

UK ROYAL WEDDING

FROM BLIND DATE TO I DO

Since Prince Harry first confirmed that he was dating American actress Meghan Markle, the couple's every move has been documented and scrutinized. CNN looks at what we know about their relationship:

FIRST DATE (EARLY JULY 2016)

Harry and Meghan go on a blind date in London after being set up by a mutual friend (as revealed by the couple in a post-engagement interview). The first date is quickly followed by a second the next day.

TRIP TO AFRICA (LATE JULY OR AUGUST 2016): Meghan visits Harry and camps out with him for several days during his trip to Botswana. The media and public are unaware of their burgeoning relationship.

FIRST NEWS REPORTS (OCTOBER 2016): Rumors about the relationship first start appearing in British media. Some articles focus on Meghan's racial background and her status as a divorcee.

'HARRY AND HIS MEG' (DECEMBER 15, 2016): Britain's tabloid The Sun newspaper publishes the first picture of the couple, taken while they are out together in London.

FIRST KISS ON CAMERA (MAY 7, 2017): Meghan watches Harry play a charity polo match. Pictures of the couple kissing headlines the next day.

MEGHAN SPEAKS OUT (SEPTEMBER 5, 2017)

In an interview with Vanity Fair, Meghan speaks publicly about her relationship with Harry for the first time. "We're two people who are really happy and in love," she says.

FIRST MAJOR APPEARANCE (SEPTEMBER 25, 2017): Harry and Meghan make their first major public appearance as a couple at the Invictus Games in Toronto. Pictures of the pair looking happy and relaxed are soon splashed across websites and front pages around the world.

THE PRINCE POPS THE QUESTION (EARLY NOVEMBER 2017): The couple get engaged after the prince proposes during a "cosy night" in at their home in Nottingham Cottage, London -- but they keep the news a secret.

'WE'RE ENGAGED' (NOVEMBER 27, 2017)

The engagement is announced via Twitter. Harry and Meghan make a public appearance in the grounds of Kensington Palace before recording an interview broadcast on BBC TV in the evening. Harry reveals he fell in love with Meghan "incredibly quickly."

FIRST WALKABOUT (DECEMBER 1, 2017): For their first official public engagement, the couple travel to the city of Nottingham -- somewhere Harry has spent a lot of time since first meeting with young people there in 2013 to explore issues around youth violence. Crowds of well-wishers turn out in the freezing cold to congratulate the newly-engaged couple.

YOUTH FORUM VISIT (APRIL 18, 2018): During a gathering of Commonwealth heads of government in London, the couple meet young leaders from across the region. In a speech, Harry says he is excited about his new role as Commonwealth Youth Ambassador -- and about Meghan's role alongside him.

THE QUEEN CONSENTS (MAY 13, 2018)

Buckingham Palace releases an image of the hand-written document officially recording the Queen's consent to the wedding and signed by the monarch herself. It's written on vellum -- a kind of parchment originally made from calf skin -- and decorated with flowers symbolizing the two home nations of the bride and groom.

LAST-MINUTE DRAMA (MAY 14, 2018): Just days before the wedding, family drama threatens to derail the couple's plans. Meghan's father Thomas Markle reportedly admits staging photos of himself with a paparazzo and tells TMZ he is having heart surgery, putting his attendance in doubt. Kensington Palace asks the media to show "understanding and respect" towards Thomas Markle "in this difficult situation."

THE BIG DAY (MAY 19, 2018)

Harry and Meghan gets married in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. They become Duke and Duchess of Sussex.



(Clockwise from bottom left) Meghan Markle (C) walks down the aisle in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, in Windsor during her wedding to Britain's Prince Harry; Harry, Duke of Sussex, places the wedding ring on the finger of Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex; UK royals including Queen Elizabeth II watch proceedings during the ceremony; the newlywed couple kiss as they leave from the chapel; US actor George Clooney and his wife British lawyer Amal Clooney were among a long list of celebrities who attended the wedding; and fans react as they watch the wedding ceremony. All pictures were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

Global royalists celebrate wedding : Divided Britain unites

AFP, Windsor

There was silence along the Long Walk in Windsor as thousands of well-wishers listened to Prince Harry and Meghan Markle say their vows -- then the crowd erupted into cheers and popped prosecco corks as they were declared husband and wife.

Crowds of colourful royal enthusiasts from around the world flocked to the historic British town yesterday, many of them gathering on the tree-lined avenue leading up to the castle.

People from as far afield as Canada, Australia and the Philippines waved Union Jack flags, donned tiaras, royal t-shirts hats and scarves, cheering and dancing as they watched the ceremony on big screens.

"She looks beautiful -- it's a timeless dress," said Denise Show, 46, from southeast England, as Markle emerged in a white sculpted gown with a long

veil stretching out behind her. When the choir in St George's Chapel sang "Stand by Me", the crowds outside joined in. The Long Walk was transformed into a sea of Union Jack flags when the national anthem played.

"It's like a dream," said Theodora Torres, 71, who came from Los Angeles with her husband.

Harry and Meghan drew huge cheers when they went past in an open-topped horse-drawn carriage after the wedding, escorted by soldiers in gleaming ceremonial uniforms.

Karen Long, from the US state of Texas, said she felt compelled to come to Britain for the big occasion given Markle's American nationality.

"I feel like she is one of us!" she said. "We all wanted to be a princess, we thought we couldn't and there she is, breaking all the barriers."

Some of the most fanatical supporters camped for days, seeking to secure the best spots to watch the happy couple ride by.

Armed police, sniffer dogs and airport-style security scanners were deployed throughout the town, while huge barriers were hauled into place to prevent a vehicle attack.

Police patrolling the parade route Saturday were applauded by crowds, as snipers took up positions on numerous roofs.

One of the largest cheers from the crowds came when Prince Charles stepped forward to accompany Markle down the aisle, after her own father Thomas pulled out due to ill-health. However, she made part of the journey through the church on her own -- something many in the crowd applauded.

There were also audible sighs when the big screen focused on Markle's mother Doria Ragland, who was visibly moved by the ceremony.

AFP, London

At street parties and pubs around the country, Britons celebrated yesterday's royal wedding with bunting, booze and bonhomie in a welcome respite from the divisions and uncertainties of Brexit.

Families, friends and neighbours converged to watch Prince Harry and Meghan Markle exchange vows in the last major royal wedding for a generation.

After weeks of media coverage on the wedding, and with clear blue skies replacing Britain's often dreary weather, the mood was a joyous one.

"It's a nice way to bring everyone together... at least just for the day," said Maha Khan, 22, watching the ceremony at a London pub called the Duke of Sussex -- the new title for Prince Harry.

Local authorities across the country have approved hundreds of street party applications, which allow roads to be shut to traffic and decked out with decorations.

People had also gathered around a big screen in the Pear Tree pub in Scotland's capital Edinburgh.

"I think it's just feeling a sense of belonging to a wonderful piece of history," said Clare Jevons, 51, from Somerset, one of those who turned out.

NEWS IN brief

Sadr wins Iraq poll

Final results from Iraq's election confirmed yesterday that an alliance spearheaded by populist cleric Moqtada Sadr has triumphed, but the fiery preacher faces a huge task to form a governing coalition. Sadr's Marching Towards Reform bloc won 54 of the 329 seats in parliament in a major upset at a May 12 vote that saw a record level of abstentions as Iraqis turned their back on a widely reviled elite.

Saudi Arabia detain women's advocates

Saudi authorities have arrested seven prominent women's rights advocates, just weeks before the kingdom's longstanding driving ban on women is set to be lifted, Human Rights Watch said yesterday. Without identifying those detained, Saudi Arabia's state security apparatus said seven people had been arrested for "attempting to undermine the security and stability of the kingdom... and to erode national unity".

Russia unveils floating nuclear power station

Russia yesterday unveiled the world's first floating nuclear power station at a ceremony in the port of the far northern city of Murmansk where it will be loaded with nuclear fuel before heading to eastern Siberia. Constructed by the state nuclear power firm Rosatom, the 144 by 30 metre (472 by 98 foot) ship holds two reactors with two 35 megawatt nuclear reactors that are similar to those used to power icebreaker ships. The barge can produce enough electricity to power a town of 200,000 residents.

AFTERMATH OF US EXIT FROM NUCLEAR DEAL

Iran to wait and see if EU plans 'materialise'

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday said it would wait to see whether Europe produces tangible results in overcoming US sanctions before deciding whether to stay in the nuclear deal, as a top EU official visited Tehran to present plans to maintain trade ties.

"The ball is in the court of the EU. They have presented different proposals, we will see if they materialise," Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation head Ali Akbar Salehi told reporters.

He was speaking after a meeting with EU Energy Commissioner Miguel Arias Canete, the first high-level Western official to visit Iran since the US withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal earlier this month.

Canete called the nuclear deal "fundamental for peace in the region" as he outlined EU plans to continue oil and gas purchases and protect European companies, despite renewed US sanctions on Iran that

are set to be phased in over the next six months.

"For sure there are clear difficulties with the sanctions," Canete said at a press conference alongside Salehi.

"We will have to ask for waivers, for carve-outs for the companies that make investments."

Salehi acknowledged Europe's efforts but said: "We want tangible results, otherwise we take our own decisions. I personally don't want to see such decisions being taken."

Iran has threatened to resume industrial uranium enrichment "without limit" unless its interests are preserved.

Iran's trade with the European Union is around 20 billion euros, evenly split between imports and exports.

Iran, which has the world's fourth-biggest oil reserves, produces some 3.8 million barrels of oil per day, 70 percent of which goes to China and other Asian countries, and 20 percent to Europe.



CUBA MOURNS

Relatives of passengers traveling on the Boeing 737 plane that crashed shortly after taking off from Havana's main airport react at Franck Pais airport in Holguin, Cuba on Friday. Cuba begins two days of national mourning yesterday for victims of the crash of a state airways plane that killed all but three of its 110 passengers and crew.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Explosions at Afghan cricket match kills 8 45 wounded; Ghani condemns attack

AFP, Jalalabad

Eight people were killed and 45 wounded in a series of explosions targeting a cricket match in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad, officials said yesterday, the first attack since the holy month of Ramadan began.

The blasts exploded among spectators crowded into the stadium at around 11pm (1830 GMT) on Friday evening as they watched the local "Ramadan Cup", the provincial governor's office said.

No group has yet claimed the murders but the Taliban said they were not responsible in a WhatsApp message. Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province, on the border with Pakistan, has a Taliban presence and is also a stronghold of the Islamic State group.

In September 2017 IS claimed a suicide bombing on a cricket match in Kabul which left three dead and five injured.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Saturday condemned the attack in Jalalabad.

"The terrorists did not stop killing our people even during the holy month of Ramadan... by carrying out a terrorist attack in a populated sport stadium, once again they have proved that they are not bound to any creed or religion, and they are the enemy of humanity," a statement from his office said.

Premature public trial!

Malaysia's former first lady laments 'trying times'

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's unpopular former first lady yesterday lamented the "trying times" since her husband Najib Razak's ouster from power, in a plea for public sympathy just a day after police seized a huge trove of cash, jewels and designer handbags linked to the couple.

Rosmah Mansor, who is widely reviled for her reported luxurious tastes and tone-deaf attitude towards the struggles of ordinary Malaysians, issued a statement lashing out at the police raids, complaining that news of them amounted to a "premature public trial".

The former first couple's world has been turned upside down after Najib's long-ruling political machine suffered a shock defeat in May 9 elections.

Najib has been barred from leaving the country pending investigations into allegations that he, his family and cronies looted billions in state money. He is widely expected to face criminal charges.



linked to Najib. Rosmah, 66, is widely mocked for her imperious manner and reports of multi-million-dollar jewellery purchases and a vast supply of designer handbags that has earned comparisons to the famed shoe collection of former Philippine first lady Imelda Marcos.

BJP pulls out of test to govern Karnataka

CM resigns before trust vote

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party yesterday walked away from a court-mandated test to prove it had the support of a majority of lawmakers to govern the southern state of Karnataka, after an election a week ago threw up no clear winner.

The move could now allow an alliance of the main opposition Congress and a regional party to form the government in the state.

Newly elected lawmakers had been due to vote in the assembly on the orders of the Supreme Court, which intervened after the opposition had protested against a decision of the Karnataka governor to invite Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to form a government in the state.

The BJP had emerged as the single largest party with 104 seats but fell short of a majority in the 225-member state assembly.

On Saturday afternoon, Karnataka BJP leader BS Yeddyurappa, who was sworn in as the chief minister on Thursday, said he would resign instead of trying to prove that he had the support of a majority of the legislators.

"Democracy has finally won the battle against the unholy politics of intimidation, corruption and lies," Congress said in a Tweet. "Congratulations Karnataka!"