

## BRITAIN SEEKS BREXIT WITHOUT BORDERS FOR N IRELAND

**LONDON/DUBLIN:** Britain has said there should be no border posts or immigration checks between Ireland and the British province of Northern Ireland after Brexit, in a paper that attempts to resolve one of the most complex aspects of its departure from the European Union.

Some 30,000 people cross the 500-km (300-mile) border every day without customs or immigration controls; negotiators must work out new arrangements without inflaming tensions in a region that suffered decades of bloody turmoil before a peace deal in 1998. As part of a series of papers that Prime Minister Theresa May hopes will push forward talks with the EU, the government on Tuesday outlined its vision for a "frictionless" customs system, which one EU politician described as 'fantasy'.

Yesterday's publication drew heavily on those proposals as a solution for Northern Ireland that would not involve "physical border infrastructure and border posts", or electronic surveillance. Reaching agreement with the EU on this was top of Britain's list of Brexit priorities, the government said.

The aim is "to find a practical solution that recognizes the unique economic, social and cultural context of the land border with Ireland, without creating any new obstacles to trade within the UK," Northern Ireland minister James Brokenshire said. May also said Britain would consider stepping in to replace some EU funding for peace projects in Northern Ireland after it leaves the bloc in March 2019, to prevent a resurgence of violence between pro-British Protestants and Catholic Irish nationalists.

### Detail needed

Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney welcomed the proposals, saying Britain had acknowledged for



**This June 15, 2016 file photo of traffic crossing the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland in the village of Bridgend, Co Donegal Ireland. Britain said yesterday that there must be no border posts between Northern Ireland and the Irish republic after Brexit. —AP**

the first time that it would not be practical to depend on technological solutions to monitor the border. "Of course what we don't have, though, is the detail as to how it's going to work," he said. But Senator Mark Daly, deputy leader of Ireland's opposition Fianna F-il party, said the proposals for a frictionless border appeared "more like fiction, and clueless on this island."

"It will be a smugglers' charter," he told BBC Radio

Four. Northern Ireland sold 2.7 billion pounds (\$3.5 billion) of goods into Ireland in 2015, according to official figures, and many businesses have complex supply chains that involve crossing the border multiple times during the production process. The Sinn Fein party, which wants a referendum on ending British rule in Northern Ireland and uniting the island under the Irish flag, said it doubted an open

border could be delivered. "They have not put anything concrete on the table...we are a fleeting concern to the British government, collateral damage in the Brexit negotiations," said Michelle O'Neill, Sinn Fein's leader in Northern Ireland. Britain said it wanted to maintain the Common Travel Area (CTA), a pact that allows free movement between the United Kingdom and Ireland for British and Irish citizens, with no need for passport controls and "no question of new immigration checks operating between Northern Ireland and Ireland". That would mean EU citizens wishing to enter Britain could do so by travelling legitimately to Ireland and crossing the border unchecked - something that is likely to antagonize the many Britons for whom controlling immigration was a key reason for backing Brexit.

"If you don't have any of these checks between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland - the UK-EU border - and you don't have any between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, well then, where do you check immigration?" Conor McGinn, a spokesman for the opposition Labour Party, told Sky News. "It seems to me that the government has handed back control of its border to the EU."

The government said control over migration from the EU into Britain could be exercised by restrictions on access to the British social security system and labour market. Further details would be set out in a future document on immigration. Britain also wants to introduce new "trusted trader" arrangements to help larger companies and make smaller firms exempt from customs processes. It rejected the idea of an effective customs border in the Irish Sea that separates England, Wales and Scotland from Ireland and Northern Ireland as "not constitutionally or economically viable". — Reuters

## CHINA ASKS US, N KOREA TO 'HIT THE BRAKES' ON THREATS

TRUMP PRAISES N KOREAN LEADER'S DECISION NOT TO FIRE MISSILES

**BEIJING:** China is telling the US and North Korea to "hit the brakes" on threatening words and actions and work toward a peaceful resolution of their dispute, in a sign of growing concern over the standoff on the part of Pyongyang's only major ally.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a phone conversation with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, that the two countries should work together to contain tensions and permit no one to "stir up an incident on their doorstep," according to a statement posted on the Chinese foreign ministry's website. "The most important task at hand is for the US and North Korea to 'hit

annual military exercises with South Korea in exchange for Pyongyang halting its missile and nuclear tests as a first step toward direct talks.

Yesterday, the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps Gen Joseph Dunford, continued a visit to China following talks the day before with his Chinese counterpart that touched on North Korea. No details of the talks have been released.

Dunford on Tuesday told Fang Fenghui, chief of the People's Liberation Army's joint staff department, that the sides had "many difficult issues" between them but were willing to deal with them through dialogue.

to dialogue, but that's up to (Kim)." Lobbing missiles toward Guam, a major US military hub in the Pacific, would be deeply provocative from the US perspective. A miscalculation on either side could lead to military confrontation.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in, meanwhile, a liberal who favors diplomacy, urged North Korea to stop provocations and to commit to talks over its nuclear weapons program.

Moon, in a televised speech Tuesday on the anniversary of World War II's end and the Korean Peninsula's liberation from Japanese colonial rule, said Seoul and Washington agree that the nuclear standoff should "absolutely be solved peacefully." He said no US military action on the Korean Peninsula could be taken without Seoul's consent.

North Korea's military said last week that it would finalize the plan to fire four ballistic missiles near Guam, which is about 3,200 kilometers (2,000 miles) from Pyongyang. It would be a test of the Hwasong-12, a new missile the country flight-tested for the first time in May. The liquid-fuel missile is designed to be fired from road mobile launchers and has been described by North Korea as built for attacking Alaska and Hawaii.

### Trump's praise

US President Donald Trump yesterday praised North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for a "wise" decision not to fire missiles towards the US territory of Guam, which has eased escalating tension between the two countries.

Reclusive North Korea has made no secret of its plan to develop a missile capable of firing a nuclear warhead at the United States to counter what it perceives as constant US threats of invasion. Trump warned North Korea last week it would face "fire and fury" if it threatened the United States, prompting North Korea to say it was considering plans to fire missiles towards the Pacific island of Guam.

But North Korean media reported on Tuesday Kim had delayed the decision while he waited to see what the United States did next. "Kim Jong Un of North Korea made a very wise and well-reasoned decision," Trump wrote on Twitter. "The alternative would have been both catastrophic and unacceptable!" North Korea's threat to fire towards Guam had prompted Trump to say earlier that the US military was "locked and loaded" if North Korea acted unwisely.

North Korea has long ignored warnings from the West and from its lone major ally, China, to halt its nuclear and missile tests which it conducts in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions. The United States has been hoping China can press the North to rein in its weapons programs. The top US general reiterated that in talks in Beijing this week. —Agencies

### North Korea plan

North Korea's military on Tuesday presented leader Kim Jong Un with plans to launch missiles into waters near the US territory of Guam and "wring the windpipes of the Yankees," even as both Korea and the United States signaled their willingness to avert a deepening crisis, with each suggesting a path toward negotiations.

The tentative interest in diplomacy follows unusually combative threats between Trump and North Korea amid worries Pyongyang is nearing its long-sought goal of being able to send a nuclear missile to the US mainland. Next week's start of US-South Korean military exercises that enrage the North each year could make diplomacy even more difficult.

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told reporters in Washington on Tuesday, "We continue to be interested in trying to find a way to get



**BEIJING: Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Joseph Dunford speaks with a Chinese official before boarding his plane at Beijing Capital International Airport in Beijing, China yesterday to travel to Shenyang, China to observe a Chinese Military Exercise. —AP**

the brakes" on their mutual needling of each other with words and actions, to lower the temperature of the tense situation and prevent the emergence of an "August crisis," Wang was quoted as saying in the Tuesday conversation.

The ministry quoted Lavrov as saying tensions could rise again with the US and South Korea set to launch large-scale military exercises on Aug. 21. "A resolution of the North Korea nuclear issue by military force is completely unacceptable and the peninsula's nuclear issue must be peacefully resolved by political and diplomatic methods," Lavrov was quoted as saying.

China is North Korea's main economic partner and political backer, although relations between Beijing and Pyongyang have deteriorated amid the North's continuing defiance of China's calls for restraint. In recent months, China has joined with Russia in calling for the US to suspend



**PAJU: Visitors walk by the map of two Koreas at the Imjingak Pavilion in Paju, South Korea, yesterday. —AP**

## NORTH KOREA THREAT PROMPTS GUAM NATIVES TO ASSERT RIGHTS

**HAGATNA, Guam:** The threatened missile attack by North Korea on Guam has prompted calls for peace from the island's indigenous people, who are weary of yet another conflict after enduring centuries of hostilities. About one-third of the US territory's 160,000 people identify as Chamorro, the indigenous group that is believed to have migrated to Guam from Indonesia and the Philippines an estimated 3,500 to 4,000 years ago. It is believed to be one of the world's first seafaring migrations.

They have since endured colonization by Spanish settlers, bloody skirmishes during World War II and a steady escalation of American military presence on the island. An expert on Guam says it would be "disastrous and tragic beyond words" for the island's indigenous culture if it were targeted in a war between the US and North Korea.

"These islands are the home of the Chamorro people," said Michael Lujan Bavacqua, an assistant professor of Chamorro Studies at the University of Guam. "Literally our bones are buried in the soil." Chamorros have their own traditions, including open ocean navigation of the kind recently highlighted in the Disney animated movie "Moana" and a Roman Catholic religious heritage introduced by colonizers and missionaries. The Spanish influence began after explorer Ferdinand Magellan arrived on the island in the 16th century.

Some Chamorros gathered at a peace rally this week to try to teach the world about their struggle to protect their ancestors' land, assert their rights as indigenous people and pursue some form of self-governance. Some women wore traditional floral head crowns called mwarmwars. Some men wore loincloths and traditional carved jewelry around their necks. One person blew a shell trumpet, as a summons to rise up.

"It's a call to stand in solidarity not just Chamorro people of this land, but for people all over the world because peace for

Guam means peace for the world," said Monaeka Flores, 39, an artist and lawmaker's aide. "If anything should happen here, that's going to be a global war. It's a call to respect the people. And respect the land and to stand in solidarity with us."

### The battle for Guam

The battle for Guam between the United States and Japan during World War II almost completely destroyed Hagatna, the capital city. Not much effort was made to restore during the post-war years.

"You have erased the historical connections of these people. You have destroyed what they have been walking through for centuries," Malia Tony Ramirez, a historian with the Guam Department of Parks and Recreation, said of the three-week battle. The military's buildup of bases after the war destroyed more historical sites, he said, as did the development of hotels and resorts.

The Chamorro name refers to descendants of the initial people who settled on Guam and smaller, neighboring islands in the Marianas island chain. The US took control of Guam in 1898 after the Spanish-American War. The Navy ruled the island until Japan took control in 1941. The US installed civilian leadership and granted citizenship to Guam residents in 1950. Today, some Chamorros and others on Guam want the island to be independent or perhaps establish a "free association" relationship like some of its island neighbors have. The free association island states allow the US exclusive military access to their land and waters while their citizens have the right to live and work in the US.

Adrian Cruz, an activist and chairman of the Free Association Task Force, said the Chamorro language and traditions have kept his people together for 4,000 years. He said Chamorros will be fine regardless what happens, just like they were during World War II and under the Spanish. "The Chamorro people are resilient people, and we will survive," Cruz said. —AP

## NEW UK AIRCRAFT CARRIER HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH ARRIVES AT PORT

**LONDON:** The HMS Queen Elizabeth, the biggest ship ever built for the British navy, sailed into its homeport for the first time yesterday as tens of thousands jammed the harbor to welcome it.

The 3 billion-pound (\$3.9 billion) ship arrived at Portsmouth Naval Base in southern England with sailors lining the flight deck and Royal Navy helicopters soaring above. A band of Royal Marines added to the pageantry as the families of service members lined the jetty to cheer the 919-foot (280-meter) vessel, which has been conducting sea trials since setting out from Rosyth dockyard in Scotland on June 27. "She is Britain's statement to the world: a demonstration of British military power and our commitment to a bigger global role," Defense Secretary Michael Fallon said. "The thousands of peo-

ple across the UK who have played a part in building her and her sister ship, HMS Prince of Wales, should be immensely proud as our future flagship enters Portsmouth."

The carrier was built specifically as a platform for the next generation of fighter jets and is expected to have two dozen F-35B aircraft on board by 2023. The Queen Elizabeth and the Prince of Wales will replace three smaller carriers that were retired over the past decade.

Fallon said in June that Russia would look at the new carrier with envy, comparing it to the "dilapidated" Admiral Kuznetsov, which was launched in 1985. Russia's defense ministry fired back, with a spokesman dismissing the Queen Elizabeth as just a "conveniently large sea target" that should stay close to US protection assets. — AP



**PORTSMOUTH: Britain's new flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth arrives in Portsmouth, Britain yesterday. HMS Queen Elizabeth has arrived at its home port in southern England to great fanfare. —AP**

## SUSPECT'S BROTHER ARRESTED IN UK MODEL KIDNAPPING

**LONDON:** British police have arrested the brother of a Polish man suspected of kidnapping a British model and threatening to sell her on the dark web. The UK National Crime Agency says officers arrested Michal Konrad Herba yesterday in central England on an arrest warrant issued by Italy.

Italian police are holding his brother, Lukasz Pawel Herba, on suspicion of

abducting model Chloe Ayling. Ayling says she was lured to Milan last month for a fake photo shoot, then drugged, stuffed into a suitcase and held at a rural house by criminals who threatened to auction her online.

She was released after six days when Lukasz Herba took her to the British consulate in Milan. Michal Herba, who is 36, is due to appear in a London court today. —AP