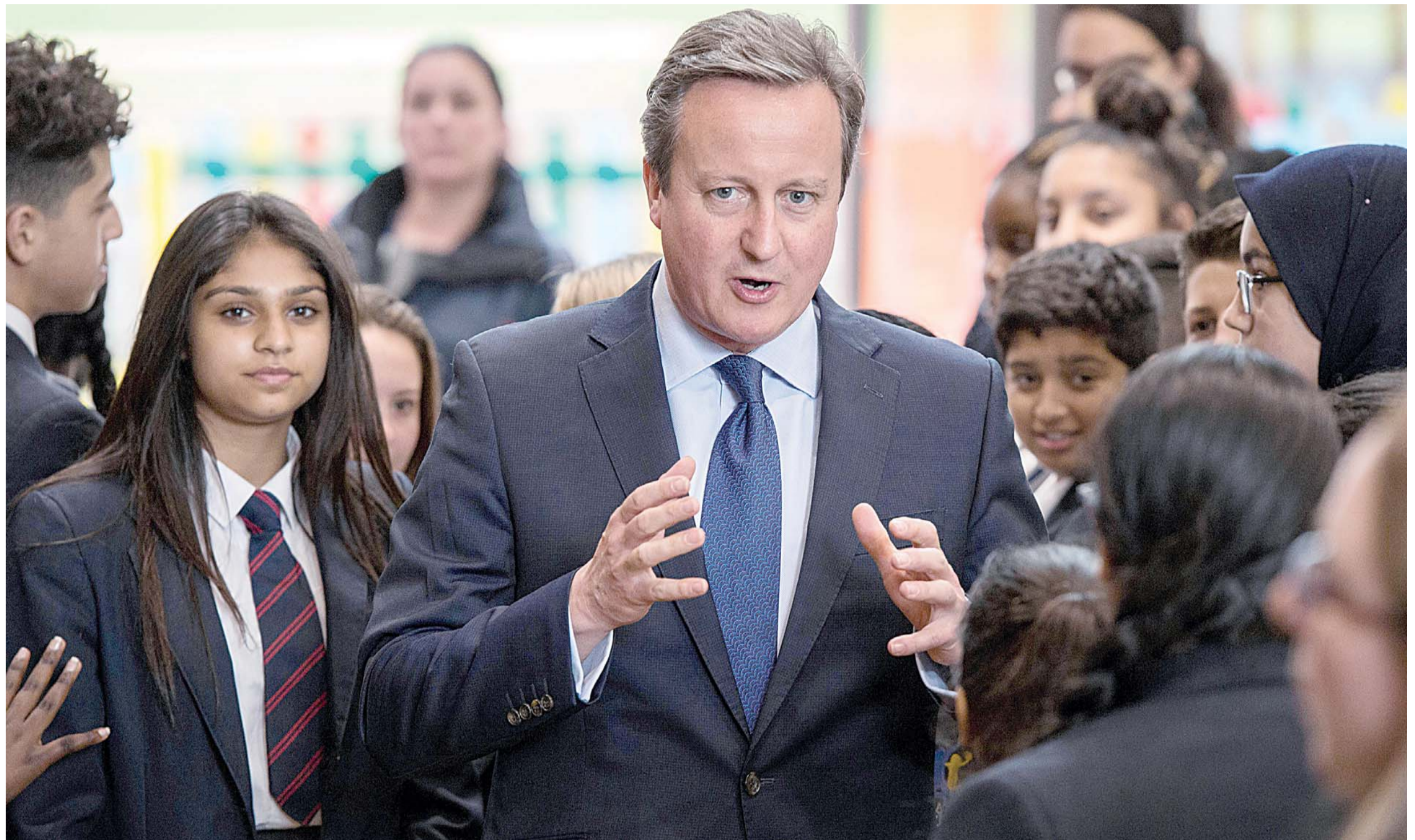




Pentagon chief seeks better use of US forces in Afghanistan

WHAT TO EXPECT AS MAY STARTS UNTANGLING THE UK FROM THE EU



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron is pictured during a visit to Reach Academy Feltham yesterday. —AP

CAMERON CHAIRS HIS FINAL CABINET MEETING

PM TO DEPART OFFICE TODAY

LONDON: British Prime Minister David Cameron chaired a farewell Cabinet meeting yesterday, a day before handing over power to his successor following the historic vote to leave the European Union.

Ministers gathered for the final session a day after Home Secretary Theresa May was confirmed as the new Conservative leader and prime minister-in-waiting - and as a moving van arrived in Downing St. ahead of Cameron's departure today.

Culture Secretary John Whittingdale said there had been a "touch of sadness" to the meeting, which saw May and Treasury chief George Osborne led tributes to Cameron. Cameron resigned after Britons voted June 23 - against his advice - to leave the EU. May will have to deal with the political fallout and

oversee the complex process of separating from the bloc.

She will spend the day considering the makeup of her own Cabinet before she moves into 10 Downing St. on Wednesday. British media have focused on whether Osborne will keep his job in charge of the economy. With the pound in crisis and fears over the economy, some argue that May could opt for continuity and keep Osborne in place, particularly as he has the confidence of many in the banks and markets.

But others say that the key position should go to someone who favored leaving the European Union. May supported remaining in the EU, but has promised to give prominent "leave" campaigners key Cabinet roles in a bid to heal the party's longstanding split over Europe.

Brexiteers

Two of the leading Brexiteers, former London Mayor Boris Johnson and Justice Secretary Michael Gove, were briefly Conservative leadership contenders, and May could show magnanimity by putting them in her Cabinet.

She has also said she will appoint a "Brexit minister" to oversee negotiations with the EU. May is already facing pressure from the 27 remaining EU countries to invoke Article 50 of the bloc's constitution, which sets the clock ticking on two years of formal exit talks. She has not said when she plans to do it.

She is also facing calls from opposition politicians to call an early election, before the next scheduled vote in 2020. May might be tempted to go to the polls to confirm her own mandate, and because the main opposition Labor Party is

in the midst of a leadership struggle that puts it in a weak position.

Leader Jeremy Corbyn has lost the support of most Labor members of Parliament and is facing a challenge from legislator Angela Eagle. The party's governing National Executive Committee is met yesterday to rule on whether Corbyn should automatically be on the ballot in a leadership contest, or whether he needs to gather nominations from 51 lawmakers - something he would struggle to do. Corbyn is likely to mount a legal challenge if the decision goes against him. Left-winger Corbyn has a strong base of support among grassroots Labor members and some trade union leaders.

Len McCluskey, general-secretary of the Unite union, called Eagle's challenge a "coup" and said it would be a "sordid little fix" to exclude Corbyn

from the ballot paper. The leadership battle has turned bitter, and risks splitting the century-old party in two. Police said Tuesday they were investigating reports that a brick had been thrown through the window of Eagle's constituency office in northwest England.

Corbyn said the attack on Eagle's office and abuse directed at other lawmakers was "extremely concerning." Last month Labor legislator Jo Cox was shot and stabbed to death in her northern England constituency, the first lawmaker to be killed in a quarter of a century.

"As someone who has also received death threats this week and previously, I am calling on all Labor Party members and supporters to act with calm and treat each other with respect and dignity, even where there is disagreement," Corbyn said. —AP

RIGHTS GROUP DECRIES 'FORCED ANAL EXAMS'

KAMPALA, UGANDA: Human Rights Watch is urging an end to "forced anal examinations" with a report documenting them in eight countries, mostly in Africa, saying the practice is based on flawed ideas about supposedly proving homosexual conduct.

In a report released yesterday, the advocacy group calls the examinations "a form of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment" that amounts to sexual assault, violates international conventions and could rise to the level of torture.

The report draws on interviews with 32 men and transgender women subjected to the exams in eight countries that ban same-sex conduct: Cameroon, Egypt, Kenya, Lebanon, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda and Zambia.

The report says the exams are rooted in "discredited 19th century theories" that homosexuals can be identified by characteristics of the anus. A Kenyan court recently upheld the use of anal examinations to determine a suspect's sexual orientation, dismissing the argument that the procedure amounts to torture and degrading treatment.

A group of homosexuals in Uganda will soon launch a court case against the procedure because it violates the country's bill of rights, said Frank Mugisha, a gay leader who said he was aware of many such incidents. "It's very degrading," he said.

Although some cases involve rape, many involve consenting adults targeted by the police, some of whom try to extort cash from suspects, Mugisha said. The subject of homosexuality is taboo in many African countries. In 2009, a Ugandan lawmaker introduced a bill that prescribed the death penalty for some homosexual acts. A less severe version passed by lawmakers was rejected by a court as unconstitutional, amid international pressure.

Many homosexuals live secret lives, afraid of beatings and other acts of violence if they are outed. —AP



KENYA: Kenyan gays and lesbians and others supporting their cause wear masks to preserve their anonymity as they stage a rare protest. —AP

STORMS TEAR UP COMMUNITIES IN MINNESOTA, WISCONSIN

LITCHFIELD, MINNESOTA: Storms carrying tornadoes, torrential rain and powerful winds damaged homes, deposited a snow plow in a tree and flooded highways in north-central Minnesota and northern Wisconsin.

Audrey Schoenberg took shelter at a restaurant in Litchfield, Minnesota, after a tornado Monday flipped her home off its foundation. "I'm numb. I'm numb. I don't know really what I do feel right now. It's quite a shock to see that everything is gone," she said.

Authorities said the tornado damaged up to 20 homes in the area. Keith Johnson, the mayor of Litchfield about 70 miles west of Minneapolis, said there was serious damage, but that no one was injured.

"I've lived in this town 52 years and I've never seen a storm like this in our community," Johnson said. Diane Kelbing told KARE-TV that she and her husband raced to their mobile home park shelter when they heard the tornado warning siren. "Well, the garage is gone, the shed is gone, the snowmobile trailer is gone. We've got a snow plow in the tree," Kelbing said.

Fifty residents were removed from the Hilltop Health Care Center in nearby Watkins after the home lost part of its roof. The American Red Cross said it is assisting the evacuees. Law enforce-

ment also reported a tornado touchdown around 6:30 p.m. Monday three miles east of Rockville, in Stearns County, Minnesota, according to the National Weather Service.

The storms also washed out sections of highways in northern Wisconsin and closed other roads. The Ashland County Sheriff's Office urged against travel in the county because many local roads were flooded. Sections of US Highway 2 and state Highway 13 south of Highbridge were closed yesterday.

The National Weather Service said more flooding was likely in northern Wisconsin, where rivers and creeks will continue to rise over the next two days. Areas around Danbury to Minong, Hayward, Ashland and Hurley are expected to experience the most significant flooding.

In Minnesota, the storms also generated a deluge of heavy rain causing the Crow Wing County Sheriff's Office to advise against travel late Monday because of flooding. In St. Cloud, powerful rain flooded street and left some motorists stranded in high water. In a Baxter industrial park, a foot of water covered the roadways. The National Weather Service reported 11 inches of rain fell in the east-central Minnesota city of Sturgeon Lake. —AP