

World News Roundup



Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May takes part in a Q&A during a general election campaign event at marketing services group Linney, England on May 10. Britain goes to the polls in a general election on June 8. (AP)

Brexit

Barnier bids to ease row

'No return to a hard Ireland-UK border'

LONDON, May 11, (Agencies): The European Union's chief Brexit negotiator has reassured Ireland that the bloc will fight to ensure there is no return to a hard border with Northern Ireland when the UK leaves the bloc.

Ireland is the only EU country that shares a land border with Britain, and could face economic turmoil if Brexit brings tariffs and other trade barriers between the UK and the bloc.

EU negotiator **Michel Barnier** told Irish lawmakers on Thursday that "I will work with you to avoid a hard border."

Addressing both houses of the Irish parliament in Dublin, Barnier acknowledged that Ireland is in a unique position over Brexit and said "Ireland's interest will be the Union's interest."

He said nothing in the exit negotiations should put Northern Ireland's peace settlement at risk.

Barnier, sought to ease tensions between the bloc and Britain, saying a deal was possible if the talks were conducted without "aggressivity".

"If we put things in the right order, if we negotiate with mutual respect, without any kind of aggressivity ... and if we are open to finding solutions, there is no reason why our strong Europe cannot maintain a strong relationship with the UK," Barnier said.

The prospect of reinstalling checkpoints has sparked fears for a resumption of tensions in Northern Ireland, which was plagued by decades of violence over British control until the Good Friday peace agreement in 1998.

Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny told his Fine Gael party on Wednesday that he would deal with his leadership next week, when he is widely expected to announce his resignation, two sources present at the meeting told Reuters.

Kenny — who has already said that he will not lead the Fine Gael party into elections due late next year — had said he would outline his plans to party colleagues following a European Union summit on Brexit at the end of April.

Kenny, prime minister since 2011 and the leader of his party for almost 15 years, is expected to be replaced by a younger colleague — most likely Social Protection Minister Leo Varadkar, the bookmaker's favourite, or Housing Minister Simon Coveney.

Coveney said he expected the three-week contest to begin in the not too distant future.

Whoever wins will be both party leader and prime minister at least until the election. Fine Gael fortunes are banking on a new leader to revive their fortunes with the party marginally trailing its main rival Fianna Fail in most opinion polls.

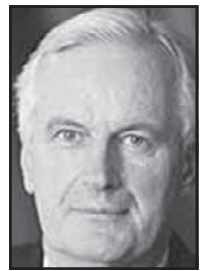
Also:

BRUSSELS: Plans to move the European Union's London-based medicines regulator to Strasbourg and push through a long-held project to close the EU parliament's expensive second seat in the French city are gaining traction among legislators, EU officials said.

Lawmakers have been holding discreet talks on such a swap, which they hope would help eliminate French opposition to Strasbourg losing the seat, one official said.

Last week's election win in France of pro-EU President **Emmanuel Macron** may further help the plan come to fruition.

ros (\$123.96 million) a year, EU auditors say. Critics have long called for the arrangement to be scrapped, but it has stayed in place largely because France would have vetoed any attempt to make the



Barnier



Ireland's President, Michael D. Higgins (left), and his wife Sabina (second left), greet Britain's Prince Charles, Prince of Wales and his wife Britain's Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall at Aras an Uachtairain, the official residence of the President, in Phoenix Park, Dublin on May 10. (AFP)

Britan

3 charged with terrorism: London police on Wednesday charged three women, including a mother and daughter, with terrorism offences and conspiracy to murder after a raid during which one of them was shot.

The charges were announced following the April 27 operation at a home in north-west London, during which 20-year-old Khawla Barghouthi was arrested and Rizlaine Boular, 21, was shot by police.

Boular's mother Mina Dich, 43, was arrested the same evening in Kent, southeast England.

The Metropolitan Police was given permission to hold the women for an extended period of questioning and they were charged on Wednesday with preparation of a terrorist act and conspiracy to murder.

Counter terrorism officers had been monitoring them ahead of the raid, police said at the time of the arrests, without giving detail of the nature of the terrorism plot they were allegedly behind. The women are due to appear in court on Thursday.

Seven other people arrested as part of the terrorism probe have been released from custody, including three women aged 18-19.

Britain's national terror threat level has been "severe", meaning an attack is highly likely, since August 2014.

The northwest London raid came hours after a man was arrested near the British parliament in possession of three knives.

Khalid Mohammed Omar Ali, 27, has been charged with preparing terrorist acts in relation to that incident and faces further charges related to alleged bomb-making in Afghanistan.

His arrest followed the March 22 attack near parliament by **Khalid Masood**, 52, who drove into pedestrians, killing four, then stabbing a police officer to death before being shot dead by an armed officer. (AFP)

Girl dies on water ride: A British theme park is closed to the public after an 11-year-old girl was killed on a water ride. Evha Jannath died after falling from the Splash Canyon ride. She was on a school trip Tuesday at the Drayton Manor theme park in Tamworth, 125 miles (200 kilometers) northwest of London, when she fell into the water.

British police said that Evha was recovered from the water and received advanced life support from ambulance crews but later

Election

Labour stung by leak

Conservatives 'slip'

LONDON, May 11, (Agencies): Support for British Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party has slipped two percentage points ahead of a June 8 general election but they still hold a big lead over the opposition Labour Party, according to a YouGov opinion poll for the Times.

The Conservatives were at 46 percent against Labour's 30 percent, the paper said in a limited extract released on Wednesday.

YouGov interviewed 1,651 people between May 9 and 10.

Britain dismisses report of worsening relations between May and Hammond

Britain's defence minister on Thursday dismissed a Times newspaper report suggesting that relations between May and her finance minister, Philip Hammond, had deteriorated.

The Times newspaper said relations between the teams of the two most senior members of government had deteriorated following a series of disagreements over policy and presentation ahead of a June 8 election.

When asked about the front page report, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon told BBC Radio: "I would have thought John you would be the last person to fall for such titillating."

"Philip Hammond, (interior minister) Amber Rudd, Theresa May, (foreign minister) Boris Johnson and I in the cabinet are working together."

Meanwhile, May promised to increase the country's defence budget by at least 0.5 percent in real terms every year until 2023 if she wins a June 8 election, adding an extra two years to her party's existing spending pledge. May, whose Conservative Party is expected to win the election next month, said the promise was about keeping the country safe and fulfilling Britain's "obligations to the world".

"If elected on June 8 I will ensure that the UK continues to spend at least 2 percent of GDP on defence and that the budget rises every year," May said in a statement.

Alongside the United States, Britain is one of only five countries in

the NATO military alliance which meet an obligation to spend 2 percent of economic output on defence — something May has used to curry favour with US President Donald Trump.

Both Trump and May have repeatedly called on NATO allies to meet the spending target.

In related news, Britain's opposition Labour Party faced embarrassment Thursday after a draft of its platform for next month's election was leaked days before its scheduled release.

In a further mishap, a car carrying Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn struck a television cameraman outside a party meeting.

The draft election manifesto says that if elected Labour will re-nationalize Britain's railways and post office, abolish university tuition fees, ban "zero hours" employment contracts, build more social housing and reverse cuts to welfare benefits.

The party says the pledges will be paid for out of taxation and redirected revenue.

The governing Conservatives said the policies show Labour has an outdated left-wing economic vision.

The party had planned to publish the document next week before the June 8 election. The unveiling of the parties' manifestoes — containing solid promises on which they can be held to account — is a centerpiece of every British election.

Labour election coordinator Andrew Gwynne said the leaked document was not the final manifesto but "a draft of policy ideas."

Corbyn pulled out of a campaign appearance Thursday morning after the leak. Later, a car carrying Corbyn appeared to hit the foot of a television cameraman outside a meeting of party officials in central London.

The cameraman was treated by paramedics before being taken away in an ambulance.

Among the pledges, which are yet to be signed off, the party said it would guarantee a "meaningful vote" on the final Brexit agreement and rules out leaving the European Union without a deal.

tating effects.

"This fragility that we see in so many countries in the world has been the cause of many conflicts," Guterres said at an event organised by Britain's United Nations Association.

In his first major speech in Britain since becoming UN head in January, Guterres said the organisation's humanitarian operations must focus on preventing repeat problems.

"It is essential to not just address the humanitarian crises, but to build resilience — of populations, of regions and countries — to create the conditions for those humanitarian crises not to be repeated," said Guterres.



Guterres

In 2015, a record 65.3 million people were uprooted worldwide, according to UN data. Some 1.6 million refugees and migrants reached the European Union in 2014-2016, leading to the largest migration crisis since World War Two.

More than 20 million people risk dying from starvation because of drought and conflict in Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and northeast Nigeria, while more than 100 million face acute malnutrition worldwide, according to the UN (RTRS)

Remains 'N. Ireland victim': Human remains found in a French forest have been identified as those of **Seamus Ruddy**, one of the "disappeared" of Northern Ireland's conflict who was murdered in 1985, a panel said Wednesday.

"We were looking for Seamus Ruddy, and we found him," a spokesman for the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims Remains (ICLVR), Dennis Godfrey, told AFP.

He said French authorities used a familial DNA sample to match Ruddy to remains found in the Bord forest south of Rouen, in the northern region of Normandy, on Saturday.

The 33-year-old was working as an English teacher in Paris when he vanished in May 1985, becoming one of the 16 "disappeared" of Northern Ireland.

They were abducted and killed by republican paramilitaries during the so-called Troubles, three decades of violence over British control of the province that left around 3,500 dead.

Ruddy's murder was claimed in 1995 by the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), a republican paramilitary group. The Irish Republican Army claimed a further 13 murders of those who "disappeared". (AFP)

Sham marriages reveal slavery:

Criminal gangs are tricking East Europeans into sham Scottish marriages with Asian men — selling the women for sex, labour and passports — in an expose that campaigners say reveals the extent of human slavery worldwide.

The cross-border story of how destitute women are lured from Romania and Slovakia with the promise of work in Western Europe, then sold in Scotland as slaves is told in a BBC television documentary to be aired on Wednesday.

Anti-slavery activists said the story was no surprise, with an estimated 46 million people living in some form of modern slavery around the globe.

"Sadly, the issue of sham marriage and sexual exploitation of vulnerable women and girls is not a new phenomenon," said Justine Currell, Executive Director at Unseen, an anti-slavery group.

"This story highlights the depths that these gangs will go to make a profit, regardless of the terrible consequences for the individual," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. (RTRS)

died in a hospital.

In a statement issued Wednesday by police, the Jannath family said Evha "was a beautiful little girl who was full of love and always smiling."

An investigation has been launched to



Masood



Ruddy

determine how Evha fell off the ride. Similar rides have been closed at other theme parks. (AP)

Build resilience — UN chief: The head of the United Nations said on Wednesday it was vital to help fragile regions grow resilient and ward off future crises as well as address humanitarian disasters when they erupt.

UN Secretary-General **António Guterres** also criticised rising xenophobia and "aggressive nationalism" in western democracies, calling for greater social cohesion.

Guterres said "sources of fragility" — such as climate change, corruption, mass migration, scarce food and water — no longer occurred in isolation and had devas-