

May defends Syria strikes



Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May attends a press conference in 10 Downing Street

London

British Prime Minister Theresa May defended yesterday her decision to launch air strikes against Syria, answering criticism over her bypassing of parliament by saying lawmakers could now hold her to account.

May, who has regained confidence after winning support for her tough stance on Syria and Russia, said she was driven by the need to decide quickly on joining the United States and France in Saturday's strikes, made in retaliation for a suspected gas attack.

Saying she had no doubt the "Syrian regime" was behind an attack which she called a "stain on humanity", May told lawmakers she had acted in the national interest and refused to say whether she would seek their approval for further action.

"I'm absolutely clear that it is parliament's responsibility to hold me to account for such

decisions and parliament will do so," she told the House of Commons in a rowdy session that laid bare divisions over the military action. "But it is my responsibility as prime minister to make these decisions and I will make them."

May has weathered months of doubt over her leadership due to rows over Brexit and an ill-judged decision to call an early election when her Conservative Party lost its parliamentary majority. She is now enjoying international support for her action in Syria and against Moscow over a nerve agent attack on a former Russian spy in Britain.

Still, she has had to tread carefully in parliament, where she now relies on a small Northern Irish party to get enough votes to pass legislation, and has worked hard to offer lawmakers, angry about being sidelined, time to discuss the Syrian action.

Ian Blackford, the leader of the opposition Scottish National Party in Westminster, was one of many who asked May why she had not recalled parliament for a vote, breaking with a convention dating back to the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

"The prime minister leads a minority government," he said. "It was perfectly possible for the house to have been recalled in advance, why was this not done?"

While some Conservatives also expressed their regret that she had bypassed parliament, May also enjoyed praise from others - one calling her a "real prime minister" by moving swiftly to support the joint air strikes.

Instead, it was the opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn who drew jeers and shouts when he suggested that May had simply followed the orders of U.S. President Donald Trump - something the British leader denied. (Reuters)

#PollToday



Do you think OPEC producers will be able to boost oil prices above \$80 a barrel in 2018?

Yes No Cant Say



"There will be no more bloodshed or fighting because the government is back in Aden. We will exert all our efforts to stop the security situation from further deteriorating and to stop further assassination attempts on dozens of religious and military figures."

-Ahmed Obeid bin Daghr, Yemen's Prime Minister

Rest in sight

Archaeologists find silver treasure on Baltic island



Hundreds of 1,000-year-old silver coins, rings, pearls and bracelets linked to the era of Danish King Harald Gormsson have been found on the eastern German island of Ruegen.

India set to receive average monsoon rains

India is likely to receive average monsoon rains in 2018, the weather office said, raising the possibility of higher farm and economic growth in Asia's third-biggest economy.

UAE stops training Somalia's military

The United Arab Emirates says it will end its military training mission to Somalia after an incident that saw its soldiers assaulted and \$9.6 million seized at an airport in Mogadishu.

Macron says Trump, France agree on Syria

French President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday he had not meant to signal a change in the U.S. position on Syria.

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Arab Coalition implements humanitarian plan in Yemen

The Arab Coalition in Yemen has established a support center to implement a humanitarian operation for Yemen, which aims to improve the critical situation in the country by providing financial support and improving development and economic projects, as well as providing safe routes in parallel with new outlets.

The priorities of the operations plan is to meet the humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people,

delivering commercial cargos, and oil derivatives to all regions of the country. The plan aims to achieve levels of flow of commercial goods and achieve tangible improvement in various aspects of life in Yemen.

It will also take into account the serious threat posed by the Houthi militias, and beyond it by Iran, to security in Saudi Arabia, the countries of the region, and the vital waterways of international trade. (AlArabia)

Coinsecure exchange says \$3m worth of bitcoins stolen



A Bitcoin automated machine (ATM) is seen at Hong Lim Complex in Singapore

New Delhi

Coinsecure, an Indian cryptocurrency exchange, said nearly \$3 million were stolen from its bitcoin wallet, the biggest reported so far in the country.

The theft is expected to further weaken trade in cryptocurrencies, which the government has likened to "Ponzi schemes" that offer unusually high returns to early investors.

Coinsecure, which has over 200,000 users trading on its platform daily, said that around 438 bitcoins, which were stored in a password-protected virtual wallet were siphoned off to an unknown destination on the internet

after the details were leaked online.

"We regret to inform you that our bitcoin funds have been exposed and seem to have been siphoned out to an address that is outside our control," the company said in a statement posted on its website.

Legal experts said there was a need to regulate the virtual currency market, instead of imposing restrictions on its trade.

Bitcoins in India were trading at 480,000 Indian rupees, or about \$7,359 on Friday, according to cryptocurrency exchange Coinome, well below its international market price of about \$7,771.

Afghan returns captured Pak soldier, five bodies

Khost

Afghan tribesmen yesterday returned a Pakistani soldier they captured in a deadly skirmish along the countries' border, as well as the bodies of five soldiers, the governor of Afghanistan's Khost province said.

The soldier and the bodies were handed to Pakistani troops, said Khost governor Hukum Khan Habibi.

The dispute arose over Pakistan's work on a fence intended to span nearly all of the disputed 2,500-km (1,550-mile) border, much of

it mountainous and porous. Afghan officials have alleged that Pakistani troops crossed onto Afghanistan soil, prompting firing on Sunday by border forces and the local tribal force.

The two sides later agreed on a ceasefire.

US, UK accuse Russian-backed hackers

Washington

The United States and Britain alleged that Russian government-backed hackers had infected computer routers around the world in a cyber espionage campaign that targeted government agencies, businesses and critical infrastructure operators.

U.S. and British officials told reporters that they planned to issue a joint alert on the

attacks, which targeted routers that form a key part of the internet infrastructure in a cyber espionage campaign that could be leveraged in the future to launch offensive attacks. "When we see malicious cyber activity, whether it be from the Kremlin or other malicious nation-state actors, we are going to push back," said Rob Joyce, the White House cybersecurity coordinator.