

World News Roundup

Britain

Weather disrupts airport, trains

EU is attempting to swindle Britain in Brexit talks: report

LONDON, July 29, (Agencies): Italy's far right deputy prime minister **Matteo Salvini** has accused the European Union of attempting to "swindle" the United Kingdom out of the Brexit people voted for in the landmark 2016 referendum, The Sunday Times reported.

"My experience in the European parliament tells me you either impose yourself or they swindle you", Salvini told the weekly as he urged prime minister Theresa May to take a harder stance in negotiations to sever ties with the trading bloc.

May and her ministers are scrambling to forge agreements with each of the EU's 27 member states after a week which saw her already fragile "Chequers plan" for Brexit knocked back by Brussels chief negotiator Michel Barnier.



Salvini

On Thursday Barnier rejected May's plan to keep the border between EU member Ireland and the UK province of Northern Ireland open, with a dual system of taxes levied by each side for the benefit of the other.

But League party leader Salvini has urged May to consider taking a hard line, potentially leaving the EU without securing a deal. "Because on some principles there is no need to be flexible and you should not go backwards," he told The Times.

The paper said he also implied the EU is attempting to punish Britain for seeking to leave, claiming: "There is no objectivity or good faith from the European side."

"I hope the negotiations end well for the UK to serve as an example of the people coming out on top of the EU," he added. "I remember the referendum stage as an example of participation and freedom: I hope it can be an opportunity for the British."

Barnier has attempted to scupper May's plan to circumvent Brussels in striking a deal with the member states, insisting that there is not a "sliver of difference" between him and the 27 nation leaders.

But according to The Times Salvini has said he would welcome one-on-one talks with May, undermining Barnier's authority as the head of talks.

**Travel trouble in UK:** Tourists and Britons hoping to go on vacation are enduring another day of travel trouble in Britain after severe weather led to flight cancellations and delays on cross-Channel trains.

A week of extreme heat gave way to thunderstorms Friday, touching off travel delays on Saturday.

Budget airline Ryanair says Friday night's thunderstorms, along with air traffic control staff shortages, led to 14 cancelled flights at Stansted Airport. Other London-area airports — Luton, Gatwick and Heathrow — also warned of delays.

Nats, the UK air traffic control service, says the unpredictable nature of the storms means aircraft are not able to fly their usual routes. The service says the thunderstorms "effectively block large swathes of airspace because aircraft cannot fly through them."

Eurotunnel passengers faced a third day of disruption on the cross-Channel

service. **Warning over data misuse:** Tech firms like Facebook should be made liable for "harmful and misleading" material on their websites and pay a levy so they can be regulated, British lawmakers said, warning of a crisis in democracy due to misuse of personal data.

Facebook has increasingly become a focus of the media committee's inquiry into "fake news" after the data of 87 million users was improperly accessed by British-headquartered consultancy Cambridge Analytica.

Facebook executives said on Wednesday its profit margins would plummet for several years due to the cost of improving privacy safeguards and slowing usage in its top advertising markets. The news wiped over \$120 billion off the company's share price.

At the same time, the company is coming under concerted regulatory scrutiny in Britain, the United States and the European Union.

"Companies like Facebook made it easy for developers to scrape user data and to deploy it in other campaigns without their knowledge or consent," Damian Collins, chair of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, said in a statement officially released on Sunday.

"They must be made responsible, and liable, for the way in which harmful and misleading content is shared on their sites."

The report was first published online late on Friday by Dominic Cummings, who ran the officially designated Vote Leave campaign in the EU referendum.

The standards of accuracy and impartiality which tech companies are held to could be based on regulator Ofcom's rules for television and radio, the lawmakers said.

British broadcasters, whether publicly or privately owned, must generally stick to strict rules on political balance and factual accuracy, overseen by a regulator.

TechUK, a trade association for technology firms operating in Britain said it would be challenging to hold them to a higher standard than the country's newspapers or politicians.

"Sometimes decisions about what is and isn't 'fake' will be highly political and contentious," techUK's deputy director, Antony Walker, said.

"Determining what is and is not accurate information is not always straightforward and both traditional media and elected politicians can often be sources of news that is inaccurate or untrue," he added.

The committee's report also suggested a levy on tech firms which could contribute to an increased budget for Britain's data regulator, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), in the way in which the banking sector pays for the upkeep of its watchdog, the Financial Conduct Authority.

The ICO earlier this month fined Facebook for the Cambridge Analytica scandal. Tom Watson, deputy leader of Britain's opposition Labour Party, said the government had previously rejected its efforts to give the ICO greater investigation powers and improve disclosure of how online political adverts are funded. Cambridge Analytica, which was hired by Donald Trump's campaign in 2016, has denied its work on the US president's election made use of the data in question.



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu inspect warships during the Navy Day parade in Saint Petersburg on July 29. (AFP)

Migration

Over 1,200 migrants rescued off Spanish coast

Poland may take Filipino workers, says minister

WARSAW, July 29, (AFP): Poland, whose right-wing government opposes taking in migrants, may have to look to Filipino workers to cover a growing labour shortage hurting the economy, a senior official said Saturday.

"We are on course to conclude an agreement. I hope that in the autumn we will be able to at least sign a preliminary accord" with the Philippine authorities, Deputy Labour Minister Stanislaw Szwed said according to a PAP news agency report.

Szwed noted that Poland and the Philippines were both Roman Catholic countries and so shared many cultural values.

Poland was in particular looking to attract qualified workers, in the IT, medical and construction sectors, he added.

According to analyst forecasts, Poland by

2030 will be short of four million workers, partly the result of continued emigration of its own workforce to other EU countries and partly due to a low birth rate.

Spain said Saturday it had rescued more than 1,200 migrants from the sea in two days as the country's interior minister called for a European-wide solution to illegal immigration. Fernando Grande-Marlaska said Spain had now seen "on the ground, the problems that exist, the problem of immigration which is a European problem which requires a European solution", following a visit to the southwestern Cadiz region.

The minister was on a fact-finding visit to learn how police and the Red Cross are dealing

with the influx of migrants. Earlier Saturday, the maritime rescue service said on Twitter it had rescued 334 people from 17 boats.

Tunisia on Saturday said it would take in 40 migrants, including two pregnant women, rescued by a commercial vessel.

The ship, the "Sarost 5" a Tunisian flagged supply boat, has been blocked for two weeks from docking off Zarzis in southern Tunisia.

"For humanitarian reasons, we will accept the 40 migrants," Prime Minister Youssef Chahed said in parliament.

The African migrants, five of whom are women, set off from Libya and were lost at sea for five days before being spotted.

Europe

**Tears at memorial:** Hundreds of people have attended a memorial service in the Greek seaside resort of Mati for the dozens who perished in a wildfire that devastated the area.

Bishop Kyrillos presided over Sunday's service at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary, six days after the fire swept through and killed at least 86 people.

Kyrillos said the community is mourning the loss of family, neighbors and friends.

In a message read out during the service, the Church's Holy Synod said the burden of responsibility weighs upon everyone to avoid actions that hinder the protection of the environment. (AP)

**Conservatives hit low:** Support for German Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative bloc, trying to move beyond a bitter dispute over migrant policy that threatened the coalition, has fallen to its lowest level since 2006, a poll showed on Sunday.

The Emnid poll published in Bild am Sonntag showed Merkel's Christian Democrats and their sister party, Bavaria's Christian Social Union (CSU), down one percentage point at 29 percent. That compares with 33 percent in the September election.

The CSU faces a tough regional election in October with polls showing it could lose its absolute majority in Bavaria. (RTRS)

**26 Russian ships:** Russia's navy will deploy a total of 26 new ships this year including four carrying Kalibr cruise missiles, President **Vladimir Putin** said Sunday as the country celebrated Navy Day with a show of strength.

"In total in 2018 the navy should get 26 new warships, motor boats and vessels including four warships with Kalibr cruise missiles," Putin said in the northwestern city of Saint Petersburg, Interfax news agency reported. (AFP)



Putin

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