

Merkel Warns US, Britain no Longer Reliable Partners

FRANKFURT - Europe "must take its fate into its own hands" faced with a western alliance divided by Brexit and Donald Trump's presidency, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Sunday. "The times in which we could completely depend on others are on the way out. I've experienced that in the last few days," Merkel told a crowd at an election rally in Munich, southern Germany. "We Europeans truly have to take our fate into our own hands," she added. While Germany and Europe would strive to remain on good terms with



America and Britain, "we have to fight for our own destiny", Merkel went on. Special emphasis was needed on warm relations between Berlin and newly-elected French President Emmanuel Macron, she said. The chancellor had just returned from a G7 summit which wound up Saturday without a deal between the US and the other six major advanced nations on upholding the 2015 Paris climate accords. Merkel on Saturday labelled the result of the "six against one" discussion "very difficult, not to say very unsatisfactory". (AFP)

Trump Girds for Defense of Top Aide in Russia Row

WASHINGTON - Donald Trump, just back from his first international trip as US president, geared up to combat concerns Sunday over aides' ties to Russia including explosive reports that his son-in-law sought a secret communications line with Moscow. The latest furor was stirred up after The Washington Post reported late Friday that Jared Kushner - arguably Trump's closest White House aide, and husband to the president's eldest daughter Ivanka - made a pre-inauguration proposal to the Russian ambassador to set up a secret, bug-proof link with the Kremlin. Kushner, 36, even suggested using Russian diplomatic facilities in the United States to protect such a channel from monitoring. The Post said, quoting US officials briefed on intelligence reports. The report, if confirmed, would raise new questions about the Trump team's relationship with

the Russians, who US intelligence agencies said tried to sway the November election in Trump's favor. News reports said the White House, reeling from the explosive developments in the long-running Russia saga, is ... (More on P4)... (16)



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16,000 Cops Donate Blood in Indian State to Overcome Crisis

NEW DELHI - More than 16,000 policemen in West Bengal have donated blood in the past one week to alleviate blood crisis in the eastern Indian state, local media reported Sunday. "Some 16,000 police personnel have donated blood. There will be nearly 50,000 bottles by June 10," West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was quoted as saying in state capital Kolkata Saturday. The Chief Minister has said that her ruling Trinamool Congress party

workers and other government employees in the state will also donate blood to overcome the crisis. India is reportedly facing a blood shortage of three million units, despite being a country of 1.25 billion people. And West Bengal is among some Indian states that faced severe blood crisis. The crisis is mainly due to the fact that there is a shortage of volunteers as well as stored blood expiring after some time, experts say. (Xinhua)

Macron Makes France's Mark, with Trump and Globally

TAORMINA, Italy - Within days of taking the French presidency, Emmanuel Macron faced a string of diplomatic tests - pushing the Paris climate deal on a skeptical Donald Trump, rallying European allies to do more to fight Syria's extremists, and now hosting Vladimir Putin. Europe has a lot riding on Macron's diplomatic performance. So far, it appears, so good. Macron struck up an unusually chummy rapport in his first meetings

with Trump, winning a handshake contest and the U.S. leader's cellphone number, despite their stark political differences. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, too, is warming to the energetic Macron - they've already met three times in the two weeks since Macron took office - and is pinning hopes on him to boost Europe's economy and unity. Macron is eager to dispel doubts about his ... (More on P4)... (17)

Germany to Decide about Troop Withdrawal from Turkey by Mid-June

BERLIN - Germany, whose relations with Turkey have been strained by a series of rows, will decide within two weeks whether to withdraw troops deployed at Turkey's Incirlik air force base, a German Foreign Ministry official said on Sunday. Roughly 250 German troops are based at Incirlik to help in the fight against Islamic State militants. Germany said last week it was considering moving its soldiers from Incirlik to Jordan or another country in the region because



the Turkish government refuses to grant German lawmakers access to the site. Ties between NATO allies Germany and Turkey

have deteriorated sharply after a succession of diplomatic rows. Most recently, Turkey has expressed anger that Germany is granting asylum

to Turks accused of participating in a failed coup in July. The failed putsch prompted a purge of the Turkish military, judiciary ... (More on P4)... (18)

Canada's Opposition Conservatives Pick New Leader

OTTAWA - Canada's main opposition Conservative Party elected Andrew Scheer as its leader Saturday to take on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in the next election, expected in 2019. Scheer, 38, is a lawmaker from western Saskatchewan province who has pledged to reduce government spending and trim deficits. After a year of campaigning, he defeated 12 other hopefuls at a suspenseful party meeting outside Toronto. Scheer now faces the difficult task of uniting two deeply divided wings of the party ahead of the next election. He succeeds interim leader Rona Ambrose, who took over from then prime minister Stephen Harper after his defeat in the 2015 elections. Harper was credited with uniting the right and breaking the Liberals' stranglehold on power over most of the last century in Canada. (AFP)

North Korea Leader Oversees 'New' Weapon System Test: KCNA

SEOUL - North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un has overseen a test of a new anti-aircraft weapon system, state media said Sunday, amid mounting tensions in the region following a series of missile tests by Pyongyang. Over the past few months, the young leader has overseen several military drills, including the test-firing of a medium-range ballistic missile last Sunday, as Washington seeks to ramp up pressure on Pyongyang to curb its nuclear ambitions. The North's official Korean Central News Agency said Kim "watched the test ... (More on P4)... (20)

May's Conservatives Maintain 14-Point Lead over Labour: ICM Poll

LONDON - British Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party has a 14 percentage point lead over the main opposition Labour Party ahead of a June 8 election, according to an ICM opinion poll published in the Sun newspaper on Sunday. The poll put the Conservatives on 46 percent and Labour on 32 percent, little changed from the previous ICM poll on May 22 which put the Conservatives on 47 percent and Labour on



33 percent. Other polls published since Monday's suicide attack in Manchester have shown May's lead narrowing.

ICM said support for the Liberal Democrats was at 8 percent and the UK Independence Party at 5 percent. (Reuters)

NATO's Parliamentary Assembly Reassures Support to Georgia's Wish to Join NATO

TBILISI - President of NATO's Parliamentary Assembly Paolo Alli reaffirmed support for the aspiration of Georgia to move closer to the West here on Saturday. At the meeting with Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili in Tbilisi, Alli reiterated NATO's strong supports for Georgia's aspiration to integrate with the Euro-Atlantic structure, according to local Interpress News Agency. Meanwhile, he noted that it is a rare case that the parliamentary assembly session is held in a non-NATO member state, which in his words means "not only a gesture but a significant political step by NATO."

During the meeting, Margvelashvili asked Alli to engage NATO experts in the preparation of recommendations in order to improve Georgia's national security architecture. On Friday, at the opening ceremony of NATO's Parliamentary Assembly in Tbilisi, Alli insisted that stability in the Caucasus and around the Black Sea is inextricably linked to Western security. "We think Georgia will become a member of NATO", said Alli. "This was the decision the allies made in Bucharest, and this decision remains" effective, he stressed. The four-day ... (More on P4)... (21)

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Beijing Fair Opens for International Cooperation in Service Trade

BEIJING - An international fair aiming at encouraging the opening up and cooperation of the service trade opened in Beijing Sunday. The Beijing International Fair for Trade in Services, slated for May 28 to June 1, will focus on science and technology, Internet and communication, culture and education business and tourism, health and medication, and finance. Themes at the fair include the opening up of the service industry, Belt and Road Initiative and coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region. Launched in 2012, the fair has been held successfully four times. A total of 7,500

companies have joined the event, with 321.71 billion U.S. dollars of transactions. On Sunday, 42 countries and regions held exhibitions or events, with 18 of the countries joining the fair for the first time. At a keynote speech at the fair, Beijing deputy mayor Zhang Gong said the city's service trade volume reached 150 billion U.S. dollars in 2016. The added value of Beijing's service sector was around 2 trillion yuan (292 billion U.S. dollars) last year. The sector accounted for 80.3 percent of the local GDP. About 12.3 billion U.S. dollars of foreign investment was used in the sector, according to Zhang. (Xinhua)

Sharif Urges People to Develop Characteristics of Unity, Tolerance, Human Respect

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has extended his greetings to the Muslims on the onset of the holy month of Ramadan and urged his countrymen to inculcate in them the characteristics of unity, tolerance, sincerity and human respect to fight the negative mindset. The prime minister, in his message to the nation on the beginning of the holy month, said fasting was not just merely meant to stay hungry or thirsty rather it was all about inner purification. He urged the people to make special arrangements during the month to assist the poor and deserving people living in their surroundings. He thanked Allah Almighty for bestowing him another opportuni-

ty to get blessings of the holy month and prayed for recurrence of such happenings throughout everyone's life. The prime minister said fasting was not only an act of worship rather it was a way of life meant to bring righteousness and discipline. He said, "In light of Allah's directives, the believer keeps him away from consuming everything during the holy month, which otherwise is permissible. Such a training is meant to make the worshippers strong and steadfast to enable them fight all challenges in their lives." The prime minister said fasting also taught to fight the social evils and develop the society as a healthy, pure and loving. (APP)

Blight of Sectarianism to Make Middle East Insecure: Rouhani

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says sectarianism is among the main blights undermining security in the Middle East, stressing the importance of adopting measures to promote peace in the Muslim world. In a Saturday phone call with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Iranian president said Tehran attaches great significance to the expansion of relations with its neighboring countries, particularly Qatar. "One of the principles of our foreign policy is to continue cooperation with the neighboring countries in the Persian Gulf, and we believe that we can remove the

existing obstacles and strengthen brotherly bonds through firm determination," Rouhani added. He urged regional countries to make collective efforts to establish peace and calm in the region, saying stability and security of regional countries are closely intertwined. He stressed the importance of pursuing "moderation and wisdom" in ties among countries, saying political approaches must be applied in settling regional crises. "Regional countries need more convergence and consultation to solve regional crises, and we are ready to cooperate in this regard," Rouhani said. (Prestv)

Uzbekistan's Senate Ratifies Textiles Protocol with EU

TASHKENT - The Senate of the Oliy Majlis (upper house of the Uzbek parliament) ratified the 'textiles protocol' to the partnership and cooperation agreement (PCA) between the EU and Uzbekistan at the plenary session, Trend's correspondent reported. The document also envisages customs privileges while processing, supplying and transit of Uzbek textile products to the EU countries. The law "On ratification of the protocol to the EU-Uzbekistan PCA and bilateral trade in textiles" in accordance with the procedures will be submitted

to the country's president for signing. Up till now, the most-favoured-nation treatment as part of the PCA has not been applied to the import of textile products from Uzbekistan. There was a double licensing system when issuing permits for the import of textile products from Uzbekistan to the EU. The European Parliament ratified the 'textile protocol' to the PCA between the EU and Uzbekistan in December 2016 after Uzbekistan complied with the requirement to eradicate child labor in cotton harvesting. (Trend)