5 percent of the country's territory, according to Russia's defense minister.

That's a dramatic decline from the height of the rise of IS in 2014, when the extremist group seized about a third of both Syria and Iraq, before its downfall began. The remarks by Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu came as Russia-backed Syrian troops are pushing deeper into the eastern Syrian town of Mehekhan, one of the few still held by IS. Speaking at a conference in the Philippines, Shoigu said on Monday that "terrorists" - a term the Syrian government and its allies use for all armed opposition, including militant groups such as IS and al-Qaida's Syria affiliate - controlled more than 70 percent of the country before Russia launched its air operation at the end of 2015 to support President Bashar Assad's offensive against IS militants and opposition forces.

In Syria in 2015, IS briefly held nearly half of the country's territory after the militants captured the historic city of Palmyra, parts of the northern Kurdish town of Kobani, the central desert and reached the city of Hassakeh in the northeast. Later that year, IS started suffering setbacks that culminated with the fall last week of the northern city of Raqqa, the extremists' de facto capital. IS has also lost wide areas it once controlled in Iraq, including the northern city of Mosul, the largest city the group had ever captured. (AP)

Neighbor News

CPC Elects New Central Committee in Leadership Transition

BEIJING - The Communist Party of China (CPC) on Tuesday unveiled a new leadership, electing the 19th CPC Central Committee to lead the Party for the coming five years.

Elected by 2,336 delegates at the closing session of the 19th CPC National Congress, the new CPC Central Committee includes 204 members and 172 alternate members. "The congress elected a new Central Committee of the Party, realizing organizational succession," Xi Jinping said while addressing the closing session at the Great Hall of the People. Xi, 64, was elected into the new Central Committee. He was the General Secretary of the 18th CPC Central Committee. Also elected were Wang Huning, Liu Qibao, Xu Qiliang, Sun Chunlan, Li Keqiang, Wang

Yang, Zhang Chunxian, Zhao Leji, Hu Chunhua, Li Zhanshu and Han Zheng. Li Keqiang, 62, was a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the 18th CPC Central Committee. The others were all members of the Political Bureau of the 18th CPC Central Committee. The 19th CPC Central Committee will elect the Political Bureau, the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau and the General Secretary at its first plenary session scheduled on Wednesday. Before the formal election on Tuesday, delegates to the congress carried out preliminary elections for candidates of members and alternate members of the 19th CPC Central Committee and of members of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. (Xinhua)

Tillerson Visits Pakistan as US Warns over Taliban Havens

ISLAMABAD - US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson landed in Islamabad Tuesday as Washington turns up the heat on Pakistan for allegedly providing "safe havens" for Taliban militants.

Tillerson's visit, his first to Pakistan since becoming secretary of state, comes months after US President Donald Trump angrily accused the nuclear-armed country of harbouring "agents of chaos" who can attack NATO-led forces in neighbouring Afghanistan.

It follows on the heels of an unannounced stop in Afghanistan, where the US top diplomat reiterated America's commitment to the country and warned Washington has made "very specific requests" of Pakistan seeking to "undermine the

support that the Taliban receives".

Washington and Kabul have long accused Islamabad of supporting militant groups including the Taliban, believed to have links to Pakistan's shadowy military establishment who aim to use them as a regional bulwark against arch-nemesis India.

Pakistan has repeatedly denied the charge, insisting it maintains contacts only with the militants as it seeks to bring them to the table for peace talks. During his brief trip to Bagram air base Monday, Tillerson told reporters Pakistan needs to "take a clear-eyed view of the situation that they are confronted with in terms of the number of terrorist organisations that find safe haven inside" the country. (AFP)

Trump's Attempts to Undermine JCPOA Have Failed: Rouhani

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has stressed that all of US President Donald Trump's efforts to undermine the nuclear deal have so far failed.

"Every day (Trump) says this deal is the worst in the US' history. As he put it, it is shameful for America, but still he has not been able to do anything with this agreement," said Rouhani in a televised speech on Monday.

Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council - the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China - plus Germany signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on July 14, 2015 and started implementing it on January 16, 2016.

Under the JCPOA, Iran undertook to put limitations on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions imposed against Tehran.

On October 13, Trump refused to formally certify that Iran was complying with the 2015 nuclear deal and warned that he might ultimately terminate the agreement. While Trump did not pull Washington out of the nuclear deal, he gave the US Congress 60 days to decide whether to reimpose economic sanctions against Tehran that were lifted under the pact. Reimposing sanctions would put the US at odds with other signatories to the accord and the European Union. (Presstv)

President of Turkmenistan to Visit Tajikistan

ASHGABAT - President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov will pay an official visit to Tajikistan, the press service of the Tajik Foreign Ministry reports. The official trip of the Turkmen President was discussed at the meeting of Foreign Minister of Tajikistan Sirodjiddin Aslov with Deputy For-

eign Minister of Turkmenistan Berdimuhamedov Myatiyev. The Turkmen delegation arrived in Dushanbe to discuss preparations for the upcoming official visit of the President to Tajikistan, the report said. The delegation also held a meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister of Tajikistan. (AKI)