

May's Conservatives on 46 Percent, Labour on 34 Percent Ahead of Election: Orb Poll

EDINBURGH - British Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservatives have retained their lead over the opposition Labour Party ahead of the June 8 election, but with Labour gaining ground, an Orb poll published by the Telegraph showed on Saturday.

The poll showed the Conservatives with 46 percent, the same level of support versus one week ago, while Labour rose to 34 percent, up 2 percentage points, the Telegraph said.

The Liberal Democrats fell 1 point to 7 percent while the UK Independence Party gained 1 point to 7 percent. The poll was conducted between May 17 and 18, but the size of the sample was not given. (Reuters)



Not all Issues Discussed at Latest Round of Syria Peace Talks: UN Envoy

GENEVA - The UN Special Envoy for Syria announced Friday that the latest round of Syria peace talks ended, and he hopes to resume negotiations between warring factions "sometime in June" to address all the critical issues which had not been touched upon this week. "We did not have the physical time for in-depth discussions in the formal sessions to cover all four baskets," UN envoy Stefan de Mistura told press, referring to the issues of governance, a new con-

stitution, elections and the war on terrorism.

"But we did discuss several substantive issues of key concern to the parties and we intend to move ahead on all four baskets in coming rounds, while the new process of having expert meetings will also continue," he added.

The setting up this week of expert meetings on constitutional and legal matters was considered a positive step by the envoy, who hoped that they will push forward the political track in future negotiations.



The envoy also lauded the fact that the procedure this time round was more business-like, and that there were fewer rhetorical statements by rival factions engaged in UN-mediated talks seeking to broker a political end to the six-year conflict. The messages from rival ... (More on P4)... (19)

Trade Rep Brings 'America First' Policy to Asia-Pacific Summit

HANOI - U.S. President Donald Trump's new trade representative held his first face-to-face meetings with some key partners on Saturday as the United States charts an "America First" policy that has upended the old global order and sparked fears of protectionism. Robert Lighthizer met ministers from Canada and Japan on the sidelines of a gathering of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countries in Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, the biggest trade meeting since

Trump took office. Its members account for over 40 percent of world trade. Lighthizer and Japan's economy, trade and industry minister, Hiroshige Seko, agreed on strengthening bilateral trade and removing barriers, a statement from the U.S. trade representative said. "In particular, both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation to address common concerns with respect to unfair trade ... (More on P4)... (20)

UN, U.S. "Double Dealing" in Criticizing its Missile Tests: DPRK

UNITED NATIONS - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Friday accused the United Nations and the United States of "double dealing" for condemning Pyongyang's Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) tests. Ambassador Kim In Ryong, deputy permanent representative of the DPRK, read out a letter to the media in the Press Briefing Room at UN headquarters in which he threatened to ignore UN Security Council (UNSC)

resolutions for what it calls discrimination and registered additional complaints against the world organization and the United States, including for joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises. "The sophism of the U.S. claiming that it may carry out missile launches but not the DPRK and that its launches are a 'contribution' to peace and security while the one by DPRK is 'provocative' and strains tensions, is really ... (More on P4)... (21)

US Defense Chief Favors Diplomatic Way on Nuclear Issue in Korean Peninsula

WASHINGTON - U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis warned on Friday that military solution to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) nuclear issue would be "tragic on an unbelievable scale." "So our effort is to work with the U.N., work with China, work with Japan, work with South Korea to try to find a way out of this situation," said Mattis here at a Pentagon briefing. Tension has remained high on the Korean Peninsula over the past months between the United States and the DPRK over the

U.S. threat to stage military attacks against Pyongyang in response to its nuclear and missile programs. The United States and South Korea also held their largest-ever joint military exercises in the past two months. At the end of April, the USS Carl Vinson nuclear aircraft carrier task group arrived in the waters off the Korean Peninsula for a separate joint naval exercise



with South Korea. However, a joint statement by U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Mattis and National Intelligence Director Dan Coats said last month that Trump aims to use economic sanctions and diplomatic measures to pressure the DPRK to dismantle its nuclear and missile programs. (Xinhua)

Polish, German Presidents Discuss Migration Crisis, Bilateral Relations

WARSAW - Polish President Andrzej Duda on Friday said Poland is and has been open to people in need but "I cannot imagine a situation in which someone is forced to come to Poland and is kept here." His comments came after a meeting here with his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier. "Poland is an open country but I say a firm no when I hear about plans of obligatory relocation of people to Poland," said Duda, adding that the Europe needed cooperation and solidarity. "Anyone who wants and ... (More on P4)... (22)

Merkel Wants to Restart Minsk Talks on Eastern Ukraine

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel has told Ukraine's president that she wants to initiate new talks on the stagnant peace process in his country. The German news agency dpa reported that Merkel said Saturday she wants to bring together President Petro Poroshenko, Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron, and herself to discuss the continuing violence in eastern Ukraine. Those countries were all parties to the so-called Minsk agreement brokered in 2015 that has helped end large-scale battles between Ukrainian troops and pro-Russia separatists, but clashes have continued. Merkel expressed dismay about an increase of violations of the arms truce since Easter, and said that "security is the precondition for further political developments." Poroshenko, who met Merkel in Berlin Saturday, said that he sees no alternative to the Minsk agreements. (AP)

Trump Renominates Two Top U.S. Military Leaders: Pentagon

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump has renominated Marine Corps General Joseph Dunford as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Air Force General Paul Selva as the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Pentagon said Friday. Both generals would serve for a two-year term, but must still be reconfirmed by the Senate, according to the Pentagon. Dunford, who led U.S. forces and the international coalition in Afghanistan from February 2013 to



August 2014, was nominated to the Joint Staff by Trump's Democratic predecessor Barack Obama. He has served as chairman since September 2015. Selva, the Joint Staff's 10th vice-chairman, was nominated to the role at the ... (More on P4)... (23)

Merkel Rival Vows to Fight German Election Like France's Macron

BERLIN - Chancellor Angela Merkel's Social Democrat (SPD) rival said on Saturday he would model his campaign for the Sept. 24 federal election on that of Emmanuel Macron, an outsider who was voted in as French President two weeks ago. Martin Schulz, trying to regain momentum after a shock election loss in Germany's most populous state of North Rhine-Westphalia last week, the SPD's third defeat this year, said Macron's win showed a pro-European campaign could work. "I will do exactly the same. We need a strong impulse for Europe that also stirs up a new enthusiasm for Europe," he told the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper. In stark contrast to his oppo-

nent in the second round of the presidential election, French nationalist Marine Le Pen, Macron championed Europe. Schulz, a former president of the European Parliament who was chosen to lead the struggling SPD in January, reiterated support for Macron's idea of a common euro group budget to help jointly tackle growth in the currency union and create jobs. But he explicitly ruled out eurobonds, or mutualized debt, anathema to many Germans who are fear they will end up bankrolling struggling states who resist reforms. "It's a debate from yesterday that's over," Schulz said, adding that EU treaties did not allow for common debt liability. (Reuters)

Nieghbor News

China Rejects US Allegations over Plane Interception

BEIJING - China has denied US allegations that two Chinese fighter jets intercepted an American military plane earlier this week, saying that its aircrafts were acting "in accordance with the law." "Related remarks from the US side are inconsistent with fact," the Chinese Ministry of Defense said in a statement posted to its website late Friday. "On May 17, a US reconnaissance aircraft was carrying out an operation in airspace over the Chinese Yellow Sea (the northern part of the East China Sea), and Chinese aircrafts acted to identify and investigate in accordance with the law," the statement said, calling the action "professional" and "safe."

The US Air Force said in an earlier statement Friday that its plane, a WC-135 Constant Phoenix, was conducting a "routine mission" in international airspace when it was intercepted by two

Chinese Sukhoi SU-30 fighter aircrafts.

The WC-135 is a so-called "sniffer plane" designed to scan the atmosphere for signs of nuclear activity. "The WC-135 was operating in accordance with international law. While we are still investigating the incident, initial reports from the US aircrew characterized the intercept as unprofessional," the Air Force said.

Mid-air interceptions occur routinely in international airspace, but the US military will often call out foreign pilots if it judges the maneuvers to be risky or unprofessional. Meanwhile, China urged the US to halt such reconnaissance exercises in order to prevent future incidents. "The American military's frequent reconnaissance operations are the root cause of security issues between the Chinese and US navy and air forces," the Chinese Defense Ministry's statement said. (Presstv)

Pakistan in Talks with Thailand, Turkey, Iran on FTA

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan is negotiating free trade agreement (FTA) with a number of countries, including Thailand, Turkey and Iran, to bolster its exports. According to officials, several rounds of negotiations have been held so far with Thailand and Turkey, radio.gov.pk reported. They said the main text of the agreement on Trade in Goods has been finalized with both the countries and currently negotiations are underway on the items to be given conces-

sionary market access. The officials said negotiations with Iran are underway on trade in goods, services and investment. The first round of negotiations was held December last year in Tehran while the second meeting is likely to be held in July. According to the officials, several other measures are also being taken including incentives to the industries, promotional activities and establishment of Exim Bank, to enhance the country's exports. (Agencies)

Russia Remains Open to Cooperation with Iran, Putin Tells Rouhani

TEHRAN - In a congratulatory message to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on his reelection, Russian President Vladimir Putin voiced Moscow's readiness to keep working with Tehran on mutual and international issues. Putin congratulated his Iranian counterpart on winning a second term in the message on Saturday, RT Arabic reported. Moscow is prepared for cooperation with Tehran in the bilateral and international arenas, Putin added. The Russian leader also called for efforts to implement bilateral agreements between the two countries, including a recent one signed during President Rouhani's visit to Moscow in March.

President Rouhani won a second term in Friday's presidential election by winning 57 percent of the votes. The voter turnout surpassed 73 percent. Iran and Russia have formed a strong alliance in recent years and have ramped up efforts to boost defense cooperation, trade ties, and cultural interaction. They both support the Syrian government against foreign-backed militancy. Tehran and Moscow insist that the Syrian nation is the only side that has the right to shape the future of the Arab country, which has been gripped by civil war since March 2011 with various terrorist groups, including Daesh (ISIL), currently controlling parts of it. (Tasnim)

Presidents of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan Vow to Boost Cooperation

TASHKENT - President Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov discussed further development of bilateral cooperation of the two countries during the state visit of Mirziyoyev to Turkmenbashi, the press service of the Uzbek President reports. The talks focused on the consistent development of cooperation between the countries in all spheres. "This visit of the President of Uzbekistan will give a new impetus to bilateral partnership on

the basis of mutual trust, respect and interest and will serve to bring the relations to a higher level," the press service says. The heads of states exchanged views on the current state and prospects of cooperation between the countries, regional and international issues of mutual interest. The two underlined that both countries have everything to expand the practical results of the agreements reached in the framework of the state visit of Mirziyoyev to Turkmenistan in March 2017. (AKI)