



Britain 'still part of Europe'

Says Johnson, plays down prospect of Scottish independence

Top Brexit campaigner Boris Johnson yesterday sought to build bridges with Europe and with defeated Britons who voted to remain in the EU in last week's historic referendum.

Johnson, a former London mayor now a favourite to succeed outgoing Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron, said there would be an "intensifying" of cooperation with Europe despite the vote to quit the EU.

"I cannot stress too much that Britain is part of Europe," Johnson wrote in his regular column in the Daily Telegraph newspaper. He also said there was no need to rush Britain's exit from the EU, and also played down the prospect of Scottish independence.

"The only change -- and it will not come in any great rush -- is that the UK will extricate itself from the EU's extraordinary and opaque system of legislation," he wrote. "EU citizens living in this country will have their rights fully protected, and the same goes for British citizens living in the EU," he said.

"British people will still be able to go and work in the EU; to live; to travel; to study; to buy homes and settle down."

But Johnson said Britain, the first country in the 28-member bloc to vote to leave, would retain close ties with Europe. Johnson also urged Brexit supporters to "build bridges" with Britons who had supported staying. "They are our neighbours, brothers and sisters who did what they passionately believe was right."



British Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne makes a statement at the Treasury in London yesterday following the pro-Brexit outcome of the June 23 EU referendum. Britain should only trigger Article 50 to leave the EU when it has a "clear view" of how its future in the bloc looks, finance minister Osborne said. PHOTO: AFP

Britain, Europe scramble to contain Brexit turmoil

AGENCIES

British leaders battled to calm markets and the country yesterday after its shock vote to leave the EU, while insisting London would be not rushed into a quick divorce.

Finance minister George Osborne said Britain's economy was "as strong as could be" to deal with the fallout of Thursday's momentous Brexit vote, which has already sent financial markets into tailspin.

Britain's historic decision to be the first country to leave the 28-nation bloc has sent shockwaves through the political and economic fabric of the nation and claimed the scalp of Prime Minister David Cameron.

It has also fuelled fears of a break-up of the United Kingdom with Scotland eyeing a new independence poll, and created turmoil in the opposition Labour party where leader Jeremy Corbyn is battling an all-out revolt, reports AFP.

In his first public comments since the vote, Osborne said: "I want to reassure the British people, and the global community, that Britain is ready to confront what the future holds for us from a position of strength."

But despite his soothing words, shares in banks, airlines and property companies plunged on the London stock exchange as investors singled out those three sectors as being the most vulnerable to the Brexit vote.

Meanwhile, the British government yesterday agreed to establish a new civil service unit that will have the complex task of negotiating the country's departure from the European Union, outgoing Prime Minister David Cameron's spokeswoman said.

"The prime minister proposed and the cabinet supported the establishment of a new unit to lead intensive civil service work on the issues that will need to be worked through in order to present options and advice to the new prime minister," she said.

Poland would like to see Britain hold a second in-out referendum on EU membership, the leader of the country's ruling party said yesterday, warning however the bloc would have to "radically change" for Britons to want to return.

"Our idea for today... foresees efforts aimed at making Britain return, including a second referendum," Poland's powerful rightwing leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski said.

Kerry calls on EU to stay calm

AFP, Brussels

US Secretary of State John Kerry yesterday urged European Union members not to "lose their head" or be "revengeful" after Britain's shock referendum decision to leave 28-nation bloc.

"I think it is absolutely essential that we stay focused on how, in this transitional period, nobody loses their head, nobody goes off half-cocked, people don't start ginning up scatterbrain or revengeful premises," Kerry said in Brussels.

He said Washington and Europe must "look for ways to maintain the strength that will serve the interests and the values that brought us together in the first place. And that is what is important."

Kerry also stressed that despite Britain's decision on Thursday, these common values would endure, and that a "strong EU" remained vital for Washington.

Blame game begins

'Remain' campaign members turn on each other

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The blame game for losing the EU referendum has begun as senior figures in the Remain campaign accused Downing Street of "arrogance and timidity", while David Cameron's allies pointed the finger at Jeremy Corbyn's failure to convince many traditional Labour supporters to vote in.

An inquest into the Remain camp's catastrophic defeat is underway amid bitter recriminations. Insiders in the cross-party Britain Stronger in Europe (BSE) campaign have told The Independent that Number 10 made a series of disastrous mistakes, and that Jeremy Corbyn's office neutered their efforts by preventing Labour playing a full part.

The shock of defeat for the Remain camp was all the greater because on the morning of Thursday's referendum it believed it would win by between five and eight points. That was the forecast made by its pollster Andrew Cooper and Jim Messina, the American former strategist to Barack Obama who helped Cameron win his general election victory last year.

"It was extraordinary that they failed to pick up the depth of anti-EU sentiment,"

said one Remain source. "We knew we had problems in the North East, Yorkshire and Wales, but we had no idea of the scale of it. With hindsight, the warning signs were there, but we didn't act on them." The failure of intelligence led to a reluctance to speak about immigration, which became a crucial vote-winner for the rival Leave camp. Remain's internal polling showed that Cameron's plan to delay EU migrants full access to benefits for four years was popular - but that most voters did not know about it.

Early in the battle, Cameron's operation considered running its own campaign. Will Straw, BSE's director, worked hard to head off the threat in order to maintain a cross party effort. But the price was that Downing Street often called the shots.

Remain sources claimed that Cameron and George Osborne were "scared off" by the hostile reaction to the Chancellor's warning that Brexit would every household losing £4,300 a year. Remain was ordered not to repeat it -- in a sharp contrast with the Leave camp, which stuck rigidly to its equally controversial claim that Brexit would save taxpayers £350m a week.

Cameron condemns xenophobic incidents

AFP, London

Prime Minister David Cameron's spokeswoman yesterday said the government "will not tolerate intolerance" after a series of racist incidents were reported following Britain's decision to leave the European Union.

"We should be absolutely clear that this government will not tolerate intolerance... intimidating migrants, telling them they need to go home," his spokeswoman told journalists.

The Polish Embassy in London earlier said it was "shocked and deeply concerned" by incidents of abuse directed at the Polish community.

They include the posting of laminated cards reading "Leave the EU - no more Polish vermin" to members of the Polish community in Huntingdon, near Cambridge, on Saturday and reports of racist graffiti scrawled on a Polish community centre in Hammersmith, London.

"We would like to thank for all the messages of support and solidarity with the

Polish community expressed by the British public," the embassy said.

London mayor Sadiq Khan yesterday placed the city's police force on alert following the incidents.

Khan said he took "seriously my responsibility to defend London's fantastic mix of diversity and tolerance."

"I've asked our police to be extra vigilant for any rise in cases of hate crime, and I'm calling on all Londoners to pull together and rally behind this great city." "It's also crucial that we don't demonise the 1.5 million people in London who voted for Brexit, we must respect their decision and work together now to get the best deal for London."

Cambridgeshire Constabulary's Nick Percival said the force was looking into the posting of racist cards. "We are... taking it seriously as it does represent a hate crime. We would encourage anyone who is either a victim or is aware of the source of this to come forward."



A man tells another driver: 'Go back to your country'. PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

NEWS IN brief

Snowden's extradition lawsuit rejected

REUTERS, Oslo

Former US spy contractor Edward Snowden has failed in a legal bid to win guarantees from Norway that it would not extradite him to the United States if he went there to receive a free speech award, a Norwegian court said yesterday.

Snowden's law firm said in April he would take the state to court to secure free passage to the Nordic country.

Church owes gays an apology: Pope

BBC ONLINE

Pope Francis has said that the Roman Catholic Church should apologise to gay people for the way it has treated them. He told reporters that the Church had no right to judge the gay community, and should show them respect. The pontiff also said the Church should seek forgiveness from other people it had marginalised - women, the poor, and children forced into labour.

Ukraine launches joint drills with Nato

AFP, Kiev

Ukraine yesterday launched joint military exercises with the United States and a string of other Nato countries as tensions with Moscow remain high over the pro-Kremlin insurgency in the country's east. The annual Rapid Trident military exercises, taking place in Yavoriv, involve some 1,800 soldiers from 14 countries and focus on "peacekeeping and stability operations," the US military said in a statement.

Clinton swipes at Trump over Brexit

AFP, Washington

Democrat Hillary Clinton on Sunday took a swipe at Republican rival Donald Trump's stance on Brexit, saying that "bombastic comments" do more harm than good during such times.

Trump has hailed Britain's vote to leave the European Union as "fantastic," telling reporters during a visit to Scotland on Friday that he thinks the Brexit is "a great thing."

Clinton, who was speaking to the US Conference of Mayors, did not mention Trump by name, but told city leaders that the United States should be governed by those "who put the interest of the American people ahead of their personal business interests."

Trump was in Scotland for the ceremonial re-opening of his refurbished Trump Turnberry golf course.

America needs leaders "who understand that bombastic comments in turbulent times can actually cause more turbulence," Clinton said.

"And that's why steady, experienced leadership is so important at times like these."

Trump, who has relied on populist fervour and anti-immigrant rhetoric in his presidential bid, has said Britain's anti-EU movement had parallels with his own quest to become the US president.

Clinton acknowledged Sunday that "just as we have seen there are many frustrated people in Britain, we know there are frustrated people here at home too."

'CIA arms for Syria rebels sold to black market'

NEW YORK TIMES ONLINE

Weapons shipped into Jordan for Syrian rebels by the Central Intelligence Agency and Saudi Arabia were stolen by Jordanian intelligence operatives and sold to arms merchants on the black market, the New York Times reported, citing American and Jordanian officials.

Some of the stolen weapons were used in a shooting in November that killed two Americans and three others at a police training facility in Amman, according to a joint investigation by the New York Times and Al Jazeera.

A Jordanian officer shot dead two U.S. government security contractors, a South African trainer and two Jordanians at a U.S.-funded police training facility near Amman before being killed in a shootout, Jordanian authorities had said in November. The training facility was set up on the outskirts of the capital, Amman, after the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq to help rebuild the shattered country's postwar security forces and to train Palestinian Authority police officers.

The weapons used in the shooting had originally arrived in Jordan for the Syrian rebel training program, the paper reported, citing American and Jordanian officials.

Theft of the weapons, which ended months ago after complaints by the American and Saudi governments, has led to a flood of new weapons available on the arms black market, the New York Times said.

Jordanian officers who were part of the plan "reaped a windfall" from sale of weapons, using the money to buy iPhones, SUVs and other luxury items, according to the paper, which cited Jordanian officials. The CIA could not be immediately reached for comment.



Lebanese army soldiers secure the area near the site where a string of suicide bomb attacks took place in the Christian village of Qaa, in the Bekaa valley, Lebanon yesterday. At least four suicide bombers hit the village before dawn that killed five people. PHOTO: REUTERS

BIHAR SCANDAL Exam topper sent to jail for cheating

BBC ONLINE

An Indian student has been sent to jail for cheating after she failed a retest.

Ruby Rai, 17, ranked first in the Bihar state exams - but said in a video interview that her main subject political science was about cooking.

After the video went viral, Rai was made to re-sit her exams, and was arrested after she failed and had her original results cancelled. She was produced in court on Sunday where a magistrate sent her to jail until 8 July.

The decision to send her to prison has been criticised given that she is a minor and should, therefore, be sent to a detention home for juveniles.

India formally joins elite missile club

PTI, New Delhi

India yesterday joined the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) as a full member and said its entry would be mutually beneficial to enhance global non-proliferation norms.

Marking India's first entry into any multilateral export control regime, Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar signed the instrument of accession to MTCR in the presence of France's Ambassador-designate Alexandre Ziegler, The Netherlands' Ambassador Alphonsus Stoeltinga and Luxembourg's Charge d'Affaires Laure Huberty.

"India has joined the MTCR this morning... India's entry into the regime as its thirty-fifth member would be mutually beneficial in the furtherance of international non-proliferation objectives," External Affairs Ministry said in a statement.

"India would like to thank each of the thirty-four MTCR Partners for their support for India's membership. We would also like to thank Ambassador Pieter de Klerk of The Netherlands and Mr Robert Steinmetz of Luxembourg, co-Chairs of the MTCR," the statement said.

The MTCR Point of Contact in Paris has conveyed the decision regarding India's accession to the regime through the French Embassy in New Delhi as well as the Embassies of The Netherlands and Luxembourg, it said.

India's entry into MTCR comes days after it failed to get NSG membership due to stiff opposition from China and a few other countries.

Israel, Turkey end six years of acrimony

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli and Turkish leaders yesterday lauded a deal reached at the weekend to restore ties after six years of acrimony over a deadly raid on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stressed that his country's maritime blockade of the Hamas-run Gaza Strip would remain following the agreement, though Turkey obtained aid concessions for the Palestinian enclave.

Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said that "to this end, our first ship loaded with over 10,000 tonnes of humanitarian aid will leave for Israel's Ashdod port on Friday."

Yildirim also noted Israel's commitment to pay \$20 million in compensation over the 2010 raid that killed 10 Turkish activists, in exchange for all claims against Israeli soldiers being dropped.

Netanyahu pointed to the economic benefits for Israel, with his country in search of regional customers for gas exports and talk of a potential pipeline to Turkey.

Speaking in Rome after meeting US Secretary of State John Kerry, Netanyahu described the agreement as having "immense implications for the Israeli economy".

"I mean positive, immense implications," he said. Kerry also hailed the deal as a "positive step", while UN chief Ban Ki-moon, on a visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories, called it a "hopeful signal for the stability of the region."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas spoke by phone overnight, with the Turkish leader explaining the agreement's main points, a statement from the Palestinian presidency said.