



A woman reacts next to flowers left on the south side of London Bridge near Borough Market yesterday. British police made several arrests in two dawn raids following the June 3 attacks, claimed by the Islamic State group which left seven people dead. PHOTO: AFP

Trump seeks 'much tougher' travel ban

Presses for expedited judicial review by SC

AFP, Washington
US President Donald Trump yesterday called for a "much tougher version" of his travel ban and an "expedited" hearing for the measure before the Supreme Court.
In a series of early morning tweets, the president also said the United States was already "extreme vetting" travelers coming into the country for safety reasons.
"The Justice Dept. should have stayed with the original Travel Ban, not the watered down, politically correct version they submitted to S.C.," Trump wrote.
"The Justice Dept. should ask for an expedited hearing of the watered down Travel Ban before the Supreme Court - & seek much tougher version!"
"In any event we are EXTREME VETTING people coming into the U.S. in order to help keep our country safe. The courts are slow and political!" the US president wrote.
In a rare move on Friday the Supreme Court expedited consideration of the case, ordering the American Civil Liberties Union

-- which represents the plaintiffs -- to respond by June 12 to the Trump administration's petition for court consideration.
Once it receives the response the high court could quickly rule on whether to take up the case.
The court's order came just one day after the Trump administration asked the court to reinstate its temporary ban on travelers from six Muslim majority nations, requesting it stay two nationwide blocks of the measure that had been issued by appellate courts.
Trump issued his initial travel ban by executive order in January, but that measure -- which banned entry to nationals from seven countries for 90 days and suspended the nation's refugee program for 120 days -- was quickly halted by the courts.
The administration said the travel ban was needed so it could evaluate existing screening protocols and set new ones.
A revised executive order in March aimed to address concerns raised by the federal judges. It deleted Iraq from the list and removed an indefinite ban on Syrian refugees.



CHECKING IS INFILTRATION SE Asian nations plan to step up co-op

REUTERS, Singapore
Southeast Asian nations plan to use spy planes and drones to stem the movement of militants across their porous borders, defence officials said at the weekend, as concerns rise over the growing clout of Islamic State in the region.
Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines said they will launch joint air patrols this month at their shared boundaries in the Sulu Sea, in addition to existing maritime patrols.
Authorities in the region have urged greater cooperation to counter the fallout from a raging battle with Islamic State-linked militants in the southern Philippines, the biggest warning yet that the ultra-radical group is building a base in Southeast Asia.
"Our open borders are being exploited by terrorist groups to facilitate personnel and material," Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) told the Shangri-La Dialogue, an annual regional security forum in Singapore.
The region is home to 600 million people and includes Indonesia, which has the world's highest number of Muslims. Authorities in both Indonesia and Malaysia, also Muslim-majority, have said thousands of their citizens are sympathisers of Islamic State and hundreds are believed to have travelled to Syria to join the extremist group.
Indonesian authorities blamed Islamic State for bombings last month that killed three police officers, the latest in a series of low-level attacks by the militants in the last 17 months.

May under microscope

Poll shows lead of PM's Conservatives slips to 11 points; opposition leader urges her to quit over police cuts

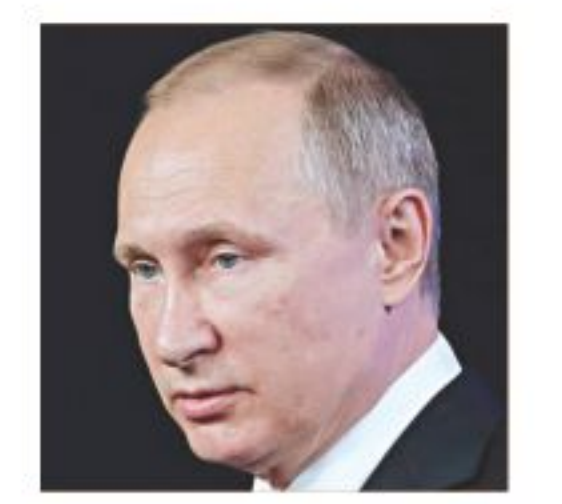
AGENCIES
Prime Minister Theresa May is seeking reelection as a tough leader to take Britain through Brexit, but her "strong and stable" image is under close scrutiny after a string of terror attacks and campaign missteps ahead of Thursday's vote.
May won praise in many quarters for her initial responses to the Manchester concert bombing and Saturday night's rampage in London, which left seven people dead.
But by focusing much of her Conservative party's campaign on her rival Jeremy Corbyn's security credentials, she has faced accusations of politicising the attacks.
Corbyn yesterday backed calls for Prime Minister Theresa May to resign for reducing the number of police officers during her six years as interior minister, reported AFP.
Asked by ITV television if he backed the calls for May to resign after three terror attacks in three months, the Labour Party leader said: "Indeed I would... We should never have cut the police numbers."
"There's been calls made by a lot of very responsible people on this who are very worried that she was at the Home Office for all this time, presided over these cuts in police numbers and is now saying that we have a problem - yes, we do have a problem: we should never have cut the police numbers," he said.
Asked again if he wanted May to quit, Corbyn replied: "We've got an election on Thursday and that's perhaps the best opportunity to deal with it."
Meanwhile, the lead of May's Conservative Party over the opposition Labour Party has narrowed slightly to 11 percentage points before the June 8 election, according to an ICM poll published in the Guardian newspaper yesterday.
May's lead slipped from a lead of 12 percentage points in a previous ICM/Guardian poll published a week ago.
In the new poll, support for the Conservatives stood at 45 percent, unchanged from last week, and Labour was on 34 percent, up one point.

BRITISH ELECTION



Six dead in Florida workplace shooting

REUTERS, New York/Florida
A man fired from his warehouse job in April returned to his old workplace near Orlando, Florida yesterday and fatally shot five people before killing himself, Orange County Sheriff Jerry Demings said.
The 45-year-old suspect was armed with a handgun and knife when he entered a business called Fiamma, which describes itself as one of the world's largest manufacturers of awnings for recreational vehicles.
The unidentified assailant shot and killed five people before turning the gun on himself, Demings said at a press briefing. Three men and one woman died at the scene, and another man died at an area hospital. There was no indication that he used the knife on his victims.
The unidentified assailant had a history of misdemeanor criminal offences but was not linked to any terror organisations, said the sheriff, who described the shootings as workplace violence.
"He was a disgruntled employee that came back to this business this morning," Demings said. "It appears this incident has nothing to do with any global terror activities."
In June 2014, Orange County deputies investigated a report that the man battered another employee at the warehouse, but no charges were brought, Demings said.
The shooting comes almost a year after 49 people were killed at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando on June 12, 2016, the deadliest mass shooting in modern US history. At least 58 people were also injured.



TRUMP-RUSSIA TIES Putin denies having info on US president

REUTERS, Washington
Russian President Vladimir Putin strongly denied he had any compromising material about US President Donald Trump in a sometimes combative televised interview broadcast on Sunday.
"Well, this is just another load of nonsense," Putin said on NBC News' "Sunday Night with Megyn Kelly," when asked whether he had any damaging information on the Republican president.
The remarks were the latest in a series of denials from Moscow that have had little impact so far on a political crisis in the United States over potential links between Russia and Trump's inner circle.
The issue will be front and center this week in Washington, where former FBI Director James Comey is due to testify on whether Trump tried to get him to back off an investigation into alleged ties between Trump's election campaign and Moscow.
Comey, who was leading the Federal Bureau of Investigation's probe into alleged Russian meddling in last year's US presidential election, was fired by Trump last month, four years into his 10-year term.
Putin also told NBC that regardless of Trump's previous travel to Russia as a businessman, he had had no relationship with him and had never met him. Putin noted that executives from perhaps 100 American companies were currently in Russia.
"Do you think we're gathering compromising information on all of them right now or something?" Putin asked, before saying: "Have you all lost your senses?"

NEWS IN brief

Indian troops kill four attackers in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar
Indian paramilitary forces killed four suspected suicide attackers who tried to storm their camp in the disputed Kashmir region early yesterday. The gunmen lobbed grenades and fired automatic weapons outside the Central Reserve Police Force camp in Indian-administered Kashmir before dawn.

Police kill hostage-taker in Australia

AFP, Sydney
Australian police yesterday shot dead a man who took a woman hostage in a Melbourne apartment, after the body of another man was found in the building's lobby. The woman escaped safely but three officers were injured as police stormed the building.

Seven dead migrants found inside Libya truck

AFP, Tripoli
Seven migrants from sub-Saharan Africa have been found dead in an abandoned refrigerator truck near the Libyan capital, a senior official said yesterday. "There were 35 illegal migrants on board, but seven of them had already died, and the 28 survivors have received treatment," Adel Mostafa said.

At least 22 die in India bus crash

AFP, New Delhi
At least 22 people died when they became trapped in a bus that caught fire after it collided with a truck in northern India yesterday. Police said the doors of the government-run bus jammed in the collision, trapping the passengers inside as it caught fire after the fuel tank burst.

100,000 children at risk in Mosul: Unicef

AFP, Baghdad
Up to 100,000 children are in danger as Iraqi forces battle to retake west Mosul from the Islamic State jihadist group, the United Nations children's agency Unicef said yesterday.
Nearly eight months into the massive operation to recapture Iraq's second city, security forces have retaken all but a handful of areas in west Mosul from the jihadists.
But those areas -- Mosul's Old City and others nearby -- are still home to large numbers of civilians in grave danger from the fighting as well as from a lack of food, medicine and clean water.
"An estimated 100,000 girls and boys remain in extremely dangerous conditions in the Old City and other areas of west Mosul. Many are caught in the crossfire, and hospitals and other medical facilities have reportedly come under attack," Unicef said in a statement.
"As the fighting continues, Unicef calls on all parties in west Mosul to protect children and keep them out of harm's way at all times, in line with their obligations under humanitarian law," it said.
Unicef said it has received reports of civilians including children being killed in west Mosul, some of them as they sought to flee.
The Mosul operation has taken a heavy toll on civilians, pushing more than 750,000 to flee their homes and leaving hundreds dead or wounded.



A man carries his children out of their flooded hut to move to a safer place after heavy rains, on World Environment Day, on the outskirts of Agartala, India, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

'Step up' on North Korea

Tillerson tells China to strengthen efforts to curb Pyongyang's nuke programme, calls out Beijing over its S China Sea activities

AFP, Sydney
China and other nations must strengthen efforts to curb North Korea's nuclear weapons programme, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said yesterday, while also calling out Beijing over its South China Sea activities.
America's top diplomat, speaking after talks in Sydney, also gave a brief response to the unfolding crisis in the Gulf, where Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt have all announced they are severing ties with gas-rich Qatar.
In the Asia-Pacific region, the United States has spent recent weeks trying to reassure allies it can maintain a tough line against China's "militarisation" of the South China Sea while at the same time seeking help from Beijing.
President Donald Trump -- who frequently denounced China on the campaign trail -- has turned to Beijing to help rein in ally North Korea's weapons programme, prompting concern among Asian allies that America might go easy on the South China Sea territorial dispute.
"We desire productive relationships," Tillerson said after annual discussions with his Australian counterpart Julie Bishop in Sydney.
"But we cannot allow China to use its economic power to buy its way out of other problems, whether it's militarising islands in the South China Sea or failing to put appropriate pressure on North Korea."
He said China and other regional partners should "step up" efforts to help solve the North Korea situation, because it presents a threat to the "entire world."
China claims nearly all of the South China Sea despite partial counter-claims from Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam.
It has rapidly built reefs into artificial islands capable of hosting military planes.
Tillerson reiterated US and Australian commitment to freedom of navigation in the South China Sea to "ensure unimpeded flow of lawful commerce in a rules-based order."
But reporters asked Tillerson if America was applying a double standard in telling countries to adhere to the international order while simultaneously pulling out of a trans-Pacific trade deal and the Paris climate accords -- moves that prompted even longstanding allies to question whether America was retreating into isolationism.



India launches mega rocket

Hopes to win bigger share of global space industry

REUTERS, New Delhi
India launched a communication satellite using its most powerful rocket yesterday, improving its prospects of winning a bigger share of the more than \$300 billion global space industry and its hopes of a manned mission.
The 13-storey high rocket, the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Mk III, or "Fat Boy", lifted off from the Sriharikota space centre in southern India at 5.28 p.m. (1158 GMT) in clear blue skies.
At 3,136 kg (6,914 lb) the GSAT-19 satellite is the heaviest India has attempted to put in orbit, the space agency said.
The United States, Russia, China, Japan and European Space Agency have the capability to launch satellites weighing more than three tonnes.
Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the scientists behind the launch and said it took India closer to the next generation of launch capabilities.
"The nation is proud," he said in a Twitter post.
Modi's government has been promoting a home-grown space programme as a demon-

stration of low-cost technology and in February it launched 104 satellites in a single mission, most of them for foreign customers.

The Indian space agency has also considered a manned space mission involving sending astronauts into a low-earth orbit, but the programme has not yet been cleared by the government.

In 2014, scientists first flew the GSLV Mk



III and checked the working of an unmanned crew module on the vehicle, suggesting that it would be the launch platform for a manned mission in future.

In May, India launched a communications satellite for its smaller neighbours to share, part of its efforts to build goodwill in the region.