

World leaders react to Macron's win



UNITED STATES
"Congratulations to Emmanuel Macron on his big win today as the next President of France. I look very much forward to working with him!" President Donald Trump wrote on Twitter.



GERMANY
"Congratulations, @EmmanuelMacron. Your victory is a victory for a strong and united Europe and for French-German friendship," said Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman.



RUSSIA
Russian President Vladimir Putin urged Macron to bridge deep rifts between Moscow and Paris and work together to fight the threat of terror.

"The citizens of France entrusted you to lead the country in a difficult period for Europe and for the entire world community. The growing threat of terrorism and violent extremism is accompanied by an escalation of local conflicts and the destabilisation of entire regions," Putin said in a congratulatory telegram released by the Kremlin.



BRITAIN
"The Prime Minister warmly congratulates President-elect Macron on his election success. France is one of our closest allies and we look forward to working with the new President on a wide range of shared priorities," said a Downing Street spokesman.



EUROPEAN UNION
"Happy that the French chose a European future," European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker wrote on Twitter.

EU Council President Donald Tusk also offered his congratulations, saying the French had chosen "liberty, equality and fraternity" and "said no to the tyranny of fake news".

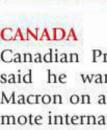


CHINA
President Xi Jinping congratulated Macron, saying the two countries share a "responsibility toward peace and development in the world."

"China stands ready to work with France to move the strategic Sino-French partnership to a higher level," Xi said in a congratulatory note, according to the Chinese foreign ministry.



JAPAN
Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said "the victory of President-elect Macron is a symbolic victory against inward-looking and protectionist moves and shows a vote of confidence in the EU".



CANADA
Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he wanted to work together with Macron on a "progressive agenda" to "promote international security, increase collaboration in science and technology, and create good, middle-class jobs on both sides of the Atlantic".



(Clockwise from left) Supporters of Emmanuel Macron celebrate near the Louvre museum after results were announced in the second round vote of the 2017 French presidential elections, in Paris, yesterday. Outgoing President Hollande and Macron attend a ceremony to mark the end of World War II at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. Marine Le Pen is seen on a screen while conceding defeat at the Chalet du Lac in the Bois de Vincennes in Paris.



Macron will not seek to 'punish' UK over Brexit

Says his chief economic adviser Jean Pisani-Ferry

AFP, London

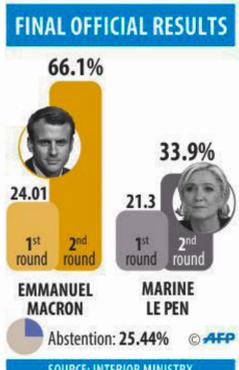
Incoming French President Emmanuel Macron will hold a "tough" line during Brexit negotiations but will not seek to "punish" Britain, his chief economic adviser said yesterday.

"I don't think anybody has an interest in a hard Brexit," Jean Pisani-Ferry told the BBC.

"There is a mutual interest in keeping prosperity that exists and has built over the years... and obviously also the security and defence relationship, which is extremely important."

Macron, who campaigned on a pro-EU platform, has previously called Brexit a "crime" and said that Britain should continue paying into the EU budget if it wants access to the European single market.

British businesses have warned against a "hard Brexit", which would sever ties with



adversary during negotiations. "We have divergent interests on some aspects of the negotiations, so there will be a tough negotiation and he will be tough," he said. "As grown ups on both sides, we can manage to settle the exit negotiation and to build up a relationship," he added.

Third of voters spoiled ballots

AFP, Paris

A third of French voters declined to choose between centrist Emmanuel Macron and far-right leader Marine Le Pen in Sunday's presidential election, either abstaining or spoiling their ballots -- a record rate in nearly half a century.

When asked if he would still seek to make Britain pay, Pisani-Ferry replied: "Punish? Certainly not, but he believes that even today Europe is part of the solution to the problems we are facing."

The advisor, who is expected to get a senior role in the new government, told BBC Radio 4's Today programme that Macron would still be a formidable

adversary during negotiations. "We have divergent interests on some aspects of the negotiations, so there will be a tough negotiation and he will be tough," he said. "As grown ups on both sides, we can manage to settle the exit negotiation and to build up a relationship," he added.

Le Pen looks ahead to parliamentary polls

AP, Paris

Far-right leader Marine Le Pen lost her bid to become France's first female head of state but she is unbowed, making plans for a major makeover of her party and her next electoral battle: June's parliamentary elections.

Le Pen's loss to centrist Emmanuel Macron still gave her a historic number of votes, reflecting the changing image of her once-pariah National Front party from fringe force to a political heavyweight.

Always a fighter defying the odds, the ambitious Le Pen set a new challenge for herself: "a profound reformation of our movement to constitute a new political force."

The National Front's interim president, named while Le Pen campaigned for Sunday's runoff, said the changes include giving the party a new name.

"It's opening the doors of the movement to other personalities," Steeve Briois told The Associated Press, "then give it a new name to start on a new basis."

Changing the name was discussed at the height of Le Pen's efforts to scrub the party image and remove traces of racism and anti-Semitism that scared away potential backers. But party stalwarts saw the change as too radical.

A new name would help Le Pen distance herself from the old guard - including her father, party founder Jean-Marie, who was kicked out under his daughter's image revamping.

The party's new look won't come about before the parliamentary elections on June 11 and 18.

"We need new tools," campaign director David Rachline said yesterday on France Info radio.

Corruption, North Korea ignite South Korea poll

AFP, Seoul

South Korea's presidential hopefuls made a final push for votes yesterday, with the left-leaning candidate a clear favourite, as the North assailed the outgoing conservative government a day before the polls.

A former pro-democracy activist and human rights lawyer, Moon Jae-In of the Democratic Party -- who favours engagement with Pyongyang -- has been leading opinion polls for months.

The final Gallup Korea survey of the campaign ahead of today's vote gave him 38 percent, far ahead of centrist Ahn Cheol-Soo on 20 percent.

Today's vote was called to choose a successor to Park Geun-Hye after her impeachment for corruption and abuse of power.

The campaign has focused largely on jobs and the economy, with North Korea less prominent despite high diplomatic tensions between Washington and Pyongyang over its nuclear and missile ambitions.

Moon has promised to reinvigorate the

South's sluggish growth and create more jobs, and hinted at a more flexible approach towards its nuclear-armed neighbour.

The front-runner advocates dialogue and reconciliation with the North to defuse the situation and eventually lure it into negotiations that have been at a standstill for years -- an approach criticised by his conservative opponents.

Pyongyang yesterday slammed the South's conservatives -- who have been in power for a decade -- as "senseless traitors seeking only confrontation and war" who were responsible for the "tragic" state of North-South relations.

An editorial in Rodong Sinmun -- the mouthpiece of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea -- acknowledged that an election was taking place, and said conservatives were scheming to retain power.

The North has carried out two nuclear tests and a series of missile launches since the start of last year and Washington has said military action was an option, sending tensions spiralling.



Moon Jae-In Ahn Cheol-Soo



Protesters hold placards and chant during a demonstration against Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi, as she attends an event at the Guildhall in the City of London yesterday. Suu Kyi received honorary freedom of the City of London after meeting with Queen Elizabeth II and heir to the throne Prince Charles on Friday.

NEWS IN brief

Indonesia to disband radical Islamist group

AFP, Jakarta
Indonesia said yesterday it would disband the local branch of radical Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir, as concerns grow about hard-liners in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country. Hizb ut-Tahrir, which calls for Islamic law and wants to unify all Muslims into a caliphate, has been operating for decades in Indonesia and has a large following.

India's cops to probe Kejriwal bribe charge

NDTV ONLINE
The allegation that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal received Rs 2 crore cash has been referred by Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal to the anti-corruption branch of the police for investigation. Kapil Mishra, sacked as minister by Kejriwal on the weekend, went public with the sensational charge on Sunday. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) alleged yesterday that Mishra was acting on behalf of the BJP and making baseless allegations "out of desperation" after being removed.

S Sudan child refugees top one million: UN

AFP, Nairobi
War has now forced more than one million children to flee South Sudan and uprooted 1.4 million others within the country, the United Nations said yesterday. Children make up 62 percent of the 1.8 million people who have fled South Sudan for refugee camps in neighbouring Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda since civil war began in 2013. Unicef and UNHCR said in a joint press release.

Hunger-strike leader secretly filmed eating

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's prison authority on Sunday shared a video of what it says is jailed Palestinian leader Marwan Barghouti eating after weeks of leading hundreds on a hunger strike.

His wife, Fadwa Barghouti, said the footage was a "fake" and "intended to break the morale of prisoners" after more than 1,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails joined Barghouti in refusing food on April 17.

The protesting prisoners have issued a list of demands including better medical services, family visits and more dignified detention conditions.

The video, which was published by Israeli media outlets, purportedly shows Barghouti eating cakes in footage said to have been shot on April 27 and May 5, according to a statement from the authority.

Barghouti, a senior member of Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's Fatah party and a highly popular figure among Palestinians, is serving five life sentences over his role in the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising.

His wife said on Sunday Barghouti had been put in solitary confinement 22 times since he was jailed.

"These measures to break the morale of prisoners show Israel's failure," she said. Israeli Internal Security Minister Gilad Erdan denounced "Barghouti's political calculations".

US reviews safe zones

Says Mattis, warns 'devil's in the details'

AGENCIES

US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said yesterday the United States would closely examine proposed de-escalation zones aimed at easing Syria's civil war but warned "the devil's in the details" and that much needed to be worked out.

The deal to create "de-escalation" zones in the major areas of conflict in western Syria took effect on Saturday.

The initiative was proposed by Russia, President Bashar al-Assad's most powerful ally, with the support of Turkey, which backs the opposition. Iran, Assad's other major ally, also backed it.

Politial and armed opposition groups have rejected the proposal, saying Russia has been unwilling or unable to get Assad and his Iranian-backed militia allies to respect past ceasefires.

Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moualem said yesterday that his government would abide by the terms of the plan

so long as rebels also observed it, although the Syrian government has also said it will continue to fight what it calls terrorist groups, reported Reuters.

Russia said yesterday it had tabled a draft resolution at the United Nations Security Council to back up a deal on establishing safe zones in Syria.

"We confirm that a draft resolution has been introduced," Russian news agencies cited the country's UN mission spokesman Fyodor Strzhizhovsky as saying in New York, without giving details.

A source at the UN told Russia's Interfax news agency that "a vote on the draft will take place possibly this week".

Meanwhile, Syrian rebels and their families began evacuating from a district of Damascus for the first time yesterday, bringing the government closer to recapturing all of the capital.

The evacuation began days after regime backers Russia and Iran and rebel supporter Turkey signed a deal to implement "de-escalation zones" where the government and opposition will halt hostilities, reported AFP.

WAR IN SYRIA
Russia tables draft UN resolution to back up safe zone deal
First evacuations from Damascus rebel district

EU MIGRANT CRISIS

11 dead, 200 missing in Mediterranean

AFP, Rome

Eleven migrants have died and nearly 200 are missing after two boats sank off the coast of Libya, UN agencies said yesterday citing survivors, in the latest such tragedy.

The first involved an inflatable craft which left Libya early Friday with 132 people on board, only to start deflating a few hours later, before overturning.

Some 50 survivors were picked up by a Danish container ship, the Alexander Maersk, which was alerted to divert by Italian coastguards and dropped them off on Sunday in Pozzallo, southern Sicily.

Representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) were able to meet them yesterday to hear their accounts.

Survivors told them that women and children were among those missing.

At the same time, the bodies of 10 women and one child were found yesterday on a beach in Zawiya, 50 kilometres (31 miles) west of Tripoli, according to an official for the Libyan Red Crescent.

Then on Sunday seven migrants -- a woman and six men -- were rescued by Libyan fishermen and coastguards off the coast of the Libyan capital.

An IOM spokesman who met them said they had set out on a boat with at least 120 people on board, including about 30 women and nine children.