



Khaleda's condition has deteriorated, says BNP

DHAKA
Jailed former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is trapped between life and death as her health has massively deteriorated over the last week due to unhealthy environment, according to her Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Jamiruddin Sircar, a BNP member, called for the immediate release of the leader, who is serving a 10-year jail term. **PTI**

Huawei will not bow to U.S. pressure: founder

BEIJING
Chinese telecom giant Huawei is ready to deal with Washington's crackdown and will reduce its reliance on U.S. components, its founder Ren Zhengfei told Japanese media. President Donald Trump effectively barred Huawei from the U.S. market on Wednesday and added it to a list which would restrict U.S. sales to the firm. **AFP**

Don't want war, but prepared to respond: Saudi

King Salman invites leaders to emergency summit on May 30 after attacks on oil pumping stations claimed by Houthis

REUTERS
RIYADH

Saudi Arabia said on Sunday that it wanted to avert war in the region but stood ready to respond with “all strength” following last week’s attacks on Saudi oil assets, telling Iran that the ball was now in its court.

Riyadh has accused Tehran of ordering Tuesday’s drone strikes on two oil pumping stations in the kingdom, claimed by Yemen’s Iran-aligned Houthi group. Two days earlier, four vessels, including two Saudi oil tankers, were sabotaged off the coast of the United Arab Emirates.

Security patrols

In response, countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) began “enhanced security patrols” in the international waters of the Arabian Gulf area on Saturday, the U.S. Navy’s Bahrain-based Fifth Fleet said on Sunday.

Iran has denied involvement in either operation,



Naval specialists attaching cargo to an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter from the deck of the aircraft carrier *USS Abraham Lincoln*, which has been deployed in the Gulf region. **• AFP**

which come as Washington and the Islamic Republic spar over sanctions and the U.S. military presence in the region, raising concerns about a potential U.S.-Iran conflict. “The kingdom of Saudi Arabia does not want a war in the region nor does it seek that,” Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel al-Jubeir told a news conference.

“It will do what it can to prevent this war and at the same time it reaffirms that in the event the other side chooses war, the kingdom will respond with all force

and determination, and it will defend itself and its interests.”

Saudi Arabia’s King Salman on Sunday invited Gulf and Arab leaders to convene emergency summits in Mecca on May 30 to discuss implications of the attacks.

A Norwegian insurers’ report seen by Reuters said Iran’s Revolutionary Guards were “highly likely” to have facilitated the attack on vessels near the UAE’s Fujairah emirate, a main bunkering hub lying just outside the Strait of Hormuz.

Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif has dismissed the possibility of war erupting, saying Tehran did not want conflict and no country had the “illusion it can confront Iran”.

Not pursuing war: Iran

This stance was echoed by the head of Iran’s elite Revolutionary Guards on Sunday. “We are not pursuing war but we are also not afraid of war,” Major General Hossein Salami was cited as saying by the semi-official news agency Tasnim.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman discussed regional developments, including efforts to strengthen security and stability, in a phone call with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the Saudi Media Ministry tweeted on Sunday. “We want peace and stability in the region but we will not sit on our hands in light of the continuing Iranian attack,” Mr. Jubeir said. “The ball is in Iran’s court and it is up to Iran to determine what its fate will be.”

‘Iranian scientist in U.S. custody since October’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TEHRAN

The U.S. has detained an Iranian scientist for nearly seven months for allegedly attempting to ship growth hormones, Iranian media said on Sunday, quoting his brother as saying he is being held “hostage”.

Masoud Soleimani, 49, a professor and senior stem cell researcher at Tehran’s

Tarbiat Moddares University, left for the U.S. on October 22, state news agency IRNA said.

He was to undertake a six-month study in the U.S., but was arrested by the FBI at Chicago airport, according to semi-official news agency ISNA. His visa was cancelled and he was transferred to Dayton prison in Atlanta, IRNA said.

Iraq slams U.S. company for evacuating staff

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BAGHDAD

Iraq on Sunday slammed as “political” a decision by U.S. energy giant ExxonMobil to evacuate staff from a southern oil field after Washington ordered personnel to quit its Baghdad Embassy. “The temporary withdrawal

of employees has nothing to do with security in southern Iraqi oil fields or any threats,” Oil Minister Thamer al-Ghadban said.

He called the move to pull out staff from the West Qurna oil field west of the southern port city of Basra “unacceptable and unjustified”.

Republican lawmaker Amash calls for impeachment of U.S. President

Becomes the first GOP politician to call for removing Trump

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Republican lawmaker Justin Amash said on Saturday that he believed Donald Trump has engaged in “impeachable conduct,” becoming the first politician of his party to call for removing the President. The Michigan Representative also accused Attorney General William Barr of “deliberately” misleading the public over the actual content and tenor of Robert Mueller’s report on Russian interference.

In a series of tweets, Mr. Amash – a member of the ultra-conservative Freedom Caucus – said “few members of Congress even read



U.S Representative Justin Amash. **• AP**

Mueller’s report,” which identified “multiple examples of conduct satisfying all the elements of obstruction of justice.” “Undoubtedly any person who is not the President of the United

States would be indicted based on such evidence,” he added. “Mueller’s report reveals that President Trump engaged in specific actions and a pattern of behaviour that meet the threshold for impeachment.”

Mr. Amash’s comments went even further than those by most Democratic leaders in Congress.

Fellow Michigan lawmaker Rashida Tlaib, a Democrat, urged Mr. Amash to co-sponsor her impeachment resolution. “...I’ve got an impeachment investigation resolution you’re going to want to cosponsor,” Ms. Tlaib wrote in response to Mr. Amash’s thread.

Trump ‘pro-life’ except in cases of rape and incest

Spells out his position on abortion

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has declared himself “strongly pro-life”, days after two U.S. States passed tough new restrictions on abortions, but said exceptions should be made for pregnancies resulting from rape or incest. He spelled out his position on abortion in his first comments on the hot-button issue since Alabama’s Governor signed a near-total ban on the termination of pregnancy.

“As most people know, and for those who would like to know, I am strongly Pro-Life, with the three exceptions – Rape, Incest and



Abortion rights activists protesting outside the U.S. Supreme Court. **• AP**

protecting the Life of the mother...” he tweeted late on Saturday. He added: “The Radical Left, with late term abortion (and worse), is imploding on this issue. “We must stick together and Win for Life in 2020.”

Austria to hold election in September after video scandal, collapse of govt.

Chancellor called for snap poll after deputy’s resignation

REUTERS
VIENNA

Austria’s President on Sunday recommended that a new election be held in early September, saying he wanted to restore trust in the government after a video scandal led to the resignation of the Vice-Chancellor.

Chancellor Sebastian Kurz pulled the plug on the coalition and called for a snap election on Saturday after his deputy, Heinz-Christian Strache, the leader of the far-right Freedom Party, quit over a video showed him discussing fixing state contracts in return for favours. It is most important that Austrians are given the



Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz. **• AFP**

chance of a new start to rebuild trust in its government, President Alexander van der Bellen said in a statement at his Hofburg residence in Vienna.

“This new beginning should take place quickly, as quickly as the provisions of the Federal Constitution permit, so I plead for elec-

tions... in September, if possible at the beginning of September,” he said.

Mr. Strache has described the video sting as a “targeted political assassination” and said it never led to any money changing hands. He insisted the only crime that took place was illegally videotaping a private dinner party. Mr. Van der Bellen and Mr. Kurz said at their joint news conference that stability was a main priority for them for the coming months. Mr. Kurz repeated that he saw the snap elections as the only way to solve the crisis. “The new elections were a necessity, not a wish,” he said.

Sirisena vows to eliminate terrorism

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka’s President marked the 10th anniversary of the end of the civil war with Tamil rebels on Sunday by vowing to crush Islamist militants responsible for Easter bombings that killed 258 people.

Maitripala Sirisena said Sri Lankan security forces and intelligence units could use their experience in defeating separatist Tamil guerrillas a decade ago to meet the new challenge from religious extremists.

“We have been able to arrest all those who were behind the Easter attacks. Some have been killed in confrontations. This gives me confidence that we can completely eliminate the threat from international terrorism,” he told a commemoration ceremony.

May to make ‘new, bold’ Brexit offer

PM to present an improved deal for lawmakers’ approval

REUTERS
LONDON

British Prime Minister Theresa May said she will present a “new, bold offer” to lawmakers with “an improved package of measures” in a final attempt to get the Brexit divorce deal through Parliament before she leaves office.

After failing three times to get Parliament’s approval for her deal, the government will now put the Withdrawal Agreement Bill, legislation which will enact that deal, before Parliament for a vote in early June.

“Whatever the outcome of any (indicative) votes, I will not be simply asking MPs (lawmakers) to think again. Instead I will ask them to look at a new and improved deal with a fresh pair of eyes – and to give it their support,” Ms. May wrote in *The Sunday Times*.



Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May. **• REUTERS**

Brexit talks between Ms. May’s Conservatives and the Opposition Labour Party collapsed on Friday.

Facing her last chance to push through the exit from the bloc, Ms. May said common ground with Labour had been found in workers’ rights and protections, the environment and security.

“When the Withdrawal Agreement Bill comes before MPs, it will represent a new, bold offer to MPs across the House of Com-

mons, with an improved package of measures that I believe can win new support,” she said.

Corbyn’s response

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, however, said Ms. May had not moved away from any of the red lines that shaped her previous attempt.

“We haven’t seen whatever the new Bill is going to be yet but nothing I’ve heard leads me to believe it is fundamentally any different from the previous Bill that has been put forward so as of now we are not supporting it,” he said in a pre-recorded interview broadcast on the BBC’s Andrew Marr show. Mr. Corbyn said he would be willing to consider a new offer, including for example new legislation that entrenched workers’ rights in law.

PM Morrison thanks community members

Australian coalition touches majority

REUTERS
MELBOURNE/SYDNEY

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison thanked his fellow Pentecostal churchgoers on Sunday after a miraculous election victory that defied years of unfavourable opinion polls and bruised a Labor opposition that had been widely expected to win.

Mr. Morrison’s Liberal-led conservative coalition has won or is leading in 76 seats, the number needed to form a majority government, according to the Australian Electoral Commission. Slightly more than three-quarters of the roughly 17 million votes have been



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison. **• AFP**

counted. A jubilant Mr. Morrison hugged community members after an early Sunday service at the Horizon Church in Sydney’s southern suburbs, from where he was first elected to Parliament in 2007.

Swiss voters approve tighter gun controls

This will align their law with EU rules

REUTERS
ZURICH/GENEVA

Swiss voters agreed by a nearly two-to-one margin on Sunday to adopt tighter gun controls in line with changes to European Union rules, heading off a clash with Brussels. The measure passed in the binding referendum under the Swiss system of direct democracy by a 64-36% margin, provisional final results showed.

The restrictions, which apply to non-EU member Switzerland because it is part of Europe’s Schengen open-border system, had raised hackles among shooting enthusiasts ahead of the vote.

Failure to adopt the rules could have forced Switzerland to leave the passport-free Schengen zone and the Dublin joint system for handling asylum requests.

Paris attacks

After militants killed scores of people in Paris in 2015, the EU in 2017 toughened laws against purchasing semi-automatic rifles such as the ones used in those attacks and made it easier to track weapons in national databases.

The initial EU proposal provoked an outcry because it meant a ban on the Swiss tradition of ex-soldiers keeping their assault rifles.