

Trump, Abe bond over sumo and golf

U.S. President reports 'great progress' in trade negotiations after meeting Japanese Prime Minister

REUTERS
TOKYO
President Donald Trump on Sunday played golf with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and presented a trophy to the winner of a sumo tournament, turning to personal diplomacy for the second day of a Japan visit shadowed by tough trade talk.

Mr. Trump is unhappy with Japan's large trade surplus and is considering putting high tariffs on its auto exports if a bilateral trade agreement is not reached. The U.S. and China are also engaged in an expensive trade war that has pounded financial markets worldwide. But it was all smiles on Sunday as the two leaders played golf and later, with wives Melania and Akie, watched giant sumo wrestlers grapple on the final day of a 15-day tournament won by Japanese star Asanoyama.

Entering the ring

Mr. Trump, the first U.S. President to watch sumo in the sport's homeland, waved to



Gold buddies: U.S. President Donald Trump with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at Mobara Country Club, Japan. •AP

the audience as he entered the hallowed Kokugikan and then saluted them with applause. Arriving just in time for Mr. Asanoyama's bout, Mr. Trump nodded as Mr. Abe gestured in explanation, later watching as the three final lifted their legs high and stamped them to the ground in a ritual entrance.

The two couples used armchairs instead of sitting cross-legged on the *zabuton*

cushions traditional for close ringside seats. Mr. Trump, using a special set of wooden stairs fitted to the sumo ring, presented Mr. Asanoyama with the President's Cup, a trophy topped with a bald eagle, the U.S. national bird.

The two met earlier at a suburban golf course.

Despite the bonhomie, trade was never far from mind. "Great progress being made in our trade negotia-

tions with Japan. Agriculture and beef heavily in play," Mr. Trump tweeted after arriving back in Tokyo from the suburban golf course. "Much will wait until after their July elections where I anticipate big numbers."

Later, prior to the start of dinner at a traditional Japanese restaurant where the food is handed to the diners on paddles, Mr. Trump said the two had had a productive day. "The Prime Minister and I talked a lot today about trade and military and various others things," he said. "I think we had a very productive day."

Earlier, on Saturday night, Mr. Trump spoke to Japan's business leaders. "Just last week, U.S. beef exports gained full access to Japan and to the markets in Japan for the first time since the year 2000. We welcome your support in these efforts, and we hope to have several further announcements soon, and some very big ones over the next few months," he said.

Trump plays down tests by North Korea

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday downplayed recent North Korean missile launches.

He tweeted that North Korea had tested "some small weapons" that had "disturbed some of my people, and others, but not me". This appeared to be a reference to U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton, who said on Saturday that there was "no doubt" the launches had contravened UN Security Council resolutions.

But Mr. Trump said: "I have confidence that Chairman Kim will keep his promise to me."

He maintains that North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un had pledged he was serious about denuclearisation.

3 French IS jihadists sentenced to death in Iraq

They were captured in Syria by U.S.-backed forces

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BAGHDAD

An Iraqi court on Sunday sentenced three French citizens to death after they were found guilty of joining the Islamic State, the first IS members from France to be handed capital punishment, a court official said.

Captured in Syria by a U.S.-backed force fighting the jihadists, Kevin Gonet, Leonard Lopez and Salim Machou were transferred to Iraq for trial. They have 30 days to appeal. Iraq has taken custody of thousands of jihadists repatriated in recent months from neighbouring Syria, where they were caught by the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces.

500 foreigners tried

The Iraqi judiciary said earlier in May that it has tried and sentenced more than 500 foreign IS suspects since the start of 2018. Its courts



A special counterterrorism court in Baghdad, Iraq. •AP

have condemned many to life in prison and others to death, although no foreign IS members have yet been executed. The trials have been criticised by rights groups, which say they often rely on evidence obtained through torture.

Those sentenced on Sunday were among 13 French nationals caught in battle-scarred eastern Syria and handed to Iraqi authorities in February on suspicion of being members of IS's feared contingent of foreign fighters. One was later released

as it was found he had travelled to Syria to support the Yazidi religious minorit. The remaining 12 were put on trial under Iraq's counterterrorism law, which can dole out the death penalty to anyone found guilty of joining a "terrorist" group.

Gonet, who fought for IS before being arrest in Syria with his mother, wife, and half-brother, has also been sentenced *in absentia* by a French court to nine years in prison, according to the French Terrorism Analysis Center (CAT). Machou was a member of the infamous Tariq ibn Ziyad brigade, "a European foreign terrorist fighter cell" that carried out attacks in Iraq and Syria and planned others in Paris and Brussels, according to U.S. officials. Lopez, from Paris, travelled with his wife and two children to Mosul in northern Iraq before entering Syria, said French investigators.

Israeli President shocked over warning on kippah

'It shows Jews are not safe in Germany'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JERUSALEM

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin said on Sunday that Germany's warning to Jews on the dangers of wearing the traditional *kippah* cap were a "capitulation to anti-Semitism" and evidence that Jews were unsafe there.

Germany's government commissioner on anti-Semitism Felix Klein said in an interview published on Saturday that he "cannot advise Jews to wear the *kippah* everywhere all the time in Ger-

many," due to increasing anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish attacks there.

Mr. Rivlin said that Mr. Klein's remarks "shocked" him, and while appreciating the German government's "commitment to the Jewish community," accused it of bowing to those targeting Jews in Germany.

"Fears about the security of German Jews are a capitulation to anti-Semitism and an admittance that, again, Jews are not safe on German soil," he said.

Afghan teenagers get 30 years for killing girl

Mahsa was abducted and strangled after her parents were unable to pay ransom

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

An Afghan court on Sunday sentenced two teenage boys to 30 years in prison for the abduction and killing of a young girl whose brutal murder provoked a national outcry. Six-year-old Mahsa Ahmadi was snatched off a Kabul street in March and was killed after her parents were unable to pay a ransom of \$3,00,000.

Police eventually arrested two boys and released a video clip showing them confessing. They said they had picked up Mahsa, driven her

away on a motorcycle, taken her to a house and then strangled her after the ransom wasn't paid.

In a televised court hearing, a judge sentenced the two youths to 30 years each in prison. Their ages were not released, but the judge said they were under 18.

For Mahsa's father, the sentence was too lenient. "I want the severest punishment for them, they should be hanged," he said. "They should feel what we are feeling." But the judge said since they were minors, they could not be executed. They



Mahsa Ahmadi, who was killed in March. •TWITTER

have the right to appeal the sentence. Mahsa's death drew broad condemnation and Afghans took to social media demanding justice.

Kidnappings for ransom are increasing in Kabul, as

are a host of other crimes, adding yet more worries for an already stressed-out population. Overwhelmed police are already pushed to their limits attempting to prevent insurgent attacks.

Crime in Kabul came under scrutiny again this month when former journalist Mena Mangal was murdered in broad daylight. Her killing appears tied to a domestic dispute, but many observers viewed the brutal and public slaying as a bellwether demonstrating just how cheap life has become in Afghanistan.

ELSEWHERE



Thailand's ex-PM Tinsulanonda dead

REUTERS
BANGKOK
Former Prime Minister and close adviser to Thailand's revered royals Prem Tinsulanonda died early on Sunday aged 98, a senior parliamentarian said. Mr. Tinsulanonda was a top aide to the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej and helped cement the unshakeable bond between the monarchy and the military. •AFP

Saudi downs drone fired by Houthis from Yemen

REUTERS
RIYADH
Saudi Arabia on Sunday shot down a bomb-laden drone deployed by Iran-aligned Houthi rebels in Yemen to attack an airport in the kingdom, state media reported. The Saudi air force intercepted and destroyed the drone that targeted Jizan airport, close to the southern border with Yemen. •AFP

Far-right parties to make gains in European Parliament election

Exit polls show parties of Le Pen, Salvini finishing at the top

REUTERS
BRUSSELS

Germany's Green party doubled its share of the vote in Sunday's European Parliament election, leaping into second place behind Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives.

The far-right Alternative for Germany showed gains to 10.5% as Ms. Merkel's party shed nine percentage points from five years ago.

Britain, which voted on Thursday, is also expected to return a large number of anti-EU MEPs. These, however, may not hold their seats for long as the British negotiate to leave the Union.

In France, Marine Le Pen's far-right party edged just ahead of the centrist alliance of President Emmanuel Macron in exit poll. Ms. Le Pen's National Rally would get just one more seat than Mr. Macron's En Marche, with 24 of France's



An official opening a ballot box in Thessaloniki, Greece, on Sunday. •AFP

74 seats in the European Parliament, the poll showed.

The 20% mark

Overall, indications bolstered hopes among officials that hostile-to-Europe, populist parties may fall short of their greatest ambition to form a solid bloc of 20% of the 751-seat chamber. That figure could, combined with milder eurosceptics, see 30% of seats held by lawmakers bent on thwarting mainstream leaders' plans

for closer EU integration.

In the Netherlands, an upstart anti-immigration party came only fourth with 11%, according to an exit poll. The centre-left staged an unexpected comeback, helped by former Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans leading its EU-wide campaign.

In Austria, the Freedom Party, which took a lead in the renaissance of the far right across the continent, took a hammering, a projection showed. However, in Hungary, the eurosceptic party of Prime Minister Viktor Orban was on track to beat pre-vote poll expectations, a survey found.

The anti-immigration League of Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini could find itself the biggest single party in the EU legislature if it can top the 28 seats, which polls indicate have been won by Ms. Merkel's coalition.

Guaidó to send delegates for Oslo talks with govt.

Norway is leading a mediation effort

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CARORA

Venezuela's Opposition leader Juan Guaidó said on Saturday that he would send delegates to Oslo next week for the first meeting with representatives of President Nicolás Maduro's government as part of a Norway-led mediation effort.

They "will talk with both the Norwegian government and with representatives of the regime", Mr. Guaidó said, after the two Venezuelan sides travelled separately to Oslo last week.

He said the Opposition delegation will be headed by Deputy Parliament Speaker Stalin González and

the ex-deputy Gerardo Blyde, both of whom were involved in the initial talks with the Norwegians.

Media reports said Venezuelan Communications Minister Jorge Rodríguez and the Governor of Miranda Province Hector Rodriguez represented Mr. Maduro's government in the initial talks, but it was unclear if they would participate in next week's meeting.

Mr. Guaidó has appeared cautious about talking with Mr. Maduro's representatives since the idea is unpopular with the Opposition base that has spent months in the streets trying to push Mr. Maduro out.

Khalifa Haftar rules out ceasefire in Tripoli

Accuses UN of trying to partition Libya

REUTERS
PARIS

Libyan eastern commander, Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, has ruled out a ceasefire in the battle for Tripoli and accused the UN of seeking to partition Libya, according to an interview published by French newspaper *Le Journal du Dimanche*.

Field Marshal Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) began an offensive in early April to take Tripoli from fighters loyal to Prime Minister Fayez al-Serraj's Government of National Accord, which has the backing of the UN. "Of course, the political solution is still the goal. But to get back to politics, we



Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar in a 2018 photo. •AFP

must first finish with militias," he said. He also said the head of UN mission to Libya, Ghassan Salame, was no longer impartial. "Partition of Libya is maybe what our adversaries want. This is maybe what Ghassan Salame also wants."